DECODING THE LITERARY MACHINE

ANALYZING THE MACHINIC DISPOSITIF IN E. M. FORSTER'S 'THE MACHINE STOPS' AND IN FRANZ KAFKA'S 'IN DER STRAFKOLONIE'

DANAI SPYROU

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LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR: DR. JANNA HOUWEN

SECOND READER: PROF. ERNST VAN ALPHEN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the social composition of the mechanical devices portrayed in E. M. Forster's novel *The Machine Stops* and of Franz Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie* and how this can be effectively used in order to interpret their imminent implosion within the stories. Beyond providing allegorical expressions for the destruction of Forster's and Kafka's machines, I will confront these devices with scholarly literature that highlight the social aspect of the machinic concept and, simultaneously, propose its transcendental dimension that exceeds its material structure and expands within social fields. Thus, the machines within Forster's and Kafka's stories are not merely operational structures or tools, but social entities with affective propositions.

This research builds on existing knowledge in the fields of social studies mainly concerned with the integration of the machinic concept within society. Its dynamic and influential presence is underlined by the diverse fields of studies, such as cybernetics, psychoanalysis, and art, which embodied, transfigured, and became transfigured by the increasingly important concept of the machinic over the last centuries. Forster's and Kafka's machines emit a mysterious atmosphere which, it is my contention that it constitutes representative samples of the machinic sociality, especially if one considers the role and operations of these machines within the stories. In examining the ways in which Forster's and Kafka's stories *The Machine Stops* and *In der Strafkolonie* respectively showcase the social aspect of the machinic and its relation with the social organization, I put forward the claim that the breakdown of the mechanical apparatuses is directly connected to this aspect as manifested by the mechanical behavior of the stories.

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INTRODUCTION

> "*[w]e cooperate with Mechanics in destroying the old poetry"* (75) *since "[w]e want to make literature out of the life of a motor"* (95) *"[t]o listen to motors and to reproduce their conversation."* (96)
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> —Christian Bok quoting F. T. Marinetti in *Pataphysics: The Poetics of an Imaginary Science* (47)

The concept of the term 'machine' has undergone numerous alterations and has been succumbed to even more numerous elucidations regarding its position and relation to mankind, which can be discerned through profound distinctions regarding its conceptualization. In general, the machine can be described as a structure intended to carry out desired works, particularly as a tool in the hands of humans (Rattan 1). Nevertheless, over the last centuries this conceptualization appears to gradually emaciate and have its place taken by a new, more social, and more multifarious model. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, nineteenth century bore witness to expeditious industrialization that radically transfigured the rationality of social and economic structures. The immense presence of the machines and their penetration into the social fabric and means of production inaugurated a new condition where machines become a dynamic presence in the domestic and public spheres, especially with the later advent of communication and information technology. This led to the reinstatement of society under a new lens where social aspects have been endowed with machinic qualities. Concepts such as world, humans, nature, work, capitalism, society, bodies are expressed through machinic narratives and articulations, crystallizing a merging process between mechanical functions and social manifestations.

In this respect, this new machinic model differentiates itself from the traditional view given by Rattan. Notably, together with the increasingly rapid advance of the machinic within society, a

powerful platform has emerged for many theoreticians, whose object of research is bound to the question of the degree to which people and systems are changed or even evolutionally transformed, and their behavior conditioned in the process of interacting with pervasive sociomechanical extensions. The fact that over the past centuries the concept of the machinic has undergone a transformation which differentiates itself from the traditional model as a mere mechanism can be illuminated by the considerable proliferation of literary and artistic productions on the technological domain. Machine tropes and narratives begin to occupy an important position in modern literature, projecting a broad spectrum of responses towards key topics such as the relationship between humans and machines, the decipherment of the desire and the human consciousness, the organization of society, psychoanalysis, etc., revealing the diverse ways in which literature and authors engage with technology and mechanical innovations. Many times, literary works entail machines that challenge machine's traditional identity and reveal its social aspect. The short stories of E. M. Forster's *The Machine Stops* and Franz Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie* are cases in point which they employ machines as centerpieces of their narrative plots, providing new insights for the perception of this new machinic model.

In his short fictional story *The Machine Stops* (1909), the thematic concept of the English novelist E. M. Forster is the Machine, a gigantic machinic assemblage which operates as an artificial ecosystem for its people, providing them with an allegedly safe shelter from the Earth's hostile environment. Exploring a phenomenally alarming parameter of mankind's future, Forster's novel makes a prognostication of a process which has already begun from the twentieth century and dealt with the ever-growing presence of the machine within social and political realities. Despite it being published prior to the advent of cybertechnology, *The Machine Stops* explores an unripe immersion in virtual and cybernetic realities, projecting a compulsive fear of mechanistic dehumanization under the mechanical limbs of the Machine which seem to be quite long as well as

forceful to sustain a massive amount of living organisms. The Machine operates in a closed-circuit system in which the actors of the story are entirely dependent and exposed to the mechanically sweeping nature of the Machine. Nonetheless, through a series of intricate and troublous incidents related to Kuno, one of the protagonists, the Machine starts showing signs of defect, resulting in its total collapse and in the end of the people and its civilization.

Kafka's novel *In der Strafkolonie* (1914) presents similar aspects of a device that expands beyond its technical function. The story takes place in a nameless colony which, as the story unfolds, seems to revolve around a mechanically punishing machine, a "remarkable apparatus," which is praised as the core essence of the colony. Despite the fact that Kafka's novel is named after the colony where the plot takes place, all the attention is paid to the ambiguous apparatus, which seems inherently linked to the Penal Colony, particularly to the Officer with whom it shares a peculiar relationship that raises questions concerning the nature of this relationship, especially if one takes into account the collapse of the apparatus when the Officer voluntarily sets out the machine for himself.

From both stories' narrative perspective, a machine is presented as the focalizer of each story's narrative, as an entity with mystic nature. In Forster's story, the Machine appears as an invisible, yet omnipresent and omniscient essence that regulates and controls the individuals and their environment, inducing them to physical and mental modifications. Similarly, Kafka's apparatus has been frequently theorized because of its allegorical and intriguing character, especially in examining its peculiar relation with the Officer. Equally important is the fact that both stories in the end share the motif of the implosion of their devices, which frames the dramatic climax of the narration, mostly because of the apocalyptic and emotionalist atmosphere that prevails among the characters. Beyond providing mere representations of 'mechanicity,' it appears

that Forster and Kafka superinduce a social dimension to their literary machines, which render them peculiar mechanical cases that call for further research.

The concept of the social composition of the machine was developed by a growing body of literature that recognized the conception of the machine not as a technical device and apparatus, but as an assemblage of social, technical, bodily, and intellectual elements. As a starting point, I posit Karl Marx's critical essay *Maschinenfragment* for it is my contention that it entails the very first integrated study on the conceptualization of the machine as a social entity. Written in the second half of the nineteenth century, Marx addressed the intellectual aspect of the machinery, which in the course of a historical development as a simple tool, is understood as the negative aspect of the objectification of the working and scholarly skills. Furthermore, the theories of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari play an essential role for the understanding of machinic theories. Their books *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* provide a useful context on the way we perceive machines. In contrast to Marx, who proposed a historically located intellectual machine as a symbol of enslavement, Deleuze and Guattari presented a critical reinvention of the concept that avoids the metaphorical usage of the term and subscribe to the belief that machine constitutes a communicating factor between bodies—machinic or not—or, to put it simply, as an extension which opens up new channels for exchange, connection, and disjunction with other bodies. Another contemporary scholar interested in the social machine is Maurizio Lazzarrato. His book *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity* is of particular interest, mainly because he views capitalist systems as machinic elements which converts representation and consciousness into social subjection and machinic enslavement. Additionally, drawing insights from the above theorists, the social aspect of the machine is richly supplemented by scholars who explore relevant social machinic motifs. By way of illustration, Norbert Wiener's theories on cybernetics, Viktor Tausk's *Influencing Machine*, and Duchamp's *Bachelor Machine* constitute key instruments in

understanding the different aspects of the social conceptualization of the machine which will be further analyzed in the first chapter. It is this heap of theories on the social machine that I wish to highlight within the novels by Forster and Kafka. Although both novels and apparatuses have indeed attracted the scholarly attention, not only from the literary field, there has been little quantitative analysis of these devices and their imminent implosion in terms of a historical and critical approach of the concept of the machine as such and how this is expressed within the narrative context. With this study, I aspire to contribute toward an anew reading and interpretation of Forster's and Kafka's short stories in particular and of modern literature in general, in light of critical philosophical and social theories, concerned with the formation of the machinic dispositif.

In this thesis, I argue that the devices within *The Machine Stops* and *In der Strafkolonie* demonstrate cases of social machines, which, in turn, can be used to explain their imminent implosion. In order to analyze what the machines in their destruction mean in Foster's *The Machine Stops* and Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie*, it is first of all necessary to look into the changing meanings of the machine throughout history. In the first chapter, I will therefore present how the concept of the machine, especially during the twentieth century, underwent a structural transformation that ushered it to exceed its material structure and to concurrently expand itself into a cognitive realm that moulds the social order. Secondly, the meaning of the destruction of the machine in Forster's and Kafka's respective novels, cannot be studied without analyzing the multiple meanings of the machine in these novels first. Chapter II will therefore examine how these concepts are embodied in the machines of my case studies with the help of theories discussed in chapter I, and presenting the ways with they compare and contrast each other. Lastly, chapter III will analyze the meaning of the destruction of Forster's and Kafka's machines based on the outcomes of the previous chapter.

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF THE MACHINIC DISPOSITIF

"As the machine turned country into city, serf-like peasants into slave-like workers, distance into time, hours into minutes, land into capital, and the ideal of a primitive arcadia into the idea of a highly-industrialized utopia, it loomed huge in the everyday consciousness of almost everybody. It moved into work , into the home, into domestic politics, into international and civil war, and into all kinds of fiction."

—H. Bruce Franklin, *Future Perfect* (141)

"The Machine, by which I mean all the agencies of order, regularity, and efficiency, whether social or technical . . ."

—Lewis Mumford, *In the Name of Sanity* (Fox 18)

In his celebrated novel *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1869), French author Gustave Flaubert presents a rather amusing scene in which one of the characters encounters a painting made by the artist Pellerin that depicted: "the Republic, or Progress, or Civilization, under the form of Jesus Christ driving a locomotive, which was passing through a virgin forest" (293). The vision of Christ driving a train through nature as an allegoric figure of the new order that is quickly approaching the "virgin," purified nature, eloquently limns a process in action. Flaubert presciently saw in the unnatural cold steel of the train the new Messiah full of new promises and pledges that would drastically turn the tide of history. Undoubtedly, this image should be understood as a simile for the excessive spread and use of the machines in the course of a process that culminated with the

technological boom of the Industrial Revolution, which Flaubert experienced, and the rearrangements they generated within society. However, by analyzing this relationship, I would add that within this peculiar scenery there is more than meets the eye. Somewhere deep in the woods, there is a human being standing aside watching the coming of the train while contemplating on the future that is about to come. Like the victorious military units march in front of the defeated as a way of affirming their supremacy, in similar manner the advent of the machine propagates its impact on a bemused crowd that tails after the new occupation and organization. The confrontation between the upcoming machinic imperialism and man introduces a kind of rupture, where the machine stands on equal terms before human being, depriving them from the vantage point of demiurge, from which human hand could modify and dominate nature.

Flaubert's view on the machines manifests an infringement, but not a violent one. More importantly, this metaphor provokes us to think of machines outside of the context of the simple tools. This proposition has become explicit in recent years, especially if one considers the rapid increase of new technologies. Developments, such as the widespread use of computers, have brought a transformation to the existing social and political roles, inaugurating a new kind of mythology in which the machine challenges its traditional model as a performative structure intended to carry out a specific action, proposing a mechanical order which translates social, cultural, and political contexts in its own terms. As a matter of fact, it was not until the eighteenth century that the idea of the machine began to expand and mingle with social and political realities, acquiring a peculiar and, sometimes, contradictory character (Raunig 19). The pinnacle, however, of the machinic cerebration occurred from the twentieth century and onwards, where the machine extended to other fields as well. With this in mind, it appears that machine's deep embedment in our culture constitutes a process in action which did not simply emerge with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Therefore, I will attempt to locate the period in which the concept of the

machine began to cease being defined through its mechanistic aspects, and to becoming transmuted into an assemblage that echoes beyond the field of mechanical technology and technical knowledge.

1.1 FROM ANTIQUITY TO PRESENT

Historically, the first traces of devices that bore resemblance to what we can call a machine, as a technological structure intended to carry out a specific action, can be found in antiquity and laid the foundations for further scientific and technological advancements in the following centuries. For its part, the machine accompanied the individual and the masses through the years and expressed the context of each historic instance, persistently remaining in an immediate dialogue with the then-current social system. The consensus view wants the machines inherently associated with industrialism and the factories as means of enhancing the human labor and the rhythms of production. Remarkably however, the history of the machines goes further back than the Industrial Revolution, to an era where factories and production existed not even as ideas. The word first appeared in Homer's *Iliad* to describe political manipulation, but it was Aeschylus who actually used its modern meaning to describe the plot device used to usher the gods or the heroes of the tragedy on stage, known with the Latin term *Deus ex Machina* (Chondros 172). Its name derives from the mechanism with which the deity-actor was introduced into the main stage area which is in use up until today. Although their usage was not substantially widespread, such devices laid the foundations for a new kind of progress, which, in the long run, would prove to be quite determinant for the evolution and formation of societies.

Nevertheless, it was around the mid sixteenth century that the term began to take shape into the public consciousness. The landscape changed radically with the advent of the Renaissance. This

era is characterized by profound technical progress such as the printing press, linear perspective in drawing, patent law, etc. In the Renaissance is found the first formation of a pre-industrial culture which, a couple of centuries later would lead to the Industrial Revolution (Sawday xv). According to Sawday: "machines and mechanisms in the European Renaissance were far more than simply an efficient means of helping human beings to perform 'work' or 'labor'. Rather, the elaborate devices of the artist-engineers of the Renaissance reached deep into early modern political, aesthetic, and philosophical structures of thought" (xvi). An obvious example of this is how the machine penetrated into philosophical metaphors and became a way of conceptualizing man and society through its concept. The philosophical aspect of the machine was analyzed by philosophers of the seventeenth century such as David Hume, Descartes and Hobbes who shook down the distinction between the animate human being and the inanimate mechanical object by elaborating on the body and the world in mechanical terms. For instance, in his book *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779), David Hume compared the world to a machine:

> Look round the world: Contemplate the whole and every part of it: You will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain. All these various machines, and even their most minute parts, are adjusted to each other with an accuracy, which ravishes into admiration all men who have ever contemplated them (53).

To put it differently, the enormous development of the machines and their relevant apparatuses was starting to become incorporated into administrative mechanisms and knowledge structures of a social body that was becoming more and more industrialized in order to enhance its

productivity and its power exercise. Austrian writer Gerald Raunig marks that the word machine was inserted into the German and English language from the French word *machine* or the Latin *machina* which indicated a "purely technical term" (Raunig 19-20). Nevertheless, as he points out, the outstanding evolution of the development of technical apparatuses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and their circulation within every possible field of society resulted in the nineteenth century in "an economic dispositif of technical apparatuses" (Ibid). In other words, machine's growing influence begins to become incorporated within economic structures and means of production. The decisive transition, however, occurred at around the mid eighteenth century. The Industrial Revolution evinces a major turning point in history, to the point that every aspect of daily life was influenced in some way. The excessive industrialization and the massive exploitation of the machines situated the world under a new lens which, in the long run, fostered serious indications of the existence of a machinic dispositif, which will be described in depth later. The contention that machine was more than a mechanism was firmly supported by all social fields as many theorists feverishly spoke of the impact of the machine within sociopolitical theories, cybernetics, psychoanalysis, and philosophy.

As I will discuss in the next section, in the social field Marx spoke about the mechanical-intellectual machine, while Deleuze and Guattari distinguished the paranoiac, miraculating, and celibate machines within the social body. Additionally, Lazzarato talked about the notion of subjectivity within the capitalist system. Norbert Wiener examined the scientific field of cybernetics, which is concerned with the development of control and communication systems; furthermore, in a more anthropocentric analysis, the study of Victor Tausk on the *Influence Machine* portrays types of paranoid delusions on schizophrenic patients, which are clustered around a mechanical apparatus; last but not least, Duchamp's invention of the bachelor machines introduced a new perception of the machine as an object with deadly and sexual tensions.

1.2 SOCIAL ANALYSES

What has been termed as 'the classical dichotomy' between thinkers and makers had begun to collapse in Renaissance Europe, while a new distinction arose that replaces the 'thinkers' with 'scientists' and 'makers' with 'engineers' (Sawday 54). To put it differently, the dipoles that distinguished the intellectual groups from the workers has been reinstated under a new mechanical and industrialized context that would significantly shape the fabric of society. In the event of this transition, theorists and scholars provided their own definitions and perceptions which manifest the differences and the mutations that the human-society-machine analogy has undergone.

The mechanistic viewpoint reached its peak during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, providing confirmatory evidence that the world was moving towards a generalized machine thinking. In his book, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (1858), German philosopher Karl Marx consolidated this thinking by claiming that the 'machinery' has entered into the fixed capital and the production of the living labor (692). He refers specifically to capital and its tendency to employ the means of labor as "general productive forces of the social brain," in order for it to be realized as fixed capital (Ibid). He avers that once the working skill and the intellectual knowledge are absorbed into the capitalist system, the means of labor passes through different metamorphoses, whose culmination is the machine, or rather, an automatic system of machinery "set in motion by an automaton, a moving power that moves itself" (Ibid). This self-active machine consists of a number of mechanical and intellectual organs, which render the workers as mere accessories within the capitalist system (792). On these grounds, an inversion is observed: instead of the machines being a tool in the hands of the workers, they have now taken over the productive and capital forces by means of objectifying the knowledge and

skill of the workers and the intellectuals. In keeping up with the negative aspect of the industrialization of the machine, Marx propounds the view that this has created a relationship of social subjection between humans and machines: “The worker's activity, reduced to a mere abstraction of activity, is determined and regulated on all sides by the movement of the machinery, and not the opposite” (693). This radical standpoint signals a new era of the machine: from the hand that performed manual labor and from the same hand that held the machine-tool for its own service, to the machine domination over that hand and its expansion to the entire forces of production and social relations. Marx views technological and mechanical progress as an independent force that interferes into the social relations. The workers are “subsumed under the total process of the machinery itself, as itself only a link of the system, whose unity exists not in the living workers, but rather in the living (active) machinery (793). Metaphorically speaking, Marx’s technological determinism sees the machine as an enormous organism and the human beings as its dependent components.

Alongside with the emergence of the cybernetic theories, the notion of the machine shifts away from the strict opposition against the human being and becomes incorporated into the general bio-political system. In Lewis Mumford’s words: “during the last century our situation has changed from that of creators of machinery to that of creatures of the machine system” (196). In this framework, at the second half of the twentieth century, French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and French psychiatrist Félix Guattari considerably contributed toward a more efficient interpretation of the social-mechanical status. In their treatise *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), they propose a renewed version of the society-capital-machine triptych, which leaps off from the previous Marxist theories. Given the emergence of the internet and the cybernetics theories, Deleuze and Guattari developed a theory that effaces any resistance that may be caused by antitheses and contrasts within society. Their theory on the notion of assemblage is a loosely defined term; in general, it can be described

as a number of heterogeneous elements which are gathered into a single context and can generate multiple effects (3-4). In other words, they conceptualize the existing order not as a demarcated space where the polar intensities behave like a pinball game; rather, it is the relationships between objects and the way they interact through these relationships that encompass how objects come to be, signifying a context that is reigned over by a systemic concatenation. Deleuze and Guattari's model potentially demonstrates that within society exists no opposite forces, delimitations or exclusions. Everything (including humans) can be considered an assemblage whose machinic units constitute communication factors and enter into relations with other heterogeneous, machinic elements, which produce a number of effects, which, in turn, are used for further communication with other assemblages.

In the rise of information and network theories, Deleuze and Guattari found fertile grounds so as to analyze social complexity by emphasizing fluidity, exchangeability, and multiple functionalities. In other words, society's units are part of a distributed system, whose dynamic is based on interconnected, "rhizomatic" relations. The rhizome is an essential concept of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy as a concept which apprehends multiplicities "by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, and offshoots" (21). It has no hierarchical system, since the rhizome "pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight" (Ibid). In Deleuze and Guattari's theory, therefore, assemblage constitutes an agent where it is no longer a matter of challenging the various kind of interaction between man and machine and their respective outcomes; rather, it is, according to Raunig, a matter of rhizomatic "concatenations, of how man becomes a piece with the machine or with other things in order to constitute a machine" (25).

In addition to these theories, French sociologist and philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato relocated the centre of gravity from a socio-philosophical angle to a more individually focused. For

his part, Lazzarato argues that within capitalist society exists two forces: social subjection and machinic enslavement form the notion of the subjectivity within the capitalist system (14). He views capitalism as not merely a relationship among people; there are indeed power relations, but there relations are consisted by social machines and technical images, through which capitalism exercises its power (28). The individual in Lazzarato's theory constitutes the "individuated subject," the "economic subject," or the "citizen.", who is an active component for capitalism's vitality (25). The weakness of capitalism, he suggests, is in the production of subjectivity. Following Deleuze and Guattari, Lazzaratto differentiates two modes, which he calls "dispositifs" within the capitalist system: the social subjection and the machinic enslavement. He defines social subjection as the way we are inscribed with an identity, for example, sex, body, profession, nationality. It entails all these characteristics that form our individuality (24). For the second dispositif, Lazzaratto borrows the term 'enslavement' from Deleuze and Guattari which initially originates in cybernetics and the science of automation and refers to the "management" or "governance" of the components of a system (25). With the term "machinic enslavement" Lazzaretto refers to the technological system which enslaves its elements so as to ensure the stability and the equilibrium of the overall function. Machinic enslavement is not explicitly restricted in the technological area, but in essence "enslavement constitutes the social machine such as a factory, business, or communications system (Ibid). Within this system, the relationship between machines and humans is but "recurrent and interchangeable," being part of a production, communications, consumption, etc (26).

As can be seen, the Industrial Revolution demonstrated a shift which was marked by the alarming theories of Karl Marx and the rapid and omnipresence of the machines. However, this shift was more than just an invasion of the mechanics in our lives; it denotes a prolific dialogue regarding machine's different social conceptualizations. For Marx, machinery was an alien force

which would threaten our very human essence and would alienate us from the means of production. He installed a potential scenario of the machine's ubiquitousness by warning against an absolute subjugation to the machine and its apparatuses. The domination of the machine is not entirely based on the reversal of the relationship of workers and means of labor that came as a natural consequence of a transition from tool to machine; it brought about an inversion of power over knowledge (595). The fact that: "all sciences are imprisoned in service to capital" gives a hint of the presence of the machine and the beginning of its transformation into a dispositif (Raunig 22). It is necessary, however, to clarify exactly what is meant by the word dispositif. The term was introduced by French philosopher Michel Foucault to describe the system of relations that are established between various heterogeneous elements, such as discourses, institutions, architectural forms, law, science, philosophy, etc (194). In this respect, since social aspects are argued to have achieved a machinic quality, it would, then, be preferable to examine machine not as an abstract concept, but through its relations as a dispositif, which have been established by its strong social presence.

Almost a century later, the cybernetic theories made us confront a new reality: machines and individuals constitute equivalent co-existing entities within a close system, in a society where everything is governed by machinic and communication systems. In this context, Deleuze and Guattari inserted the concept of the assemblage as a composition of diverse units that enter into relations with one another. Deleuze and Guattari claim that not only we are not subjected to the machine, but we all constitute equal entities within the social flow, marking a leap towards a more cybernetic way of thinking, where bodies acquire a mechanistic quality in order to interact with other mechanic bodies within the social body of assemblage. Deleuze and Guattari's model promote an image of the society that runs through flow. On the same level, Lazzarato opens a discussion regarding the relationship between the human and capitalism, which is comprised of

machinic elements. Lazzaratto contributed for his part to the Deleuze and Guattari's theory by introducing two modes, the social subjection and the machinic enslavement. The combination of these two modes constitute the catalyst for the existence of capitalism. Capitalism, for Lazzaratto, is essentially "a series of machinisms, which cannot be deduced simply from the functions of technical machines" (34); this implies that the reason why the dispositifs exert their power on the individuals comes about as a way of sustaining capitalism and its necessary machinisms.

In the final analysis, the technological and mechanical upsurge of the Industrial Revolution paved the road for an inflation of critical theories and discourses on the machine not as a technical structure but as a social and philosophical conception that provides theoretical and conceptualized crossroad from which other theories or explanations will crop up in terms of untangling the socius. In this respect, the past centuries can be said to have ushered the machine not only to take shape but also to be redefined and redefine its relationship with the society. In order to examine the social aspect of the machine in full depth, I will now further elaborate on the cybernetic and information theories, since they constitute a salient chapter on the way machines operate as regulatory systems within social field.

1.2.1 CYBERNETICS

The interdisciplinary field of cybernetics is mainly concerned with the communication and control systems in living organisms and machines. Although cybernetics emerged as a modern term in the years following World War II, particularly associated with the intersection of computer science and information theory, its name derives from Plato who introduced the word *κυβέρνησῃ,* which is translated as the "action of manoeuvring a ship" (Teuscher 67). However, the theory of cybernetics gained great popularity during the mid twentieth century, particularly with Norbert Wiener's book

Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine (1948). In his book, Wiener appropriated Plato's definition in order to demonstrate that complex systems, from mechanical to biological ones, process information in order to respectively acquire and produce inputs and outputs. Wiener was primarily interested in how these systems regulate themselves through feedback mechanisms that required no human or intelligent agent (4). Feedback is given in the form of information, as data that remain unaltered and unique, since in his own words: "information is information, not matter or energy" (132). Feedback and self-regulation constitute the main principles of the cybernetic theories that focus on how digital, mechanical or biological systems process, react to and change or can be changed to better accomplish the tasks. According to Christof Teuscher, feedback is essential to describe every informational process which is able to conform its behavior according to the analysis it makes of its actions' effects (67).

Wiener's ideas on self-regulating systems, intrigued British mathematician Alan Turing who saw in the non-interventional character of the cybernetics new possibilities concerning artificial intelligence. In his highly influential paper *Computing Machinery and Intelligence* (1950), Turing introduced to the public the topic of artificial intelligence by imposing the question: "Can machines think?" (433). However, he later declares that it is paradoxical to put the works "think" and "machine" in the same sentence, therefore he rephrases his question to "Are there imaginable digital computers which would do well in the imitation game?" (440). By challenging the machine to win a game, called the *Imitation Game* so as to examine a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behavior, Turing brought to the fore pressing issues regarding a machine's capacity to generate equivalent intelligent behavior that could imitate the human being's.

The centrality of these definitions entails a society which is by far based, if not dependent, on artificial and intangible principles. By and large, information and its dissemination constitute the main arteries of the social body on which mechanical apparatuses exert their control and regulation.

Simultaneously, that suggests that the underpinning of the social structure is entirely based on mechanical entities which enable the implementation of this task. The machine and its relevant technical units provide the passage through which information flows, which in turn, regulates the society and its human relationships. As Jennifer Slack alleges, we are living in "an age [that] connotes an all pervasive logic, a logic that requires that everything be explained in its own terms . . . The information age thus hails all subjects as trapped in its logic" (253). This logic translates social, political and human connotations in its own terms, while it imposes a common holistic context that controls and regulates a machine-assisted automatic system in which its units are composed of equivalent and homogeneous values. This becomes evident by the plethora of fields which appropriated concepts of the cybernetic theories in order to develop existing theories or to invent new ones. Notable example is the concept of post-humanism and the post-feminism. In her book *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), Katherine Hayles refers to the disembodying qualities of information and how bodies are modified when entering into the virtual era. Additionally, Donna Haraway with her renowned work *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1984) introduces the notion of the cyborg which constitutes an amalgam of technology, science, and socialist-feminism, rejecting the rigid boundaries between organic and non-organic forms.

Given these points, it seems that within cybernetic theories it seems impossible to demarcate the presence of the machinery from the individual and social sphere. In this context, it becomes evident that Deleuze and Guattari's theories can be considered as 'brainchildren' of the cybernetic theories and of the general context of the information society. Although it may be true that the field of cybernetics is invariably linked with the study of the operating interactions within a system, the initial technological optimism existing in cybernetics spread to other fields as well, especially the social sciences and philosophy. The importance of the concept of cybernetics lies in the fact that they provide basic tools for explaining how compound phenomena can emerge from

simple but interconnected behaviors, and how systems and their relations can be thoroughly analyzed and defined through circular, causal chains. In *The Machine Stops*, Forster proposes a system which greatly resembles a cybernetic system in the form of the Machine, which will be further developed in the next chapter.

In addition to cybernetics, the social composition of the machine will be further explored in the fields of psychoanalysis and art.

1.3 MACHINE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Alongside with the key new technologies over the past centuries, a host of cultural and psychoanalytic theories were developed and shed new light on the assimilation of the machine-human and how they intersected with and shaped new forms of knowledge, self-interpretation and interplay between Self and the Other.

In the psychoanalytical field, Austrian psychoanalyst Viktor Tausk published an article under the name *On the Origin of the 'Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia* (1919) which contained his observations and interpretations on patients that were formerly diagnosed with schizophrenia. In his article, he makes the position that many of the individuals that were considered schizophrenic, were allegedly influenced by a "diabolical apparatus," which was mainly operated by enemies (186). Tausk would give this machine a name, suggesting that all the machineries of the mad are varieties of or modular components of the mysterious, polymorphous apparatus he calls "the influencing machine" (Connor 39). The patient attempts to decipher the construction of this machine, which violently persecutes the former, by means of their technical knowledge. Tausk mentions five main effects of the influencing machine:

1. It creates delusions that makes the patients seeing images. In this case, the machine functions as magic lantern or cinematography.
2. It generates thoughts and feelings that derive from mysterious forces and inexplicable phenomena. The patient appears to have inadequate knowledge of physics in order to explain them, that's why it is called "suggestion apparatus" as well.
3. It produces motor phenomena that result in erections or seminal emissions, which are intended to strip the male from its potency and weaken him.
4. Patients experience "estranging" sensations in the sense that they perceive them as alien and strange.
5. It is liable for further cutaneous eruptions, abscesses, and other pathological processes (186).

The connection with the patient is often established by means of invisible wires leading into his bed, in which case the patient is influenced by the machine only when he is in bed (187). Tausk reports a number of cases in which patients felt flows and currents, including that of a man who "felt electrical currents streaming through him, which entered the earth through his legs; he produced the current within himself, declaring with pride that that was his power!" (188).

The case of Daniel Paul Schreber interestingly resembles the symptoms of Tauks's Influencing Machine about conspiracy and paranoia. While institutionalized in an asylum, Schreber wrote the book *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (1884-1885), in which he describes the peculiar manifestations of his mental illness. At first, he experienced an odd thought that it would be very nice to be a woman submitting to the act of copulation (36). In different passages within his book, he declares that he underwent metaphysical revelations and delusional images:

> I saw God's omnipotence in its complete purity. During the night . . . the lower god appeared. The radiant picture of his rays became visible to my inner eye . . . that is to say he was reflected on my inner nervous system. Simultaneously I heard his voice; but it was not a soft whisper (124).

> I receive light and sound sensations which are projected on to my inner nervous system by the rays (115-117).

As his psychosis progressed, he accused his doctor Paul Flechsig of invading his mind using "nerve language" that caused a deleterious effect on him, which he described as "signified communication with supernatural powers" (7-8). Schreber's disorder bears remarkable resemblance to Tausk's *Influencing Machine* and provides reflection on the impact of the machine on the human body and psyche. Mark Roberts uses Schreber's case study to indicate the almost overwhelming effect of the mechanical presence and theories on the individual:

> "plugged into" madness, rendered into a machine, strapped into restraint, probed by deviced, subjected to the psycho- and electromechanical theories of the time, Schreber was naturally intensely aware of the fact that he had become a machine and horrified that he was one (37).

As can be seen, Victor Tausk's work influenced many later theorists of psychoanalysis and literature. The notion of a sinister machine taking over the human brain and causing them odd and pathological side-effects suggest an impact of the machinic outspread on the individual that appears as a mysterious substance that significantly affects them. However, it is important to realize that

Tausk developed his theories on schizophrenic patients in his capacity as a psychoanalyst, which means that his views on Schreber's case are based on medical observations and remarks. At the same time, Roberts presents Schreber's mental machine as the direct result of a historical period significantly abounded with mechanical innovations and theories. In either case, these divergent lines ultimately meet at the point where the concept of the machine becomes extremely influential towards the individual to the extent that they simulate mental and physical experiences.

On these grounds, it would be useful to examine the concept of the bachelor machine as another illustration in humanists and social fields, that offered a different prism of the interaction between human-machine.

1.3.1 THE BACHELOR MACHINE

In addition to Tausk theories, the psychoanalytic concept of the machine can be further elaborated from a different pathway. Machine as a metaphor has been widely celebrated by artists especially in the movements of Futurism, Surrealism and Dada. Their endorsement has flowered an important number of conceptualizations and interpretations that attracted further research and elaboration in other fields as well. An obvious example of this is the concept of the machine célibataire or the bachelor machine. More specifically, Duchamp came up with the term "bachelor machine" or "celibate machine" in a note written in 1913 during the preparation for his artwork *Le Grand Verre* (1915–1923). Duchamp's assemblage consisted mainly of two parts: the realm of the bride above, and the realm of the bachelors below, orchestrating a hodgepodge of mechanical implements with the full title *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*.

The allocation of the bride (upper part) and of the bachelors, which contains, among other things, the chocolate grinder, the cemetery for uniforms and liveries—Priest, Delivery Man,

Gendarme, Cuirassier, Policeman, Pallbearer, Footman, Stationmaster and Page Boy—and the Témoins Oculistes (lower part), are deliberately determined so that the Bachelors would not be able to have a direct contact with the Bride. The Bride, a mixture of mechanical and biological functions that Duchamp had separately attributed to an oil painting in 1912, is undressing, attracting and pushing away at the same time the suitors, whose orgasmic deprivation is diagrammatically indicated at the bottom of the composition. According to Marcel Duchamp, this impossibility renders his artwork "a tormented gearing [that] gives birth to the desire-part of the machine" (39). This enigmatic love drama spurred a surge of theoretical and psychological theories concerned with issues such as desire, eroticism, life, and death. Michel Carrouges found in Duchamp's machine similar structures with other literary and artistic machines, such as the apparatus in Franz Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie* or the mechanisms of Raymond Roussel in *Impressions d'Afrique* (1910) and *Locus Solus* (1914), and the female cyborg in Alfred Jarry's *Le Surmâle* (1902). In fact, these contraptions share a common framework which portrays modern unrequited and mechanical sexuality (Burnham 28). Generally, the fact that Carrouges's bachelor machine "appears first of all as impossible, useless, incomprehensible, [and] delirious," underlines the literal and metaphorical impotency of the Duchampean mechanistic realms, which in mechanical or physical terms, appear as "playful physics," in Duchamp's words or a 'pataphysical' machine, since it has no reason for existing (Carrouges 21) (Duchamp 49).

The impact of the bachelor machine expanded in other fields as well. Interested in the scheme of individual desire within the social environment, Deleuze and Guattari inserted the concept of the bachelor machine into their 'schizo-capitalism' theories. Machines in Deleuze and Guattari's theories constitute "systems of cutting," namely, systems that cut, interrupt, and redirect flows. In *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), they locate the bachelor machine, together with the paranoiac and the miraculating, in the domain where desiring-machines and the Body without Organs constitute

connections, which are linked to the axiomatic organization within capitalist society. The paranoiac, miraculating, and bachelor machines are, more or less, products of the collision between the organizational, dense and harmonious desiring-machines and the non-signified, unlimited and non-coded Body without Organs. Desiring-machines are machines which, although they indicate a break in relation to the other machines they are connected to, reintroduce or attempt to organize their deviant cuts and breaks, which desire couples them and render machinic (*Anti-Oedipus* 5). The Body without Organs, on the other hand, forms a "plane of consistency," that "concretely ties together heterogeneous, disparate elements" (*Anti-Oedipus* 558). Deleuze and Guattari claim that the bachelor machine constitutes a combination of the desiring-machine and the body without organs as "a genuine consummation," that produces "intensive quantities" with automatic and auto-erotic propositions that signify a new birth "as though the eroticism of the machine liberated other unlimited forces" (*Anti-Oedipus* 18). Precisely these intensive quantities are for Deleuze and Guattari the main components of desire, as a process of production without reference to any exterior agency (*Anti-Oedipus* 21). In other words, the bachelor machine has the capacity to produce desire-breaks within the social body, which the 'body without organs' registers within the social flow of the production of desire.

In 1975, curator Harald Szeemann revisited and expanded Carrouges's theory with an exhibition he organized in Kunsthalle Bern with the tile *The Bachelor Machines*. In addition to the reproduction of Duchamp's *Le Grand Verre* as the pivotal idea, Szeemann exhibited manufactured full-scale models of other bachelor machines as well, including the torture and execution apparatus Franz Kafka described in *In der Strafkolonie*. In a later interview, Szeemann gave his own interpretation on the bachelor machine saying that: "It had to do with a belief in eternal energy flow as a way to avoid death, as an erotics of life: the bachelor as rebel-model, as anti procreation" (Obrist 117). With this in mind, it is underlined the significance of the modern myth of

the bachelor machine as a kind of new technological articulation of the mythological tale of Narcissus where machinism, terror and auto-eroticism are materialized into an operating system where everything is translated in terms of intensities and flow.

Considering the influential position of the machine, the fields under examination manifest a different aspect of the machinic concept, which, as shown above, has acquired a social character. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the machinic perforation into the social, political, intellectual and human areas, the concept of the machine has come to be defined in terms of Gerald Raunig's enhanced conception as a social movement, that transcends its historical and critical background. A closer look at the data indicates a configuration of the traditional meaning of the machine. The convergence of the machine with social and institutional knowledge incited it to shed off its pure mechanical substance and to be transformed into an ensemble of heterogeneous discourses with sociopolitical propositions, that extend from sociopolitical analyses like Deleuze and Guattari's theories to more individually focused, for instance Viktor Tausk's research in particular. In a word, the machine is not at all limited to its technical aspects, but is instead a mechanical-intellectual, even social assemblage (Raunig 24). With this in mind, we could argue that the concept of the machine has been transitioned to a machinic dispositif, as a hybrid narrative whose echoes have a pithy impact on the social structure. The increasing integration of the machine especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries resulted in the modulation not only of the social status quo but of the concept of the machine itself.

CHAPTER II

THE MACHINIC DISPOSITIF IN FORSTER'S AND KAFKA'S STORIES

"[The] Intellectual, almost spiritual appeal of machinery [which] becomes evident to everyone who experiences machines directly: It is this curious sense of fascination more than the wish to build something useful or the hope for material rewards that makes men devote their lives to machinery. Constructing, operating, even watching machines provides satisfactions and delights that can be intense enough to become ends in themselves. Such delights are purely aesthetic . . . the fascinations and delights of machinery are a historical force, insufficiently appreciated perhaps because of a cultural bias, but nevertheless real, a force that has affected not only our technology but also philosophy, science, literature, or in short, our culture at large"

Otto Mayr, *Philosophers and Machines* (4)

As was previously stated, from the Renaissance onwards the distance between human and machine might have collapsed altogether. As a machinic dispositif, the concept of the machine appears to have transgressed its determined boundaries as a technical object and to have been transmuted into a dialectic entity that calls into question determined relations and communication with its environment. Its social character—along with its immense possibilities as a conceptually, mentally, technically, and bodily manipulative object—subverts the polarity between human and machine, organism and mechanism, individual and community and sets the basis for new approaches to the perception of the intellectual machine and its operations. In this context, let us now study Forster's *The Machine Stops* and *Kafka's In der Strafokolonie* in light of the above theories.

Forster's story takes place in a dystopian world in which human beings have lost their ability to live on the Earth. For this reason, they have been relocated below ground, in an advanced artificial intelligent system, where they live in total isolation, having all their physical and mental needs met by the almighty Machine. They harmonically coexist with it, leading an automated and simulated life. Previous civilizations have apparently become extinct and their cultural and religious absorptions are reduced to the Machine and its Book. Out of the daily lives of the two main characters of the story, Vashti and her son Kuno, one is in the position to observe that this global Machine literally regulates all aspects of their daily lives such as communication, education, transportation, and human relations. Within this society run by the Machine, human contact has been strictly reduced to a kind of instant messaging/video conferencing machine, sex is treated as a mere biological necessity, and pain and discomfort have been decidedly vanished. What is striking, however, is the fact that the only activity that people appear to be solely engaged in are intellectual activities, and more specifically, in the dissemination of 'ideas,' which constitute the main intellectual purpose within the Machine's society.

Respectively, with the sentence "Es ist ein eigentümlicher Apparat," Kafka opens his enigmatic novel *In der Strafkolonie* (1914), which remains until today a Rubik's cube due to its perplexing and puzzling character (*In der Strafkolonie* 2008). There are only four characters, who are named after their role in the story: the Explorer, the Officer, the Condemned, and the Soldier. The Explorer, who arrives at this colony from far away, is introduced to the apparatus by the Officer who prompts him to watch the execution of the Condemned while it will be carried out by this very apparatus. This elaborate torture device consists of three parts and functions as a means of punishment for the accused by inscribing on their body the law they have broken, leading to a slow and painful death. When the apparatus is in operation, the condemned is not summarily executed, but is subject to approximately twelve hours of distressing torture while the sharp needles of the

apparatus burrow deeper and deeper into the prisoner's flesh, inscribing their crime. As it turns out, behind the Officer's seemingly innocent invitation to the Explorer to witness a presentation of the punishing apparatus, underlies the Officer's latent incentive to implore the Explorer to mediate in favor of the apparatus to the new Commandant. It appears that the machine has fallen into disfavor with the New Commandant, which would eventually result in the abolishment of the apparatus. In sight of the brutal machine, the Explorer refuses the Officer's request, something that prompts the latter to set up the machine for himself. Nevertheless, the machine is being dismantled in a spectacular way, killing in a horrible way the Officer and dragging along with its downfall to oblivion the state on whose ideology it was built.

Both E. M. Forster and Franz Kafka in their stories *The Machine Stops* and *In der Strafkolonie* embody mechanical devices that appear to emit a mysterious and uncanny radiation that exceeds their material substances. Against this backdrop, it would be worthwhile to explore the way the machine within Forster's and Kafka's plots is demonstrating elements of the machinic dispositif through its connection with the characters of the stories and the way they interact within a milieu where machine is in the lead, in order to shed light on the cause of their imminent dematerialization. In the chapter that follows, I will analyze the theoretical dimensions of the chapter I on my case studies.

2.1 THE MACHINIC DISPOSITIF IN E. M. FORSTER'S *THE MACHINE STOPS*

In his book *Ins Universum der technischen Bilder* (2000) German philosopher Villem Flusser begins by giving his definition on the idea of utopia. More specifically, he states that: "Utopia means groundlessness, the absence of a point of reference. We face the immediate future directly, unequivocally, except inasmuch as we cling to those structures generated by utopia itself" (3).

Utopia, as a non-place, projects imaginary models of 'ideal' and 'perfect' societies as crystallized by the seminal works of scholars such as Thomas More, Tommaso Campanella, Étienne Cabet, Edward Bellamy and H. G. Wells. Above all, utopias resemble a static topos in the sense that the absence of temporality and spatiality creates an abstract distance that gives the impression of a non-existent reality blatantly separated from the present state. However, as Silvana Capolaretti indicated, utopias can never be pure fantasy, since they are unavoidably *fictio* and *mimesis*, two traits which render utopia not an imaginative structure, but a genre firmly grounded on concrete realities (32). To that end, utopias as an a-topos come in direct conflict with present models, organizations, and situations, providing, on the one hand, a different substitutional system, divergent from its current state, while offering, on the other hand, critical nuances of a potentially improved society and humans.

In this context, E. M. Forster's fictional story *The Machine Stops* unlocks an imaginary reality guided by social and technological implications. Influenced by the alarming Marxist predictions, Forster wrote his fictional story at the dawn of the twentieth century, where the accelerating industrialism together with the timid spread of the computerization began to form a premature machinic milieu. In his short story, he illustrates a techtopian world in which an entire human civilization lives in cells and is controlled by an omnipresent and ubiquitous machine directing human communication and education. The Machine has entirely substituted the uninhabitable Earth by providing an underground beehive-like structure where human beings are living in total isolation and are mainly engaged in intellectual activities. There is no direct experience or contact that is not carried out by the machine itself. The Machine has replaced notions of religious beliefs, being worshipped as the One and ultimate provider of not only bread-winning goods but also spiritual ones. Human beings are completely dependent, almost blindfold, on the Machine which, in turn, has passed from the role of being man's creation to being the

creator, to the degree that it controls the weather conditions: “Night and day, wind and storm, tide and earthquake, impeded man no longer. He had harnessed Leviathan” (Forster 57). This condition can be perfectly by Isaac Asimov, who had once declared that: “Man has always been at the mercy of forces beyond his control—consider economic and sociological forces, whims of climate, and the disasters of war. Machine control is just a different kind of control, and a superior kind since man himself designs it” (251).

Considering Forster’s Machine as a governor of an entire civilization, it is becoming clear that Forster imagined amidst the frantic mechanical outspread of his time a machine-dominated world where human beings are portrayed under the control of an advanced man-made force that physically and spiritually binds the human beings to the Machine’s functions and ‘humming’:

> “The Machine,” they exclaimed, “feeds us and clothes us and houses us; through it we speak to one another, through it we see one another, in it we have our being. The Machine is the friend of ideas and the enemy of superstition: the Machine is omnipotent, eternal; blessed is the Machine” (71)

Despite being written almost fifty years before cybernetic theories made their debut, Forster depicts a technological utopia tightly tied on a mechanical structure. This is eloquently illustrated if one parallels the mechanical society of the Machine with the very later theories of information or network society. Generally, the network society is defined by the explosion of portable machines that provide ubiquitous wireless communication and computing capacity. In Forster’s case, although there is no explicit reference to the ‘informaticity’ of the Machine, the full automation of the all the aspects of peoples’ everyday lives is indicated by the following passage:

> There were buttons and switches everywhere —buttons to call for food for music, for clothing. There was the hot-bath button, by pressure of which a basin of (imitation) marble rose out of the floor, filled to the brim with a warm deodorised liquid. There was the cold-bath button. There was the button that produced literature. And there were of course the buttons by which she communicated with her friends (54).

As a representation of an early network society, *The Machine Stops* depicts a fantasy in which the setting unfolds on a self-governing mechanical ambience. The lack of human intervention within the vital processes and spin-offs of an entire system touches upon themes such as Turing's artificial intelligence and poses questions about the Machine as a machinic dispositif and the discourses that emerge regarding its operation outside the visible buttons and switches. First and foremost, it becomes apparent that in Forster's story, human needs and desires are mediated by mechanical processors in order to maintain the stability and life of the human civilization. Along similar lines, authors like John Barth and Kurt Vonnegut have responded towards a mechanically governed world; Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy* (1966) explores a world-university controlled by WESCAC, an omnipotent and omniscient computer and Vonnegut's novel *The Sirens of Titan* (1959) is based on the supposition that humans are cybernetic messages controlled as part of a larger inter-galactic code. Forster's eerie Machine appears to constitute a decentralized organism that extends throughout the whole civilization. Marcia Bundy Seabury put forward the claim that Forster's future world portrays an early symptom of a networked mode of life, long before significant technological developments take place, like home computers or the Internet (66).

Within the story, one encounters cybernetic characteristics. An obvious example of this is the fact that the only interpersonal activity that the inhabitants of the Machine-world allowed

themselves to, were the production and dissemination of ideas: “I dislike seeing the horrible brown earth, and the sea, and the stars when it is dark. I get no ideas in an air-ship” (Forster 52). Every day they conduct virtual conferences and meetings whose only purpose is the quest for new ideas; as a matter of fact, Vashti herself delivers lectures on the history of music, exchanging and producing “original” ideas as part of their daily routine within the Machine. What one extracts from the story is that ideas and their insatiable production constitutes, in essence, the solely communal engrossment which brings together, virtually at least, the isolated human beings of the Machine-world. Comparing this model with network societies, it could be argued that the concept of the ideas in *The Machine Stops* has a similar functional pattern with the concept of information within cybernetic theories. Just like information constitute the homogenizing translatable data which flow within a mechanically controlled system, likewise ideas in Forster represent a conventional code of communication promoted by the mechanical extensions of the Machine. Vashti connects through the Machine’s network to process ideas/information in order to respectively acquire and produce inputs and outputs, in the form of short lectures so as to saturate her intellectual needs. In both cases, the pursuit of the highest efficiency articulates the ultimate goal of the machinic systems. According to Wiener: “To live effectively is to live with adequate information” (17). In case of *The Machine Stops*, this statement could be rephrased as: “To live effectively is to live with adequate *ideas.*” Ideas, therefore, for Forster’s story constitutes the vital component of the Machine’s system in the same way information is of critical role for cybernetic systems.

Considering Deleuze and Guattari’s theories, the automated environment of the Machine-god can be compared to an assemblage in which people and mechanical extensions become assimilated into a homogenizing process where polarities such as ‘subject’ and ‘object’ or ‘animate’ and ‘inanimate’ operate in a state of flux. Another subtle differentiation relies on the transparent character of the cybernetic systems. Forster envisioned an anti-utopian world where the Machine

has invented more subtle and finer channels for its circulation. The fact that the Machine has no centralized managing function, but, on the contrary, its structure appears omnipresent and pervasive, resembles the transparency through which network systems channel their information. In the first part of the story, one reads that: “the room, though it contained nothing, was in touch with all that she cared for in the world” (Forster 54). In the same way, the Machine managed to apply a state of invisibility Vashti’s room was empty but interconnected at the same time with the world through the Machine.

At this point it would be important to investigate the spatial construction of the Machine. Due to the perils caused by the toxic atmosphere of the Earth, the artificial environment of the Machine is narrow and delimited. Its spatial structure is determined, defined and strict. There is no other experience or contact outside its borders since such an endeavor would lead to Homelessness, which is death sentence by exposure and abandonment on the Earth’s surface. Furthermore, it appears that the Machine has created a distorted perception of space which Kuno realized only when finding himself outside the designated borders set up by the Machine: “We say “space is annihilated,” but we have annihilated not space, but the sense thereof” (Forster 62). Although humans can freely move around the world, traveling is viewed as an appalling activity for the reason that it presented no interest to the introvert and sequestered individuals, since they were insufficient stimuli for the production of new ideas:

> “What was the good of going to Peking when it was just like Shrewsbury? Why return to Shrewsbury when it would all be like Peking?” (Forster 57)
>
> —
>
> “No ideas here,” murmured Vashti, and hid the Caucasus behind a metal blind”

> "In the evening she looked again. They were crossing a golden sea, in which lay many small islands and one peninsula. She repeated, "No ideas here," and hid Greece behind a metal blind" (Forster 61).

As an assemblage, the Machine collects within its limits heterogeneous physical and mechanical identities that produce a defined interconnected and controlled system whose elements become intertwined within a constant flow of production and effects. It is precisely what Lazzaratto was describing when he presented his theories on the dispositifs of social subjection and machinic enslavement. Forster's creatures form an individuality based on their general biological and occupational characteristics, which, in turn are used by the Machine as a way to exert the machinic enslavement, by choosing, for example, who is going to be a parent or who is going to visit the surface of the Earth; thus, the Machine personifies the technological system that enslaves its elements in order to ensure its equilibrium and sustainability.

However, due to them being nurtured and overexposed to the mechanically saturating effect of the Machine, Forster's creatures undergo a transformation that challenges their bodies and competences. Turning to Hayles's work, at one point, she points out that: "there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals" (2-3). This indicates that within the Machine's assemblage human and machinic identities are subject to a fusing process, in which human beings can be articulated with machines. Human beings in Forster's story acutely resemble Donna Haraway's cyborgs, as hybrid cybernetic organisms as model creatures of social reality and fiction (149). Within the story, the Machine appears to permeate the bodies and become diffused with them: "Its hum penetrates our blood, and may even guide our thoughts" (Forster 64). Consequently, it seems fair to suggest that this had an impact on the appearance of the individuals,

as demonstrated at the beginning of the story where Vashti is presented as: “a swaddled lump of flesh-a woman, about five feet high, with a face as white as a fungus” (Forster 51). At another passage we see that: “By these days it was a demerit to be muscular” (Forster 62). In Forster’s story, the body becomes atrophied for it has been neglected over the intellectual indulgence of the perpetual generation of new ideas. Every physical act has been reduced to a mechanical necessity. For example, sexual act is a ‘necessary evil,’ where one has to meet certain requirements in order to become a parent: “For Kuno had lately asked to be a father, and his request had been refused by the Committee. His was not a type that the Machine desired to hand on” (Forster 63). Later on, we observe that the Machine reminded of the ancient Spartan custom of the Keadas gulch, where according to the myth, Spartans used to throw the sick or feeble children: “Each infant was examined at birth, and all who promised undue strength were destroyed” (Forster 62). On the basis of these evidence, Machine’s practices appear to accentuate the realisation that Forster’s characters embody mechanical traits, which induce them to a mutative process where their bodies function as prosthetic or extensions of the Machine itself. As post-humans, the inhabitants of the Machine respond to an entirely machinic environment by obtaining mechanical features and being units of a systemic concatenation that operate within a closed, controlled and machinic system.

As Beauchamp correctly observed, “Forster early on grasped the truth that the Machine creates its own politics, its own sociology, its own rationality, its own epistemology, its own axiology and, indeed, its own theology” (92). Under those circumstances, *The Machine Stops* portrays a utopia—or an anti-utopia, to be more precise—in which machines are disturbingly lively, and human beings frighteningly inert. Forster expresses an alarmingly prophetic prediction of the future role of the machine within our lives, describing almost a century ago a condition which Erik Brynjolfsson described as a twenty-first era with the name “second machine age,” in which computers and other digital advances are substituting mental power—the ability to use our brains to

understand and shape our environment—just like muscle power was replaced by the steam engines and its descendants (7-8). In fact, machines transform not only things, but people—their capabilities, desires, inner lives, emotions, and family relationships. Through the Machine's networking limbs, individuals are able to communicate, to educate, to transport, and to entertain themselves. As an automated receptacle, the Machine could be said to constitute a cybernetic network of communication and control through its mechanical limbs which interfere and mediate on the human relations and maintenance. Forster's future world resembles an organized network community, which is "manoeuvred" by mechanical operations so as to maintain its stability, and hence its life.

2.2 THE MACHINIC DISPOSITIF IN KAFKA'S *IN DER STRAFKOLONIE*

Walter Benjamin had once profoundly observed that Kafka writes from the perspective of a "modern citizen who realizes that his fate is being determined by an impenetrable bureaucratic apparatus whose operation is controlled by procedures which remain shadowy even to those carrying out its orders and a fortiori to those being manipulated by it" (248). Under an unfathomable and irrational justice system, typical characteristics of Kafka's fiction like in *Der Prozeß* (1925) and in *Das Schloß* (1926), those condemned to death row are neither aware of their charges nor are they presumed to be anything but guilty. Likewise, Franz Kafka begins his short story *In der Strafkolonie* with one of the protagonists, the Officer, dearly introducing to the Explorer this "remarkable piece of apparatus," a mechanical torture device used to discipline and execute (*In the Penal Colony* 75). This seemingly innocent statement makes more sense when the reader confronts the so-called mysterious apparatus: a massive, mechanical structure designed to inscribe with vibrating needles on the convicted's body the penalty for which they were found

guilty. Indeed remarkable, Kafka's apparatus intrigues with its gruesome and brutal character and has given birth to countless theories and interpretations connected to the apparatus itself and the mystical powers that it seems to possess. Theodor Adorno has written on the enigma that is Kafka's writing: "Every sentence says 'interpret me' and none will permit it" (246). Much attention has been devoted, also, to the Kafka's apparatus itself. J. D. Thomas emphasizes the symbolic significance of the triune structure of the apparatus and he relates it to the Judeo-Christian trinity and other religious that are related around the number three (15). The same logic underlies William J. Dodd's theory but this time from a Freudian perspective; Dodd holds the view that Kafka's three-part structure refers to Freud's division of the psyche into id, ego, and superego (129); Richard T. Gray analyzes the apparatus from a semiotic point view and claims that it consists a "semiotic instrument of mediation insofar as its structure replicates the threefold character of the modern sign" (225).

These arguments suggest that within his novel *In der Strafkolonie*, the main character is the machine itself. The entire story revolves around this occult apparatus which, "more and more in the course of a very detailed explanation given by the Officer to the Traveler, comes to appear an end-in-itself" (Löwy 16). The apparatus appears as the material incarnation of the principles and laws that govern the Penal Colony, or, in other words, the Logos of the Penal Colony becomes flesh in the form of the mechanical apparatus. Occupying an entire valley all by itself, it is a bizarre figure that, as we are informed by the Officer, carries out elaborate instructions with extreme precision. Its fatal performance resembles the hand of some implacable power whose primitive nature is mirrored on the rigid landscape that encircles the Penal Colony and comes in great contrast with the new Commandant and its new civilized methods. Demonstrating this, the apparatus towers in such height that the Officer has to use a ladder to reach its upper department. Although Kafka's mysterious machine constitutes a fictional product with theoretical and philosophical value, its

description warrants attention, not only for its peculiar construction but also for the influence that it appears to wield on the characters on the story, and more notably on the Officer.

In this respect, the apparatus's role within the story has embroiled much debate regarding the powers it seems to possess over the characters. Globus G. Gordon and Richard C. Pillard made an intriguing parallelism between Tausk's theory on the *Influencing Machine* and Franz Kafka's apparatus in *In der Strafkolonie*, in which they put forward the claim that Kafka's torture apparatus and its effects present in many respects similarities to the mechanical scheme from which schizophrenic individuals suffer. Traits such as the obscure nature of the *Influencing Machine* and the manipulation of the patients' thoughts provide fertile ground for its similitude to Kafka's apparatus and render it a machinic dispositif due to its immaterial and mental resonances it bears on the individual. In addition to the nature of the machine, they refer to its effects as well; according to Gordon and Pillard, through its bodily inscription on the guilty's body, the apparatus controls thoughts and feelings, whereas like Tausk's patients reported erotic and sexual arousal under the Influencing Machine, the apparatus appears to evoke strange experiences and feelings, such as the "Enlightenment" or the "transfiguration" in the sufferers' faces (199). On top of that, the fact that the apparatus of the story is handled and operated by male characters (the Officer and the Soldier) who persecute the victim in the name of the justice, stresses the notion of the apparatus as a typical Influencing Machine (Ibid). As a mental machine, Kafka's apparatus is materialized as the projection of one's body and its performances as bodily correspondences of their body, but, in essence it seeks to overpower and subdue it. These arguments suggest a disembodied dimension of Kafka's apparatus, that rises above its mechanical identity and purpose and becomes registered as a determined social existence. Along similar lines, Kafka's apparatus as a machinic dispositif concedes further analysis regarding its position within the story. From a sociopolitical angle, Deleuze and Guattari appropriated Carrouges's theory on the bachelor machines, in which Kafka's

apparatus is included, so as to analyze the relationship of desire to reality and to capitalist society in particular as schizophrenic tendencies. In this respect, the way Kafka's machine could be argued to impose mental and social oscillations within its closed circuit, which are tightly connected to its mechanical structure and performances.

To begin with, the central concept is the basic structure of Kafka's apparatus. Its structure comprises of three parts: the Bed, the Inscriber, and the Harrow. The Bed is where the prisoner lies upon; the Inscriber is the mechanism which determines the movement of the third part, the Harrow, that contains the multiple needles which draw the sentence on the prisoner's body. These sections constitute the tripartite notorious apparatus that occupies the central position within Kafka's story and the essential constituent of the Penal Colony.

French author Michel Carrouges included Kafka's machine in his analyses on the concept of the bachelor machine as introduced by Marcel Duchamp and his work *Le Grand Verre* or *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*. As mentioned in the first chapter, Duchamp's famous art piece stages an instrumentation system in which the Bride on the upper part spreads her charms on the lower part of the structure where her prospective lovers are depicted only as empty uniforms. Carrouges saw in Duchamp's construction similar structural and conceptual motifs with Kafka's punitive apparatus; initially, the same overall structure with two superimposed elements.

The upper part of Duchamp's *Le Grand Verre*, namely the Bride, lies on a horizontal scale with a part of hers hanging vertically, while, at the bottom the *Neuf Moules Mâlic* are arrayed together with their various mechanics. Similarly, at the top of Kafka's apparatus there is the Inscriber in a horizontal arrangement which holds in the Harrow whose needles are in vertical position. Its low part, the Bed, constitutes the soldier's mechanical bed; secondly, both machines have the same operating principle. In *Le Grand Verre*, the large vertical tip of the hanged female models moves in jerk, just as the Harrow does not cease to swing and to vibrantly inscribe the

sentence on the condemned's body; thirdly, the same kind of hieroglyphic inscription at the top of the Bride that resembles the sheet fitted into the inscriber of Kafka'a apparatus; fourthly, in the lower part of *Le Grand Verre* the chocolate grinder that grinds an imaginary milky substance—could be semen—reminds of the tattooing of the condemned man that causes vomit and blood; and lastly, both cases result in a final effect. In *Le Grand Verre*, Duchamp mentions a "dazzled splash," while in *In der Strafkolonie* one encounters sensational feelings, such as ecstasy after vomiting (Duchamp 65) (Carrouges 25-26).

Nonetheless, their stuctures are the visible side. Each bachelor machine is organized under a system of projections composed of two equivalent units. First, there is the mechanical unit, which refers to the mechanical elements that correspond respectively to the two female and male characters of the second unit, namely the sexual. In Duchamp's *Le Grand Verre*, the Bride and the Bachelors are presented as mechanical structures that respectively distinguish themselves from each other as female and male. The bottom part contains nine bachelors who can be considered as fractions of the masculine element. Within Kafka's story, the apparatus could be said to present mechanical and sexual elements as well. As indicated above, the upper part of the machine, namely the Inscriber and the Harrow, resembles the female Bride due to its horizontal plane and the vertical position of the needles. Then again, the position alone does not provide confirmatory evidence regarding the femininity of the apparatus. The key to take into consideration is the sexual and erotic undertones that are emitted by the Harrow and its deathly performance on the prisoner's body. More specifically, like Duchamp's Bride arouses and casts her siren song on the suitors below, Kafka's apparatus exudes an erotically charged atmosphere that has an impact on the protagonists of the story. In particular, the only character that has an immediate contact with the apparatus is the Officer himself. The Officer appears to have a special bond with the apparatus from the fact that, although mechanically, this apparatus dispenses torture in a gruesome manner, he appears quite

affected by the penal apparatus and its process. He is depicted marveled, almost ecstatic, at the sight of the transfiguration that the Harrow causes on the sufferers' faces:

> "oft hockte ich dort, zwei kleine Kinder rechts und links in meinen Armen. Wie nahmen wir alle den Ausdruck der Verklärung von dem gemarterten Gesicht, wie hielten wir unsere Wangen in den Schein dieser endlich erreichten und schon vergehenden Gerechtigkeit! Was für Zeiten, mein Kamerad! Der Offizier hatte offenbar vergessen, wer vor ihm stand; er hatte den Reisenden umarmt und den Kopf auf seine Schulter gelegt" (*In der Strafkolonie* 2008).

> ('I often crouched on that spot there, a little child in each arm to right and left. How we all took in the look of transfiguration from the suffering face, how we bathed our cheeks in the reflection of a justice finally attained and already passing! What times they were, my comrade!' The Officer had obviously forgotten who was standing in front of him; he had embraced the Traveler and laid his head upon his shoulder) (Joyce Crick *In the Penal Colony* 87).

Between the female Harrow and the male Officer, one finds two sharply defined elements whose functional mechanisms constitute the original and determinant structure for the identification of bachelor machines. In light of this, it seems fair to suggest that the Harrow as the virgin female unit provokes sexual tension and mechanical death to the allured Officer, who, consequently, represents the masculine unit, as the Harrow's alter-ego. Duchamp's *Mâlic* are portrayed as the male unit that is seduced by the Bride, thus completing the sexual intermeshing of *Le Grand Verre*, in the same way the Officer in *In der Strafkolonie* personifies the male element that, together with

the womanly nature of the Harrow, comprise the sexual unit of the apparatus. The female Harrow "communicates ecstasy and death," as Carrouges indicated, upon her male lover, namely the Officer, who in this machine of eroticism and terror finds a self-sufficient object of desire. As a bachelor machine, Kafka's apparatus encompasses both male and female elements that establish a sexual interrelationship suggesting unknown pleasures and otherworldly experiences.

Nonetheless, Duchamp's Bride ensnares her lovers into an erotic delirium that, ironically, is condemned to remain unrealized and celibate. Its construction is such so as not to allow any contact point whatsoever between the Bride and her Bachelors, giving the impression of an unfulfilled erotic drama that will never be fulfilled. Correspondingly, Kafka's apparatus proposes a similar unrequited pattern. Although the Officer is presented as "the sole champion," who passionately fights for the maintenance of his object of desire, his only physical contact with the apparatus was limited to repairing or polishing it (*In the Penal Colony* 86). He himself has never experienced on his flesh this marvelous process of justice that causes this magnificent transfiguration on the prisoners' faces; yet he sadistically rejoices its deadly process:

> "Erst um die sechste Stunde verliert er das Vergnügen am Essen. Ich knie dann gewöhnlich hier nieder und beobachte diese Erscheinung. Der Mann schluckt den letzten Bissen selten, er dreht ihn nur im Mund und speit ihn in die Grube. Ich muss mich dann bücken, sonst fährt es mir ins Gesicht. Wie still wird dann aber der Mann um die sechste Stunde! Verstand geht dem Blödesten auf. Um die Augen beginnt es. Von hier aus verbreitet es sich. Ein Anblick, der einen verführen könnte, sich mit unter die Egge zu legen" (Kafka 2008).

> ("Only at the sixth hour will he lose his pleasure in eating. Then I usually kneel here and observe this phenomenon. The man rarely swallows his last mouthful; he just turns it round

in his mouth and spits it into the ditch. Then I have to duck, for otherwise it will land in my face. But how still the man becomes at the sixth hour! Understanding dawns upon even the most stupid. It begins with the eyes. From there it spreads further. A sight that might tempt you to join him lying beneath the Harrow") (Joyce Crick *In the Penal Colony* 84).

The Officer's erotic attachment to the apparatus is quite evident. He appears quite fond of the apparatus, owing to the fact that he helped during its construction and now he has remained the remaining "sole champion," that prides over its efficiency and intricacies with passion. Before a horrific sight such as the grisly task of a brutal execution, the Officer not only approves of it but he colors the process with bright and euphoric words such as "understanding" and "dawn," as if in front of him a divine epiphany takes place. Just as important is his almost absurd impulse to posit himself in the position of the condemned. The mechanical movements of the apparatus that exercise its deadly operations seem to stimulate the Officer who is "tempted" by the impressive hodgepodge of mechanics, power, and potency. Behind his enthusiasm, however, lurks an inkling of jealousy for not being in that position to not having the female Harrow piercing his body. Undoubtedly, an erotic aura hovers in the atmosphere, as the Officer invests a kind of libido on the apparatus, which excites him and tormenting him at the same time, for the reason that, as a bachelor machine, the apparatus emanates sexuality and celibacy: "There is, in the act of love," Baudelaire muses, "a great resemblance to torture or to a surgical operation" (46). Significantly, the arousing sensations of the Officer toward the machine can be said to resemble the stirring affect of the Influencing Machine on Daniel Paul Schreber's case. Similarly to Schreber, the Officer is suggestively triggered by the apparatus and its performance, causing him odd commotion. However, in Kafka's story, Officer's sexual disposition is being directed by and directed toward an actual machine and not by a mental image of it. Between the male-Officer and the female-Harrow

lies an inherently unachievable coupling that is, nevertheless, powered by an inexhaustible source of desire, or in Deleuze and Guattari's words: "a celibate misery and glory experienced to the fullest, like a cry suspended between life and death, an intense feeling of transition states of pure, naked intensity stripped of all shape and form" (*Anti-Oedipus* 20).

In this context, it would be worthwhile to examine Deleuze and Guattari's theory on the bachelor machine and its concept of desire. As noted earlier, for Deleuze and Guattari, the bachelor machine, together with the paranoiac and miraculating machines, constitute the residuums of the interaction between the organized desiring-machines and the anarchic, disconcerted nature of the Body without Organs. As the most consummated mechanical conjugation, the bachelor machine is not determined by conjunctive/disjunctive relations, like the paranoiac and miraculating machines, but, more notably, it transcends them and synthesizes "the nuptial celebration of a new alliance," a new gateway of intensities, that frame the seamless flow of desire (*Anti-Oedipus* 19). Respectively in *In der Strafkolonie*, the apparatus comes into being as a bachelor machine through the principles of attraction and repulsion; neither can be considered a paranoiac machine since its deadly character breaks the connections with the other machines, nor is a miraculating machine either, for when its parts, the Inscriber, the Harrow, and its mechanical elements are in operation, it makes connections with the other machines, such as the Officer and the Condemned. Death and Eros reproduce this pattern in the form of a terror apparatus that kills whoever lies upon it, so as to generate newer and newer articulations of desire and erotism; according to Georges Bataille: "In essence, the domain of eroticism is the domain of violence, of violation" (*Death and Sensuality* 16). In this respect, the syzygy of these two antithetical mechanical forces constitutes the celibacy and the eroticism of Kafka's apparatus that delivers new geneses and states of desire.

Considering Deleuze and Guattari's statement that "there is only desire and the social, and nothing else," Kafka's apparatus can rightly be called a 'productive' bachelor machine for it

constitutes the cornucopia of desiring-production within the Penal Colony as a sociopolitical system with capitalist qualities (*Anti-Oedipus* 29). The concept of desire in the Penal Colony is part of the infrastructural base of society, in which the schizoanalytical Officer desires the subject that oppresses him; the death instinct of the apparatus only connects desire to the social sphere of the Colony. The Officer manifests mechanical libidinal investment toward a machine that "is not only technical but social, and through which desire desires its own repression" (*Anti-Oedipus* 346). The whole concept resembles a vicious circle if one takes into account how an oppressive and deadly form, such as the apparatus of the story, is produced by desire within the Penal Colony, which, in turn, is the consequence of such production. Imagine the way a turntable needle suddenly crushes on the vinyl record and the record starts to go into a loop, producing an intense sound that could indefinitely go on until something intercedes between them.

In the final analysis, as a bachelor machine, Kafka's apparatus is a fantastic image that has an affinity with sublime sentiment by transforming "love into a mechanics of death" (Carrouges 31). As a machinic dispositif, it embodies transcendental glimpses, more notably in the way that Kafka's characters, when the apparatus carries out the deaths sentence, often experience a kind of redemption, which is viewed as a "transfiguration" on their faces. In a word, Kafka's apparatus constitutes a kind of double articulation of an erotic and machinic difference that moves in perpetual motion, and existing, in Rosalind Krauss's view: "beyond the cycle of fecundation, birth, life and death, constituting a dream of both infinite celibacy and total autoeroticism" (64). Lifeless and deadly, the machine underscore the interrelation and interconnection of eroticism and death:

> "Im übrigen arbeitet die Maschine noch und wirkt für sich. Sie wirkt für sich, auch wenn sie allein in diesem Tale steht. Und die Leiche fällt zum Schluss noch immer in dem

unbegreiflich sanften Flug in die Grube, auch wenn nicht, wie damals, Hunderte wie Fliegen um die Grube sich versammeln." (*In der Strafkolonie* 2008)

("Besides, the machine still works, and functions of its own accord. It functions of its own accord even when it is alone in this valley. And the corpse still falls in the end, dropping with incomprehensible softness into the ditch, even though people no longer gather in their hundreds like flies, as once they did, around the ditch") (Joyce Crick *In the Penal Colony* 88).

On the whole, it seems fair to suggest that within Forster's and Kafka's stories, the devices occupy the attention not only for narrative purposes, but particularly for their intriguing face as machinic dispositifs. In *The Machine Stops*, Forster visualized an anti-utopian society completely reliant on a machinic assemblage that actually serves as an ecosystem for the uninhabited Earth. Within the story, one encounters the erosive effects of an apparatus whose mechanical concatenations have physically and mentally pervaded the human beings of the Machine, mutating them in a singular manner. Respectively *In der Strafkolonie*, Kafka's vicious apparatus is more than a simple executive machine; it extends beyond its 'mechanicity' and makes the people around it tan inverted image of the Condemned, since everyone appears to be victims of the apparatus, due to its twofold nature that binds together notions of death and eroticism.

With all things considered, there is evidence that Forster's and Kafka's machines showcase social devices which operate as machinic dispofitis for the reason that they suggest heterogeneous discourses and debates within the narrative plots, that transcend their materiality and traditional conceptualization as mere tools. Such a transcendental glimpse is explicit in *The Machine Stops* and *In der Strafkolonie*, where the reader encounters machines that operate as an ecosystem for

entire civilizations and physically transmute human beings, in case of Forster, or machines that erotically influence the individuals and become involved with sociopolitical expressions.

In this respect, the novels offer a different perspective, in which literature can be used as a prism to understand the machine as a dispositif, by engaging these theories in a narrative context and potentially revealing or adding further theoretical and philosophical value. Moreover, the theoretical framework on the machinic as indicated in the chapter I provided new insights and revealed the latent "sub-stories" which were hidden within the mechanical devices of the novels, which consequently facilitates the analysis of their destruction as well. On their turn, these cases signify a prolific soil onto which machines act as a mirror allowing us to delve deeper into the characters and providing a clear context about the interpretation of the imminent destruction of the machines which will be examined in depth in the next chapter. The analysis of the novels show how in these texts the theory is sort of 'performed' but also how the literary genre in general and the case studies in particular imagine the collapse of 'the machinic' and can showcase connections and relations in places where theory cannot.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPLOSION OF THE MACHINES

"What attracts us in the destroyed object (in the very moment of destruction) is its power to call into question—and to undermine—the solidity of the subject."

—Georges Bataille, *The Cruel Practice of Art* (3)

"*Alle Apparate abschalten!"*

—Friedrich Kittler's last words (qtd. in Roch 2011)

In examining the previous indications, there is ample evidence for the notion that the machines within Forster's and Kafka's stories have acquired a social character that can be mapped through their connections with the characters and the environment of the narrative landscape. They transcend their material substance and form as insistently determined objects and obtained a social and political status with ramifications that define (and defy) the grid layout of *The Machine Stops* and *In der Strafkolonie*. In addition to that, the end of the stories concur with the implosions of the Forster's Machine and Kafka's apparatus[1]. This poses questions about the causes which induced these machines to this act of self-destruction, particularly if one takes into account that there was no exterior or interventional agent that set this process into action.

[1] It should be noted that *In The Penal Colony*, there are actually two endings; the first, when the apparatus falls apart killing the Officer, and the second one, a short epilogue which is separated from the rest of the narrative and depicts the Traveler visiting a teahouse and the grave of the Old Commandant and dealing with the mocking attitude of the locals before he walks away. Therefore, I choose to focus on the former ending for it is contained within the main plot of the story.

Specifically, it could be argued that the concept of the destruction of the machine is inevitably related to a wider social and historical context. The wrecking of the machines suggest a rebelling act against technology. Known as Luddism, this movement is initially originated in the nineteenth century England by weavers who revolted against the newly manufactured machines of the Industrial Revolution that were designed to reduce the workforce and, consequently, the eclipse of their work as craftsmen. Luddism, emerged simultaneously with modern machine itself, increased as the Industrial Revolution gained strength, and has remained a persistent, if underrecognized, presence even as the world has become a highly technical place, as manifested by Romantic poets such as Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau (Fox xii). However, the motif of the machinic destruction within Forster's and Kafka's stories should not be explicitly considered product of a Luddite tradition; by definition, Luddism favors a thoughtful use of appropriate technologies which does not damage the relationships we hold dear (Ibid). Although this could be a case in point for Forster's story, for the reason that it entails a rejection against the mechanistic principles that devaluate the humankind, both case studies do not indicate an intentional, deliberate destruction of the machine as violent reactions.

Surprisingly, both artists and writers have been intrigued by the machine and its destruction in relation to the social. Swiss artist Jean Tinguely and contemporary Dutch artist Thijs Rijkers are cases in point, who embodied the destruction of the machinic in their artistic oeuvre, but from a different approach. Tinguely produced kinetic mechanic constructions which synthesize a cheerful and ironic mechanical body interwoven with aggression, the urge to destroy, and the fear of transience and death. At the beginning of 1960, Tinguely's self-destructing machines take centre stage in his artistic concerns. His art performance *Homage to New York* (1960), an enormous eight-by-sixteen-meter mechanical installation was spectacularly dismantled in front of the audience in the sculpture garden of the Museum of Modern Art. In addition to *Homage to New York*, Tinguely

produced similar installations during the next years of his career: *Etude pour Une fin du monde No. 1* (1961), *Study for an End of the World No. 2* (1962), and *La Vittoria* (1970). The apocalyptic destruction of these installations manifests a harsh political and social comment on an ever-changing society ravaged by wars, technologic innovations, speed, and boiling political negotiations. Along similar lines, Rijkers produced a series of industrial artworks called *Suicide Machines* (2013). Up to now, he has designed two mechanical pieces which will eventually destroy themselves; a self-powered saw that ultimately will cut into its gearbox, and the second one pours sand into its gearbox until it is worn out to the degree of ruination. Rijkers himself has stated that these self-destructing machines were made to testify if it would be possible to evoke empathy for a machine without human features.

Still, it is important to realize that there is a major difference between Tinguely's and Rijker's mechanical constructions. These artworks were specifically designed to purposefully face their own demise. In the literary field, however, the implosion of the machines is not to be understood as in the artistic one, namely as an intentional and deliberate action. In Forster's and Kafka's cases, the devices seem to have their own, yet ambiguous, roles that act as actors within the stories. Both narratives escalate and end with the apocalyptic destruction of their machines that, simultaneously, signals the end of the stories. The enigmatic breakdown of the machines in *The Machine Stops* and *In der Strafkolonie* implies a violent negation that wrenches the stories to a null-point, not only in narrative terms with the end of the stories, but also in terms of terminating the regimes of the civilizations. In Forster's anti-utopia, as the title indicates, we observe the incremental crumbling of the Machine and its eventual collapse resulting in the consequent annihilation of the overall mechanical civilization and its inhabitants. In Kafka's story, the collapse of the apparatus gives the *coup de grâce* to an imploding Penal Colony and to the Old Commandant's regime.

In this context, this chapter will analyze the stories so as to explore how Forster's and Kafka's machines are led to destruction.

3.1 THE COLLAPSE OF THE MACHINE IN *THE MACHINE STOPS*

Alexandra Aldridge has described Forster's story as "a neo-Luddite assault," for it harshly criticizes the negative effects on communities, the environment and the individuals themselves that were caused by the development of new technologies (9). Indeed, it would be quite convenient to associate the termination of Forster's Machine to a Luddite tradition for the reason that it entails a rejection against the mechanistic principles that devaluate the humankind and a profound yearning to escape the alienating machinations of society (Seegert 34). Additionally, it would justify the striking way with which the Machine shuts down bringing civilization down with it. Although this might be the case for Forster's story, especially if one takes into account similar works that occurred before *The Machine Stops*, such as Samuel Butler's *Erewhon: or, Over the Range* (1872), where again the reader encounters the same wistful Luddite-like motif of the devastating results of mechanization, it is my contention that the breakdown of the Machine should not be seen as a merely unilateral event of the narrative, but more remarkably, as an ontological entity that affects and is affected by etiologic relations.

In Forster's story, one of the main characters, Kuno, disobeys the law of the Machine and manages to visit the surface of the Earth without the necessary permission, discovering that there are other humans living outside the world of the Machine. Since then, however, the Machine begins to present increasingly irreparable defects that lead to the inevitable collapse of the Machine and its civilization. With this in mind, there seems to be a connection between Kuno and the consequent destruction of the Machine that could provide an effective explanation for its destruction.

Therefore, it would be useful to initially examine Kuno's role and action within the story that could shed light on the Machine.

Vashti and Kuno constitute the main characters of the story. Kuno is Vashti's son but, unlike to the common sense, the nature of their relationship does not indicate the conventional parental type; rather they appear quite distant and estranged, particularly from the side of Vashti, who is reluctant to her son's persistent solicitations to see her. Later on, we are revealed that Kuno had been taken away from Vashi when he was born, as set out by the Machine's protocol which cuts off parental's responsibilities once a baby is born.

However, Vashti acknowledges that "there was something special about Kuno" (Forster 56). First of all, his appearance differed from the typical model that was established by the Machine's standards. He is presented as a brawny man with physical strength and intense atavist traits that provoked a sort of aversion to the perfected, unnatural human beings of the Machine: "The very hair that disfigured his lip showed that he was reverting to some savage type" (Forster 65).

His speciality, nevertheless, does not stop at his exterior appearance. Unlike his surroundings, Kuno displays an idiomorphic behavior which is incompatible with the highly homogenized deportment imposed by the Machine. Already from the first part, he expresses his desire to see his mother face-to-face, a request which disturbs Vashti, and a yearning to see the stars and to visit the surface of the Earth. His dreamy and sensationalist tone, so different from the reasonably advanced intelligence of the Machine, turns Vashti's disturbance into agitation, for the reason that it does not entail any efficient contribution to the progress and development of the Machine. Either by nature or by another kind of stimulation, Kuno is dissatisfied with the mechanical life provided by the Machine and seeks escape outside its limits:

> "The truth is," he continued, "that I want to see these stars again. They are curious stars. I want to see them not from the air-ship, but from the surface of the earth, as our ancestors did, thousands of years ago. I want to visit the surface of the earth." (Forster 53)

Later, he implements his desire by leaving his underground cell and going on the surface of the Earth, but not by legal means, since an Egression-permit is required; he finds out a way of his own and is shaken to the core by his immediate contact with the civilization outside the Machine. During his stay on Earth, Kuno experiences overwhelming emotions which catalytically influence his worldview and his stance towards the Machine. First, he describes how he became aware of space identity; it is only when he manages to go outside the Machine's predetermined boundaries, that he becomes fully aware of the Machine's spatiality and mechanicity. Reaching a space beyond the sheltered environment in which he had spent his entire life, Kuno acquires the ability to critically objectify the Machine and its humming as well as to fiercely doubt the unnatural principles with which he and his mother were fostered by the Machine's laws: "All the things I had cared about and all the people I had spoken to through tubes appeared infinitely little" (Forster 65). Additionally, this becomes evident by Kuno's realisation that the body has a utilitarian importance for exploring and interpreting the world. For the first time, he redefines the meanings of 'Near' and 'Far,' that could be measured through his own bodily perception and capability as is indicated by his laconic statement that: "Man is the measure" (Forster 63). Contrary to the Machine's automation and lack of historicity, Kuno rediscovers his corporeal existence that has the ability to adapt to a system in which the sun and the air were not an immediate peril, but, above all, to a system that bears a sense of history that connects Kuno to ancient men and their voices that still echo through the hills and the mountains:

> "The mortar had somehow rotted, and I soon pushed some more tiles in, and clambered after them into the darkness, and the spirits of the dead comforted me […] I felt that humanity existed, and that it existed without clothes. How can I possibly explain this? It was naked, humanity seemed naked, and all these tubes and buttons and machineries neither came into the world with us, nor will they follow us out, nor do they matter supremely while we are here." (Forster 64)

Through Kuno, Forster expresses a technological denunciation in which man's creation has become the creator that controls mankind. By no means pure nature can compete technological and artificial nature, which has stripped humans from all the characteristics that defined their humanness.

> "But to me they were living and the turf that covered them was a skin, under which their muscles ripped, and I felt that those hills had called with incalculable force to men in the past, and that men had loved them. Now they sleep—perhaps for ever. They commune with humanity in dreams. Happy the man, happy the woman, who awakes the hills of Wessex. For though they sleep, they will never die." (Forster 67)

Resembling the Renaissance's anthropocentric transition, where man becomes the centre of the universe, Kuno gradually gains insight of his own body and its potentialities which stands in great contrast with the notions with which the Machine nurtured its inhabitants where flesh was atrophying in order for the intellect to rise. In realizing that space is perceptively constructed and that the body constitutes a reliant medium for the perception of the world, Kuno makes a leap from a blindness caused by an absurd scientific fundamentalism towards an enlightening knowledge

which allows him to make sense of his position and to critically analyze the Machine and its strategies. He becomes conscious of the sterility that has created an insurmountable distance between the natural world and the people and how the latter has sadly diverged from everything that defined humanity:

> "Cannot you see, cannot all your lecturers see, that it is we who are dying, and that down here the only thing that really lives is the Machine? We created the Machine, to do our will, but we cannot make it do our will now. It has robbed us of the sense of space and of the sense of touch, it has blurred every human relation and narrowed down love to a carnal act, it has paralysed our bodies and our wills, and now it compels us to worship it. The Machine develops—but not on our lines. The Machine proceeds—but not to our goal." (Forster 67)

These factors suggest Kuno's phase transition away from a mechanically foetal condition where the Machine had substituted the natural environment and the human body with an artificial ambience and intelligence. He desires physical, mental, and spiritual exploration, meaningful human contact, and contact with the natural world. In relation to he general population of the Machine, Kuno appears quite abnormal. He symbolizes the rebellious portion of society and it seems as though he is the only one who initially sees the problematic aspect of idolization of the Machine:

> "The Machine has been most merciful."
>
> "I prefer the mercy of God." (Forster 69)

Initially, it may seem that Kuno constitutes an ectopic element of the Machine that unnaturally disrupts the smooth operation of the system. However, this perspective displays some problematic aspects, especially if one takes into consideration that Kuno was born and bred within the Machine's ambience and laws, unseparated from the rest of the individuals who followed this exact life. In order to avoid any philosophical misunderstandings concerned with the human nature and its inherent qualities, I will particularly focus on the relation between Kuno and the Machine as interconnected and conflicting entities. In his book *Conjunctions and Disjunctions* (1990), Octavio Paz analyzes his theory on the Accident, in which he positions it not as an intruding factor that comes from the outside and disorganizes the system, but as a property of it: "The Accident is not an exception or a sickness of our political regimes; nor is it a correctable defect of our civilization: it is the natural consequence of our science, our politics and our morality" (112). In this context, Kuno can be viewed as one of the cogs of the Machine's mechanical assemblage which constitute a direct product of the Machine's intense operations of mechanically sustaining an entire civilization.

However, though it belongs to the systemic consistency, the Accident is not a "correctable defect." In *The Machine Stops*, this becomes evident when one examines the turn of the events that drastically transfigure the dynamic of the story and unveils a new approach for the imminent collapse of the Machine. First, immediately after Kuno's illegal exposure to earth, two important developments take place. First, the Machine proceeds to radical changes that generally were readily accepted. More specifically, the Machine decides to abolish the respirations, which practically marked the end of the traveling to the surface of the earth; on the other hand, it reestablished the religion that resulted in an almost frantic fanaticism towards the Book of the Machine and its instructions. Second, the Machine starts showing signs of mechanical deficiency which were becoming increasingly noticeable. For example, it cannot provide beds for people to sleep and the light in the rooms becomes darker every day. The air in the room becomes foul. When Vashti tries

to play music, the music sounds jarring and odd. In the end, the Machine stops working, proving that it failed to overcome its weak points: “The Machine stops.” “What do you say?” “The Machine is stopping, I know it, I know the signs” (Forster 72). In light of this, it would be useful to investigate how the role of Kuno impacted the breakdown of the Machine.

As noted before, the Machine constitutes a mechanical assemblage through which the individuals communicate, transport, educate, and entertain themselves. It entails major notions of cybernetics like information exchange in the form of ideas, communication, and transparent control processes through intense propaganda and authoritative power exertions, resembling an organized network community, which is “manoeuvred” by mechanical operations so as to maintain its stability and its life. Significantly, as a machinic dispositif, the Machine is not reduced to its technical aspect as a mechanically operating object, but is a social system with influential extensions that organizes and shapes the environment and its individuals in its own terms. People and environment have become so tightly interconnected and dependent on the Machine and its services, that the effects of such reliance can be translated in the physical and mental alterations manifested in the previous chapter. This process has all the characteristics of a homogenizing procedure with which cybernetic systems translate and code multiplicities into data in order to become easily manipulable and exchangeable. In this closed system of ideas and power relations where the Machine operates as a cybernetic system, Kuno constitutes the element whose function cannot be translated as exchangeable data within the Machine’s system. In this respect, Kuno appears to suggest the “inexchangeable” component, which the Machine cannot process or make use of it and, therefore, it leads to its malfunction and, eventually, to its death. In his book *Fatal Strategies* (1983), Baudrillard analyzed the concept of the “inexchangeable,” which termed as “the pure object, whose power forbids either possessing or exchanging it” (*Selected Writings* 47). In

other words, Baudrillard's inexchangeable object refuses to surrender to equability and resists being overcoded by the system's exchangeable flow,

In order to better understand Baudrillard's notion of the inexchangeable in relation to the breakdown of the Machine, it would be worthwhile to extend the research to another book of his, namely the *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993). In this work, Baudrillard introduces the symbolic concept in the Marxist theories, which exists outside the simulative representations of advanced capitalist societies. In analyzing the function of death within these systems, he draws attention on the inexchangeable object which has the irreversible function of natural death, which the capitalist system has always staved off and rendered invisible (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 180). More specifically, the inexchangeable object constitutes an element of the symbolic order, which means that is located outside the capitalist system's regimes, and constitutes a risk for that system as a fatal strategy. For instance, the concept of terrorism is inexchangaeble for the reason that it does not belong to the system it attacks, but on the contrary, it appears as an unlocalized and unprogrammed event, or in Baudrillard's words, it has the ability of the natural death, which "cannot be programmed and localized" (*Symbolic Exchange and Death 125*). Natural death for Baudrillard represents a social abjection for the system since it depletes the body of all the qualities which renders it exchangeable, usable, and coded within the capitalist system. For its part, the capitalist system only simulates functions of natural death provided with fascinating images of death and disaster that, nonetheless, stem from artificial processes that endow death with an aesthetic substance and transforms it into a reversible and socially exchangeable form (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 37). Therefore, although the system can easily calculate all kinds of death, natural death suggests a challenge to the system for the reason that it has no computable equivalent. This, in return, leads the system to suicide in return, disarray and defeat.

In this respect, Baudrillard's inexchangeable object suggests a sort of death but not in physical terms; it emerges as a form, which shakes the determinacy of the capitalist system, ushering its objects into a state of indeterminacy. In *The Machine Stops* Kuno represents the inexchangeable object that affects, and eventually, strikes the Machine's system. As shown, Kuno assembled a number of characteristics that appeared inconsonant with the general features that individuals shared under the affective operations of the Machine. In terms of physical appearance, his atavist traits come in contrast with the beauty standards established by the Machine that opposes the natural characteristics. He appears rather uninterested in engaging in the production of original ideas or in worshipping the Machine, and craves for physical intimation. On top of that, his illicit exploration of the earth seemed to trigger a reactionary process which sets the Machine into destruction mode. Besides illegal, Kuno's action suggests a symbolic, unpredicted event, certainly out of the determined physical and mechanical limits of the Machine, since one had to obtain a special permission to visit the surface of the Earth. For the cybernetic system of the Machine itself, however, this unlocalized and irreversible deed bore the significance of the inexchangeable, for it exists in a space where the Machine is unable to localize and (over)code.

Nevertheless, it should be added that the Machine itself inflicts 'Homelessness' on the offenders, namely death by exposing them to the surface of the Earth. This is a representative evidence of the death that Baudrillard referred to as simulated and artificial death. The Machine's Homelessness manifests an imposed technical and non-natural death through a process that does not deviate from its determined and exchangeable structure and goal. To put it simply, death by Homelessness for the world of the Machine constitutes an institution, or in other words, a regularity, pertaining to the organization and maintenance of the mechanical assemblage. However, Kuno's case has the function of the irreversible natural death that "cannot be programmed and localized" (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 126). As a result, the Machine begins to malfunction and

to show unregenerate defects in an attempt to recover control over its established order, as demonstrated by its cautious measures to ban the traveling on the surface of the earth and to intensify the worshipping manifestations toward it. Consequently, as a response to Kuno's in exchangeable death-function the Machine is driven to its own death for the reason that it can no longer articulate the interchangeability and exchangeability of its mechanical processes.

With these things considered, the implosion of the Machine within Forster's story *The Machine Stops* could be argued to have been caused by a natural consistency, not in the non-mechanical sense, but in terms of a physiological occurrence that, nevertheless, threatens the established order and smites sovereign rationalities. The mechanical environment of the Machine, as seen in the previous chapter, as a closed cybernetic system is infested by the misfit character of Kuno, who as a Pazean Accident, does not suggest an exteriority, but is part of the Machine.

The "inexchangeable" features that render the Machine useless and incapable of working properly constitute immanent qualities of the Machine itself. It is a "piece of sabotage" that wreaks havoc on an entire system (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 161). Therefore, in light of all this, it could be concluded that, although it exterminates the entire mechanical civilization, the destruction of the Machine in Forster's novel constitutes an internal procedure which is not necessarily opposed to the idea of life; it leaves positive space for an anew resurrection: "Oh, tomorrow—some fool will start the Machine again, tomorrow" (Forster 77).

3.2 THE BREAKDOWN OF KAFKA'S APPARATUS IN *IN DER STRAFKOLONIE*

The spectacularly grotesque breakdown of Kafka's apparatus in *In der Strafkolonie* has attracted much scholarly attention, which has approached the deadly dismantling of the apparatus from multiple perspectives, reinforced by the open to interpretation character of the novel. For example,

Carl Curtis underlines the mythical violence of the apparatus whose sudden collapse leads from an old political regime to a new order: “Kafka (the student of law) insightfully represents the outdated judicial system's uneasy rationality and proceeds to outline its function in order to reveal its shortcomings and the reason for the eventual implosion” (114). For Curtis, the breakdown of Kafka’s apparatus represents the residuum of an ancient barbaric order that collapses under the uneasy rationality of the New Commandant’s order, or in his own words: “the logic of the inquisitorial model in conflict with Enlightenment reason” (19). Daniel W. Boyer is of a similar opinion. He sees the implosion of the apparatus as the direct effect of the entry of abrogated law into its central operating system. More specifically he claims that due to the new antithetical nature of the justice, between the Old and New Commandant, “the machine deconstructs in the most literal and retrograde sense” (100). From a linguistic perspective, Giorgio Agamben analyzes Kafka’s story through the prism of the relationship between language as an arbitrary tool and the penal machine to which the man is bound. In his interpretation he sees the writing engraved by the machine on the flesh of the condemned man (language) as punishment and the breakdown of the machine as justice triumphing over the restraining language and the redemption of the man from its grasp (115).

Indeed, as a sinister apparatus with a polysemic character, its consequent implosion would give birth to a relatively similar kinds of interpretations. Both Curtis and Boyer rely on the social transition from a primitive model to a modern one, from a violent order to a rational one under the header of law and justice. For his part, Agamben establishes an essential relation between language and law that is accomplished through the breakdown of the apparatus. Nevertheless, from the perspective of Deleuze's and Guattari's earlier discussed theory, Kafka’s apparatus constitutes a bachelor machine that generates the desiring-production within the Penal Colony as a sociopolitical system with capitalist qualities. Their theory leads to a whole new different perception of the

apparatus and situates it as an indispensable and vital component for the sustainability and conservation of the colony, not strictly limited to a forensic approach. In this context, however, it would be worthwhile to examine the reasons behind the breakdown of the apparatus.

As was pointed out in the previous chapter, Kafka's apparatus and Duchamp's *Le Grand Verre* share, along with other literary works, similar structural and conceptual motifs, which are included within Carrouges's theory of bachelor machines. Drawing parallels between Kafka's machine and Duchamp's artwork, it was indicated that both display sexually recognizable mechanical elements without any possibility of mutual comprehension. In Kafka's novel these elements are represented by the Harrow, the upper part of the torture machine, that represents the female unit, and by the Officer as the male unit. Returning briefly to the celibacy of Kafka's apparatus, the erotic attraction of the Officer toward the Harrow is repeatedly manifested throughout the story and has been an object of research for Deleuze and Guattari's psychoanalytical theories. One question that needs to be asked, however, is this: What happens then, when the Officer decides to put his body under the deadly apparatus and set it in motion?

Turning now to Kafka's story, the Officer implores the Explorer to speak to the new Commandant in favor of the continuation of the apparatus and its practices. The Explorer, who appears quite uncomfortable by the sense of responsibility that was imposed on him, professes his opposition to the brutal apparatus and declares that he will privately give his opinion and then leave before he can be called to hand in any official report. Upon listening to the Traveler's answer, the Officer in a self crisis frees the Condemned and prepares the apparatus for himself, with the phrase 'Be Just' to be inscribed on him. However, the machine does not elegantly execute the sentence; it malfunctions and stabs the Officer to death before the Traveler's aghast eyes.

Under those circumstances, it becomes evident that the Officer's action strongly contests the perennially celibate projection of the torture apparatus. As a bachelor machine, it represents an

amalgam of machines, militant bachelordom and a repudiation of nativity, through which the Officer finds himself entangled into a tormenting situation. Yet, the Officer is about to break this celibate interconnection by setting out the machine to operate on his body and, thus, achieving a perfected coalition, which cancels its bachelor nature:

> Der Offizier aber hatte sich der Maschine zugewendet. Wenn es schon früher deutlich gewesen war, dass er die Maschine gut verstand, so konnte es jetzt einen fast bestürzt machen, wie er mit ihr umging und wie sie gehorchte. Er hatte die Hand der Egge nur genähert, und sie hob und senkte sich mehrmals, bis sie die richtige Lage erreicht hatte um ihn zu empfangen; (*In der Strafkolonie* 2008)
>
> (The officer himself had turned towards the machine. If it had been clear before that he was expert in the ways of the machine, now it was almost astounding to see how he dealt with it and how it obeyed him) (Joyce Crick *In the Penal Colony* 96).

Moreover, the fact that the deliberate self-execution which is about to take place differentiates itself from other executions. This is acutely indicated by its unusually low sounds the moment the apparatus begins its deadly performance on the Officer's body, compared to the previous metallic cacophonies:

> …ehe er sich erinnerte, dass ein Rad im Zeichner hätte kreischen sollen; aber alles war still, nicht das geringste Surren war zu hören. Durch diese stille Arbeit entschwand die Maschine förmlich der Aufmerksamkeit. (*In der Strafkolonie* 2008)

(… he recalled that one wheel in the Marker should have been grating; but everything was silent; not the slightest humming was to be heard. By operating so silently, the machine almost escaped his notice.) (Joyce Crick *In the Penal Colony* 96)

The Officer united with the Harrow, the male united with the female. Kafka's apparatus is no longer a bachelor machine for the very simple reason that the Officer disrupts the desiring and imaginary connection that distinguishes and, at the same time, binds together the sexual elements of the apparatus. By definition, the bachelor machine refers to particular syntheses and mechanical processes in which the apparatus stands simultaneously for the omnipotence of eroticism and its negation, "for death and immortality, for torture and Disneyland, for fall and resurrection . . ." (Szeemann 7). Kafka's machine takes the definition of the bachelor machine a step further by orchestrating a mating that challenges and defies the sexual and deadly connotations of the apparatus which are perpetuated by an unfulfilled mechanical relationship. In the final analysis, it provides an answer to Duchamp's Gordian knot that seemed in essence enigmatic and inscrutable.

Consequently, whereas Duchamp's Bride remains intact, Kafka's apparatus malfunctions and disintegrates, brutally killing its male unit. Instead of the mystical experience that transfigures the condemned's faces in an ecstatic manner, the Officer undergoes an outright murder by his object of desire:

Es war, wie es im Leben gewesen war; kein Zeichen der versprochenen Erlösung war zu entdecken; was alle anderen in der Maschine gefunden hatten, der Offizier fand es nicht; die Lippen waren fest zusammengedrückt, die Augen waren offen, hatten den Ausdruck des

> Lebens, der Blick war ruhig und überzeugt, durch die Stirn ging die Spitze des grossen eisernen Stachels. (*In der Strafkolonie* 2008)
>
> (It was as it had been in life; not a sign of the promised deliverance was to be discovered; what all the others had found in the machine, the officer had not found; his lips were pressed tight; his eyes were open, and had the appearance of life; his gaze was calm with conviction; the point of a great iron spike pierced his brow.) (Joyce Crick *In the Penal Colony* 98)

It is interesting to note that in the fatal coupling of the apparatus with the Officer, one finds further connections to the psychoanalytic field. The erotic desire of the Officer that completed with his entrance in the apparatus bears significant similarities to the Freudian Eros, which in short constitutes the life and reproductive forces (*Complete Works* 3785). Opposed to Eros stands the death drive as a biological drive that returns to the inorganic, as the organism reacting to any disturbance to the status quo and resists the tendency toward survival, propagation, sex, and other creative, life-producing drives (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 316). Wilhelm Stekel, one of the Freud's followers, expanded Freudian death drive referring to "Thanatos" as a complementary term of Eros (218). Death drive or 'Thanatos' present similar patterns to the deadly function of Kafka's apparatus that kills, and particularly to its nature that refutes every form of life that approaches it. By all means, it seems fair to suggest that the breakdown of the apparatus can be seen as the encounter of Eros as the life instinct and Thanatos as the death instinct, personified in the act of the Officer entering the apparatus as an impetuous collision that resulted in the eventual breakdown of the apparatus.

Having analyzed the grounds on which Kafka's apparatus was driven to collapse, it is necessary to examine its correlation with the concept of desire, as it was argued that the machine plays a vital role in the metabolism of the desiring-production within the Penal Colony. The theory of Deleuze and Guattari provides a useful account on the representation of the desiring production and how it is connected to the breakdown of the machine. As indicated previously, the apparatus as a bachelor machine differentiates itself from the miraculating and paranoiac machine for it integrates heterogeneous and opposing forces (desiring machines and Body without Organs) as part of the desiring production (*Anti-Oedipus* 346). However, when he machine ceases to be a bachelor machine the moment the Officer sets out the machine for himself, the apparatus automatically embraces its lethal nature and is transformed into a death machine that violently repulses any approaching organism. On the other hand, the Officer implements his desire to connect in all its totality to the apparatus. Considering Deleuze and Guattari's approaches, the apparatus could be identified as the Body without Organs that repels the organizing site of production that the Officer as desiring machine puts forward. Through the embodiment of these two opposing forces that form production and anti-production the machine acquires a unity that leads to its implosion. The concept of the coalescence of rivalry energies is an important aspect for the understanding Deleuze and Guattari's thought, as indicated in their analysis in *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986), where they explicitly refer to the machine of the Penal Colony: "The machine seems to have a strong degree of unity and the man enters completely into it. Maybe this is what leads to the final explosion and the crumbling of the machine" (*Kafka* 8). For Deleuze and Guattari, then, the breakdown of the torture apparatus summarizes the meeting of productive and anti-productive forces which reveals the fundamental aspect of the desiring production as a unified, efficient apparatus that consolidates opposing elements. The manifestation of this consolidation, however, puts an end to the machine.

In line with Deleuze and Guattari's theory on the desiring-production, the destruction of Kafka's apparatus involves the immanence of desire to the social in all its aspects. The dismantling of the apparatus constitutes a social manifestation of the flow of desire within the Penal Colony as its synthesizing force that assembles and produces forces within society:

> »Es kommen natürlich Störungen vor; ich hoffe zwar, es wird heute keine eintreten, immerhin muss man mit ihnen rechnen. Der Apparat soll ja zwölf Stunden ununterbrochen im Gang sein. Wenn aber auch Störungen vorkommen, so sind es doch nur ganz kleine und sie werden sofort behoben sein.« (*In der Strafkolonie* 2008)

> ("Of course, malfunctions do occur; I certainly hope that won't hap-pen today; all the same, we have to reckon with them. The apparatus should actually run for twenty-four hours without interruption. But even if malfunctions do occur, they are very slight after all, and they will be put right straight away.") (Joyce Crick *In the Penal Colony* 76)

By entering the apparatus, the Officer not only cancels the machine's allegedly celibate nature, but more importantly, it allows the direct merging of antagonistic entities within the functioning of the desiring production. The Officer as the male unit/Eros/desiring machine contends the female unit/Thanatos/Body without Organs, resembling "an organ-machine," which "is plugged into an energy-source-machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts" (*Anti-Oedipus* 1). As Deleuze and Guattari have shown, the destruction of the apparatus constitutes part of a social process which functions through necessary couplings and secessions so as to produce flows of desire for its productive functioning. In examining the operation of Kafka's apparatus, this is eloquently illustrated by the various forces, take the Officer for instance, which oppose and

collaborate with each other in order to create and maintain the perfect balance for the social to be productive and sustainable.

To conclude this chapter, the findings and arguments from the previous chapters have been attempted to theorize and provide an efficient perspective through which the implosion of the machines within Forster's and Kafka's stories can be read and interpreted. Seeking to address the growing integration of the machine within society, the theoretical approaches provided useful frameworks for the decoding of these literary machines. This research has also shown that the destruction of the devices reaches, what Baudrillard had defined as "dead point," the dead centre, "where every system crosses this subtle limit of reversibility, contradiction and doubt and enters live into non-contradiction, into its own exalted contemplation, into ecstasy…" (*Fatal Strategies* 14). In *The Machine Stops*, Kuno introduces the "inexchangeable" within a strictly exchangeable system, irreversibly damaging its functions and inducing it to an unrevoked point towards annihilation. Respectively in *In der Strafkolonie*, Kafka's apparatus sags under the weight of its improbable coupling with the Officer, a consummation. In addition, another significant aspect which is underscored is related to the factors that led to the implosions of the machines. As discussed above, the breakdown of the apparatuses within the stories is not attributed to an external agent that affected a predetermined system; notably, the mechanical disintegration came from systemic components. Kuno was born and raised within the Machine's environment, while the Officer and the apparatus constitute set of significant clusters for the desiring-production within the Penal Colony. These results lend support to the claim that the implosion of Forster's and Kafka's machines suggests internal processes, which are embedded in the broader context of the systems, be it biological or mechanical. The fact that in both cases the implosion of the machines follows a transitional gap—the rhetorical question of the protagonists before their demise in Forster's story

whether a similar mechanical civilization will emerge and the self-evident domination of the New Commandant in Kafka's story—can be explained in the economic term coined by Joseph Schumpeter, known as "creative destruction" or "Schumpeter's gale". Concisely, Schumpeter's theory refers to the process of industrial mutation and accumulation of wealth that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one (82-83). In this context, we can view the deregulation and breakdown of Forster's Machine and Kafka's torture apparatus as parts of their systems, as creative processes, like regulation and progress, which contribute to a social evolution and restructure.

CONCLUSION

"...the machine is a stranger to us; it is a stranger in which what is human is locked in unrecognized, materialized and enslaved, but human nonetheless. The most powerful cause of alienation in the world of today is based on misunderstanding of the machine."

—Gilbert Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects* (1)

The concept of the machine can be versatile and multifaceted. In this thesis, I have sought to demonstrate that the machines within Forster's novel *The Machine Stops* and Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie* indicate cases that illustrate the social composition of the machine, providing, in turn, useful insights with respect to the meaning of the imminent implosions of these devices. The aim of this study was twofold: on the one hand, it set out to closely investigate these novels through their mechanical sequences and accomplish a prolific dialogue with the theoretical framework; on the other hand, the second aim was to examine the destruction of the machines based on the findings of the first research. The mechanical aspects of the stories appear tightly linked to a wider social context, which is specifically articulated through the relations of those devices with the characters and the environment in each story. In analyzing this context, I was able to give an effective interpretation on a subject which, to my way of thinking, is relatively overlooked. Although the social dimension of the machinic does not have immediate references to literary studies, this "misunderstanding," mentioned in the quote by Simondon, should not hinder the endeavors of finding new ways to read literature. In general, therefore, the social concept of the machine was applied for an anew reading of Forster's and Kafka's novels in particular and of literature in general.

I began my analysis of the social aspect of the machine by presenting a number of scholars who have delved into this subject. The contention that machine is more than a mechanism is firmly supported by a considerable number of social fields as many theorists spoke of the impact of the machine within sociopolitical theories, cybernetics, psychoanalysis, and philosophy. Especially from the Industrial Revolution and onwards, the sociality of the machine begins to gain ground among scholars, who saw in the excessive industrialization and exploitation of the machines a new emerging affair which steadily seeped into various social areas. In closely examining the theories of thinkers from diverse backgrounds such as Karl Marx, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Maurizio Lazzarato, Viktor Tausk, Norbert Wiener, and Marcel Duchamp, the social character of the machinic was highlighted as a concept that transcended its historical and critical background. More importantly, the increasing integration of the machine especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries resulted in the modulation not only of the social status quo but of the transformation of the concept of the machine itself into a dispositif, namely as an assemblage of heterogeneous discourses with sociopolitical propositions. Therefore, for the sake of the discussion, the term ‘machinic dispositif' is introduced in order to describe the systemic relations of the influential concept of the machinic within society and the changes which has brought about.

In the second chapter, I analyzed the meaning of the machines in Forster’s *The Machine Stops* and Kafka’s *In der Strafkolonie* in light of the theories discussed in the first chapter. In Forster’s anti-utopia, the heart of the research focuses on the Machine as a machinic assemblage, which resembles an ecosystem for the hostile Earth. The Machine appears to bring together main characteristics of a cybernetic system for three reasons: first, similar to cybernetics, the civilization of the Machine is governed and controlled by a system that uses technology; second, the way information constitute the main arteries of the cybernetic system, in *The Machine Stops* one encounters a similar functioning pattern in the form of ideas; lastly, cybernetics suggest an

‘invisible’ system through which control and regulation are exerted, resembling, in turn, the omnipresent and transparent channels of the Machine which seem magically connected to every room. Touching upon topics such as artificial intelligence and post-humanism, Forster’s story puts forward a machine that sustains and maintains an entire human civilization. Through the examination of the effects Machine had on its individuals and environment, it was argued that Machine’s mechanical ambience had brought about physical and mental mutations to its inhabitants. With this in mind, the Machine’s outspread is not simply a system governed by invisible wires, but more importantly, a powerfully affective assemblage which has the capacity to shape human beings, suggesting the existence of a machinic dispositif. Similarly, Kafka’s apparatus manifests the machinic dispositif in two ways, both linked to the ambiguous figure of the Officer. On the one hand, Globus G. Gordon and Richard C. Pillard made an interesting parallelism of Viktor Tausk’s study on the *Influencing Machine* with the apparatus of the Penal Colony, arguing that Kafka’s machine bears the same mode of operation with Tausk’s machine. On the other hand, Carrouge’s theory on the bachelor machine provided a useful context through which Kafka’s penal apparatus can be analyzed. The fact that it is more than a simple executive machine is underlined by the celibate character of the device that generates erotic sensations and deadly articulations towards the Officer. The strange relationship between the Officer and the apparatus accentuated this belief. Furthermore, as described in the schizoanalytic theories of Deleuze and Guattari, the celibacy of the apparatus inscribes it into the desiring-production or, in other words, into the production of social flow. The ability of the bachelor machine/Kafka’s apparatus to produce new states of desire and social production, as part of the conflict between the desiring machines and the Body without Organs, subscribes it to the broad social context of the colony, rendering it the main source of desiring-production.

In the third and last chapter, I analyzed the meaning of the breakdown of Forster's and Kafka's machines based on the outcomes found in chapter II. By understanding the devices in *In the Machine Stops* and *In der Strafkolonie* as machinic dispositifs, the collapse of the machines within the stories can be interpreted in a new way. In the former case, as a Pazean accident, Kuno's rebellious character becomes responsible for the fall of the (allegedly) cybernetic system of the Machine. Its descent begins from the moment misfit Kuno illegally visits the surface the Earth and narrates to his mother his wondrous discoveries and revelations that witnessed. More specifically, I argued that Kuno constituted the "inexchangeable" object, following Baudrillard's terminology, within the strictly exchangeable system of the Machine, causing irreparable defects that led to its implosion. In Kafka's case, the entrance of the Officer in the apparatus causes a rupture which, in turn, cancels the celibacy of the apparatus; hence, the apparatus is presented as a consummated, unified machine which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, results in its crumbling. What can be extracted as a commonplace for these implosions is the fact that they suggest internal processes through which social systems suffer and collapse and, then, are reborn as part of the "creative-destruction" process. This is becoming explicit in the equivocal nuances at the end of the novels that leave promising space for insinuations for the existence or the replacement of the existing system with another, different one. In this respect, although there is "an evil demon is there to make this beautiful machine always break down," there will be someone else who will make this machine rise again (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 181). In summary, the destruction of the social machines/ machinic dispositifs as manifested within Forster's and Kafka's stories should not be understood as a reactive response against the technological progress, but notably as depictions of the system's fluctuations.

As the analyses of my case studies have made clear, theories on the social aspect of the machine can provide a useful framework for the decoding of the literary machines in Forster's and

Kafka's novels. The purpose of the current study was to examine these imaginary devices under the scope of circumstantial theories, concerned with the social composition of the machinic. Hopefully, the findings in this study establish a better understanding on the concept of the machine and its death as a matter of social organization and overturning.

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