



# From the Unconscious to the Revelation: Freud's tripartite reading of E.M Forster's "The Machine Stops"

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## **ABSTRACT:**

**ABSTRACT** *E. M Forster's "The Machine Stops" which was published in 1909 envisioned a world which is managed by technology, where human inclination for intimacy, freedom and direct experience are silenced in favor of mechanical order. This paper proposes a psychoanalytic reading of the story which employs Freud's concepts of the tripartite to illustrate how Forster portray the psychic struggle between mechanical conformity and the liberating power of self revelation.*

*The character Vashti ,the mother of Kuno embodies repression and submission to the machine ,but Kuno presents the unconscious seeking for the freedom and authentic human condition .His journey signifies an emergence moving from suppressed desires to revelatory insight. In conclusion a psychoanalytic reading of The Machine Stops by Forster which enables a transition from unconscious to conscious awakening. Through Kuno's resistance and search for freedom against the dominance of machine's domination, affirming the perpetual relevance of psychoanalysis in interpreting literature's engagement with untold desires and transformative understanding*

**KEYWORDS:** *Psychoanalysis, Freud's tripartite, Unconscious to the revelation, Id, Ego, and Superego of Kuno and, Machine*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

A dystopian narrative of E. M Forster's short story 'The Machine Stops ' which anticipates the aftermath of immoderate reliance on technology. The story was written long before the digital era, it envisions a forthcoming world in which the world lives or confined to a small cell, which is entirely dependent on machine for survival, communication and knowledge and also for physical comfort face-to face interaction and travel are dissuaded as individuals communicate only through screens.

The protagonist, Vashti is a faithful believer of the machine, while her son Kuno opposes its domination and aspiring for real experience on the surface of earth. The story serves as a judgment of blind dependence on machine. The struggle between desire and authority in the story focuses on human thought, emotion and behavior which act as a critical lens to study character's hidden motives.

Psychoanalysis, a therapeutic method developed by Sigmund Freud in the late 19th century. It is believed that human thoughts, emotion and behaviors deeply influenced by the unconscious mind which contains suppressed desires, memories and conflicts.

Psychoanalysis works with Kuno who represents the suppressed human intuition for freedom, touch and straight experience of natural world.

The protagonist Kuno in E. M Forster's *The Machine Stops* can be insightfully examined through the concepts of Freud's tripartite model, Id, Ego and Superego. Freud's theory clarifies human behavior as a continuous struggle between instinctual desires, rational and moral regulation. Kuno who rejects the dominance of machines and embodies the conflict between natural and societal control. His longing for freedom and contact with the earth's surface demonstrate the Id. His prudent planning reflects the balancing of ego. On the contrary, his mother Vashti embodies Superego.

In order to explain Kuno's Tripartite here follows certain examples from the story. As in the case of Id -Kuno confesses to Vashti," I want to see the sky and the stars..... I want to live my own life "These extract shows his instinctive drive for freedom, direct experience and the denial of artificial comfort by the machine. It's Kuno's Id forcing for primal desires.

Ego as a rational mediator- instead of an open rebel he secretly escapes to the earth's surface. He plans brilliantly even if he knows its dangers.

Kuno opposes super ego which means the moral side of machine and social authority while his mother, Vashti fully personifies it by obeying and justifying the machine's laws, Kuno's struggle is very clear through Freud's tripartite model. He epitomizes the deeper human need to overcome control and regain individuality.

Not only considering the character Kuno ,machine emerges not simply as a technological instrument but as a psychological construct that shows Freud's notion of superego ,operating as all the compassing authority that rules human belief ,desire and action while crushing instinctual impulses in the name of order and safety .Freud's tripartite model of the mind ,especially the superego works as the embedded voice of law ,repression and moral code enforcing discipline upon the rebellious forces of the id and restraining mediations of the ego.

Forster's machine is glorified as the authority of truth so much ,so it assumes a god like proportion in the lives of its subjects. Humans are detached in their cells and surrendered their physical liberty along with their power of imagination ,submitted to machine's commands. It reveals the novel's prescience.

Forster projected not just the overdependence of humans upon technology but also the psychic subjugation that rises when external structures of power convert into repression of intern. The mother character Vashti demonstrates her submission to the machine shows the psyche dominated by superego, her inborn inclinations for intimacy, touch and travel are silenced and she undergoes anxiety. Kuno represents a rebellious voice of id and the fighting ego that aims for a mediation between instinct and authority urging for a face to face experience and authentic connection in resistance to the machine. The super egoistic character of the machine noticed in its emphasis on obedience, worship and hostility. The machine enquire every details of human life like their communication and interaction .Individuals like Vashti unquestioningly accept machine. For example, Vashti was frustrated when Kuno suggest her to leave the cells ,shows her obedience to the machine.

The repression of machine implements is not violence but psychological in nature like Freud's superego model, it acts by way of guilt, fear and conformity, through subjects who discipline themselves long before any punishment is implemented externally. Yet repression ,he reinforces ,can't be maintained perpetually for the unconscious which strives to assert itself and the dominance of the superego excessively may provoke a chance of conflict or a complete breakdown . This is figured through the character Kuno, whose dissatisfaction upon machines shows in the machine's ideology. His wish to feel the earth's surface and to have an encounter with the sky and to establish a face to face human contact which helps to manifest the repressed instincts. The machine, doesn't sanction divergence instead it tightens the grip and discourage all unconventional drives .In doing so, it will become an over extended superego bloated with authority demanding admiration not only as a tool but as a deity

This divinization of the machine show how repression is glorified and transforming into self propagating system of authority that can't be questioned without imposing foundations of the society where it sustains. But Forster shows the paradox in totalizing authority ,the more supreme the repression ,the more disastrous the collapse .When repression can't contain the instincts no longer as it suppresses. The ruin of machines is not just the failure of technology but psychological collapse. A symbolic implementation of the superego's downfall when it can't balance the call of instincts it silences. Vashti, who once elevated the machine as supreme, is left perplexed and helpless when the system fails. Her recognition for Kuno's truth, but it's too late and it leads to total submission. Kuno on the other hand, though its own ruin at least signifies the possibility of awakening. In this sense, machine's destruction is a catastrophe and catharsis. Catastrophe, a disastrous event, here in the story happens upon the machine on which humanity relies on collapse, is the emotional effect of tragedy after the total destruction of the machine, the authority that had disguised as ultimate reality.

According to Freud, the story stages the inexorable progression of an overbearing superego- its sacralization of authority and its final destruction under pressure of the inborn impulses it restricts. Forster's vision becomes not a critique of technology and mechanization but an insightful allegory of psychological repression. The machine in the story is the super ego that paused the desire, Vashti, is the ego that was silenced under the authority of the machine and Kuno is the id forcing towards awakening. The destruction of the machine indicates the unsustainability of a life lived under the pressure of repression, it reminds that authority destroys the human instincts, the machine or the technology is to guide not to control. Forster's allegory lies between repression and revelation between authority and authenticity of instincts. Forster warns the civilization who substitutes machine for human which risks not only the collapse of technology but psychic ruin.

A journey from Unconscious to revelation Forster portrays Kuno not only as a rebel of external authority but as awakening from the state of repression toward awareness of truth. His actions are enough to realise his transformation of revelation. At first Kuno feels a deep discontent with life, with machines and he can't describe why. Kuno's inner discontent and secret longing, he feels suffocated in the underground and aspiring for the experience to touch the surface. His fascination with freedom, air and sky indicates unconscious impulses rising towards revelation.

The next incident of Kuno's forbidden journey to the surface where he breaks the rules of the machine world and reaches the outside world, he sees stars, breathes fresh air and experiences real life. This also marks a momentous step from repression to realization.

Another example for revelation is Kuno experienced a human weakness, he believed that life and connection can't be constructed by technology, especially machine. The meaning of life lies in direct experience bonding and nature which oppose technological illusion.

Kuno's final revelation stage occurs when the machine fails; his mother too realizes the truth that she lived in denial while her son Kuno grasped the revelation earlier. These experiences of Kuno highlight the weakness of a society that blindly depends on technology.

In conclusion ,Kuno;s progression from unconscious to conscious awakening depicts Forster;s profound investigation of human desires for realness beyond the machine's inflexible control. His endeavors to break free to the earth's surface his resistance against the oppressive order ,and his ultimate realization of the machine's weakness serve as crucial part in this transformation. His revelations not only disclose the limitations of technological supremacy but also show case the psychoanalytic development of repressed impulses into awareness .By examine Kuno's revelations from his struggle to breathe fresh air to his final acknowledgement of human fragility. Thus journey from Unconscious to awakening becomes both a personal and collective.

## Conclusion

E.M Forster's "The Machine Stops" gains new depth when analyzed through psychoanalysis ,especially Freud's tripartite model of the mind .The machine in the story evolved as a technological superego, imposing strict laws ,controlling instinct and demanding blind devotion .Vashti represents the ego ,balancing between her internalized compliance and her quickly silenced doubts. While Kuno articulates the id's unconscious drive for freedom ,epitome and authentic experience. The breakdown of machine becomes more than the failure of technology, its an awakening of the repressed ,a return of primal energies long denied. Psycho analytically, the story demonstrate not only a reproach of mechanized society but a psychological allegory of conflict revelation where the unconscious depends on truth against the subjugation of the control.

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