

Mechanical system of life against humanity in Pirandello's I quaderni di Serafino Gubbio operatore (1925)¹ (The Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio Operator of Cinematograph)

Mohammad Hosein Ramazankiaei*

Assistant Professor Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of
Tehran, I.R. Iran

(Received: 8 Sep. 2008, Accepted: 3 Jan. 2010)

Abstract

This study investigates the process of dehumanization caused by a bizarre relationship between man and the machine. In the area of Italian literature there are very few novels that take into consideration the heady world of industrialization. Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936) one of the most famous European playwrights, novelist and short story writer places accurate emphasis on this problem. He chooses motion picture as symbol of mechanical system of life against humanity. The author insists that in the modern world the control we exercise over the work process through machinery undergoes a radical transformation. Mechanism becomes the principal means of controlling production and, as such, it controls human creativity. After the machine takes control of human creativity, man is no longer an individual and has no identity apart from the machine. The issue of industrialization against humanity is partially reflected in Pirandello's other novel *The Late Mattia Pascal* but it creates a bitter polemic in the author's sixth novel *The Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio Operator of Cinematograph*. This research focuses on the theme of life undermined by the voracity of industrialization. I additionally explained in the introduction that there is no affinity between Pirandello's theory of mechanical life and ideology of two contemporary thinkers of Postmodernism: Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) and Paul Virilio (born in 1932).

Key Words: Pirandello, industrialization, Shoot, mechanical system, machine-made life, humanity.

1- From the film studio Kosmogroph, Serafino Gubbio steadily winds the crank of his camera by day and scribbles with his pen by night revealing the world both mundane and melodramatic that unfolds in front of his camera. With his notebooks Serafino Gubbio parodies human weakness drawing attention to the theme of isolation and madness as emerging tendencies in the modern world. In various scenes of the novel Serafino mentions antithetical themes to show the impassiveness of the individual in modern society devoured by the machine. The machine makes human being so impassive that he gradually loses his homogeneity with other individual. In this case and as a result man finds difficulty to establish a regular relationship with others. Serafino confesses that he does not like to speak at all. He is aware of his difference from other individuals and knows that no one understands him because of his impassiveness. The main difference that Serafino finds between himself and other individual is that he finds others as persons but believes that his presentation resembles as that of a thing, a crank.

* Tel: 61119039, Fax: 021-88634500, E-mail: mkiaei@ut.ac.ir

Introduction

The Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio (Shoot!) was originally published in Italian in 1915. This novel is one of the first European novels to take as its subject the heady world of early motion pictures. The novel is a classic example of the Nobel Prize-winning Sicilian playwright Luigi Pirandello's (1867-1936) literary talent for blurring the line between art and reality. From the film studio Kosmograph, the author's character Serafino Gubbio steadily winds the crank of his camera and shows no tendency to change or fluctuate. He reveals a world both mundane and melodramatic that unfolds in front of his camera. Through Gubbio's journal-like diary which is also saturated with fantasy, Pirandello struggles with the philosophical implications of modern industrialization. Like much of Pirandello's work – such as *The Late Mattia Pascal* (1904) - *The Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio* reveals human weaknesses against the supremacy of the mechanical system of life. This is the machine that devours human life and makes man one of its innumerable parts. As far as the methodology of this research is concerned, I have focused on Pirandello's novel, in order to extract the antithetical matter of mechanical system of life, which is concealed beyond other issues the author is dealing with. Outwardly, Pirandello's theory of contrast between the machine and humanity is somewhat related to the French theorist Jean Baudrillard and also to the French urbanist and philosopher, Paul Virilio. Baudrillard is a thinker of postmodernism who tried to combine philosophy and social theory in an original way while looked at philosophy with contempt. In a letter to his son, Pirandello asked him not to waste his time studying philosophy because he has studied it and it has nothing to say. On the other hand, in his first full-length novel *L'Esclusa (The Outcast)* (1901) Pirandello again shows his disdain for philosophy. Baudrillard and Virilio focus on the postmodern and high technical society and find the distinction of race and gender as its structure. But Pirandello belongs to pre-modern society whose looking at contemporary society is merely the process of comparing the past and the present. Indeed Pirandello's feeling is nostalgic and he looks back nostalgically to what has been lost and does not pay attention to what is changing. Even Paul Virilio as a cruel

critic against the postmodern industrialized and positive society does not feel nostalgia for the past. According to what Nicholas Zurbrugg says Virilio defines his general approach to contemporary culture (Zurbrugg, 193). Both Baudrillard and Virilio criticize the technical progress brings for contemporary society. Even Baudrillard argues about the distance between an experienced truth and an obscured truth that the mass media claim to offer us (Tim Dant, 83). Here we encounter two different perspectives from two different groups of thinkers. In the case of Baudrillard and Virilio, what deserves to be considered is cruel criticism versus institutionalised structure of contemporary society. But in Pirandello's case we find just a feeling, a mixed feeling, of happiness, sadness and longing especially when it recalls a place or event from the past.

Discussion:

Pirandello's disdain against rationalism has been embodied by description of a bitter inadequacy between man's feeling and cruel mechanical life. Through his rational power man industrialises society in which his feeling is the first victim. The author's reflection helps him to reveal not only the monstrous aspect of modern society but also facts that kill man's spirit. The subject of industrialization and this doubt that whether it is able to guarantee a comfortable life is partially mentioned in the author's Nobel Prize winning novel *Il Fu Mattia Pascal* (*The Late Mattia Pascal*)¹.

1- When Mattia Pascal arrives in Milan he encounters a new atmosphere that completely differs from his simple homeland. Milan is a big and huge city and from the apparent aspect of that city Mattia Pascal deduces that all activities and generally life are under the control of a mechanical system. Mattia asked himself: "*Perche' tutto questo stordimento di machine? E che fara' l'uomo quando le machine faranno tutto? Si accorgera' allora che il cosi' detto progresso non ha nulla a che fare con la felicita'?* Di tutte le invenzioni, con cui la scienza crede onestamente d'arrichire l'umanita' [...] che gioia in fondo proviamo noi, anche ammirandole?" (*Tutti i romanzi*, Milano: Mondadori, 1966. p.353) Mattia Pascal has been deeply obsessed by this question: what man will do if machine does everything and takes man's role in controlling life? And Pirandello's reflection pushes him to ask: what man will do if machines somehow no longer are able to order society and life? Because, at first, man's life did not depend on mechanical system; after man through science submits the control of his life to machine then he cannot detach it from its dependence.

Quaderni di Serafino Gubbio operatore has an immediate start to present the contrast between natural life and machine-made world. From the first page of the work the reader encounters Serafino's impassiveness. Pirandello starts very soon to show that due to a mechanical life his character differs from other human beings.

"There is a *_something more_* in everything. You do not wish or do not know how to see it. But the moment this something more gleams in the eyes of an idle person like myself, who has set himself to observe you, why, you become puzzled, disturbed or irritated. I too am acquainted with the external, that is to say the mechanical framework of the life which keeps us clamorously and dizzily occupied and gives us no rest." (Pirandello, 1116)¹

Serafino's *statuesque* pushes our reflection so that it recalls a free man whose life is destroyed by a mechanical system of modernisation. This catastrophic transformation has been described by Serafino himself:

"Man who first of all, as a poet, deified his own feelings and worshipped them, now having flung aside every feeling, as an encumbrance not only useless but positively harmful, and having become clever and industrious, has set to work to fashion out of iron and steel his new deities, and has become a servant and a slave to them". (Pirandello, 1112)²

Here Serafino describes two contrary states of man: man with his free feelings in a free existence and man as an object who is deprived of a natural life. Man as a poet defying his sentiment decided to throw this virtue away as a useless and harmful obstructive thing. As wise and industrious, he built his divinities of iron and himself has become their slave. The character continues with an exclamatory sentence: "Viva the machine that mechanizes life!" How can the machine have a

1- C'è un oltre in tutto. Voi non volete o non sapete vederlo. Ma appena appena quest'oltre baleni negli occhi d'un ozioso come me, che si metta a osservarvi, ecco, vi smarrite, vi turbate o irritate. Conosco anch'io il congegno esterno, vorrei dir meccanico della vita che fragorosamente e vertiginosamente ci affaccenda senza requie.

1- "L'uomo che prima, poeta dedicava i suoi sentimenti e li lodava, butai via i sentimenti, ingombro non solo inutile ma anche dannoso e' divenuto saggio e industrie, s'e' messo a fabbricare di ferro, d'acciaio le sue divinita' ed e' diventato servo e schiavo di essi"

long life? The machine is voracious and insatiable that carries on its life by devouring man's heart and soul. Serafino ironically asks the reader if he still has some soul or mind because the machine needs it. In Serafino's question the emphasis is placed on the term "still" that satirically implies mechanical position of man deprived of soul and heart. There should be also a significant relevance between the author's negative comment on the industrial civilization and the historic frame of the novel. In 1915 Pirandello published his novel originally entitled *Shoot* (*Si gira*). This happened exactly at the time of Italy's intervention in the First World War and both of Pirandello's sons had been summoned to enter military service. On the other hand, Futurists and war were quite intimately linked. They glorified war as the world's only hygiene and as the destructive gesture of freedom that could easily destroy everything in order to prepare afresh society for industrial civilization. Destroying libraries, museums and academies of every kind were among their manifests. Pirandello presented his utilitarian cowardice Serafino Gubbio at a time when Italian Futurists praised love of adventure, danger, violence and the mechanized onslaught of the war. But futurists did not praise war for itself and war was not their final goal. They believed in war as a movement that could sweep pre-industrial society preparing it for industrial civilization. A society occupied by the overwhelming presence of arsenals and shipyards blazing with violent electric, greedy railway stations, factories with lines of their smoke, bridges that cross over the rivers, adventurous steamers, locomotives and flight of the planes in the wind were futurists' fervent dreams.¹ Pirandello apparently brings Serafino as an anti-futurist who, paradoxically, returns to the past time when man, as a poet, was used to defy his sentiment. While Futurists excitement expresses their great approval for

1- About futurism and the futurist manifestos see Enrico Cripolti, *Il mito della macchina e altri temi del futurismo*, Palermo: editore Celebes, 1969. Umbro Apollonio, "F.T. Marinetti *The founding and manifesto of Futurism*" in *Futurist manifestos*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1973. Pp.19-24. And also Isabella Gherarducci "Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo" in *Il Futurismo Italiano*, Roma: Edizioni riuniti, 1976. p.27-28. Richard Humphreys has a remarkable chapter "The futurist reconstruction of the universe" in his *Futurism*, London: Tate Gallery, 1999.p.38-48. The critic focuses on Marinetti's technical manifesto of futurist literature.

militarism and patriotism, Pirandello's character, secluded in his individuality, wants to return to the age of poetry.

Man's presentation as a thing in the industrialized world

Machine makes human being so impassive that he gradually loses his homogeneity with other individuals. In this case and as a result, man finds it difficult to establish regular relationship with others. Serafino confesses that he does not like to speak at all. (Ibid, 1134). He is aware of his difference from other individuals and knows that no one understands him because of his impassiveness. The main difference that Serafino finds between himself and other individuals is that he finds others as individuals but believes that he himself is just an object. Wanda Strauven says that Serafino's identity could not be detached from the handle he turns (Strauven, 127). He is an object, not a person and his identity depends on the identity of the object. And Fabrizio Denunzio remarks that Serafino Gubbio identifies himself with an object: his machine. (Denunzio, 191) One may add that even a machine has an identity but Serafino, as a part of a machine, has no identity far from that one defined by the machine. He has just a function. In the second section of the fourth notebook Serafino makes a comparison with his presence with Luisetta and three other persons in an automobile:

"She began to feel that my person was not necessary; but that my presence there had the necessity of a thing, which she as yet did not understand; and that I remained silent for that reason." (Ibid, 1178)¹

Serafino states that the young Luisetta at first knows him as one of those actors in the automobile who were speaking to each other. Afterward she realises that Serafino has no presence as a persona but as a thing. In fact Serafino's utility as thing is necessary and not his presence as a man whose qualities can relate him as a

1- Ora cominciava ad avvertire che per questi altri ed anche per lei (in confuso) non ero propriamente uno. Cominciava ad avvertire, che la mia persona non era necessaria; ma che la mia presenza li aveva la necessità d'una cosa, ch'ella ancora non comprendeva; e che stavo così muto per questo.

human being. Stella M. John says that Serafino depicts himself as someone apart from society and estranged from others. (M. John, 52) Those present in the automobile can speak because they are persons but Serafino with his necessity of being a thing should be mute. This is the frustration of a man who subjugated his humanity to the machine and has been reduced to a mute object. Here Pirandello emphasises the alienation of man. The automobile can be considered as a metaphor in which an alienated camera man cannot be in touch with other individuals. The responsibility of alienation is attributed to the mechanised society as the source of alienation.

Once in *The late Mattia Pascal*, Pirandello condemned the machinery of being unable to generate happiness. In *The Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio the Operator of Cinematograph* the author deals again with antithesis between the machine and human nature. All actors of the Kosmograph studio travel with their own motor cars. But Serafino does not like to travel with motor cars which the film studio Kosmograph offers to actors. Travelling with cars does not let him see the beauty of trees on the roadside. He knows that instead of that beauty he will see shortly a monotonous and tedious green strip. Trees on the roadside which Serafino likes to see symbolises a peaceful and natural life that can provide enough happiness:

I, [...], am still here; I can console myself for my slow progress by admiring one by one, at my leisure, these great green plane trees by the roadside, not uprooted by the hurricane of your passage, but firmly planted in the ground, which turn towards me at every breath of wind in the gold of the sunlight between their dark boughs a cool patch of violet shadow: giants of the road, halted in file, ever so many of them, the open and uplift on muscular arms their huge palpitating wreaths of foliage to the sky(Pirandello, 1162).¹

And the tiresome strip of trees and other objects give a frightening sensation of

1- Io, invece, ecco qua, posso consolarmi della lentezza ammirando a uno a uno, riposatamente, questi grandi platani verdi del viale, non strappati dalla vostra furia, ma ben piantati qua, che volgono a un soffio d'aria nell'oro del sole tra i bigi rami un fresco d'ombra violacea: giganti della strada, in fila, tanti, aprono e reggono con poderose braccia le immense corone palpitanti al cielo.

losing in speed. Pirandello focuses on the speed as a result of machinery in order to remind us of what we lose: nature. The silence of a natural and peaceful life has been broken by the sonorous noise of the engines of those motorcars the actors use for travel. In this novel Pirandello leads us to probe into the condition of human life. If in *The Late Mattia Pascal* a little canary imprisoned in a cage reminds the reader of the myth of freedom, here in Serafino's diary book the reader finds all humanity totally entrapped in a huge cage. This cage of machinery not only embraces human being but also deprives him of all human senses. The problem is that the mechanism of modern life is based on those substantial elements that remain exactly on the opposite side of a simple life. The aspect of this mechanism will certainly eradicate those symbols through which man can refer to his nature. The row of beautiful shady trees changes into a humdrum strip. With this instance Pirandello invokes the reader's mind to think about the noise of the machine and factories that completely veil the voice of birds and other elements of natural life.

The machine deprives human being of any human sense so that man becomes merely a contemplator and a simple observer who does not show any reaction in circumstances. According to man's nature, in an emotional scene, in an exciting situation or even in a frightening circumstance, man's various senses should be reactive. But when mechanization devours all these senses man's reaction becomes mutinous. Ugo Olivieri reasonably argues that Serafino Gubbio loses all ties with his natural life in order to become a mute and alienated witness of a modern world dominated by technique. (Olivieri, 103) This is what Serafino testifies in that frightening scene where the beautiful actress Nestoroff and the actor Aldo Nuto die. Serafino stays in a cage displayed for the operator; he observes the scene without any reaction raised from human senses and captures mechanically the tragic scene by his camera. By describing Serafino in his cage, Pirandello exposes the deep contrast between man and his position in a mechanical system. In that cage Serafino lives out of time and also out of that common life with others. Without feeling and without any human senses the character's brain has no function, he does not think and his heart never comes to be impressed by any emotional scene. He is a simple

crank and his eyes resemble a camera that does not lead to his heart whatever, though exciting, he encounters. Without any passion, compassion or ambition Serafino becomes a simple crank, a cold and impassive part of the machine. Douglas Radcliff-Umstead states that Serafino Gubbio is a dutiful servant of the life-killing machine. (Radcliff-Umstead, 251) Serafino's instance explicitly shows that a dehumanised crank loses any possibility of being in communication with other individuals. If the relationship between the machine and man is essentially like that of an oppressor and a victim- or as the relationship between a devourer and a prey- the relationship between a victim and other people can be seen as that one of between a dead impassive individual with people who still have no conscience for dehumanisation. The machine withdraws those qualities of man that enable him to meet human needs or desires, those features that enhance his life. In this novel the impossibility of being in logical communication with other individuals does not derive from the eccentricity of life or multiplicity of personalities- an important issue focused on by Pirandello in his other novels such as *One, None and a Hundred Thousand*- but it has emanated from dehumanisation that deprives man of his individuality. Like a cold instrument man is devoid of any human senses and, as much as life and vitality is concerned he is dead. (Dombroski, 1994) In this world man is not eligible to fabricate his illusion and to build a fictitious world in order to put up with absurd life. He just serves machine as merely as a tiny part that in the next future will have not any successful function even for the machine. The vital force of self-creation that enables man to justify his existence comes to be denied by the machine. By presenting Serafino's substantial transformation into a simple instrument Pirandello endeavours to testify verifiable facts that in the modern world of industrialization man is in danger being dehumanized by the machine. Unlike what the reader can encounter in Pirandello's other novels such as *The Ltae Mattia Pascal* and *One, None and a Hundred Thousand*, in this novel the author makes use of a traditional literary style by presenting Serafino as a traditional narrative subject. Unlike Mattia Pascal of *The Ltae Mattia Pascal* and Vitangelo Moscarda of *One, None and a Hundred Thousand*, whose subjective position depends on the view

point of the other individuals, Serafino's subjection can be nullified by insatiable and encompassing covetousness of the machine that has a strong desire to possess the control of human existence.

An absurd coexistence between man and the machine

Serafino's attempt to write his diary is an attempt to make evident human feeling deformed by the voracity of the machine. In order to provide a reliable proof of dehumanization Serafino should objectivise himself as a crank. In fact a subject substance has been transformed into an object matter because of what the character wants to expose as the process of dehumanization. What the machine deforms with cruelty is not Serafino himself, but his subjective human substances such as feeling, love. In a likely metempsychosis Serafino's human substances pass into the body of a crank.

The highest point of the novel appears in the final pages where the ever-contrasting coexistence between man and the machine emerge in the scene. The beautiful actress Varia Nestoroff and a tiger as symbols of naturality of life encounter the fierce nature of two rapacious machines: The gun and camera. Varia Nestoroff reminds the reader of man's freedom entrapped by a film studio. She takes part in movies just in order to carry her life, and Anthony Caputi sees her as a victim of her helplessness. (Caputi, 251) She does not play role by any potential or instinctual force. Like Nestoroff, the tiger, too, is inflicted the compulsory presence in a film studio. Nestoroff is the prisoner of her mind undermined by the authorities of the Kosmograpf movie studio and the tiger appears in a cage built by the machine. In this scene Pirandello shows how the insatiable voracity of the machine devours human life. The gun kills Nestoroff and tiger and Serafino the camera man captures this tragedy with his camera without any reaction. The prominent importance of this section exists in Serafino's confession when he introduces himself as the slave of the camera:

"And I began to turn the handle [...]My hand was impassively keeping the time that I had set for its movement, faster, slower, dead slow, as though my will had

flowed down--firm, lucid, inflexible--into my wrist, and from there had assumed entire control, leaving my brain free to think, my heart to feel; so that my hand continued to obey even when with a pang of terror I saw Nuti take his aim from the beast and slowly turn the muzzle of his rifle towards the spot where a moment earlier he had opened a loophole among the boughs, and fire, and the tiger immediately spring upon him and become merged with him, before my eyes, in a horrible writhing mass. Drowning the most deafening shouts that came from all the actors outside the cage as they ran instinctively towards the Nestoroff who had fallen at the shot, drowning the cries of Carlo Ferro, I heard there in the cage the deep growl of the beast and the horrible gasp of the man as he lay helpless in its fangs, in its claws, which were tearing his throat and chest; I heard, I heard, I kept on hearing above that growl, above that gasp, the continuous ticking of the machine, the handle of which my hand, alone, of its own accord, still kept on turning;"(Pirandello, 1274)¹

Serafino's identity no longer differs from that of a camera and his existence appears as part of the camera's existence and function. In fact Serafino's human substance is amazingly incorporated into the mechanical function of a machine. For this reason Guido Baldi expresses that the main issue of the novel concentrates on the enslavement of man against the machine. (Baldi, 123) Serafino claims to be perfect not as a human being but as a component of a machine. Here Pirandello leads to a contrast between the machine and humanity to the highest point: the

1- "E io mi misi a girare la manovella,[...] La mia mano obbediva impassibile alla misura che io imponevo al movimento, più presto, più piano, pianissimo, come se la volontà mi fosse scesa - ferma, lucida, inflessibile - nel polso, e da qui governasse lei sola, lasciandomi libero il cervello di pensare, il cuore di sentire; così che seguitò la mano a obbedire anche quando con terrore io vidi il Nuti distrarre dalla belva la mira e volgere lentamente la punta del fucile là dove poc'anzi aveva aperto tra le frondi lo spiraglio, e sparare, e la tigre subito dopo lanciarsi su lui e con lui mescolarsi, sotto gli occhi miei, in un orribile groviglio. Più forti delle grida altissime levate da tutti gli attori fuori della gabbia accorrenti istintivamente verso la Nestoroff caduta al colpo, più forti degli urli di Carlo Ferro, io udivo qua nella gabbia il sordo ruglio della belva e l'affanno orrendo dell'uomo che s'era abbandonato alle zanne, agli artigli di quella, che gli squarciavano la gola e il petto; udivo, udivo, seguitavo a udire su quel ruglio, su quell'affanno là, il ticchettio continuo della macchinetta, di cui la mia mano, sola, da sé, ancora, seguitava a girare la manovella."

machine at first deprives man of his humanity and then makes him become as a component of itself.

The diary of Serafino Gubbio not only depicts the process of dehumanization but also exhibits an encompassing moral void. Once the machine is made, it needs to devour man's life and soul to act. Pirandello puts his stress on this importance that all our souls will be moulded in the same style so that if we put them on top of one another we can build a pyramid which can reach up to the stars. Serafino cannot

avoid his anger, and pity as well, when he realises the actors of film studio submit themselves to the manufactured godhead of Kosmogroph owing to their capricious ambition for wealth. This is a bitter trade in which man is caught. Based on the regulation of this treatment, man's feeling comes to be considered as a useless thing that has no value. For this reason Serafino looks at people and at the airs they have and listen to them but he cannot believe in the reality of what he encounters. In *The Late Mattia Pascal* Pirandello wonders if the automation can provide happiness but here in this novel the author is convinced that modern civilization destroys human life. Pirandello affirms that a mechanism which can work itself without the interference of man, will be substituted by man. Man no longer will be of use and gradually the machine will eliminate him.

As mentioned above, since the first page of his novel, Pirandello places his emphasis on the machine as the source of man's alienation in modern society. The protagonist proclaims against the mechanism of industrialization that restlessly occupies man's life without offering any rest. The machine changes the quality of life and *fragore* (clamour) and *vertigine* (dizziness) (ibid,1109) become its inseparable features. These ambiguous features degrade the ingenuity of man in understanding the complicatedness of mechanised life. Serafino prefers to confess in the first page of his notebook the reasons for deciding to write down his experiences. In the contrast between humanity and the devouring machine, this is man that will certainly be defeated. His inability in defending his human qualities and senses against the devastating power of the machine brings about man's madness. The character asks himself whether the clamorous machinery of life the day to day

becomes more complicated and whether it has not degraded man to a condition of madness which he must break out of and destroy everything (ibid, 110). Indeed Serafino's notebooks present his outburst through which he not only makes reflections of his wretched plight but also of those victims who, like Serafino, are condemned to be nothing more than a silent hand in favourite of the machine. I should agree with Roberto Alonge who states that the controversial polemic of the novel is not directed completely against the cinema (Alonge, 175) It may be truism to say that in Serafino's notebooks cinema can somehow be the symbol of an artificial form of art. It exposes the character's anxieties about daily industrialization seems to become more developed and complicated. Not cinema itself but cinematography as an industry and clamorous and dizzy mechanism of life brings about man's folly.

Serafino's nickname emanates from his role of automaton turning the crank without saying anything and without any eventual intervention. In fact the movie camera kills the life of two groups. At first Serafino who bends over the life-devourer machine becomes a mere silent hand with only a duty of turning the machine. And then the camera detaches the actors from their vitalities by showing them as void images on screen. Pirandello stresses that man in his industrialised life should submit all his innate powers to the power of the machine. In fact the machine has no faith in man's creativity. When Serafino starts to operate the camera his eyes should follow the cold and indifferent eye of the machine. Man's eye is able to both capture and comment on life but a camera's eye only provides a dim and provisional draw of a scene devoid of any emotion. But this is man who should suppress his emotion in order to become an impassive thing. The camera imposes its mechanical function on man's emotion, feeling and senses. After arriving at the state of a passive handle Serafino begins to record life. And his records are reflected in his notebooks. Here the character's act resembles the function of a movie camera. A movie camera detaches life from itself as the machine records and finally reflects life deprived of its vitality on the screen. Serafino, too, records life and expresses it in the fragmented pages of his notebooks. Both the movie camera and the character

act as an indicator that shows impassively a detached and abstracted image of life.

A glance at Pirandello's novels shows that the author believes in the alienation of the character in case of being absent from society. In fact the temporary non-existence of man results in the loss of those qualities which relate him to a particular place or atmosphere. In a psychoanalytical investigation made in the sixth book of Serafino the author emphasises a new feature in presenting this issue. After living with the memory of his grandfather's house, it happens that Serafino visits the villa. At first he finds everything extremely changed but then he admits that the reality of the place has not changed and this is Serafino who has undergone by bestowing his humanity to the machine. The confusing and depressing fact is that the character does not know exactly whether he is changed or things have changed. The character makes a vain endeavour to create a sincere relationship with all those things which form his memorial life. Even a trivial memory of Serafino's sweet past failed to relive or to revive that lost period because of his change:

"I had rung the bell. But sound was completely different. I could not realize that I was changed or sound of the bell was changed. How sad it was!"(Pirandello, 1235)¹

In his conversation with the tigress that the Kosmograph Studio bought to be used in a film, Serafino questions the culpable fierceness of man that with making use of the machine as instrument kills the innocent fierceness of nature. The animal's fierceness derives from his nature but man's fierceness emanates from his self-indulgence commented as self-defence:

"You cannot remain here on any other terms. Either you must be imprisoned like this, or you must be killed; because your ferocity—we quite understand—is innocent; nature has implanted it in you, and you, in employing it, are obeying nature and cannot feel any remorse. We cannot endure that you, after a gory feast, should be able to sleep calmly. Your very innocence makes us innocent of your death, when we inflict it in self-defence. We can kill you, and then, like you, sleep

1- "Sonai il campanello. Un altro suono. Ma ormai non sapevo più se dipendesse da me o perché il campanello era un altro. Che tristezza!"

calmly. But out there, in the savage lands, where you do not allow any stranger to pass; not here, not here, where you have not come of your own accord, for your own pleasure. The beautiful, ingenuous innocence of your ferocity makes the iniquity of ours seem disgusting here. We seek to defend ourselves against you, after bringing you here, for our pleasure, and we keep you in prison: this is no longer your kind of ferocity; it is a treacherous ferocity! But we know, you may be sure, we know how to go even farther, to do better still: we shall kill you for amusement, stupidly". (ibid, 1254)¹

Human beings destroy nature just for the simple reason of fun. The impassiveness of man brings him to watch the destruction of nature and there is not any connotation that can imply his pity or remorse. In fact this is man that by submitting himself to a machine's determination endeavors to exercise the machine's destructive power on nature. Thus what is more salient is man's impassibility in his cooperation with the tyranny of machine. Serafino's stress is shown on some words like "death" "kill" and he emphasizes that the tigress's death enables the "pretty machine" to extract profit. Pirandello shows the narrator as an ill character who enjoys his role of being an impassive servant:

"You stare. At what do you stare, you beautiful, innocent creature! That is just how things stand. You are here for no other purpose. And I who love and admire you, when they kill you, shall be _impassively turning the handle of this pretty machine here, do you see? They have invented it. It has to act; it has to eat. It eats everything, whatever stupidity they may set before it. It will eat you too; it eats everything, I tell you! And I am its servant. I shall come and plant it closer to you,

1- "Tu qua non puoi stare altrimenti. O così imprigionata, o bisogna che tu sia uccisa; perché la tua ferocia - lo intendiamo - è innocente: la natura l'ha messa in te, e tu, adoprandola, ubbidisci a lei e non puoi avere rimorsi. Noi non possiamo tollerare che tu, dopo un pasto sanguinoso, possa dormire tranquillamente. La tua stessa innocenza fa innocenti noi della tua uccisione, quand'è per nostra difesa. Possiamo ucciderti, e poi, come te, dormire tranquillamente. Ma là, nelle terre selvagge, ove tu non ammetti che altri passi; non qua, non qua ove tu non sia venuta da te, per tuo piacere. La bella innocenza ingenua della tua ferocia rende qua nauseosa l'iniquità della nostra. Vogliamo difenderci da te, dopo averti portata qua, per nostro piacere, e ti teniamo in prigione: questa non è più la tua ferocia; quest'è ferocia perfida!"

when you, mortally wounded, are writhing in your last agony. Ah, do not fear, it will extract the utmost penny of profit from your death! It does not have the luck to taste such a dinner every day. You can have that consolation. And, if you like, another as well". (ibid, 1254)¹

The apogee of the character's impassibility has been embodied by his insisting in getting closer to the tigress when she will be mortally wounded in order to plant his machine. Serafino's grating depiction of the machine's pitilessness and fierceness along with man's passiveness continues when he ironically and satirically expresses that the tiger-skin will be presumably for Nestoroff the actress. She can use it as a costly rug under her little feet.

The silence of things which Serafino finally attains shows the protagonist's endeavour to escape from the supremacy of the machine. Here I should refer to Ganeri's comment on this Pirandellian character. Ganeri sees Serafino as a little angel in a very small land who is on the exact opposite side of a huge industrialization. (Ganeri, 152) He is looking for a quiet home in sunlight, city empty of machine at night and a countryside far from the city where the noise of automobiles cannot break the silence. But finally he decides to have a mute presence. He prefers to speak to no one and his colleagues in the Kosmograph studio do not speak to him. They only convey to the protagonist those orders he can do without the necessity of giving any explanation. Douglass Radcliff-Umstead denotes that silence is a sentence that condemns Serafino. (Radcliff-Umstead, 267) The critic adds that the supremacy of the machine makes the character go berserk and writing notebooks is the result of his angry outcry. One may add that Serafino's being completely a mute presence can be considered as his reaction against the

1- "Guardi? Che guardi, bella belva innocente? È proprio così. Non sei qua per altro. E io, che t'amo e t'ammiro, quando t'uccideranno, girerò impassibile la manovella di questa graziosa macchinetta qua, la vedi? L'hanno inventata. Bisogna che agisca; bisogna che mangi. Mangia tutto, qualunque stupidità le mettano davanti. Mangerà anche te; mangia tutto, ti dico! E io la servo. Verrò a collocartela più da presso, quando tu, colpita a morte, darai gli ultimi tratti. Ah, non dubitare, ricaverà dalla tua morte tutto il profitto possibile! Non le accade mica di gustar tutti i giorni un pasto simile. Puoi aver questa consolazione. E, se vuoi, anche un'altra".

development of the machine as well as his attempt to compose the notebooks shows his outburst. With his silence Serafino can become a perfect automaton who should just turn the handle of camera. In fact silence indicates a process in which man undergoes a deep transition and passes from human being to the automaton. In this process man loses his human quality to become an impassive piece suitable for the machine. Indeed the protagonist's silence is a way he chooses in order to put up with the agony of living. On the other hand it is the silence that enables Serafino to contemplate impassively the grating scene of man's mutilation caused by the machine. Vila Fortuneti rightly says that Serafino Gubbio shows a dissociated and divided inner self since he passively witnesses on one hand, and criticizes society on the other hand. (Fortuneti, 277).

Conclusion

According to what Serafino Gubbio discusses in his diary, "life" and the "machine" are two different words that usually are referred to with two different meanings. Life refers to the natural origin of man and the machine concerns an industry that, with its insatiable voracity, devours man's life. There is something that, I would dare to say, the ambiguous conception that Serafino gives of life. As far as the machine is concerned, Serafino Gubbio gives a precise definition of machinery and shows explicitly how man becomes one of the trivial parts of the machine that make it work. But the novel does not focus on the meaning of some words such as "life" "humanity" and "creativity". What is the function of man's creativity that comes to be annulled by the machine? Is humanity a common quality of man's generation or are those individuals who avail themselves of humoristic vision to allowed criticize the modern world?

To sum up, the pathetic life of man starts when his life comes to be undermined by a mechanical system of life. Industrialization does not bring happiness for man but makes him become a component of the machine. In modern society and in life based on industrialization' vitality of life is completely perished and existence depends merely on the function of machines.

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