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**HUMAN AS A TRAGIC HERO: THE UNCANNINESS OF BEING**

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HUMAN AS A TRAGIC HERO: THE UNCANNINESS OF BEING

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- 1) Sigmund Freud
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- 3) Max Frisch
- 4) Homo Faber
- 5) Alienation

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## **ABSTRACT**

The main motive behind writing this thesis was to associate the famous novel *Homo Faber* (1957) by Max Frisch, one of the most important names of German literature, with the psychological concept of the ‘uncanny’, which was first fixed by Sigmund Freud in his essay *Das Unheimliche* (1919) and to analyze it in the context of the tragedy of modern man. *Homo Faber* was written after World War II, in an era where scientific and technological progresses had a great importance. Against this background, the novel portrays the process of identity building of an individual, the role s/he was given by the society, his/her conflict with nature and with himself/herself, and as the final result the ‘alienation’ process as a criticism of modernity. The analysis of the content, the characters and the transformation of the protagonist were adopted as the methodology of the thesis. This analysis shows us in the context of ‘uncanny’, how modern man gets alienated from his/her own nature and identity and the unavoidable tragedy s/he experiences in the end by surrendering to technology.

### **Keywords:**

- 1) Sigmund Freud
- 2) Uncanny
- 3) Max Frisch
- 4) Homo Faber
- 5) Alienation

## ÖZET

Bu tezin yazılmasındaki temel amaç, Almanca edebiyatın önemli isimlerinden İsviçreli yazar Max Frisch'in 1957 yılına ait ünlü eseri *Homo Faber*'i, Sigmund Freud'un 1919'da kaleme aldığı *Das Unheimliche* makalesinin bel kemiği olan 'Unheimlichkeit' (tekinsizlik) kavramı çerçevesinde ele alarak eseri, modern insanın trajedisi olarak incelemektir. *Homo Faber*, yazıldığı İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası, bilimsel ilerleme ve teknolojinin tek geçer akçe olduğu dönem itibarıyla, bireyin kimliğini oluşturma süreci, toplum tarafından kendine biçilen rol ve doğa/kendi doğası ile yaşadığı çatışma ve nihayetinde vuku bulan yabancılaşma sürecini etkin ve eleştirel bir anlatımla ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışmada yöntem olarak edebi metin olay örgüsü, karakter analizleri ve roman kahramanının dönüşüm süreci bağlamında incelenmiş ve 'tekinsizlik' kavramı üzerinden, modern insanın teknolojiye boyun eğerek kendi doğasına nasıl yabancılaştığı, benliğini nasıl ötekileştirdiği ve sonunda yaşadığı kaçınılmaz trajedi ele alınmıştır.

### **Anahtar Kelimeler:**

- 1) Sigmund Freud
- 2) Tekinsizlik
- 3) Max Frisch
- 4) Homo Faber
- 5) Yabancılaşma

## INTRODUCTION

ἀλλ' ἐξ ὑπαρχῆς αὐθις αὐτ' ἐγὼ φανῶ<sup>1</sup>

Ambiguity and reversal in *Oedipus Rex* are discussed in a part of *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* that is the joint work of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet.<sup>2</sup> Vernant and Vidal-Naquet state that we can understand the “It is I who will bring the criminal to light” but also “I shall discover myself to be the criminal”<sup>3</sup> with the expression “ἐγὼ φανῶ” (egō phanō) in “By going right back, in my turn, to the beginning [of the events that have remained unknown] I am the one who will bring them to light [ἐγὼ φανῶ]”, sentences said by King Oedipus at the beginning of the play with a considerable determination and pride while discussing who killed Laios in a mourning and hurry. This ambiguity in words of Oedipus (not known by him yet) is the ‘Double’, enigmatic side of his own existence. This Corinthian foreigner rescuing Thebai by giving correct answer to riddle of Sphinx, and enshrined people’s memories while being announced as the new king, is face-to-face with a new riddle whose answer is himself: Who is the killer of Laios? Vernant and Vidal-Naquet provide Aristotle’s opinion regarding the tragic fiction<sup>4</sup>: According to Aristotle, tragic fiction consists of ‘recognition’ and ‘peripeteia’ elements as well as being ‘pathetic’ and recognition in *Oedipus Rex* is the most beautiful one, however: “... it coincides with the peripeteia.”<sup>5</sup> Recognition in Oedipus is not towards any other person than himself and he shall learn that the killer is himself after reaching the answer of the riddle.

Aristotle defines the tragic hero as: “... a man who is neither a paragon of virtue and justice nor undergoes the change to misfortune through any real badness or wickedness but because of some mistake.”<sup>6</sup> Purpose of this thesis is to

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<sup>1</sup> Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, trans. Sir George Young (Dover Publications, 2012), 132.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant & Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, translated by Janet Lloyd (New York: ZONE BOOKS, 2006), 118-124.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, ed. Gerald F. Else (University of Michigan Press, 1967), 32-33.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 38.



examine the piece as a tragedy of modern humans by examining the famous novel *Homo Faber* of Max Frisch by employing Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny. In this context, protagonist Walter Faber bears the role of the tragic hero of the modern age. However, there is no doubt that it is a very contradictory question that how Faber who is alienated to his own nature by surrendering into the instrumental rationality and technology following enlightenment, marginalized his own ego and consequently faced with the inevitable one fits "tragic hero" definition of Aristotle. In spite of all these discussions, Walter Faber character is the incarnation of uncanniness of existence. The most important factor combining Oedipus and Faber on the same plane is the tragic flaw (hamartia) which caused by their 'hubris'. After the 'Oracle of Delphi' tells him that he shall kill his father and marry his mother, Oedipus believes that he will be able to control his faith and make intervention to 'divine order' by leaving Corinth. However, this arrogance (hubris) leads him into a disaster. Engineer Faber not believing in providence and fate, thinks that he can continue his life with mathematical formulas and possibility calculations and uses to these possibility calculations when he suspects that the girl he has an emotional intimacy may be his own daughter. Faber's arrogance hides between numbers in his instrumental rationality. Oedipus and Faber learn that the killer is themselves when they finally open their blinded eyes to the truth.

Ambiguity and the 'Double' situation experienced by the tragic hero necessarily shift us into the concept of the uncanny (Unheimlichkeit). The uncanniness created by the 'Double' was comprehensively examined by the Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank - prior to Sigmund Freud.<sup>7</sup> Rank handles the relation of the 'Double' with our reflection on the mirror, shadows, protective spirits, immaterial belief and the fear of death. He believes that the 'Double' is an assurance against the destruction of Ego, denial of death in fact. Immortal spirit consolation of human is solely this 'Double' finding. However, Rank states that the image of this 'Double' was reversed upon completion of the childhood period.

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<sup>7</sup> Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, translated and edited by Harry Tucker Jr. (The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

The 'Double', as the assurance of immortality, becomes an uncanny harbinger of death. Like what happened to Oedipus and Walter Faber who are faced with their killer 'Doubles' at the end...

Sigmund Freud, as one of the main actors of our study, handled the concept of the uncanny (Unheimlichkeit) as one of the main columns of this thesis for the first time while making studies on psychological aspects of the creation process. Nevertheless, we cannot exclude Max Frisch -creator of *Homo Faber*- from this study. Therefore, the life story of Max Frisch is given in the first part of thesis comprising of four main parts, and *Homo Faber* was examined as an autobiographical novel. For this, the conflicts in Max Frisch's private life, the travel routes of Frisch and Faber and of course, the relation of Frisch with technology are handled. The second part is assigned to the content, language and structural analysis to approach the novel with a deep perspective. Initially, the formal characteristics of the novel are examined, and then the concept of time is discussed. Language and syntax analysis followed thereafter. The third part, focusing on the concept of the uncanny, makes up the backbone of the thesis. After providing a brief biography of Sigmund Freud in this part, the concept of the uncanny was subject to a detailed analysis in his *Das Unheimliche* article written in 1919. In the fourth part, while expressing alienation process of Faber within the context of relation between *Homo Faber* and Unheimlichkeit (uncanniness), the answers are searched for questions of how and why the protagonist became the 'Other' of himself. This chapter, divided into many sub-topics, provides ideas of Zygmunt Bauman and Adorno & Horkheimer regarding Enlightenment and modernity while focusing on Faber's relation with technology and nature, examines the role of mysticism, art and belief in novel's nature and technology conflict and finally analyzes the relation of the minor characters within the technology and tries to provide a new perspective to the uncanniness theme in the novel. In the conclusion chapter, the uncanniness of Walter Faber's being whose eyes are blinded to the truth and became an alien to himself as a general summary is discussed and in the final chapter the question of to what extent the modern human being fulfilled the 'tragic hero' definition is answered.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MAX FRISCH (1919-1991) AND 'HOMO FABER'**

The Swiss novelist and architect Max Frisch was born in 1911 in Zurich, as the second son of the architect Franz Bruno Frisch and Karolina Bettina. Although they were a modest family with financial difficulties, there is no information about any particular hardship during Max Frisch's childhood. Frisch's relationship with his father was emotionally distant, but he was very close to his mother. He was always fascinated by the adventurous spirit and wanderlust of his mother. Karolina Frisch, who was a governess in Russia for a while, told him stories about exotic lands. Max Frisch would always mention her mother with appreciation.

After Frisch completed his secondary education between the years of 1924 and 1930, he graduated with a maturity diploma and started his education in German literature and linguistics at the University of Zurich. Unfortunately, he understood that he would not find the real deal he was looking for here and he experienced a disappointment: How could he become writer? However, this disappointment did not deter him from his passion and his first article was published in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, in his freshman year at college.

The death of his father caused serious problems in the family and Frisch had to leave the college and he started to focus on his career in journalism in to support himself and his mother financially. When he set out a big journey in 1933 as the reporter for the World Ice Hockey Championship, which involved travelling to Budapest, Belgrade, Istanbul, Athens and Rome, one of his biggest dreams come true. His experiences about this extensive tour constituted the backbone of his first novel *Jürg Reinhard: A Fateful Summer Journey*, which was published in 1934.

In the summer of 1934 he met Käte Rubensohn, who was a Jewish student from Berlin and he fell in love with her. After a two-year relationship he proposed marriage to her, but he was rejected. This is because Käte believed that the reason of this proposal was not love, but it was rather compassion, moreover the feeling of benefaction. In 1939, the relationship ended.

In the 1930s, Frisch has not had a critical political thought yet; this would develop in the next ten years. However, because of his love to Käte Rubensohn, he already knew that he was far away from having sympathy for National Socialism. In 1935, Frisch visited the Weimar Republic for the first time and he wrote down the things which he experienced in this trip in his book of *Short Diary of a German Trip*.

After an unsuccessful novel, *An Answer from the Silence*, and financial difficulties he burned all the things he wrote till that day and gave up writing. With a scholarship from a friend, he started with architectural education at the ETH Zurich in 1936 and he was graduated in 1941 with a Master Degree of Architecture. However, he could not forget his writing passion completely.

Then, the war broke out. Frisch joined the army after the oath of allegiance in Tessin. During his service, (1939-1945) he kept a diary, which was published under the title of *Pages from the Bread-bag*.

The year 1942 was very successful in terms of Frisch's career as well as his private life. On the 30<sup>th</sup> July, he married her coworker, Getrude Anna Constanze von Meyenburg and they had one son and two daughters.

The discrepancy between the middle-class life and the artistic existence was Frisch's core problem throughout his life. In his novel, which was published in 1944, *I adore that which burns me* discussed this ambiguity.

Frisch started to experience conflicts in his roles as an architect, a husband and a father. His writing passion weighed heavily and he spent most of his time in writing.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, in 1942, he won the architectural competition to design the new swimming pool in Zurich, which he also attained an award of 3,000 Swiss Francs. Now, he could have his own architecture office and he hired two employees. However, due to the war, the construction could only begin in 1947. The swimming pool, which was opened two years later, was Frisch's one and only big project.

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<sup>8</sup> Beatrice von Matt, *Mein Name ist Frisch: Begegnungen mit dem Autor und seinem Werk* (Zurich: Verlag Nagel&Kimche AG, 2011), 29.

Meanwhile, his first play *Santa Cruz* was published. The subject of *Santa Cruz* was a desperate, unhappy marriage as it was the same in *Bin or the Journey to Beijing*, in which he used the ‘first person point of view’. In the following years, his focus was on theatre. *Santa Cruz* and *Now they sing again* were among his first plays which were enacted.

In 1946, Max Frisch travelled to Germany, Italy and France. Next year, he attended Carl Zuckmayer’s premiere of *The Devil’s General* in Frankfurt and there he got acquainted with the young German publisher, Peter Suhrkamp, who was going to leave Verlag S. Fischer in 1950 and open his own publishing house. Besides Hesse and Brecht, Max Frisch was also one of the writers who supported Suhrkamp. His *Sketchbook 1946-1949* was published in 1950 by Suhrkamp.

Frisch, who travelled to Prague, Berlin and Warsaw in the year of 1948, worked on his new play. In *Count Öderland*, which was performed in 1951, he maintained his stance against the Swiss bourgeoisie clearly.

In the same year, he won the scholarship of the Rockefeller Foundation and he went to the United States and spent some time in New York and Mexico. He wrote *Don Juan or the Love of Geometry* in America and after his return to Switzerland, he began to work on his novel *I’m not Stiller*. As the novel was yet at the stage of a draft, Frisch began to break his ties from his everyday life. In 1955, he closed his architecture office and he got separated from his wife and started to work as a freelance writer.

In the following months, he began to work on his novel *Homo Faber*, which was published in 1957 and was seen as the complementary to *I’m not Stiller*. The novel, narrates the life of an engineer, absolute rationalist engineer, which consists of a tragedy.

In 1956, Frisch visited the United States again and participated in the International Design Conference in Aspen, Colorado. From there, he went to Mexico and Cuba. Then he travelled to Greece and Arabia. In 1957, his famous novel *Homo Faber* was published.

Frisch, who won the Georg Büchner Prize in 1958, was the first foreign winner of this prize. After a few months, he got acquainted with the writer

Ingeborg Bachmann. Frisch was already separated from his wife Gertrude, and in 1959, the couple got divorced. Although Bachmann refused a marriage contract, Frisch would go after her to Rome in 1960. In the next five years, their relationship became the center of Frisch's life. Although their love was quite strong, they also had many problems. Their relationship became problematic for both sides, and Frisch dealt with this conflict in his novel *Gantenbein/A Wilderness of Mirrors*.

In the summer of 1962, 51 year-old Frisch met Marianne Oellers, a student of Germanistic and Romance studies. Marianne was 28 years younger than Frisch. The couple got married in 1969.

In the following years, Frisch continued to travel around the world. He travelled to Israel in 1965. In 1966 and 1968 he travelled to USSR and Poland, in 1970 again to the United States and in 1975 to China. In 1984, he came back to Switzerland and lived there till his death. In the following year, his relationship with Karin Pilliod started.

In 1989, Frisch experienced a great trauma: He was diagnosed with colorectal cancer and could not be cured. After two years, on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1991, he passed away.

The main focus of Frisch's works is the individual, who makes for himself an idol<sup>9</sup>, which he/she assumes as 'alien', 'uncanny' as well as within him/herself and the consequences of this tendency, which usually ends with the physical and/or spiritual death. In this framework, one of the best examples that can be found is his novel *Homo Faber*, published in 1957. The protagonist Walter Faber, who is an engineer alienated from his own nature and identity and reduces the human identity to technological progress, has the leading role of a tragedy, when he faces with the true nature, feelings and love.

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<sup>9</sup> "You shall not make for yourself an idol.", Exod. 20:4 (New American Standard Bible)

## 1.1. AUTOBIOGRAPHIC MARKS IN ‘HOMO FABER’

This chapter will be dealing with two issues: to what extent, *Homo Faber* is an autobiographical novel and which aspects of Frisch’s life are echoed in the novel. The first factor, which attracts attention, is Max Frisch’s choice of his profession. Following his father, in 1936, Frisch had enrolled in the ETH Zurich, to study architecture, from which he was graduated in 1941. In the following year, he won an architectural design prize and was finally able to open his own architecture office. In the light of that information, it’s possible to say, that Frisch was a good and creative architect, who also handles mathematics well. The protagonist of his novel, Walter Faber, is also good at calculations; the life of this engineer is determined by mathematics and technology.<sup>10</sup> The character, who refuses fate, fortune and mysticism sharply, claims that he does not need them, mathematics is enough for him. Both the author of the novel and the protagonist built their lives on mathematics: “I don’t need any mystical explanation for the occurrence of the improbable; mathematics explains it adequately, as far as I’m concerned.”<sup>11</sup>

As noticed in the previous chapter, Max Frisch had been in all the main places, wandered around and saw them personally, as mentioned in his novel of *Homo Faber*. In 1957, the novel’s publication year, Max Frisch already travelled to Greece, United States, Mexico and Cuba. These travel destinations concurrence with the destinations in the novel of *Homo Faber*. At the beginning of the novel, Walter Faber was travelling from New York, the seat of UNESCO, to Caracas to make the installation of the turbines. That is to say, Walter Faber’s travel is also actually a business trip like the trip of Max Frisch, who participated in the International Design Conference in Aspen, Colorado, in 1957. And Frisch decided to travel to the Central America just like his protagonist Walter Faber, who changed his destination of the business trip and traveled to Guatemala for a private matter.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Max Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, trans. Michael Bullock (Penguin Books, 2006), 26.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

Another parallelism of Walter Faber and his creator Max Frisch is their age. Frisch was 48 years old by the publication date of the novel, and Walter Faber is 50.

The chronology of the novel is consistent with the reality. Not only Frisch but also Faber were faced with National Socialism, especially with anti-Semitism at the same age. Frisch experienced that during his trip to Germany in 1935 and there Faber learned what anti-Semitism by means of his half-Jewish girlfriend Hanna Landsberg.

Frisch's marital status and his relationships with women have also similarities with Walter Faber's as well. In 1954, Frisch was separated from Trudy von Meyenburg, with whom he married in 1942 and in 1957 - just before *Homo Faber* was published- he travelled with a girlfriend to Greece. The protagonist Walter Faber almost married his girlfriend Hanna Landsberg. Hanna refused the proposal, because she thought that the reason of this proposal was not love, but the idea of getting residence permit for the half-Jewish girlfriend in Switzerland: "I was only marrying her to prove I wasn't an anti-Semite, she said, and there was just nothing to be done."<sup>13</sup>

Faber meets Sabeth on a cruise to Europe for another business trip and he travels to Greece with her without knowing that she is his own daughter from Hanna.

The last similarity which should be noticed is that the same illness kills both Max Frisch and Walter Faber: Cancer. At the end of the novel, Walter Faber undergoes an operation for his stomach cancer, which probably will kill him; Max Frisch died 15 year after *Homo Faber* was published, over a long illness period, due to colorectal cancer.

To sum it up, it can be claimed that there are so many similarities between Max Frisch and Walter Faber. But it's not possible to reveal whether the author wanted to leave meaningful autobiographical traces during the process of creating his work, or only to spread small details between the lines.

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<sup>13</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report.*, 70.



## 1.2. TRAVEL ROUTES OF FRISCH AND FABER

In 1953, a period where Frisch earned his life not by writing but by architecture, he expressed his thoughts about himself, that he is a townsman, a nomad and not a farmer.<sup>14</sup>

Max Frisch's life and work were formed by his journeys, nay beginning from his childhood. When Frisch was a little child, her mother told him stories about her days in Russia and the idea of travelling fascinated him. This wanderlust would develop into a lifelong passion to know other countries and cultures in the world. Therefore, it is not surprising that he travelled to all the countries and cities which took part in his works.

Beyond the fact that his trips to the North- & Central America and Greece are consistent with Faber's destinations, their lust for travelling is also common. Obviously, one may notice a sort of restlessness at this point. Max Frisch's biography was shaped by his journeys to North- and Central America, Eastern Europe, Soviet Union, Germany and Italy. Walter Faber also travels a lot because of his job. Actually, throughout the whole novel he is on the way. The protagonist meets Sabeth on a cruise to Europe. The main events unfold during his trips.

Max Frisch was only 22 years old when he travelled as a reporter for the World Ice Hockey Championship to Corinth, Budapest, Belgrade, Istanbul, Athens and Rome in 1933. In 1946, he was in Germany, Italy and France, and two years after that in Prague, Berlin and Warsaw. In 1951, he won the scholarship of the Rockefeller Foundation and he visited the United States and Mexico for a year. In 1955, he began working on his new novel *Homo Faber* and next year he participated in the International Design Conference in Aspen, Colorado. After the conference he travelled to Mexico and Cuba. Trips to Greece and Arabia followed it. In 1957, his famous novel *Homo Faber* was published. Despite his trips to Israel, Soviet Union, Poland, Japan and China reveal that he never lost his wanderlust in the following year. It is possible to say that those countries have no important places in terms of this thesis.

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<sup>14</sup> Julien Schütt, *Max Frisch: Biographie eines Aufstiegs* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2011), 67.

The more Max Frisch travelled, the more his vision became broader and his experiences grew richer. He conveyed his experiences into his works. Walter Faber is also travelling all the time due to his job. As an engineer working for UNESCO, he participates in many projects worldwide to aid the third world countries. In the novel, Faber's first trip is a flight from New York to Caracas, with a stopover in Houston. After a fuel supply, they move on to Caracas, but the plane crashes because of the engine failure in the Tamaulipas desert, in North Mexico. After spending 4 days in the desert, they are able to fly to Mexico. Faber decides here to postpone his business trip and travel with Herbert to Guatemala to visit Joachim, who is one of his old college friends. So, Herbert and Faber travel by train to Campeche, the nearest city to the tobacco plantation, which is run by Joachim. Once they arrive at the plantation, they find out that Joachim hung himself a while ago. Walter Faber goes to Caracas and then he returns to New York in a couple of days. Faber's next trip is an exceptional case. He decides to travel not by a plane but on a cruise ship. He arrives in Le Havre in Normandy, after a five-day cruise from New York. This trip has great importance since he meets his daughter for the first time, without knowing that she is his daughter and falls in love with her. Faber travels by train to Paris to find Sabeth, to whom he said goodbye on the boat. The two rent a car and travel through France (Avignon, Nimes, Arles, Marseille, Toulon), Italy (Pisa, Florence, Siena, Perugia, Arezzo, Orvieto, Assisi, Rome) and Greece (Patras, Corinth, Megara) to Athens where Sabeth's mother Hanna lives. After Sabeth's tragic death Faber leaves Europe and returns to New York. He flies via Miami to Caracas to complete the installation of the turbines: "This time I flew via Miami and Merida, Yucatan, where there is a plane to Caracas almost every day. I broke my journey at Merida (with stomach trouble)."<sup>15</sup>

Thus, Faber visits Palenque one more time to visit Herbert. After that, Walter Faber arrives in Caracas and because of his illness he has to stay there for two weeks. Now the 'report', 'first stop' of the novel, is written here.

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<sup>15</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report.*, 205.

Havana, Cuba, where he spends four days after his Caracas layover, is a very important terminal because it changes, moreover, converts Faber's philosophy of life (*Weltanschauung*). After the Havana vacation, Faber flies Lisbon to Dusseldorf via Lisbon and shows his Guatemala films. Then, he travels by train to Zurich. His last trip is like his first one by a plane: to Athens via the Alps.

The parallels between Faber and Frisch's travel destinations may not be ignored. Although their order and dates are different, both were in Germany, Italy (Florence, Siena, and Rome), France, Greece (Corinth, Athens) in Europe and in America, Mexico and Cuba. Max Frisch also lived in Rome (1960-1965), New York (1952) and Mexico (the fall of 1951) for a while.

From this point on, the question of what those countries and cities mean to Frisch and Faber will be dealt, also what the author experiences and his protagonist are in correlation with those.

It is possible to say that America was the source of inspiration for Frisch, if we take *Stiller*, *Homo Faber* and even *Montauk* into consideration. Frisch wrote to the Rockefeller Foundation in New York about his wish to know America in order to broaden his vision of life.<sup>16</sup>

At the beginning of the novel, Walter Faber was travelling from New York (America), the seat of UNESCO, to Caracas (Venezuela) to assemble turbines. It is to say that Walter Faber's travel is also a business trip like Max Frisch's, who participated in the International Design Conference in Aspen, Colorado in 1957. And after that, Frisch decided to travel to the Central America exactly like his protagonist Walter Faber. For Faber, New York embodies the modern world, where he is wrapped up with technology and feels himself secure; America is the land of progress and unlimited possibilities; therefore the first trip of the novel begins exactly here. Their first journey with Sabeth is however a road trip throughout France. In Paris, Faber goes to the Louvre, hoping to meet Sabeth and then he takes her to the opera. Cultural events and art accompanies them along

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<sup>16</sup> Max Frisch, *Jetzt ist Sehenszeit. Briefe, Notate, Dokumente* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1998), 113.

their whole trip in France. Faber 'lets' himself to this situation for the first time, nay for a woman. During this journey, this young woman opens Faber's eyes for the art and she redounds to enlarge his vision. All those will cause Faber to face the religion and mythology. And finally, their place of arrival, Greece, is a destination where art, culture and myth meet for Faber. He is now face to face with the things, which he forces back, declines, alienates, and defines as 'uncanny'. On the other hand, Greece has a great importance in terms of Faber meeting here his first love Hanna again and accepting the existence of his daughter, her death and of course his own death. Because of this, Greece is a place in the novel, where Faber's philosophy of life extremely changes.

Also, Max Frisch travelled to Greece with his girlfriend shortly after he left his family and after a while he got divorced from his wife officially. After his divorce, Frisch had many affairs. After a while, he married a college student, but this marriage was not to last. In this framework, it would not be a mistake to say that the journey to Greece was also a turning point in Frisch's life.

Another breaking point in Walter Faber's life is experienced in Cuba. It fascinates Faber, when he witnesses here even though how frugal the people are, they can still live in peace and without worries. In Cuba, he does the things which he has never done before. He decides to change his life and enjoy it, to resign, leave New York and marry Hanna. However, he feels in his bones that he does not have enough time for all of that and his stomach pain is not only due to stress. In Cuba, Faber begins to look around with brand new eyes and does not avoid his emotions and thoughts. He discovers the beauty of life and the wall, which he built against other people, starts to come apart. His opinion about America starts changing here. The feeling of Faber, who was a typical American at the beginning of the novel, about the "American way of life"<sup>17</sup> changes when he observes Americans from a different point of view. The new awareness of his mortality as a consequence of Sabeth's death has also an impact on him. The people, who moved into his apartment in New York, do not recognize him when he calls with pay phone since he does not belong there anymore.

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<sup>17</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report.*, 50.

The jungle in Guatemala is one of the most important places in the novel. It symbolizes the nature, the archaic one, the antique period which are standing against science, modern technology and the Enlightenment. Faber feels here a great deal of discomfort because he cannot control the nature and therefore he feels himself quite powerless against it. The conflict in Faber's soul will be examined explicitly in the fourth chapter.

### 1.3. FRISCH AND TECHNOLOGY

Max Frisch, just like Thomas Mann, dealt with the dilemma between bourgeois respectability and an artistic life style throughout his life. According to him, the combination of these two was impossible.

In 1936, Frisch enrolled to study architecture and he was graduated in 1941 with a Master's Degree of Architecture after he deleted the word 'author' from the 'occupation' section in his passport and burned everything he has written till that day. However, in 1955, when *Stiller* was just a manuscript, he changed his entire life and from then on, decided to exist only with his artistic identity. To fulfill this decision, he closed his architecture office and distanced himself from the mathematician in him. Of course, this conflict did not evaporate overnight; mathematics and technology continued to live in Frisch's works. In America, he wrote his play *Don Juan or the Love of Geometry*. The leading character is an insecure man, who searches for the truth and constancy in geometrical forms. After his return to Switzerland, Frisch starts working on *Stiller*, according to many literary critics a complementary to *Homo Faber*. The protagonist is a man who disappeared six years ago without leaving any trace and known by his wife, brother, lover and friends as the Swiss sculptor Eildhauer Stiller, however, he claims that he is not Stiller.

Yet *Homo Faber* is the most remarkable work of Max Frisch, in which the author clearly discusses the issue of the discipleship of the modern man to the scientific and technological progress. The engineer Walter Faber, who denies fate

and destiny and believes only in mathematics and statistics, has to experience that his scientific conviction fails in real life and even worse it destroys many things.

If we take the Frisch's first published journal (1946-1949) as reference, we see to what extent flying is related to the problem, how man would lose himself in the labyrinths of technology. His expressions about technology proves that Frisch's thoughts deal with technology and the fact, that the novel *Homo Faber* starts with a flight is a sign that we are standing on the brink of a new era. Because of this, the novel should not be read only either as a cultural criticism cult which created feverish discussion in 1950's, or as a critical manifesto to the world of machines and its creators and fans. Then Frisch was also fascinated by the technology of modern science and made the most of technological opportunities. During the two years he spent in America, Frisch was broadcasting his own program *Our man in America* about the cultural events, literature world, American theatre and his observations on everyday life at Zurich radio. He was sending his tape recordings by mail, which included the journals of his journeys and interviews. We have only two of his broadcasts today: A radio article entitled *Encounters with Negros* and a narration entitled *Orchids and Vultures*. In 1950s, in a world where television was not widespread, radio was a very important mass medium to reach millions. It is possible to consider Max Frisch's relation to radio as a pragmatic and strategic aspect.

However, the technical progresses of radio lead Frisch once or twice to pull his hair off. Some tape recordings were sent back from the editorial staff, because of 'technical issues'. The radio technicians had to warn their 'Man in America' about details of the radio several times. Rösler's letter on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December, 1951 is an obvious example for this situation: "Reminder: All of your recordings must be recorded by 19 cm/s=7.5 inch tape speed. We have problems lately by decoding your recordings."<sup>18</sup>

Some of Frisch's acts like *Rip van Winkle*, *The Fire Raisers* and *A Lance for Freedom* were also broadcasted as a radio drama on radio.

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<sup>18</sup> Frisch,.: *Jetzt ist Sehenszeit. Briefe, Notate, Dokumente*, 146.

To sum it up, the relationship of the reporter Frisch with the radio was a necessity. It did not change later on. Frisch, who was an experienced radio drama writer, confessed afterwards that he never owned a radio and did not listen to his own plays not even once.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HOMO FABER: CONTENT, LANGUAGE AND FORMAT ANALYSIS

In this chapter the formal features of the novel will be analyzed first, and then the time factor in the novel will be dealt. The analysis of the language and syntax will provide us a deeper understanding of the novel.

The structure of *Homo Faber* is divided into two 'stops'. The first 'stop', which was written in Caracas by Walter Faber between the dates of 21<sup>st</sup> of June and 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1957, narrates the events during the flight from New York to Caracas till Sabeth's accident and the arrival at the hospital. The second 'stop' was written at the hospital in Athens, where Walter Faber was diagnosed with stomach cancer and would be operated. This structural division is synchronized with the content. The first 'stop' narrates the events, whereas the second one deals with the effects of the things that have been lived.

The full title of the novel is also noticeable: *Homo Faber: A Report*. Walter Faber, who is an engineer, considers his writings as a 'report' rather than a journal. When he arrived in Caracas, he could not do anything but to lie down in a hotel room because of his acute stomach pain. Faber, who stays alone his lonesomeness and feelings, decides to write to Hanna at this point. However, since he does not know Hanna's current address, he thinks that it is a better idea to write a report than a letter: "I wanted to write to Hanna and started several letters, but I had no idea where Hanna was staying and there was nothing left for me to do (I had to do something in that hotel!) but to draw up a report, without sending it off."<sup>19</sup>

We could interpret it as a justified, but not a convincing explanation of Faber to himself about the question why he is writing this report. It is also possible to assert that the only reason of this report is his guilty conscience. In this way, he could recreate the events -to his self and to Hanna- to prove it that he has neither direct guilt in the incest nor the death of their daughter.

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<sup>19</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report.*, 211.



The Germanist Hans Geulen from Münster University also thinks that Faber wrote this ‘report’ to pay the price before Hanna, a kind of confession. However, the fact that the report is not written directly to Hanna is the reason behind Faber’s unwillingness to give anybody a ‘judge’ role.<sup>20</sup>

This is because Faber’s report is based on events from his point of view, which were manipulated, obfuscated, forgotten and revealed only piecemeal.<sup>21</sup> It is not surprising that *Homo Faber* was written in the form of a diary because the content of the novel and the reasons, which make Faber to write the events, are quite private and this ‘report’ was written without considering that it will be read by others. Diary is a literary form, which is not closed and completed, but rather it can always be widened.

The narrative technique of stream of consciousness, which was developed at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century by modernist novelists like James Joyce and Alfred Döblin, is what Frisch used frequently. He explained this choice in his *Sketchbook 1946-1949* that writing means understanding oneself. One has to keep a diary, because we live on a treadmill and have no hope to go back. Frisch thought that time does not transform us, but it only evolves us.<sup>22</sup>

Freud and psychoanalysis had a great effect on the modernist novel. The writer focuses on his inner world, to the emotions of his characters and thereby the plot has been taken a back seat. This fictional technique allows the reader to have the feeling of getting into the consciousness of the writer or characters and to feel their emotions, perceptions and reactions along with them. Geulen points out that fragmentary semiconscious and unconscious transfers allow many synchronous thoughts and stream of consciousness.<sup>23</sup>

*Homo Faber* is not Max Frisch’s first work, written in diary form. His *Sketchbook 1946-1949* was published in 1950 by Suhrkamp, which includes the writer’s observations, travel journals, essays and many elements which will appear in his future works. It is also a collected volume of Frisch’s various

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<sup>20</sup> Hans Geulen, *Max Frischs Homo Faber Studien und Interpretation* (De Gruyter, 2011), 48.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>22</sup> Max Frisch, *Sketchbook 1946-1949* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 22.

<sup>23</sup> Geulen, Ibid., 52.

manuscripts. Additionally, during his military service he also kept a diary, which was published under the name *Pages from the Bread-bag*. Consequently, the form of his novel was set to create a tremendous impression. Frisch wrote another diary: *Sketchbook 1966-1971*. The manuscripts of his various works like *Andorra*, *Rip van Winkle*, *The Fire Raisers* and *Count Öderland* can be found in those diaries. Frisch told that the diary form is the only prose form which suits him and just because of this he could not see beyond the end of nose.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is not a surprise that *Montauk*, *Stiller* and *Homo Faber* novels appear as diaries of their protagonists.

In *Homo Faber* the protagonist Walter Faber is the first-person narrator. The inner perspective of a diary-writer allows the reader to see the most radical and unfiltered subjectivity of the character which was introduced as the reality of a novel. The literary critic Volker Weidermann also thinks that the story in the novel is filtered by the protagonist Faber all the time and therefore, we have to speak of a subjective narrative, and not of an objective report.<sup>25</sup> All the events in the novel are narrated from Walter Faber's point of view. Nevertheless, the first-person narrator technique causes us to read the words of other characters from Faber's memories, perhaps from manipulated memories. Although the subheading, *A Report* creates an expectation of objectivity by the reader; however, it is not possible to find any signs of objectivity by the narration of the first-person.

The flashbacks and flashforwards, which were caused by the reason that *Homo Faber* narrates different time periods, make it difficult to find the reader his direction, but it is for sure that this technique strengthens the tension and the intensity of impressions. In literature, there is a difference between narrative time, the time a reader needs to read a text, and the narrated time, in other words, the duration of the events. There are cases that the narrative time and the narrated time synchronize, but the narrative time can be either longer or shorter than the narrated time. In the first case, we may speak of a time scale, which is used

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<sup>24</sup> Volker Weidermann, *Max Frisch: Sein Leben, seine Bücher* (btb Verlag, 2012), 210.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

mostly by the stream of consciousness. And in the second case, there is a time compression, in which the important events and processes are shortened or sometimes completely left off. In *Homo Faber*, the narrated time is longer than the narrative time since, Faber gathers his 'report' together with his thoughts, flashbacks and flashforwards. In the second 'stop' of the novel, which is in a way shorter than the first one, the narrative time and the narrated time are closer to each other and finally, there is a synchronicity.

As it was stated above, in the novel, besides the present time, there are also flashbacks. Those flashbacks narrate mostly Faber's time with Hanna, whom he met in 1936, but also the events of the short period before writing the diary. In this way, the reader can learn something about Faber's past life and the pre-events of the report. The flashforwards have the role of being the messengers of the events in the future, which are filtered by Faber's conscious and rise to the surface while writing the 'report'. The period, which starts with Faber's flight from New York and ends with Sabeth's death, was written in past perfect tense. In-between, we frequently read parts in present continuous tense, in which Faber tells about himself.

One may not forget that this fragmentary time structure, consisting of flashbacks and flashforwards, does not fit in with the principals of the report-genre and that Faber's report consists only of his everyday life. Although Faber's report starts like a usual report, the following comments, flashforwards to the tragic end, youth memories, the subjectivity of details and the accentuated 'need of telling' move the narrative away from being of a real report. It is possible to say that, in this way, Faber tries to escape from the reality. His non-chronological narrative makes jumps in time and the very fact skips a lot of important details in the narration, can be understood as an expression of the desperation caused by his guilty conscience. In order to damp this guilt complex, he can only write the details of Sabeth's accident after a really long time. One has to look at to the *Homo Faber's* language very closely to understand the protagonist and his Weltanschauung.

The language of the novel is close to the spoken language. Also, Geulen points out that Faber writes in a simple, everyday language.<sup>26</sup> The protagonist uses regularly slang expressions: “We were damn lucky, I must say.”<sup>27</sup> We have to say, that he uses this offhanded, slang language in order to humiliate the people: “Only our ruin-lover chatted a lot, (...).”<sup>28</sup> The Engineer Faber tries to express himself while speaking with others compact and objective as possible to convey only very important things. It will not be wrong to define Faber’s language as an engineer’s, scientist’s plain language, which only expresses the necessities. When we consider the novel as a narrative of a discreet man finding his tongue, the subtitle ‘report’ would be quite appropriate.

Although the novel was written by first-person narrator, Faber uses the German indefinite pronoun ‘man’ a lot, which we cannot see in the English translation of the novel. It is typical to use this pronoun in a report, when one mentions of himself. “I felt like a blind man.”<sup>29</sup>, “We spent the nights in the cabin.”<sup>30</sup>, “We got into our Studebaker, ...”<sup>31</sup>, are only some of the examples for this situation. This is also the reason why he uses so many indefinite pronouns like “everybody”, “nobody” and “most of them”. Above all, we can say that Faber uses an academic language as much as possible. Expressions like “... the Erinyes or Eumenides”<sup>32</sup>, “... there was no desire on my part to get better acquainted”<sup>33</sup> and the recommendations for the reader “Cf. Ernst Mally’s *Probability and Law*, Hans Reichenbach’s *The Theory of Probability*, Whitehead and Russell’s *Principia Mathematica*, von Mises’ *Probability, Statistics and Truth*.”<sup>34</sup> He provides the reader with a reading list just like a teacher or a professor does. However, he also criticizes himself: “I feared I must be talking like a teacher.”<sup>35</sup> Obviously, he assumes the role of an instructor to the ones, who are not

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<sup>26</sup> Geulen, *Max Frischs Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*, 87.

<sup>27</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report.*, 24.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 8. “Man kam sich wie ein Blinder vor.”

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. “Die Nächte verbrachte man in der Kabine.”

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 71. “Man saß in unserem Studebaker.”

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

‘knowledgeable’ enough. Just like what he does in his everyday life and in his job, in helping to the underdeveloped countries. In this context, it is not possible to ignore Faber’s arrogance and superciliousness.

Faber, as an engineer, tries to be objective as much as possible in informing the reader about the timeline, places and details of the events. It allows the readers have a good grasp of the story arc and places: “Time: 10.25 a.m.”<sup>36</sup>, “WRITTEN IN CARACAS, 21 JUNE TO 8 JULY.”<sup>37</sup>

We may say that Faber has sympathy for foreign words, which started to get into German language during the time Max Frisch wrote *Homo Faber* and bring out constantly that Faber is a world citizen, at least he considers himself so. It is noticeable especially with his use of English: “After the customs, (...) I went into the bar for a drink ...”<sup>38</sup>, “This is our last call”<sup>39</sup>, etc. But there are also Spanish “Nuestro Senor ha muerto”<sup>40</sup> and French “Beaune, Monsiur, c’est un vin rouge”<sup>41</sup> expressions. Faber expects that these are understood by his readers and that is why he did not translate any of those into German. On the other hand, there are also words, which were used in German, but their English translations were also given in parenthesis. “Pleasure”<sup>42</sup> and “trip”<sup>43</sup> are examples for this usage. Moreover, the reader comes across with many technical expressions and descriptions: Faber uses words, phrases, and brands like Super-Constellation, DC-7, Alfa Romeo and Hermes-Baby (the brand of his typewriter).

If we focus on the syntax of the novel, we see that short, consecutive sentences are predominant in the text. The sentences, in which conjunctions like ‘and’, ‘or’ were richly used, are sequenced and this ensures that the narrative is plain without pompous expressions. Long, complex sentences are rarely used; important information is given in parenthesis which creates a factual, objective

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<sup>36</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report.*, 19.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 12. “Nach dem Zoll (...) ging ich in die Bar, um einen Drink zu haben (...)”

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 15. “This is our last call.”

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 14. “Vergnügen (pleasure)”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 129. “Reise (trip)”

effect: “The mortality from snake bites (adders and vipers of all kinds) is only three to ten percent, ...”<sup>44</sup>

It is possible to say, that Faber humiliates novels as well as he humiliates perceptions and metaphors, which are uncertain and far from the reality: “An aeroplane to me is an aeroplane, I can’t see it as dead bird.”<sup>45</sup> According to him, Faber does not ‘tell’, but he ‘conveys’. It means that he wants to express himself as briefly and explicity as possible. However, he progressively turns into a ‘narrator’, while he was only a ‘drafter’ who conveys the story at the beginning. The common and usual normality fell apart when it faces the change, what echoes in the novel first by content and then by structure. Likewise, the changes affect not only Faber’s narrative style but also his syntax. Hanna comments on Faber: “You don’t treat life as a form, but as a mere addition sum.”<sup>46</sup> Since Faber considers life as consecutive events, it shapes the language he uses. However, with his mental transformation, the language of the diary changes: the parataxis of short sentences leave their places to the hypotaxis of long, complex sentences:

“...Then Hanna and I stood beside her bed, we simply couldn’t believe it, our child lay there with closed eyes, exactly as if she was asleep, but white as gypsum, her long body under the sheet, her hands by her hips, our flowers on her breast, I wasn’t trying to comfort her, I really meant it when I said: ‘She’s asleep.’”<sup>47</sup>

From this point onward, Faber’s sentences consist mostly of incomprehensible private notes, sometimes without verbs: “Hanna was greatly relieved.”<sup>48</sup>, “Then the taxi arrived.”<sup>49</sup>, “Permission to smoke.”<sup>50</sup> While verbal conjugation was left, noun phrases were placed at the end of the sentences such as: “They squatted for whole evenings in their white straw hats on the earth,

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<sup>44</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 161.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 169. “Hanna sehr erleichtert.”

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 191. “Dann das Taxi.”

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

motionless as toadstools, content without light, silent.”<sup>51</sup> We may say that Faber almost always uses such sentences, when he describes an important event or a milestone. What lies behind this laconic, scrappy language is not his indifference, but the pain of the experiences he has to face with.

Faber, from time to time, highlights things he wants to sort or count by providing an explanation after colons: “We were stopping: twenty minutes.”<sup>52</sup>, “Population: Indians.”<sup>53</sup>, “Our only chance: The Land Rover.”<sup>54</sup> This form of punctuation not only sharpens the expression, but also emphasizes important things for Faber.

To sum it up, we may say that *Homo Faber* has a simple, plain language, which brings about the narrative sharpness on one hand and creates the impression that the protagonist is not flexible or compatible on the other. The expressions like ‘maybe’ and ‘perhaps’ show the ambiguity in Faber’s mind as well as the antithesis to which he uses often in his narrative: “I didn’t want to go, but I had to, that’s to say no one could really force me, but I went.”<sup>55</sup> The language at the beginning of the ‘report’ is directly proportional with Faber’s mood: stiff and fixed.

Faber’s language was interpreted by literary critics in many different ways. For example, the Germanist Ernst Schürer claims that Faber’s language presents the protagonist starkly. Schürer states that the reckless, slack tint of Faber’s language is typical for the modern man. According to him, Faber tries to cover up the emptiness in his self, his lack of self-confidence and the awkwardness to build relationships in this way.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 46.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>56</sup> Ernst Schürer, *Zur Interpretation Von Max Frischs ‘Homo Faber’*, Monatshefte 59, no. 4 (1967): 330-43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30161529>.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### READING 'HOMO FABER' WITH THE CONCEPT OF THE 'UNCANNY'

“Miserable, ephemeral race, children of hazard and hardship, why do you force me to say what it would be much more fruitful for you not to hear? The best of all things is something entirely outside your grasp: not to be born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. But the second-best thing for you — is to die soon.”<sup>57</sup>

The literary critic and philosopher Georg Steiner considers the concept of tragedy as a dramatic representation, yet a dramatic examination of a reality idea, which views man as an unwelcomed guest of life.<sup>58</sup> The description of ‘unwanted guest’ associates necessarily with the adjective ‘uncanny’ (unheimlich). If we look at the words of ‘Heimische, Altvertraute’ (native, old familiar) and ‘unheimlich’ (uncanny) etymologically, which were elaborated in Sigmund Freud’s essay *Das Unheimliche* (1919), we see a direct connection between them. Das Unheimliche (the uncanny) is the one, which is kept as ‘geheim’ (secret, intimate) and should not come out but comes to light anyway. This uncanniness is concentric with the human being, but also with the concept of tragic.

In a horrifying world, where not to be born is the best, the man is at a dead end. He is in the middle of the uncanny chaos named ‘being’ and all of the challenges against his survival. Although tragedy, which was born in Greece, has many definitions, it has also the roots in the rationality based western culture of the Age of Enlightenment. Tragedy tries to explain dichotomy through similarities and discrepancies. Yet the metaphysical cosmology of the modern Western

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<sup>57</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music* (Penguin Classics, 2003), 22. According to the old story, which Nietzsche told in his work, King Midas was hunting Dionysus’s companion wise Silenus and when he finally caught him, he asked him what was the best and most desirable thing of all for mankind. After Silenus gave a shrill laugh he gave him this answer: “Elendes Eintagsgeschlecht, des Zufalls Kinder und der Mühsal, was zwingst du mich dir zu sagen, was nicht zu hören für dich das Erpriesslichste ist? Das Allerbeste ist für dich gänzlich unerreichbar: nicht geboren zu sein, nicht zu sein, nichts zu sein. Das Zweitbeste aber ist für dich – bald zu sterben.”

<sup>58</sup> Georg Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy* (Faber&Faber, 2010), 18.



culture tends to sort, categorize, classify and organize 'things'. From Parmenides to Plato and finally to Descartes, the rational thought creates dualities, whose borders are boldly lined: human-god, human-animal, nature-technology, good-bad, beautiful-ugly, etc. However, although those dualities about existence and human seem to be equal and antithetic, the borders are not so clear; the opposites meld, from time to time they balance each other and sometimes there are obscure, ambiguous grey areas. Just like 'heimisch' (native) and 'unheimlich' (uncanny).

Since the first day when the mankind had sensed that he is all alone in this universe and things never get better for him, he started to waste his breath to get rid of the ambiguity of his existence, of the dualities he found in himself suddenly. He tries to control the world around himself by categorizing it into numerous pieces, producing definitions, naming and labeling. As aforementioned, the tradition of rational thinking which begun with Parmenides and applied by the positivist soldiers of the modern philosophy like Descartes, Berkeley, Kant, Spencer and others prefers knowing things and terms in certainty and defining them without a flow or excess which does not leave room for doubt. However, the truth is the paradox of the ambiguity, which man does not want to accept and ends up usually in tragedy. Because, there is no escape from ambiguity.

Hegel sees a human's true existence in his actions. According to him, the existing means to make his case is to create. One has to act and create to be exist.<sup>59</sup> The constructed cities and culture, the progresses made in science and technology are all the time mandatory acts of his existence. However, it is a twist of fate that every one of his actions in order to get rid of the ambiguity of his uncertain existence, every step to set in his way muddles things more up. This is because every intervention to the nature and to his natural existence fires one's hubris, his immoderation gets unbalanced, and finally we are dragged into chaos, the inescapable tragedy: sometimes we are punished by gods, sometimes we are alienated by the society.

The main purpose of this dissertation was to examine the tragic hero 'Homo faber' extendedly who appears uncanny with his existence. The journey from

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<sup>59</sup> Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Jazzybee Verlag, 2012), 60.

America, the home of technology, to Greece, where tragedy was born, reveals how Walter Faber was alienated from the nature and from himself, in order to separate, categorize and of course, fictionalize 'things' and shaken every time he faces with the 'Other' and eventually he reaches his tragic end. In order to understand the dualities Faber faces -just like his creator Max Frisch-, the alienation he created, how he became uncanny to himself and how this chaotic construction collapsed, it is very important to understand Freud's conceptualization of the 'uncanny'. After this step, the following fourth chapter will be about the 'uncannines' in the novel *Homo Faber* in the context of conflict between the nature and technology.

### **3.1. SIGMUND FREUD: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY**

The pioneer of psychoanalysis, the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud, whose birth name was Sigismund Scholomo Freud, was born on May 6, 1856 as the eldest son of Kallamon-Amalia Freud family in Moravia, which is in Czech Republic today. His father Kallamon Jacob Freud, who was a Jewish wool merchant, had another son and daughter from his first marriage. Kallamon and Amalia had seven more children together after Sigmund. In 1860, the family moved to Vienna, where Freud, a year earlier than his peers, begun with his secondary school education in 1865, and was graduated with a degree.

Freud worked in Ernst Brücke's psychology clinic between 1876 and 1882; he met Martha Bernays and in a short span of time they were engaged. He decided to leave his academic career aside and open a private practice in order to provide to his prospective bride a better life. In the Vienna General Hospital, where he begun to work in 1883, he had studies on cocaine among other things. After he participated in several studies on hysteria and hypnosis in Paris, Salpêtrière, he

opened his practice in 1886 and married Martha Bernays. The couple had six children together: Mathilde, Oliver, Jean-Martin, Ernst, Sophie and Anna.

In 1902, he was given an honorary PhD and begun training his first students. He established the first psychoanalysis working party Psychologische Mittwochs-Gesellschaft with Alfred Adler, Max Kahane, Rudolf Reitler and Wilhelm Stekel and in 1908, the group turned into the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. Within that period, Freud and his work were getting increasingly recognized.

In the following years, psychoanalysis became a science, which had more and more recognition. In 1909, Freud delivered a number of influencing lectures in the United States. He founded the International Psychoanalytical Association in Nürnberg Psychoanalysis Congress in 1910, and Jung was elected as the president, who was a student of Freud back then. Although Freud took a patriotic stand during the World War I, which erupted in 1914; his concern about his enlisted sons Martin and Ernst, changed his point of view. After the war was over, Freud's family went into a great poverty. He inherited a large sum of money from a former patient and supporter and so he could open his own publishing house: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag.

In 1920s, his daughter Anna, who was a respected member of the psychoanalysis circle, became one of the primary colleagues of Freud. In 1924, the first 12 volumes of *Collected Works* were already published. However, in 1930's, Freud and his work had increasing number of enemies. When the National Socialist took control in 1933, Freud's works were also a victim of the Nazi book burnings.

After the annexation of Austria in 1938, Freud's house in Berggasse 19 was searched and his daughter Anna was taken into custody and questioned by Gestapo. A few months later Freud family moved to London. Sigmund Freud passed away in his house in London, on September 23, 1939, and he left countless works and studies behind.

Freud's work was not only important for psychology, but also for many disciplines. Freud, whose interest and studies on literature went a long way back, adapted his theory of psychoanalysis into literary texts in his essay *Das*

*Unheimliche* (1919), in order to explain the concept of the ‘uncanny’. By doing that, he could bring psychoanalysis and literature analysis together and created an interdisciplinary synthesis. In this essay, he answers two questions: one, what does the concept of the uncanny mean and two, which factors brings the uncanniness to the scene. Before setting the framework of the analysis for the uncanniness in the novel *Homo Faber*, the definition of ‘uncanny’ will be given in the section 3.2. In the next step we will look closely at the concept of uncanny in psychoanalysis and the ‘uncanniness in life’. Only after we look into the definition of uncanny in its general terms, we can analyze the uncanniness, Faber faces between nature and technology and his alienation process, properly.

### 3.2. ON THE CONCEPT OF THE ‘UNCANNY’

“There are friends and enemies. And there are *strangers*. Friends and enemies stand in an opposition to each other. The first are what the second are not, and vice versa. This does not, however, testify to their equal status. Like most other oppositions that order simultaneously the world in which we live and our life in the world, this one is a variation of the master-opposition between the *inside* and the *outside*. The outside is negativity to the inside’s positivity. The enemies are what the friends are not. The enemies are flawed friends; they are the *wilderness* that violates friends’ *homeliness*, the *absence* which is a denial of friends’ *presence*. The repugnant and frightening ‘out there’ of the enemies is, as Derrida would say, a *supplement* – both the addition to, and displacement of the cozy and comforting ‘in here’ of the friends. Only by crystallizing and solidifying what they are not (or what they do not wish to be, or what they would not say they are), into the counter-image of the enemies, may the friends assert what they are, what they want to be and what they want to be thought of as being.”<sup>60</sup>

But, what if the old friend becomes an enemy? In his essay *Das Unheimliche* (1919) Freud went around the concept of the ‘uncanny’

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<sup>60</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Polity, 2013), 80.

(unheimlich), he declined the German psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch's definition and transformed it. While Jentsch explains (1906) the uncanniness as an intellectual feeling of uncertainty/ insecurity against the strange and unreliable one, Freud complains about the inadequacy of this definition. Because, Jentsch did not go further than explaining the relationship of 'uncanny' with new and strange one. According to him, 'uncanny' is not just the unreliable one, but also the (back than) reliable one. That is, he asserts that something have to be reliable and unreliable at the same time in order to be 'uncanny'. Freud, however, claims that uncanniness is a kind of fear against something, which was repressed but came back.

Before Freud -like a sculptor- gives the definition its new form, he first carries out an etymological research, which includes other languages:

“The German word ‘unheimlich’ is obviously the opposite of ‘heimlich’ [‘homely’], ‘heimisch’ [‘native’] –the opposite of what is familiar; and we are tempted to conclude that what is ‘uncanny’ is frightening precisely because it is not known and familiar.”<sup>61</sup>

However, according to Freud, -he points out that it was also the inadequacy of Jentsch's definition- the word ‘unheimlich’ in German includes a negation neither the English word ‘uncanny’ nor the French words ‘inquiétant’, ‘sinistre’ can mean. Freud emphasizes the German negation prefix ‘un-’ and he ranks the different usage of the adjective ‘unheimlich’: “... ‘unheimlich’ is the name for everything that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light. (Schelling)”<sup>62</sup> He claims that when ‘heimlich’ meets its opposite ‘unheimlich’ it grows into an ambiguous concept, in fact it gives birth to its opposite. In this context Freud states that ‘unheimlich’ is a subgenre of ‘heimlich’.<sup>63</sup>

As Freud continues with his analysis, he refers to many examples from literature -E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Sandman* being in the first place, which also was at

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<sup>61</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (Penguin Classics, 2003), 123. “Das deutsche Wort ‘unheimlich’ ist offenbar der Gegensatz zu heimlich, heimisch, vertraut, und der Schluß liegt nahe, es sei etwas eben darum schreckhaft, weil es nicht bekannt und vertraut ist.”

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 125. “Alles, was im Geheimnis, im Verborgenen bleiben sollte und hervorgetreten ist. (Schelling)”

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 127.

the center of Jentsch's interest- and he mentions the double (*doppelgänger*), which comes to surface in every step of the concept of the uncanny. It can grow so that the subject identifies itself with somebody else and starts suspecting his/her own identity or it sees a stranger as a replacement for itself. Eventually, there is a duplication, division or intertwining of the self. According to Freud, our 'double' is our dark twin.<sup>64</sup> At this juncture, he refers to Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank, who studies psychoanalysis in the framework of legend, myth, art and creativity and he mentions, that our dark twin had the role of a support mechanism at the beginning, in order to protect our ego from destruction, to fight against our fear of death. However, this dark twin, immortal soul, our double will not be the insurance of the immortality after a certain point; it transforms into a harbinger of death, an uncanny sign.<sup>65</sup> It shows that the darkness inside us creates a nervousness and fear (by alienating ourselves) – at an unexpected moment. That is why 'uncanny' (*unheimlich*) was a native (*heimisch*) and a known one at one time; the negation prefix 'un-' is the price of the repression.<sup>66</sup> Freud claims that in that way the 'double' is transformed into a fear object just like the gods, which were transformed into demons after the collapse of religions.<sup>67</sup>

Freud thinks that the uncanniness because of '*doppelgänger*' is in a kind of repetitive loop. According to him the 'thing', which is not new and strange, but known and essential to the consciousness, was alienated only through a repression, shows itself through repetitions. The uncanny is actually a secret witness (*heimlich-heimisch*), which was repressed but somehow escaped from its prison. After it declares its freedom it shows itself on the mirror whenever possible and drags the individual to the odd nervousness. Like Bauman, one of the most important names of the (post-)modern philosophy, mentions the individual feels that his sense of belonging is violated and he is possessed by

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<sup>64</sup> Dimitris Vardoulakis. *The Return of Negation: The Doppelgänger in Freud's 'The Uncanny'*, *Substanca*35, no 2 (2006): 100-16. <http://jstor.org/stable/4152886>.

<sup>65</sup> Freud, *The Uncanny*, 136.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

fear. Freud points out that this fear shows itself through feelings like repulsion or disturbance:

As the engineer Walter Faber grapples with this fear of death underlined by Freud, he created an 'Other' from himself, recognized his dark twin as 'uncanny' and he alienated himself to the nature, to his own body, to women and of course to the myth, in order to control everything and deny his mortality in his self-created illusion. During the journey from America, the homeland of technology, where his artificial engineer identity can maintain his shelter, to Greece, the land of the myth, he will feel the breath of his dark twin down his neck, the conflicts with women and nature will underline his mortality all the time. In the following chapter, it will be discussed how the 'other' of 'Homo faber', which was repressed, but was actually a secret witness, takes the control and the concept of the uncanny in the novel, which makes itself felt through the conflict between nature and technology persistently.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### HOMO FABER AND UNCANNINESS: CONFLICT OF NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY

While referring to the relationship of the human being of our era, who defines himself through modern science, with nature and to his stance within this framework, Bauman claims that the concept of nature means the ‘Other’ of humanity:

“Modern science was born out of the overwhelming ambition to conquer Nature and subordinate it to human needs. The lauded scientific curiosity that reputedly pushed the scientists ‘to go where no humans yet dared to go’ was never free from exhilarating vision of control, management, making things better than they are (that is, more pliable, obedient, willing to serve). Indeed, Nature came to mean something to be subordinated to human will and reason –a passive object of purposeful action, an object itself devoid of purpose and hence waiting to absorb the purpose injected by its human masters. The concept of Nature, in its modern rendition, opposes the concept of humanity by which it has been spawned. It stands for the other of humanity. It is the name of the aimless and the meaningless. Denied inherent integrity and meaning, Nature seems a pliant object for man’s liberties.”<sup>68</sup>

The starting point of this study was to reveal how the modern human being has marginalized nature and himself by submitting to technology through the novel, *Homo Faber*. The title of the novel, *Homo Faber*, points out that nature and technology are on the leading roles and that the concept of the uncanny unfolds through the conflict between these two actors in the novel. ‘Homo’, which means ‘human’ in Latin, is a term which is especially used in historical and scientific areas and it represents the nature step of the novel. On the other hand, ‘faber’ means ‘the maker’, ‘the craftsman’. The concept of ‘Homo faber’, which we can translate as ‘the tool maker, the man with a tool’, is used especially in the work of the German philosopher Max Scheler, who had a considerable influence

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<sup>68</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, 62.



especially on the philosophical anthropology, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, , while defining the modern human being who surpasses nature with the tools he makes.<sup>69</sup> In this context, the concept of ‘Homo faber’ befits Walter Faber character, the representation of the modern day human works, who produces, and who defines himself through logic and science.

The publisher Theodor Pelster remarks that the novel was written in a period (1957), which two basic stances were in a keen competition.<sup>70</sup> While on the one hand, a lifestyle which is based on science, technology and progression, which presents argumentative explanations and proofs for everything in our lives, and which is determined by the principles of rationalism reigns, on the other hand, the belief in the unexplained phenomena, fantasy, art and nature try to survive. Especially, in the reconstruction age after the Second World War, the belief in science and technology was clearly present; but ‘the superstructure’, in which the positive sciences, technology and industrialism triggered and accelerated each other cyclically, has become embodied when we come to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The physical and even the spiritual labors of the humans have been taken away by the machines and ultimately an automatized capitalist production system emerged in which humans were pushed aside for machines. Technology, which enabled humans to conquer the nature, has become the main focus—and of course the core understanding- of the modern world construction. At this point, what Bauman calls “the process of ‘Othering’” begins:

“The numbness of Nature and the loquacity of science are locked together in an unbreakable bond of reciprocal legitimation. Being the other of human, the natural is the opposition of the subject of will and moral capacity. It is the powerful will of humanity as ‘the master of the universe’ and the exercise of its sole right to legislate meanings and standards of goodness that make the objects of mastery and legislation into ‘Nature’.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Max Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (Hofenberg, 2016), 34.

<sup>70</sup> Theodor Pelster, *Max Frisch: Homo Faber* (Reclam, 2001), 66.

<sup>71</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, 62-63.

Technological improvements that beset with the Age of Enlightenment have made possible for humans to create a rather easily manageable and governable environment –in which they cannot survive without technology- when compared to the nature; this made human beings feel safe. Our modern day human has begun experiencing the modern technological world as nature, which was created, shaped and governed by him. However, on the other hand, technology was also forcing people to disconnect from their own selves and their ‘nature’. As in Bauman’s words, modern human have fallen it to a world of “conflict”<sup>72</sup> and became the ‘Other’ to himself. However ‘the thing’ that was oppressed was going to come out sooner or later and the eerie worry of uncanniness would eventually secretly consume human kind.

In this chapter, the concept of the uncanny in the novel will be assessed in the scope of the protagonist’s relationship with technology, nature and minor characters.

#### **4.1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FABER AND TECHNOLOGY**

Max Frisch describes ‘Homo faber’ as the maker-man, who is the opposite of the one who writes poems or who prays. According to him he steals the fire from the gods and sees himself as the blacksmith of the world, the lord of the nature, who does not see symbols but raw materials which he can utilize, like woods from the forests, rivers which can be turned in to electricity. But this engineer discovers his blindness only after a catastrophe; he understands the value of life just before dying.<sup>73</sup>

Pelster sees Faber as a pure rationalist who lives through numbers and statistics and, he utilizes them whenever he needs.<sup>74</sup> Walter Faber also described himself as a pure engineer: “I’m a technologist and accustomed to seeing things as

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<sup>72</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, 246.

<sup>73</sup> Frisch, *Jetzt ist Sehenszeit*, 72.

<sup>74</sup> Pelster, *Max Frisch: Homo Faber*, 15.

they are.”<sup>75</sup> For Faber, engineering which was a profession that acts upon the reality, is “a masculine profession, if not the only masculine profession.”<sup>76</sup> Walter Faber, who was a mechanical engineer that works for UNESCO, considered himself as competent in his job. He was successful and renowned in his area of expertise. As much as he was proud of this, he also took pride in having been to and working in many different places all over the world.

“After all, I had no reason to feel inferior, I did my job, I had no ambition to be an inventor, but I did as much, I thought, as any old Baptist from Ohio who poked fun at engineers; what a man like myself achieves is a great deal more useful, I supervise plant that runs into millions, I have whole power stations under me, I’ve worked in Persia and in Africa (Liberia) and Panama, Venezuela and Peru, I’m no country bumpkin – as this waiter obviously thought.”<sup>77</sup>

In the times when he did not go to places for a project, he attends to symposiums and conferences in order to enhance his knowledge and experience: “I had a hard week behind me, not a day without a conference, I wanted to rest.”<sup>78</sup> For this reason, technology was the main element that defines Faber’s life. Faber, who saw himself as a pure technical man, eroticized his job in a sense. While he might see women as dispensable – when necessary – he could not live without technology. Technology was like a sophisticated lover that expected constant service and attention from him. It was a dominant lover, which is called for duty and forces the male subdue. When Faber did not want to get back to plane in Houston, again, technology would be the one, to make him come to his senses and lead him to the right path. When the man fulfills his obligations, he is rewarded with order and relieved.

Faber who is a rationalist, does not believe in miracles and supernatural forces, he has the answer for everything by the use of his logic. The supernatural,

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<sup>75</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 29.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

according to him, is uncanny and unwelcomed. In every stage of his life, positive sciences and technology have the leading role. He gets astonished by the passion he gets into when he thinks that the people are having an adventure in the desert after a forced landing to the Tamaulipas Desert: “I’ve often wondered what people mean when they talk about an experience.”<sup>79</sup> Yet he does not think that he has seen less than the others:

“I see the moon over the Tamaulipas desert – it is more distinct than at other times, perhaps, but still a calculable mass circling round our planet, an example of gravitation, interesting, but in what way an experience?”<sup>80</sup>

He avoids firing his fantasy, to get caught up in dreams: “I can’t imagine a lot of nonsense, merely in order to experience something.”<sup>81</sup> He sides with objectivity and has trust in numerable and explainable data rather than his feelings. Faber who thinks that the machines have no risk to be subdued by their emotions that they operate parallel to the pure logic of the probability and that they can do a job at least as good as the humans, actually he prefers robots to humans.

“For this reason I assert that the robot perceives more accurately than man, it knows more about the future, for it calculates it, it neither speculates nor dreams, but is controlled by its own findings (the feedback) and cannot make mistakes; the robot has no need of intuition...”<sup>82</sup>

What especially has impact on him is, “the lightning calculating machine, also known as the electronic brain, it is controlled by vacuum tubes, a machine that far surpasses any human brain.” Because they can make calculations far faster and trustworthy than any human. “(...), because the machine cannot forget

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<sup>79</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 28.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 93.

anything, because it has a greater power than the human brain to grasp information and assess its probability value.”<sup>83</sup>

Because of all these reasons, Faber can only feel himself lively and safe in places where he is surrounded by technology. The place where he feels the most comfortable is New York, the land of progress and limitless opportunities. According to Max Frisch, America is the place where the sovereignty of ‘Homo faber’ spread widely.<sup>84</sup> Here, Faber is equipped with all of the blessings of modernity and technology. He lives in a comfortable, luxurious apartment, which can fulfill all the needs of the modern human in Central Park West. However, right at the beginning of the novel, it is pointed out that Faber does not want to live here any longer. His negative attitude against America and Americans mount up as the novel progresses; even if the ‘American way of life’ is the most natural, it is understood that it doesn’t fit in to his worldview totally. Faber is also surrounded with technology when he is on his way to Europe in a cruise ship and he could not help telling everyone around him that he is proud of it: “I told them we were on a ship, that is to say a product of technology...”<sup>85</sup> Actually, Faber who would prefer travelling by plane or car, got bored of this voyage:

“A sea voyage is a funny situation. Five days without a car! I’m used to working or driving my car, it’s no holiday for me if there’s no mechanism running, and in any case anything unusual makes me edgy.”<sup>86</sup>

Whenever he gets the opportunity to talk about technology, he gets high in spirits. Especially when Sabeth – whom he does not know that she is his own daughter yet – wants to see the engine room, he gets overly rejoiced. Faber also feels himself as safe as to doze off, at least when he is in the mid-air on a plane: “We were poised motionless in a cloudless sky, a flight like hundreds of others;

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<sup>83</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 92.

<sup>84</sup> Gerrit Bartels, “Auf der Suche nach dem Ich der Zeit voraus” *Die Zeit*, May 14, 2011.

<sup>85</sup> Frisch, *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

the engines running smoothly.”<sup>87</sup> When the plane from New York on to Caracas enters to turbulence he keeps his calm by having faith in to the technology: “I was aware of the danger that our plane might break in pieces or go up in flames as it landed- I was astounded at my own calm.”<sup>88</sup>

When he gets back to New York, he realizes that Ivy, his lover who he thought he finished the relationship with, ignores the break up. But what makes him mad is the fact that he can –still- be seduced by Ivy. After he has a sexual intercourse with Ivy once again, he feels the very strong urge to shave. In doing so, again he takes shelter in technology (shaving machine) and turns his back to the nature (Ivy), which he finds uncanny. It is possible to read this as an effort to turn back to a kind of cycle, which will maintain his safety and sharpness. Therefore, he tries his luck on every electrical socket in the house but it is in vain: the shaving machine would not work. And so Faber cannot get rid of Ivy.<sup>89</sup> The going off of the shaving machine then, actually represents the ‘electricity’ of nature, which makes everything possible in life.

In the section 4.1.4., the technological symbols that Faber going back to take shelter again and again will be analyzed in a broader framework.

#### **4.1.1. Calculating the Life**

Max Horkheimer, who is one of the most important representatives of the Frankfurt School, refers that in the subtitle ‘Means and Ends’ of *The Eclipse of Reason* there are two types of ‘minds’. The first one is the instrumental rationality, acts through the principle of self-interest and self-protection which he bases his enlightenment criticism on, which is built upon the pure logic, which is interested in a sorter and an opportunist scientific approach rather than the

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<sup>87</sup> Frisch, *Homo faber: A Report*, 9.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

content. Horkheimer underlines the idea that the Western thought which is based on Enlightenment is oriented towards this vision.<sup>90</sup>

For Faber the engineer, life can be calculated through statistics and the idea of believing in a bigger power than himself is unfamiliar to him: "I don't believe in providence and fate, as a technologist, I am used to reckoning with the formulae of probability."<sup>91</sup> This statement of Faber reveals that he does not believe in anything that he cannot prove through mathematical or physical formulations. Moreover, Faber thinks that the statistical data have an important role in our lives. The protagonist, who evaluates the probabilities with statistical and mathematical calculations, does not flinch from manipulating the data in order to successfully fool himself. For example, for justification of having their baby aborted, he speaks about the population statistics and remarks that there is an overpopulation problem in the world as the birth rates have been increasing:

"Nowadays abortion is a matter of course. In the last analysis, what would become of us without abortion? Advances in medicine and technology compel the most responsible people to adopt new measures. Mankind has trebled its numbers in a century."<sup>92</sup>

For this reason, Faber defends that the rational man should take action and draw the line against nature. "It's ridiculous to attribute mechanic-psychological accidents to 'destiny', unworthy of modern man."<sup>93</sup> Here, while there is a probability of becoming a father, Faber gets himself out of the trouble by means of math. When he is confronted with the thought that he could be the father of Sabeth, again twisted calculations of his will come to his aid:

"In the silence of my mind I calculated ceaselessly (while I talked, more than usual, I think) until the sum worked out the way I wanted it. She could only be Joachim's child! How I worked it out, I don't know. I cooked the dates until the sum, as a sum, really worked out right."<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Max Horkheimer, *The Eclipse of Reason* (Horkheimer Press, 2013), 55.

<sup>91</sup> Frisch, *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>92</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 129.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

After they had an emergency landing on the desert, he tries to persuade Ivy to travel by sea by suggesting that now he has a serious fear of flight, he once again takes advantage of the statistics:

“[What] use would it be to me that out of 1,000 flights I had made, 999 would pass without incident; of what interest would it be to me that on the same day as I crashed in the sea, 999 planes made perfect landings?”<sup>95</sup>

Faber constantly struggles with statistical calculations especially after the accident, which results in Sabeth’s death: “I started talking again, because silence was impossible, about the mortality figures for snake bite and about statistics in general.”<sup>96</sup> With this, Faber tries to ease his conscience and ignore his fault in the accident which Sabeth lost her life and find courage. But in the last analysis, he has to accept the fact that this will not bring Sabeth back no matter how hard he tries to deny his fault.

With this, Faber has to accept the existence of coincidences and the fact that they can contradict with his plans. However, he also claims that the coincidences are mere statistical deviations and exceptions, which assent to the rule. He sees them as the compositions of unlucky incidents that intersect with probability. He argues that the coincidences, which he thinks people may come across with them very rarely, are explainable and they should never be accepted as supernatural or mysterious phenomena.

“Mathematically speaking, the probable (that in 6,000,000,000 throws with a regular six-sided die the one will come up approximately 1,000,000,000 times) and the improbable are not different in kind, but only in frequency, whereby the more frequent appears a priori more probable. But the occasional occurrence of the improbable does not imply the intervention of a higher power, something in the nature of a miracle, as the layman is so ready to assume. The term probability includes improbability at the extreme limits of probability, and when the improbable does occur this is no cause for surprise, bewilderment or mystification.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Frisch, *Homo faber: A Report*, 75.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.



It is possible for us to say that his theory ends up in a deadlock: After the Caracas flight, Faber meets with Herbert who comes in view later as the brother of Faber's old friend Joachim. This coincidence changes the game. When he gets back to New York, he cannot figure out why the shaving machine would not work and so he works himself up. Because, he has stayed in the house just to strive with that machine, he could take the call to reserve his seat for the cruise ship to Europe. According to Geulen, the breaking points of the events in the novel are based mostly on coincidences.<sup>98</sup> "It was once again pure coincidence that decided the future, no more, a nylon thread in the little appliance."<sup>99</sup> If Faber could not buy the ticket for the Le Havre cruise ship, he would have never known about her daughter's existence, would have never got closer to her by going to that trip to Europe. However, the tragedy could never be averted; the events result in an incestuous relationship between the father and daughter and then Sabeth's death. Faber expresses this as:

"I admit that without this forced landing in Tamaulipas (2 April) everything would have turned out differently: I should never have got to know this young Hencke, I should perhaps never heard of Hanna again. I shouldn't know today that I was a father. It is impossible to imagine what would have happened if it hadn't been for his forced landing in Tamaulipas. Sabeth might still be alive. I don't deny that it was more than a coincidence which made things turn out as they did, it was a whole train of coincidences. But what has providence to do with it? I don't need any mystical explanation for the occurrence of the improbable; mathematics explains it adequately, as far as I'm concerned."<sup>100</sup>

Moreover, there are incidents in which the responsible side is merely Faber's subconscious but he prefers to see them as coincidences. For example, during a connecting flight in Houston, he hides in the airport just because he does not want to get on the plane. Later on, a stewardess found him and puts him back to the plane involuntarily: "I walked like a man being led out of jail into the court

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<sup>98</sup> Geulen, *Max Frisch's Homo Faber. Studien und Interpretation*, 93.

<sup>99</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 78.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

room.”<sup>101</sup> Also, in Mexico, he suddenly abandons the business trip idea and decides to go to Joachim who is with Herbert Hencke in Palenque. This is not something that the rationalist Faber does. Since he almost never makes instantaneous decisions, he does not know what dragged him into the idea of visiting Joachim: “I don’t know what it was really.”<sup>102</sup> Another senseless decision of Faber is that he prefers a ship travel to Europe rather than traveling by plane as always. Faber, who makes this decision suddenly, cannot make a logical explanation for this to himself: “It was very unlikely that I should be able to get passage to Europe at this time of the year, and I don’t know what suddenly made me decide not to fly (...). I was surprised myself.”<sup>103</sup> Coming across to Sabeth in the Louvre Museum is also one of those ‘coincidences’. Sabeth, who thinks about this meeting, which was fully orchestrated by Faber, as a pure coincidence, makes Faber laugh quite a bit.<sup>104</sup> Contrary to Faber, women in his life, especially his lover, Ivy and his young love Hanna, believe in fate and providence rather than statistical approach to life. Since women and science never coincides in Faber’s mind, their unscientific attitude towards life does not shock him. For Faber, women, just like nature (supernatural), are uncanny, unpredictable and as a result uncontrollable. However, as the novel progresses, Faber’s views about statistics changes. Later on he finally accepts that mathematics and statistics do not enlighten and explain everything. Especially when he finds out that the young woman she was in a relationship was his own daughter shakes the very foundations of Faber’s Weltanschauung; his dominating engineer attitude leaves itself to the feeling that he had missed a great deal of his life. According to Pelster, at the end Faber faces the fact that everything is not calculable/controllable in a painful way.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 15.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>105</sup> Pelster, *Max Frisch: Homo Faber.*, 48.

#### 4.1.2. What about Feelings?

Faber the engineer avoids showing his feelings as he envisions them as parasites that will disturb the system. According to Faber, humankind who once was on the peak of its creation is a product, which has problems when compared to the emotionless and for the very reason, impeccable machines. Faber is scared of the experience, the depth of his self and unexplained phenomenon in the world, so he throws himself in to the arms of enlightened rational point of view. There, under the reign of the instrumental rationality, there is no place for emotions and fantasy.<sup>106</sup> Faber thinks that expressing emotions are threatening. And as emotions derive from being with other people, Faber prefers to be a secluded person, who is on the side of avoiding it:

“One of the happiest moments I know is the moment when I have left a party, when I get into my car, shut the door and insert the ignition key, switch on, turn on the radio, light my cigarette with the built-in lighter and put my foot down; people are a strain as far as I’m concerned, even men. As to my fluctuating spirits, I pay no attention to them. Sometimes you feel low, but you pick up again. Fatigue phenomena! As in steel. Feelings, I have observed, are fatigue phenomena, that’s all, at any rate in my case. You get run down.”<sup>107</sup>

These lines of Faber, puts forward how extra societal he sees himself. Beside from this, Faber does not like speaking something about himself. Yet he accepts that sometimes he surrenders to his mood. Of course he views this as a handicap rather than a blessing in his communication with people. For example, in the Caracas flight when the plane gets in to turbulence and changes its course, he demands an explanation from the stewardess. Faber, who is defeated by his emotions at that time, cannot control his physical reactions: “I held the young lady, who could have been my daughter, by the arm, or rather by the wrist,

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<sup>106</sup> Pelster, *Max Frisch: Homo Faber*, 31.

<sup>107</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report.*, 114.

(...)”<sup>108</sup> He accepts that he is not totally without emotions anyways, for example he mentions that he can feel joy, happiness:

“But it wasn’t true that I took no pleasure in anything; I took pleasure in every moment that was in any real sense pleasurable. I didn’t turn somersaults, I didn’t sing, but there were certain things that I, too, enjoyed.”<sup>109</sup>

In the Caracas flight, Faber even thinks about changing his seat when the young German tries to speak with him. He feels harassed, angry and disturbed and says that he has no need to know this stranger.<sup>110</sup> But after the Houston connection, Faber who could not get away from the plane somehow finds his neighbor sympathetic so that they have found some common subjects that they can speak about (German cigars) and they have discovered that they both were interested in bringing in the developing countries to the World economy. During the days they spent in Tamaulipas Desert, Faber has explained the optical properties of his camera and they have sat away from the people playing chess, in order to get away from their noises.<sup>111</sup> One of the main reasons that Faber liked chess was that it could be played without talking for hours and silence is not perceived to be an act of disrespectfulness.<sup>112</sup> However, Faber starts talking when he learns that this young man is his old friend Herbert’s brother. And when they land to Mexico, he decides to accompany Herbert who suddenly wants to visit his brother. Even though they were very close back in time, Faber has not set up any connection to Joachim for 20 years. So, Joachim’s suicide and the fact that he will never be able to bring back their old friendship shake Faber deeply. We can see that Faber needs someone else in his life from this passage. Theodor Pelster suggests that normally Faber who has a high sense of duty would not abandon

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<sup>108</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 22.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

business trip, get to a pretty inconvenient journey but this incident explicitly reveal that he cannot control his emotions always.<sup>113</sup>

As Faber frequently feels that he is harassed by people, he is attentive to not to disturb them with his own existence. When he reminds Sabeth that he wants to show her the engine room but does not get a positive answer, he doesn't insist: "I don't like myself when I'm a burden to other people, and it's never been my practice to run after women who don't like me; frankly, I never needed to ..."<sup>114</sup> When the ship voyage comes to end, Faber – unlike usual – gets emotional and after getting off with all the passengers, decides to go to Paris all of a sudden. Behind this decision, there is the desire to see Sabeth again. Finally he manages to see his art lover daughter in Louvre Museum and feels happy about the time he spends with her: "I was happier than I had ever been in Paris and I called the waiter so that I could pay (...). I could never be happier than at the moment."<sup>115</sup> However these happy moments are clouded by his inferiority complex. One of the moments that this situation is revealed is the scene that he believes the waiters in the restaurant that they are having their dinner would tease him. Faber, who thinks that Sabeth would not also understand him and his feelings and who thinks that he will be ridiculed. "Only I was afraid she wouldn't believe me or would laugh in my face..."<sup>116</sup> Besides this, he thinks that he is generally not understood by people and so he rarely opens himself to them. He does not believe that someone would be sincerely interested in him and his feelings: "How many of the people I meet are interested in whether I'm enjoying myself, in my feelings at all?"<sup>117</sup>

After Paris, they set on a trip and they stop over in Avignon. The lunar eclipse they watch here is the result of the natural motions of the celestial bodies'; moon to be overshadowed by the earth and lose the light it gets from the sun. However, while observing the lunar eclipse with Sabeth, Faber is pulled away from explaining everything with the scientific ideas and the desire to bring a

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<sup>113</sup> Pelster, *Max Frisch: Homo Faber.*, 39.

<sup>114</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report.*, 107.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

logical explanation to everything. Faber and his daughter watch this natural show arm-in-arm and Faber opens himself to nature speaking about life and death fearlessly. Homo faber, finally, faces with the fact that the world and its residents are governed by forces human beings cannot understand – and, of course, himself, either. With this idea, he realizes that even the modern man is mortal and cannot control and manage everything. If we evaluate this confrontation under the scope of the uncanniness, we can see the transformation would not cause Faber to develop anxiety rather he finally accepts his mortality. The aforementioned lunar eclipse puts forth the awe and happiness of both Sabeth and Faber against the beauty of the cosmic order and for the first time, the nature ceases to be a sum of scientific laws for Faber. As a result of their intense emotions, Sabeth gets under the impression that Faber takes her seriously and he does not see her as a child. On the other hand, Faber also confesses to himself that their relationship with Sabeth is more than a friendship: “(...) for the first time I had the bewildering impression that the girl, whom I had hitherto taken for a child, was in love with me.”<sup>118</sup> That night, Sabeth comes to Faber’s room. The two, who surrender themselves to their feelings, have an incestuous intercourse. Here a masterful metaphor that is placed by Frisch leaps to the eye about light- dark. The incest that is experienced in the darkness of the night is the beginning of the tragic end of Faber and Sabeth.

Faber and Sabeth go to Italy after they spend a few days in France. Both seem so happy because they have found each other; Faber reflects upon this happiness as: “Of our trip through Italy I can only say that I was happy, because the girl, I believe, was happy too, in spite of the difference of our ages.”<sup>119</sup> He even talks about his desire for marriage: “I thought about marriage as never before...”<sup>120</sup> When they arrive in Greece, their trip’s final destination, Sabeth is involved in an accident. Faber falls in to a horrible desperation. He loses himself out of worry while trying to get Sabeth to the hospital and then he goes berserk when Hanna does not give him information about Sabeth’s situation.

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<sup>118</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report.*, 153.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

Faber makes some points on the differences between women and men's emotional expressions. He claims that men, especially mathematicians and engineers hide their feelings and act rationally. For him, women are sensual beings as they reflect their feelings consciously and as they are controlled by these emotions. Faber considers himself as a down-to-earth person.<sup>121</sup> Women are a total mystery for him, he does not understand them and this pushes him onto verge of insecurity: "(I've never been certain with women.)"<sup>122</sup> Therefore, he prefers to stay away from women, for as much as their desire to express their emotions constantly drives him mad. He expresses that he cannot stand being under the same roof with a woman longer than three weeks, especially if he has to speak about love and marriage! Ivy, whose name also means Ivy in German, has been trying to bind Faber to herself for a long time. But Faber resists this with all his power, because for him women generally, and especially Ivy, are 'limiting'. "I couldn't help thinking of Ivy. As far as I am concerned every woman is like clinging ivy. I want to be alone."<sup>123</sup> Faber sits down in Tamaulipas Desert, where they made an emergency landing, and writes down a letter to Ivy and tells her that he will not marry her. On one hand he wants Ivy to accept this decision he made, on the other, he does not want to hurt her: "I couldn't even ask her to get the films for me and I knew that Ivy, like every woman, really only wanted to know what I felt – or thought, if I didn't feel anything."<sup>124</sup> He indicates that Ivy cries a lot and has nervous breakdowns frequently.<sup>125</sup> In this scope Ivy is uncanny for Faber and she is like an uninvited guest in his life. Yet, she is like an exaggerated representation of the feelings Faber has worked so hard to suppress.

Faber's first love Hanna also often gets emotional and surrenders herself to her feelings. Whenever Hanna informs Faber that she is pregnant, he approaches the situation with doubt as she was not examined by a doctor. Hanna just laughs at this in return: "She laughed because she was perfectly certain."<sup>126</sup> Whereas, Faber

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<sup>121</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 58.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

needs evidence as the only feeling he gets caught up against improbability is uncanniness. However, this rationality and the fact that he cannot express his feelings will have consequences: Hanna abandons him after saying if she does not want to abort her baby not their ‘baby’ – they should get married. Despite all their differences of opinions Faber speaks about his relationship with Hanna in a very positive way: “Nevertheless, we were very happy together, it seems to me, and I really don’t know why we didn’t marry.”<sup>127</sup> With this, Faber alleges that Hanna was overly emotional even hysterical. This makes her unpredictable and uncontrollable, in other words, uncanny in the eyes of Faber: “Hanna was always very sensitive and moody, an unpredictable temperament.”<sup>128</sup> Faber thinks that Hanna was “a sentimentalist and an art crafty”<sup>129</sup>, and she is the one who gave him the ‘Homo faber’ nickname. Like Ivy, Hanna also has nervous breakdowns, often the couple constantly fights and Hanna insults Faber all the time. Faber believes this anger of Hanna is a characteristic attribute of the gender of women: “Hanna was furious at my remark, more crudely a woman than I had ever seen her.”<sup>130</sup> The gender conflict of Hanna and Faber relationship is actually pretty interesting as they both have no idea of the opposite sex besides their prejudices: “‘You’re a man,’ she said. ‘I’ am a woman – that makes a difference, Walter.”<sup>131</sup> Hanna has put her trust on only one man, a blind old man who she met in her youth and helped him show around Munich, since that time all men are blind according to her principle: “Hanna thought this Piper’s attitude to life sad, but typical of certain men- stone-blind, according to Hanna, lacking any contact.” and “She thought me, too, stone-blind.”<sup>132</sup> Hanna has had a relationship with Faber in college years: then she got married with Joachim, but also got separated with him and then also left Piper, whom she made her second marriage with, too. In this respect, the fact that she finds men ridiculous (“At most she thought us all queer,

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<sup>127</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 58.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.



men as a whole”)<sup>133</sup> is not strange just like Sabeth thinks that Faber is amusing: “Sabeth thought me funny.”<sup>134</sup>

In the following section, the reason Walter Faber has turned his back on his emotions, why his life is based purely on science and technology by becoming alienated to his true self will be answered.

#### 4.1.3. ‘Vitafobia’: Fear of Life

“Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity.”<sup>135</sup>

As it was mentioned in the previous sections, Faber prefers machines to humans for they are perfect, they cannot be mistaken and they do not need emotions. Geulen suggests that this is some sort of an escape and that Faber uses the – all powerful- technology as a secondary nature that somehow anchors his self-confidence.<sup>136</sup> Faber feels secure only when he is surrounded by technology. The Enlightenment which the instrumental rationality is at the center of and the rationalist-scientific point of view as Adorno and Horkheimer refer that is based on the aim of purification from fear and becoming the master of nature, is the only truth for him and rejects the mythological model that stands against this.

Geulen deals with this theory in his work, *Max Frischs Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*. According to Geulen, Faber’s thought and behavioral patterns which are based on elements that are rational, calculable and so that controllable, have a tendency to exclude everything which it cannot be calculated – and by doing so, protecting itself. Everything that he cannot predict in advance, as they are incalculable, quite dangerous in his view as they challenge his strength

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<sup>133</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 173.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>135</sup> Theodor W. Adorno-Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr and trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford University Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>136</sup> Geulen, *Max Frischs Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*, 95.

and his identity – which he creates himself. For this very reason, he does not believe in fate and providence and keeps his distance against subjective judgment. Geulen points out that this is the reason of suppressing his own feelings.<sup>137</sup> As for Pelster, he explains how Faber becomes the victim to a tragedy as having an incestuous relationship with his own daughter even though he suppresses his emotions to such an extent by suggesting: Faber is an engineer who tries to challenge nature and death by disrupting the natural order and/or cycle. But Faber excluded that the logic of engineering can never match with the desires and actions of the id.<sup>138</sup> According to Geulen, Faber's patterns of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' can be evaluated within this defense mechanism. Faber associates concepts like complicated feelings, senility and death with masculinity, technology and being physically distant; Likewise, everything like irrationality, nature, mortality which horrifies him are feminine and thereby, uncanny in his view. Faber rejects femininity, as he rejects everything physical and sexual. He even tries to abstain from his own body, which reminds him mortality, sickness and ultimately his own death which even technology cannot find a cure for.<sup>139</sup> But just like in this very example, Enlightenment causes the person who isolates himself with the survival instinct in an environment of panic to become stranger to himself and be dragged into destruction.

As the novel progresses, Faber's view upon his death changes and starts to surrender to his own feelings rather than statistics. The collapse of his defense mechanism begins in the days where he spends in Cuba. He starts getting rid of his artificial identity and labels and he proceeds to his real self and finally decides that he wants to engage in the real life. The masquerade he was participating in for years has started to crumble with the death of Sabeth; science and technology which served him as his masks throughout his whole life lose their validity and fades away with his impending death. Faber has lived in an illusion of engineering and this dragged him into his own tragedy step by step. According to Pelster, this

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<sup>137</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 16.

<sup>138</sup> Pelster, *Max Frisch: Homo Faber*, 20.

<sup>139</sup> Geulen, *Max Frischs Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*, 43.

should be a warning for the people of modernity who try to fulfill the meaning of life just with science and technology.<sup>140</sup>

#### 4.1.4. Images of the Technology in the Novel

As Walter Faber sees nature as a super- power which is uncanny and which is trying to crush him, he tries to find ways to challenge nature, to suppress and cover it in his technological world. The technology, which stands against the nature, is a hero who runs to his help every moment by inviting human beings to the common sense. For example when he was trying to hide, the stewardess reaches him with the help of technology and brings him to his senses: “Passenger Faber, passenger Faber. Please call at the information desk.”<sup>141</sup> So that Faber turns back to the plane and moves on to Caracas: “I don’t really know why I was hiding. I was ashamed of myself.”<sup>142</sup>

Being surrounded with the technology presents a strong feeling of safety and a sense of order, which he can never resist its absence. Pelster suggests that Faber always makes enormous efforts to avoid relationship with the nature.<sup>143</sup> Generally, there is an object, which inhibits his direct contact with the nature. The protagonist prefers to experience the nature in the most indirect way possible, for example from the objective of the camera, which he always carries around. Thanks to his camera he does not have to investigate around his environment directly. By absorbing his feelings, the camera helps him limiting his point of view to the frame he chooses to look at. By doing so, Faber not only brings himself to a calculable level but also makes the whole world a place where can be perceived, named and numerated in an objective way. According to Bauman, “to ‘be modern’ means to modernize –compulsively, obsessively; not so much just ‘to be’, let alone to keep its identity intact, but forever ‘becoming’, avoiding

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<sup>140</sup> Pelster, *Max Frisch: Homo Faber*, 90.

<sup>141</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 14.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>143</sup> Pelster, *Ibid.*, 35.

completion, staying underdefined.”<sup>144</sup> For as much as the illusion he tries to sustain can only stand like this, so that all the events and experiences can be calculable and – hence – become controllable. He does not realize that this tendency gradually narrows his point of view: “I’m a technologist and accustomed to seeing things as they are. (...) I’m not blind.”<sup>145</sup> But at the end of his report, he decides not to take photos anymore. This is also a result of the changes he goes through: When he sees his daughter Sabeth in his previous recordings, he faces with the reality that the film does not replace the real life, on the contrary it only deforms it and so leaves his camera (the technology in a sense) aside.

Faber’s inner transformation and his disconnection from the technology happen in very small steps. When they found his old friend Joachim’s body, who ended his own life by hanging himself, technology was present alive and well: Radio kept on playing like nothing has happened and Faber recorded everything that was happening with his camera. Faber, at that time, seems like he believes that he can find comfort in the hands of the technology. Again, Joachim’s suicide can be read as a reflection of the human desire to control the nature. The uncanny does not let death take him, he ends his life himself in the way he wants it to be. Besides, his body hanging by the rope can be seen by his workers from the outside, he keeps on playing the role of ‘the master’ which capitalism gave him.

When Faber was in Rome with Sabeth, he gets interested with whatever there is to do with the technology rather than art and culture: “What interested me was the way they built their roads and bridges, the new Fiat, the new station in Rome, the new Rapido rail motors, the new Olivettis... Museums don’t mean a thing to me.”<sup>146</sup> In the night, when the two lovers get together, the technology is on the center of attention again as Faber indicates the noise of the cars passing by the street reaches to the room. And after the accident of Sabeth, he feels abandoned not only by Sabeth, but also by the technology: The Ford which passes them by, goes on to its way regardless of Faber’s cries for help.

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<sup>144</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Polity, 2013), 13.

<sup>145</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 29.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

“I shouted for help, but I was already out of breath before I reached the road with the victim in my arms, after trudging through the sand; I was seized with despair when I saw the Ford drive past; I shouted as loud as I could; but the Ford drove past.”<sup>147</sup>

There are no other cars around in the sight. Finally, a Greek farmer accepted to carry Faber and Sabeth with his donkey carriage. And after a while, Faber manages to stop a van that drives them to the hospital. However, the driver of the van blocks the chance of Faber and Sabeth to a faster vehicle, moreover, Faber becomes obliged to give the last technological gadget he has, his Omega watch, to this man in an addition to the catastrophe they went through. According to Geulen, it is possible to make a reference to the idea that Faber’s time is up: Omega, which is the last letter of the Greek alphabet, fairly reminds Faber that the world and life go on in their own rhythms and he is on the end of his own journey.<sup>148</sup>

Faber feels very good and safe in the technological transportation vehicles. He gets wrapped up by technology when travelling by plane, ship or car and believes that technology will take him to his destination safe and sound. He gets excited and expresses that he is very happy even while sitting in a car, because it represents success, which is a product made by humans for humans, which serves humans without expecting anything from humans.

Another technological symbol, which stands between nature and Faber, is the Super Constellation, which he makes the New York- Caracas flight with. He controls the nature and his environment through this four- engine propeller plane, which was one of the most advanced machines in the 50’s. For Faber, this plane is one of the masterpieces of the technological advancement. Geulen claims that Faber knows even the sounds the plane, and this is the evidence of his special bond with this machine. Moreover, the plane does not demand anything in return, while taking him far away from his depressing lover, Ivy.<sup>149</sup> As soon as Faber takes his seat on the Super Constellation, he gets relieved and wants to fall

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<sup>147</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 158.

<sup>148</sup> Geulen, *Max Frischs Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*, 40.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

asleep.<sup>150</sup> Even when the plane runs into turbulence Faber does not feel fear, as he is sure that there is no danger.

His typewriter, which is a product of the Swiss company Paillard- Bole, is another important symbol, standing between him and nature. Hermes, who is the messenger of the gods in Greek mythology, has also duties of guiding shepherds, travelers and of clerkship. In addition to these, Geulen draws attention to Hermes' taking the dead to the underworld and helping lovers (Zeus and Io) to come together. The typewriter, which takes the name of Hermes, transforms even Faber, the super-engineer, in to a tragedy poet.<sup>151</sup> Faber loves his typewriter and brings it everywhere he goes. After the emergency landing they make in to the desert, everyone starts to write letters to their loved ones while Faber feels under pressure against this situation. He does not know who to write but somehow he feels compelled to write:

“You pretty well had to write, if only to stop kind people from asking whether you had no wife, no mother, no children – I took out my Baby Hermes (it's still full of sand) and slipped in a sheet of paper with a carbon copy, since I thought I was going to write to Williams. I typed the date and pushed the carriage over to begin the letter. ‘My dear...’ So I wrote to Ivy.”<sup>152</sup>

The typewriter, upon which Faber sits near without knowing whom to write (first he thinks about writing to his chief officer Williams), seems to have decided whom to write. After the “my dear” addressing appears as a result of the keys Faber presses, he makes the inference of Ivy. When he thinks about the last time he was with Ivy and all the hardships he has gone through with her, he decides that he wants to break up with her and leaves himself to the typewriter: “I only had to think of it – and suddenly my fingers typed by themselves.”<sup>153</sup> Well, but

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<sup>150</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 8.

<sup>151</sup> Geulen, *Max Frischs Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*, 53.

<sup>152</sup> Frisch, *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

who is the person he addresses as “my dear” anyway? Geulen indicates that Faber actually has Hanna, his previous lover in mind, with this address. For as much as, he has heard her name for the first time after twenty years, just one day before he’s sat to write this letter. On the other hand he also thinks that he calls out for his real baby that he did not want/ did not want enough in the past. ‘Hermes Baby’ must have been some kind of a technological consolation for him.<sup>154</sup> When we consider the references made to Hermes, it is also possible to think about this as a foreshadowing: Hermes depicts that Faber progresses to sin and destruction by losing his way. Faber who hits the road from America proceeds to the arms of Hermes from France and Italy to Greece, he ‘regresses’ through mythology from Enlightenment. At this point, it is impossible to remember Adorno and Horkheimer’s description of the “self-destruction of Enlightenment.”<sup>155</sup> For, by the fact that science and instrumental rationality becoming the myth, regenerating the submission and obedience upon the supernatural and religion causes the system to collapse. Through the end of the journey, after Sabeth’s death, Faber’s first sentence in the beginning of the second station is: “They have taken my Baby Hermes away.”<sup>156</sup> Here he refers actually to her daughter who he had lost a short time ago, not the typewriter. “I suppose to write by hand. I hate handwriting.”<sup>157</sup>

Another technological device that is often used by Faber with a great fondness throughout the novel is the shaving machine. Faber, horrified by the uncanny nature and its uncontrollable growth, frequently gets shaved in order to control the nature of his own body. Living unshaved is too much humane for him and this situation bothers him a lot. As this reminds him that humans can control nature but cannot cope with their own bodies. It is probable that Faber secretly knows that he is sick and his death is close. For this very reason, he tries to escape from the nature and natural cycles. Especially, the situations in which he feels uncomfortable or insecure, he clinches to the shaving machine immediately, as this device provides him a technological purification. To think that beard reminds

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<sup>154</sup> Geulen, *Max Frisch's Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*, 86.

<sup>155</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xvi.

<sup>156</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 200.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

Faber of being old and thereby it reminds him of mortality makes sense. For this reason, even though it is trivial, he obtains some kind of a relief by shaving himself. “I felt a desire to shave, not because it was necessary, but just because I felt like it.”<sup>158</sup>

#### 4.2. FABERS RELATION WITH NATURE

Adorno and Horkheimer explain the alienation of human from the nature when speaking about the transformation of the human-nature relationship with Enlightenment as:

“Myth becomes enlightenment and nature mere objectivity. Human begins purchase the increase in their power with estrangement from that over which it is exerted. Enlightenment stands in the same relationship to things as the dictator to human beings. He knows them to the extent that he can make them. Their ‘in-itself’ becomes ‘for him.’”<sup>159</sup>

Faber not only rejects nature, which he finds uncanny, he also cannot stand the idea of being a part of it. Nature, which keeps him reminded of his mortality, is a danger that is incalculable and uncontrollable for him. “Nature everywhere ensures the survival of the species by overproduction.”<sup>160</sup> This limitless overproduction, which is uncontrollable in Faber’s vision, disgusts him. Femininity, just like his illness and death, is in a very close relationship with nature, which makes him feel horrified and disgusted and in deep, which actually is the sense of uncanniness. For this reason, while the swamps which Faber sees from the plane, reminds him of the red lipstick, the colors of the lagoon reminds him the eyes of Ivy.<sup>161</sup> Faber, who is disgusted by femininity, rejects sexual intercourse, too: “I swilled the wine round in my glass to order to smell it and

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<sup>158</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 78.

<sup>159</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 6.

<sup>160</sup> Frisch, *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.



tried not to think of the way men and women couple.”<sup>162</sup> He is disturbed by the thought of sexual intercourse and reproduction: “What got on my nerves were the newest in every pool, a seething mass of newts in every one-day puddle- all this procreation, this stench of fertility, of blossoming decay. Wherever you spat it germinated!”<sup>163</sup> For Faber the engineer, sexual intercourse is the fault of women, who he defines as an uncontrollable, impulsive entity. Moreover he thinks that women stand in the face of men as a form of birth:

“The fact that the woman would rather have it once it’s there is a different matter, an automatic reaction of instincts, she forgets she tried to avoid it and added to this is the feeling of power over the man, motherhood as an economic weapon in the hands of the woman.”<sup>164</sup>

On top of it, Faber does not stop there. While remembering the words of, French-American musician, Marcel he met on the road, “Tu sais que la mort es femme! (...) Et que la tere est femme!”<sup>165</sup>, he relates the woman directly to nature and natural mortality and death.

Faber who tries to escape from impulsive and uncontrollable nature by taking showers and shaving frequently can never attain his desire: “I showered from morning to evening. I hate sweat, because it makes me feel like a sick man. (I’ve never been ill in my life, expect for measles.)”<sup>166</sup> As long as Faber tries to escape nature, he keeps finding himself in nature, which is abstracted from all civilization and technology. For example, just at the beginning of the novel, he gets to spend four days in the desert when their plane had an emergency landing, without any protection from the nature and the hot weather. The heat in Campeche is also in an unbearable state for Faber and Herbert also. With the sun above and the tropical climate, nature slaps the modern engineer, who would prefer to escape

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<sup>162</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 115.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

from the heat normally in a room with an air conditioner or in a vehicle. Faber speaks about his disgust against the climate in there as:

“As soon as we reached Campeche the heat greeted us with slimy sunshine and sticky air, the stench of slime rotting in the sun, and when you wiped the sweat from your face it was as though you yourself stank of fish.”<sup>167</sup>

Faber tries to get rid of this state of disgust from his own body by taking shower frequently; however, the nature does not leave him in peace. And that time, he was to struggle with the insects that came out of the shower drain. His next stop, Palenque, full of Mayan ruins, was not in the middle of one of the virgin forests. In this place, again, it was terribly hot outside (“The sweat immediately began to pour again.”<sup>168</sup>), the nature laws governed and the civilization and technology were ignored:

“The train drove on, leaving us standing there with our luggage as though at the end of the world, or at least at the end of civilization, and of the jeep that was supposed to take the gentleman from Düsseldorf straight to the plantation there was, of course, not a sign.”<sup>169</sup>

In a jungle in Mexico, the contradiction of nature and modern world, draws attraction with all its nakedness: Faber and Herbert, who were workaholic in their daily lives, relapsed into a psychological mood in which they did not want to do anything, joyless and lazy: “... apathy was the only possible state.”<sup>170</sup> Such that, Faber did not even touch his camera: “I was even too lazy to take films.”<sup>171</sup> According to Geulen, the animal symbolism which is used throughout the novel plays an important role in understanding Faber’s relationship with nature.<sup>172</sup> Various animal types which he met in the jungle were irritating for Faber as a part

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<sup>167</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 41.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>172</sup> Geulen, *Max Frischs Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*, 57.

of nature. These uncanny animals were here, there and everywhere and they were making too much noise:

“The flitting wings and animal cries made the place sound like a zoo; you couldn’t tell what creatures were whistling and screeching and warbling, it was a din like modern music, they might have been monkeys, or birds, or maybe some feline species, it was impossible to tell, they might have been in rut or terrified, you couldn’t tell that either.”<sup>173</sup>

On the one hand, Faber included animal metaphor while referring to women, because, according to him, women were creatures who liked violence, animal-like and instinctual. He especially, thought that his lover Ivy, whom he quarreled with frequently, fit into this definition. On the other hand, Faber included animal metaphor: The expressions of “The row began when Ivy came in with a bath towel; I threw her out – violently, unfortunately, for she loved violence, it gave her an excuse to bite me...” and “She struck me with both fists, sobbing, but I took care not to use force, because that was what she wanted,”<sup>174</sup> reveal the primitivism, thus the beastliness which he finds in the woman stereotype in a larger context, thus the beastliness. Then Ivy, while passing by him, slapped Faber on the face and Faber narrated this as, “Now she was playing cat and mouse.”<sup>175</sup> Faber was feeling himself as a mouse which a cat is playing with it before killing and this exhausted him. He again felt himself that he was abused by nature which he could not govern. For this reason, he needed to stand up and shave himself immediately. He wanted to cope with the seduction of the nature, with the help of technology. According to Geulen, Faber was trying to break the ancient hunted-hunter cycle, to suppress the dread he felt against nature.<sup>176</sup>

As they were standing over the dead body of their child, his puppy love Hanna also attacked him just like Ivy. Also Hanna told Faber that in her childhood they fought with her elder brother and after her elder brother had thrown him to

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<sup>173</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 52.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>176</sup> Geulen, *Max Frischs Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*, 47.

the floor, she promised herself to never love any man again. Hanna was so annoyed from the physical superiority of a man to woman. For this reason, she would try to close this deficit by standing on her own feet throughout all her life and having a successful career.

Faber likened her daughter Sabeth, to a cat. When they got into the engine room of the ship, Sabeth climbed to the hanging stairs easily, just “like a cat.”<sup>177</sup> Sabeth’s hair in pony tail also allured Faber deeply. Geulen expressed that this leitmotiv represents Sabeth’s life energy and her free spirit.<sup>178</sup>

Another animal which Faber correlates with women is bird. The hair of the Indian landlady reminded him bird feathers<sup>179</sup> and he likened Hanna to chicken: “She was really acting (as I suppose all women do, no matter how intellectual they are) like a hen taking her chick under her wing.”<sup>180</sup> While referring to birds, it is not possible to not to talk about vultures which are encountered so frequently in the novel. The role of these vultures, the messengers of Faber’s approaching death plays, shall be dealt in detail under the heading of 4.2.2.

Another symbolic animal which we also confronted in the novel is snake with all its uncanniness. The snake which deceived Eve into eating the forbidden apple is the symbol of seduction and sin. Snake, has an important place in Greek mythology, represents the ones who were born of earth, the ones who are earthbound. The snake haired Erinnys’ - mentioned in the novel - being the goddesses of revenge who chase up the crimes committed against the relatives, is rather meaningful. Faber was highly impressed by the Erinny head sculpture which he saw in a museum in Rome together with Sabeth. This can be read as a prospect in regards to the revenge of the incest would be lived, was going to be taken. That, Faber-snake relationship has just been dealt with at the beginning of the report. Faber, when he was in Palenque, seized with fear as thinking there might be a snake.<sup>181</sup> And in the hotel room in Rome, the incestuous sexual

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<sup>177</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 107.

<sup>178</sup> Geulen, *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>179</sup> Frisch, *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

relationship was interrupted by the sound of Alfa Romeo, racing in the silence of the night. In the emblem of the brand, the existence of a snake, which swallows a child, is thought to be a subtle reference of Max Frisch. Finally, when Faber and Sabeth arrived in Greece and they were in an ecstasy of love in the beach like dream, Sabeth is bitten by a snake and fell on the ground and bumped her head, and the cerebral hemorrhage occurred after this accident, costed the life of the young woman. The snake, which symbolizes the sin of incest, went and bit Sabeth, the Erinnys took their revenge by the life of his child. The serum which was given in the hospital set Faber's mind at rest, who thought that Sabeth was intoxicated from the bite of snake and lost her consciousness. Nature (snake), which he thought to be the mother of all evils, would be defeated by technology (serum) once more. However, doctors did not become aware of the necessity of their intervention not to the snake bite but to the cerebral hemorrhage.

Faber's typewriter Hermes Baby, which he wrote his story included in the incestuous relationship, had also a relation with the snake symbolism, as well. There were two snakes in the stick of Hermes, the Messenger of Gods. Typewriter knew everything that had happened between Faber and his daughter.

#### **4.2.1. The Will to Dominate the Nature by Degrading it to Scientific Phenomena**

By saying, "We live technologically, with man as the master of nature, man as the engineer, and let anyone who raises his voice against it stop using bridges not built by nature"<sup>182</sup>, Faber openly announced his dominance over nature. According to him, the task of the engineer especially is to take the wild nature under control before its uncontrollable growth and decay shall generate an inestimable harm.

Sexuality, one of the examples that can be given for the natural and hence the animal side of man, is rejected by Faber as it is sourced from the instincts and

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<sup>182</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 132.

changes into a desire: “It’s absurd, when you’re not impelled to it yourself by your instincts, it makes you feel you must be crazy even to have such an idea, positively perverse.”<sup>183</sup> If a child would come into existence from this instinctual action, Faber sees abortion as a necessary intervention in nature, because “[m]en are not rabbits, it’s the consequence of progress that we have to regulate things for ourselves.”<sup>184</sup> According to Faber, man as a rational being, is responsible for taking his reproduction under control. According to him, the abortion, “is the logical outcome of civilization, only the jungle gives birth and molds away as nature decrees, [m]an plans.”<sup>185</sup> Faber, as a result of the alienation towards nature and his own nature, tries to deceive/overcome the nature with the help of technology. However, sexuality is a field which he could not achieve this. Faber, who insults femininity and rejects the effect of woman on man, from time to time is drawn towards women whose childish features in her: As his lover Ivy, emphasized so many times, “was a nice kid”<sup>186</sup> or “was a good kid when she didn’t get sexy”<sup>187</sup>, and her body was: “... she had a boy’s figure.”<sup>188</sup> Faber, free from her age, he found some childish features. Sabeth’s cowboy trousers were named as “boyish trousers”<sup>189</sup> by Faber. When they entered the engine room, Sabeth’s narrow, childish hip attracted his attention.<sup>190</sup> And masculinity in Hanna, contrary to Sabeth, was not related to her appearance. He was an educated and working woman, who keeps her both feet on the ground for the 1950s. When they again met with Faber after years, he became a venerable professor, working at an archaeology institution. This prestige was a feature that Faber normally considered something belongs to man. Apart from that, Hanna could make her own choices (“Yet Hanna has always done what she thought best, and for a woman that says a great deal, I think. She led her life according to her own

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<sup>183</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 115.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

wishes”<sup>191</sup>) and she could organize her life in a successful way: “Hanna behaved like a manager.”<sup>192</sup> This made Faber respect Hanna and maybe for that reason, he said that sexuality was not strange only with Hanna and after it, he did not feel himself bad. The relationship of the protagonist with the woman characters plays an important role with respect to understanding his arrogant view and desire to govern.

According to Adorno and Horkheimer, “in thought, human beings distance themselves from nature in order to arrange it in such a way that it can be mastered.”<sup>193</sup> Walter Faber also, by exactly doing this, condenses nature into phenomena which he could explain and estimate physically and mathematically, because he could only cope with the feeling of uncanniness against nature. While looking to the moon in Tamaulipas Desert, he expressed that he only saw “a calculable mass circling round our planet, an example of gravitation” and said: “interesting, but in what way an experience?”<sup>194</sup> According to Faber, nature by no means had a poetic or fantastic side. The big, serrated rocks which were surrounding them did not frighten him because, though they resembled antique animals, Faber knew that they were only big stone pieces. And Geulen claims that Faber actually seized with fear in desert because, his environment was surrounded by omnipotent nature.<sup>195</sup> For Faber, ‘living’ was consisted of explainable and provable phenomena. Nature, which he tried to cope with by governing it, was against him with all its uncanniness. Indeed, it could be easily understood that it was a defense mechanism for not to be seized by fear and be headed for a fall. Faber’s first time, in opening himself to nature as going out of his rationalist world, even if it is partial, happened during when they were together with Sabeth, observing the lunar eclipse in Avignon on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May. Normally, this celestial event which could be explained scientifically would not disturb him, but that night, the intensity of his feelings surpassed his logic:

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<sup>191</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 172.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>193</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 31.

<sup>194</sup> Frisch, *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>195</sup> Geulen, *Max Frisch's Homo Faber: Studien und Interpretation*, 66.

“The mere fact that three heavenly bodies, the sun, the earth and the moon, occasionally lie in a straight line, which necessarily produces an eclipse of the moon, upset my equilibrium, as though I didn’t know exactly what a lunar eclipse was.”<sup>196</sup>

The engineer Faber, while on one hand, was ‘Othering’ the nature to govern it within the boundaries of his Enlightened-Rationalist world, on the other hand, he got alienated to his own nature and his self. Together with the entrance of Sabeth to his life, while the illusion which he formed for himself was shaken off from its foundations, in fact Faber faced with his own ‘Other’. The ‘uncanniness’(Unheimlichkeit) which he referred to nature and his self, caused a kind of uneasiness and panic in him. Adorno-Horkheimer mentions that this is a kind of paralysis when man becomes helpless:

“The noonday panic fear in which nature suddenly appeared to humans as an all-encompassing power has found its counterpart in the panic which is ready to break out at any moment today: human beings expect the world, which is without issue, to be set ablaze by a universal power which they themselves are and over which they are powerless.”<sup>197</sup>

#### **4.2.2. Denial of Self-Nature and Mortality**

As also stated before, the reason for Faber’s not wanting to interact with nature under no circumstance was nature’s way of reminding him that he is growing old, he would die one day and he had nothing to do against this. ‘Existing’ and ‘extinction’ which he could not control, threw his mortality into his face by causing a disgust and distrust in him. He even avoided looking at the mirror as he feared of seeing his approaching death in his eyes.<sup>198</sup> Besides this, he was closing his eyes against the symptoms of the disease. Faber was seeing the human body as a design, made of an impractical material which could easily be broken down, but could be hardly repaired.

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<sup>196</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 154.

<sup>197</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 22.

<sup>198</sup> Frisch, *Ibid.*, 212.



Faber had an attack which was resulted in fainting during the transfer in Houston. While washing his hands, he noticed that his face was deathly pale and his capillary veins became visible just like the veins of a corpse. In fact, this was a reference to his illness and his approaching death. First, he tried to convince himself that this was originated from the fluorescence at the toilet, however he gradually felt himself weak and in the end he fainted. When he regained his consciousness, an Afro-American was sitting on her knees beside him and taking care of him. The existence of the woman and as a 'super-engineer' like him, being in need of such a "negro"<sup>199</sup> cleaning attendant, caused him to feel terribly bad. The Afro-American woman, indeed, was a reflection of nature which terrified Faber and it was a statement of uncanniness.

The defective design of human body, according to Faber, was entirely approved by his prospective death as suffering from gastric cancer. "I felt my stomach – as I often did recently. There was no real pain, I was simply aware of having a stomach, a stupid feeling."<sup>200</sup> He thought that this disturbance he felt was because of clean air and mobility deficiency and indicated the environmental factors as the cause of his feeling himself bad. Faber claimed that except for one thing, he never became ill and for this reason, he was not and would not be ill. Also, Faber's not caring for himself and his body was conspicuous. Though he decided to give up smoking with the hope of relieving the pain, this decision of him did not last long. Faber's plan of getting examined by a doctor in Paris also collapsed because he forgot this decision immediately. In the end, he was hospitalized and as being conscious of gastric cancer, he expressed how he clung to life strongly:

"I cling to this life as never before, and if it was only another year, a miserable year, a quarter of a year, two months (that would be September and October), I should hope, although I know I am lost."<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 13.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

Faber was now experiencing that the technology on which he had established his life, could not always defeat nature over his own body. Nevertheless he could not elude from the numbers. Operation risks were not agitating him because the statistics give quite high survival rate. Besides, Faber's relationship with his body throughout the novel could not be denied. The trigger of this transformation was of course his encounter with his daughter Sabeth. Faber, who at the beginning rejected sexuality and found it absurd, accepted the sexuality with the desire he felt towards his daughter who had an incestuous relationship and after it, filled with life energy: "My lust for looking. My desire. Vacuum between the loins."<sup>202</sup> At the beginning, the only emotion Faber conveyed was stress, by the entrance of Sabeth into his life he learned to show his other feelings, as well. This could be seen in Cuba days clearly, which might be regarded as the transformation.

Faber rejects the nature and together with it his mortality, but his death is inevitable. Death, ornamented by Frisch proficiently throughout the novel, was also emphasized with the death symbol:

When they got off in Mexico City, he decided to visit his old friend Joachim in Guatemala together with Herbert, whom he acquainted in the airplane because, he was affected by Herbert's worry, who could not reach his elder brother. These worries would not be without reason: When they arrive, they found Joachim's dead body who had committed suicide. There were perched vultures on the roof of the cottage and on the trees, which had reminded Faber of death and made reference to the archaic order. Vultures' scratching the carcasses' eyes out, seemed like a warning about Faber's getting blind to the degree of not seeing the realities in the illusion which he had created for himself. In addition to this, the uncanny atmosphere, created over eye, made itself felt, as well. As it was dealt in Freud's article (1919), it is revealed by psychoanalysis that man's fear of his eye's gotten harmed or losing it, is one of the worst fears of a person in childhood.<sup>203</sup> Also, "[t]he study of dreams, fantasies and myths has taught us also that anxiety

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<sup>202</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 221.

<sup>203</sup> Freud, *The Uncanny*, 139.

about one's eyes, the fear of going blind, is quiet often a substitute for the fear of castration. When the mythical criminal Oedipus blinds himself, this is merely a mitigated form of the penalty of castration, the only one that befits him according to the *lex talionis*.<sup>204</sup> It should not be forgotten that Faber also thought of the same method of punishing himself after the death of Sabeth: "Why not take this two forks, hold them upright in my hands and let my head fall, so as to get rid of my eyes?"<sup>205</sup> If we again return to the vultures: Faber, in his report, mentions the vulture which he had seen it in Campeche and while travelling from Palenque to Guatemala, Faber again met with Herbert and Marcel. Faber conveyed how he had tried to frighten the birds with a futile effort and ploughed into the midst of them as having lost himself, crushed a few of them as ploughing into the midst of them as losing Faber. It seemed that Herbert was trying unconsciously to defeat the death which would confront them after a short while by the suicide of Joachim. However, death would not leave Faber and his travel companions in peace: While three men were thinking that they defeated death by cleaning the dead carcasses on the wheels, again the vultures were flying over them. Herbert gradually got used to existence of three men were thinking that they defeated death by cleaning the dead carcasses on the wheels; again the vultures were flying over them. Herbert gradually got used to existence of these birds, and even he watched them while eating.

These scavengers continued their existence in the novel. At the ball, the men in tuxedos, were reminding Faber of the vultures who stared at Sabeth. The vulture motive in this scene was making a reference on one hand to the blindness of Faber, and on the other Sabeth's tragic death. After Sabeth had died, Faber mentioned vultures once more: "I've talked to her so much about zopilotes, now she doesn't want to sit by my bed like a black vulture."<sup>206</sup> Though we only learned that Faber was taken into operation, this was a sign of death which indicated Faber would probably die.

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<sup>204</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 141.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

The sudden change of space and time reflected the life rhythm which slowed down the ship voyage that Faber was making to Europe and thus indicating his death. When they together with Sabeth, visited Museo Nazionale in Italy, Faber told that it was “silent as the grave”<sup>207</sup>. From there, they walked to Via Appia and passed through the mausoleums and sat and rested by one mausoleum. Desert, jungle, beach in Greece, natural spaces such as Havana and Alps, made Faber face with life and death, the reality of humanity. The spaces, contrasting with Faber’s engineer world, revealed the isolation of his soul. When he returned to New York, he was locked out because the lock of his flat had been changed. Nobody was remembering Faber as if he’d been already died. Faber himself turned into being an uncanny subject, an unwanted guest. Skyscrapers seemed to him as tombstones and in the party which his manager organized, Faber felt himself as if he had died and nobody was seeing him: “Nobody would notice if you weren’t there anymore. I wasn’t there anymore.”<sup>208</sup>

And the character of Professor O. can be accepted as the peak point of the death symbolism in the novel. As the super-engineer Faber saw the Professor as his idol from whom he took lesson in ETH, Faber’s fate was indicated by means of this figure. Professor O. first was seen to Faber in his dream for the first time and “although he is a mathematician” he was in a continuously crying and unpleasantly emotional state. When they had met with each other, Faber could hardly recognize him. Professor had been changed so much, his laughing changed into a “ghastly”<sup>209</sup> state and “his face was no longer a face, but a skull with skin over it.”<sup>210</sup> The reason for him to seem that much bad was Faber’s being gastric cancer. He became all skin and bone, his eyes got deeper inside and started to act so sincerely and emotionally than ever before. This man, once his idol, then was uncanny in the eye of Faber.

Professor seemed as if he was aware that he would die soon and Faber felt that he did not want to accept this. And from there, a parallelism could be derived

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<sup>207</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 135.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

that Faber who was gastric cancer in the same way, was feeling the nearing death, but he did not want to accept it. After that -while he was in the hospital- Faber also wrapped himself up in the image of Professor O.: Became so thin, ears became flap-eared and grew pale. Faber met with Professor in Zurich once more and he could hardly recognize him again, because Professor O. seemed much worse. Faber's not recognizing him again can be explained with his blindness towards his own disease and his death. They together went to Café Odéon and that was also a sign for a change because Faber had never liked this <sup>211</sup> space of the "emigrants and intellectuals-bohemians."

Faber's ignoring all of these above mentioned death symbols, revealed his rejection of 'being' and 'annihilation' and of course together with this, his own mortality. When he got close to the end -maybe- he would try to take pleasure from his last days that remained, as becoming aware of the mortality.

#### **4.3. THE CONFLICT OF NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY: MYSTICISM, ART AND BELIEF**

Walter Faber saw the faith and religion as a basis for the primitive man who does not believe in the 'god of technology' like himself. According to him, believing in the supernatural and the positivist way of thinking were standing against each other and Faber would be tested with this contradiction (dilemma) due to this standing with which he determined his own self. Adorno and Horkheimer, while explaining the Enlightenment, express that man on the road which takes him to science, renounces the meaning.<sup>212</sup> Engineer Faber was paying for discovering the 'meaning' again, with a tragic end.

This contradiction could be observed over the two (previous) lovers, woman-man, Hanna and Faber, clearly. While Faber was continuing his life on the axis of technology and statistics, Hanna believed in fate and coincidences.

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<sup>211</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 230.

<sup>212</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 8.

Hanna was an art historian and archaeologist with a doctorate degree and within this framework she was more successful than Faber who left his thesis unfinished. Hanna, as a woman, who believes in supernatural, was more successful than Faber professionally and the respect she had gained due to her success, astonished Faber: “Yet they treated her like a professor, a Nobel Prize winner!”<sup>213</sup> Faber’s trial of defending the scientific thought against myth was materialized against the art historian Hanna in the first step. Hanna had strong links with the past and they believed in not the laws of the modern science, but the laws of the old myths. The main difference between these two planes was the man’s – who believe in myth - being conscious of his mortality and his limits. Despite this, the scientist prototype which the enlightenment has created thinks that he could design his own world with instrumental intelligence and interfere in the nature in the way and level he thinks to be right. Faber, while subliming the positive sciences and technology, he refuses the mysticism and in connection with it, generally everything: “Primitive peoples tried to annul death by portraying the human body – we do it by finding substitutes for the human body. Technology instead of mysticism!”<sup>214</sup> Besides, Faber saw his nature, as a chaotic invariant continuing its existence on a primitive basis which an engineer could not be in line with the thoughts of the folk people who live in harmony with nature. On the other hand, nature was the raw material, energy source and functional model. Namely, bare nature was not chaos, it was rather the universal order which was the basis of everything and capable of everything. For this reason, nature and technology are tightly linked to each other because, while nature could continue to exist without technology, technology cannot survive without the nature.

According to Pelster, Faber’s thesis on Maxwell’scher Dämon – which reaches to fruition – was meaningful in the context of its gathering technology (Maxwell) and mythology in its heading.<sup>215</sup> Faber rejected not only the mysticism but also the art and culture which found unnecessary and boring. He claimed that art was something primitive which had no relation with explainable reality and for

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<sup>213</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 174.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>215</sup> Pelster, *Max Frisch: Homo Faber*, 80.

this reason, although he had travelled to Paris recurrently, he never visited the Louvre Museum. Faber, who never stopped talking when the subject was technology and engineering, could not know what to say about Van Gogh and according to him, the statues in the museums, were not work of arts but “are nothing more... than forbears of the robot.”<sup>216</sup> His interest towards literature was not brighter than his relation with art; he did not know Tolstoy, and expressed that he did not read anything other than academic publications: “Novels don’t interest me.”<sup>217</sup>

During the Europe travel which he had realized with Sabeth, he would review this point of view. With the interest he took to Sabeth, he started to not to close himself to the beauty of art completely. This started with his going to Louvre several times even though with the hope of only seeing Sabeth. As soon as he found Sabeth, she invited her to opera that this night program was quite extraordinary for Faber, because “[he] had never been to the Opéra, naturally.”<sup>218</sup> The ‘self-sacrifice’ chain to spend some time with Sabeth, which had started with Louvre, continued with opera. While the couple was making headway to Rome from there, Faber expressed that he was not interested in art but in Sabeth, however he did not cast doubt on the happiness of the art tours, which were the main locomotive of their travel. He even found the painting of ‘The Birth of Venus’ as “charming”<sup>219</sup> and the sculpture head of the sleeping Erinnys affected him so deeply: “Here I found it – magnificent, impressive, superb, profoundly impressive.”<sup>220</sup> Natives, whom he met in the jungle, also got their share from Faber’s rejection of myth and nature, as well. They found them quite uncanny:

“Native uprising! I didn’t believe that for a moment; the Indians were far too gentle, too peaceable, positively childlike. They squatted for whole evenings in their white straw hats on the earth, motionless as toadstools, content without light, silent. The sun and moon were enough light for them, an effeminate race, eerie but innocuous.”<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 97.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 137

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

These people's living in nature, against which Faber was horrified, in such a harmony, caused doubts in him and their distance to technology was proving their primitiveness. Frisch in his novel, found it appropriate to place the Mayan culture as a model against the visionary society which deified technology of the 1950s. Faber, found the Mayans primitive as they do not use their outstanding mathematics information to govern the nature and life. Seeing the Mayan ruins in Palenque was unnecessary for Faber and he expressed that he could not make any sense of their leaving their cities in every twenty-five years and built the new ones. Even the American Marcel, whom they acquainted with during the travel and who was spending his holiday as examining the Mayan inscriptions and ruins, could neither infuse him nor Joachim an admiration towards the Mayan culture. Unlike Faber, Marcel did not want to photograph the inscriptions because, he thought that would destroy the magic of the historical fabric. As Faber and Joachim were so exhausted that they could not even move their arms, Marcel photographed the ruins as working hard and disciplined.

Faber, who mocked everybody and especially Hanna, also got at Marcel as well but it was again Marcel who found the jeep and made them bring back to the civilization. At this point, Faber was still believing in technology and its governance strictly. Along with the transformation he experienced, he opened himself to nature in Cuba and as writing a letter to Marcel, he accepted that his criticism concerning the "American way of life" was correct: "Letter to Marcel. Marcel is right."<sup>222</sup>

#### **4.4. RELATION OF MINOR CHARACTERS WITH TECHNOLOGY**

Engineer Faber, as emphasized in the previous chapters, cannot establish deep relationships as he categorized and 'Othered' men and he even defined people generally as 'unnerving'. For that reason, by abstaining from them, he lived against nature which had created man as not a hermit but a social being. The

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<sup>222</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 220.



chess, which does not require an interaction between the parties due to everybody's being responsible for his own game, is an example putting forth his relations clearly: not to be in a position to listen. In the Tamaulipas Desert, Faber and Herbert, sat in another corner and played chess for not to be in a position to listen the conversation of others and also felt appreciation for not to be in a position to listen the others. Faber, found joining into a community and being obliged to talk to the people as 'tiring', and the situations in which he was obliged to do so, his communication with others was as limited and superficial as possible. And his perspective of women except Hanna and Sabeth, made Faber get into contact with them for only sexuality which he saw it as an imposition. He had no interest toward establishing a relationship other than sexuality and basing on trust. On the other hand, Faber's relationships with men also were as superficial as possible; men whom he described as his friends were generally his colleagues. In this context, his youth friend, Joachim Hencke was his sole friend which he ever had.

Characters who had relationship with Faber were divided into two groups: On one hand, there are engineers who worship the 'god of technology' like Faber, and on the other hand, there are the mystics who lived in harmony with nature and beyond this, believed in the supernatural phenomenon, which cannot be explained by positive sciences. There was another character between the technology, which threw off his balance, the architect of transformation, and mysticism: Sabeth. Under the next two headings, by examining the engineers and mystics, Faber's human relations will be examined closely and the trigger, which caused Faber's transformation, over the character of Sabeth, the fruit of the clash of the others (Faber and Hanna), will be explained.

#### 4.4.1. Engineers

The engineers in the novel were consisted of men only: People with whom Faber had a business relation such as his thesis advisor, Professor O., Herbert Hencke and his manager Williams. Faber's addressing to his superior with his name indicated that he had a close relationship with him. This view strengthened by his thinking of writing to Williams as Faber sat in the desert without knowing to whom he would write a letter. Besides, Faber was making status updating as frequently dialing up Williams. In the telephone conversation, which they made when Faber was in Le Havre, Williams had no time to listen the explanations of Faber, he only offered Faber to take leave for a vacation. All these showed that Faber and his manager had a superficial and a professional relationship before anything else, but for Faber, who defined himself with his profession and his job, this was important. And the parties in Williams' villa were telling that Faber took his colleagues for his not existing family. After his daughter's death, though he was not so cheerful, he once more participated in one of Williams' traditional Saturday night parties. There, how Faber's and his view of these so-called friends of him were changed by the death of Sabeth, could be seen clearly. After the sincere relationship that he had lived with Sabeth, he understood that he had nothing common with these people and therefore; he told them nothing about Sabeth:

“I didn't tell anyone my daughter had died, for no one knew this daughter had even existed, and I wasn't wearing a black armband because I didn't want people to ask questions, because it didn't concern them.”<sup>223</sup>

His manager and colleagues compelled Faber to play a role throughout his life (“Williams thought I ought to act a part, better a comic part than none at all.”) and this made him to feel himself, “like an idiot.”<sup>224</sup> After all the things he had

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<sup>223</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 201.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

lived through and his inner transformation, Faber thought that he could not continue this any longer.

Another example of Faber's shallow friendships was his chess mate Dick, who he described as:

“Dick, for example, was a nice fellow, also a chess player, highly educated, I believe, anyhow more educated than I am, a witty chap whom I admired (only at chess was I his equal), or at least envied, one of those people who could save your life without becoming your intimate friend on that account.”<sup>225</sup>

Faber stated that he appreciated Dick's interest in chess and distant stance towards other people just as himself. Especially when Dick came to Faber's house before the seafaring with some of his friends, Faber rejoiced over it, because then he would not have to spend time alone with Ivy. However, in the later hours of the night, it became clear that how distant Faber felt from Dick and his friends:

“In your company a man could die,” I said, ‘a man could die and you wouldn't notice, there's no trace of friendship, a man could die in your company!’ I shouted. ‘What the hell's the point of this party,’ I could hear myself shouting, ‘if a man could die without your noticing?’<sup>226</sup>

On the other hand, Dick was an idol for Faber, just as physics Professor O. of ETH Zurich. Professor O., who was “a true scientist”<sup>227</sup>, had gained Faber's great admiration even though he had not won the Nobel Prize; he was not even a world-renowned scientist. Professor O. had an unwavering trust in positive sciences and technology just like Faber. As his former student Faber, he did not show his feelings; he never acted too intimate towards people. This condition would only change when he had faced death. When he had met with Faber at Paris, Professor O. acted very sincerely towards him and laughed freely. This made him uncanny in the eyes of Faber. On the other hand, Professor assumed a function of the messenger of death throughout the novel as noted earlier. He, like

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<sup>225</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 73.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

Faber, got stomach cancer and changed his view of life as he got closer to death step by step. For instance, even though he found travelling outdated, he met with Faber at Paris where he was visiting. That indicated that Professor had managed to get free of the technology a short time before his death, and started to enjoy the beautiful aspects of life.

Herbert Hencke, Faber's road friend who he met at Caracas flight, was also an engineer. He had been helping the underdeveloped countries like Faber, and they both lead an 'American way of life' despite their significantly different character traits. Herbert was found annoying by Faber at first because he constantly spoke, since he only wanted to rest his head. Nevertheless, Herbert reminded him of the only true friend he had in the life, Joachim. They started to talk after the emergency landing at the dessert, and Faber learned that Herbert was the brother of Joachim and Joachim had married Faber's former fiancée, Hanna Landsberg. At Mexico, Faber suddenly decided to accompany Herbert who wanted to visit his brother in Palenque. After the suicide of his brother Joachim, Herbert underwent such drastic changes that Faber could no longer recognize him.<sup>228</sup> According Faber, Herbert went into shock, decided to leave his family and job to relocate in Palenque. This did not constitute an occupational problem since the two brothers had worked for the same company, Hencke-Bosch AG. Herbert decided to continue his brother's living, he was acting with a sound mind under the influence of the shock; however, he did have neither a purpose nor a plan for the future anymore. Herbert, who was an engineer, saw himself above the underdeveloped countries, and wanted to tame them with the help of the technology, just as Faber, turned his back towards the civilization and technology now. When Faber visited him later, he found Herbert thoroughly changed and noted that they could not get along with each other.<sup>229</sup> He was a stranger for Faber now, an 'Other'. Herbert approaches Faber with doubt, because he thought that he was there on behalf of his family and the company and would try to turn him back to Dusseldorf. He was not interested in returning back to the civilized world at all,

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<sup>228</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 68.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

from that moment on, he was following his brother's life at tobacco field, and only cared about what was happening there. He never left since the day they had found Joachim's dead body, and when Faber had fixed his car, he told him he did not need it, because he completely got used to his new life: "Herbert was like an Indian."<sup>230</sup> Faber could not understand what was happening inside Herbert at that point (yet), and he deemed that behavior as insanity. Herbert played a significant role at his transition as he was the one who brought Faber to his childhood friend Joachim, his daughter Sabeth, and eventually to his former girlfriend Hanna.

The most important point that attracted the attention when the engineer characters in the novel were thought, Faber never had any sense of belonging and a strong bonds with any of the engineer character. He was a 'stranger' with his workmates, because their communication was consisted of superficial conversations. And the characters such as Joachim, Professor O. and Herbert became the 'Other', became uncanny for Faber.

#### 4.4.2. Mystics

"In the authority of universal concepts the Enlightenment detected a fear of the demons through whose effigies human beings had tried to influence nature in magic rituals. From now on matter was finally to be controlled without the illusion of immanent powers or hidden properties. For enlightenment, anything which does not conform to the standard of calculability and utility must be viewed with suspicion."<sup>231</sup>

Mysticism, in its most clear form, embodied in Hanna and the artist Marcel, were standing against the Enlightenment values which were represented by the engineer Faber. Nature, woman, myth, culture and art were 'the Other' for him as the elements which Faber could not estimate with instrumental rationality and

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<sup>230</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 209.

<sup>231</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 3.

could not control, created a feeling of ‘uncanniness’ in him and this caused a conflict in him.

The young Bostonian musician Marcel, with whom Faber and Herbert were acquainted during the travel, were gotten caught by Faber’s radar from the very beginning as he passed his holiday by picturing the Mayan pyramids. Marcel’s rejection of taking the photos of the ruins was the tipping point and Marcel, according to Faber, was written into the class of smart aleck and arrogant ‘artists’. “At times he got on my nerves, like all artists who think themselves loftier or more profound beings simply because they didn’t know what electricity is.”<sup>232</sup> Faber did not take Marcel and the job he was doing seriously, however on the other hand, he felt himself provoked by a thought and life style contrasting with his own world view. He gave Marcel the name of “tracing-paper artist”<sup>233</sup> and mocked him just like he had given the nickname of “arty crafty”<sup>234</sup> to Hanna and mocked her archaeological researches and studies. He referred to Marcel as “ruin-lover”<sup>235</sup> and expressed that he found his Mayan admiration funny: “... though uneconomic, a sign of great depth of spirit that was his serious opinion.”<sup>236</sup>

Marcel lived in harmony with the nature, accepted it as an ancient force that should not be mixed with the dynamics of humankind. Marcel’s joy about the exhausting journey within the jungle, opposed to Faber and Herbert, underlined his integrity with the nature: “Although he was sitting at the back, where he was bounced from side to side all the time, he whistled like a kid on a school spree. When he wasn’t whistling, he sang a French children’s song for hours on end.”<sup>237</sup> Pelster remarked that Marcel was just a visitor that had no desire of, such as, making the nature better or improving it, as opposed to Faber and Herbert who went to Mexico for observation and declared themselves as the messengers of the civilization.<sup>238</sup> Marcel wanted to learn how the human could be in cooperation

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<sup>232</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 48.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>238</sup> Pelster, *Max Frisch: Homo Faber*, 67.

with the genesis from the remnants of this long-lost culture. His open and friendly attitude towards other people was rewarded with his ability to borrow the jeep from the owner of the hotel that which Faber and Herbert had not been able to borrow. The arguments between Faber the engineer and Marcel the artist through the road showed the great difference between the roles they gave to the nature and the technology, but especially their different visions of future:

“Marcel either sang *Il Etait Un Petit Navire* or chattered all night long – about Cortez and Montezuma (I didn’t mind that, after all, it’s historical) or about the decline of the white race (it was too hot and too humid to argue), about the disastrous pseudo-victory of the western technologist (he called Cortez a technologist, because he possessed gunpowder!), about the Indian soul and a lot of other rubbish, a whole lecture about the return the old gods (after the H-bomb had been dropped!) and about death becoming extinct (his very words!) thanks to penicillin, about the retreat of the soul from all the civilized regions of the earth, the soul in the *maquis* and so on. Herbert woke up at the word *maquis*, which he understood, and asked: ‘What’s he talking about?’ – ‘Highbrow tripe,’ I said, and we let him go on about his theory of America, which he said had no future, ‘*The American Way of Life* was an attempt to cosmeticize life, but you couldn’t cosmeticize life...’<sup>239</sup>

Here, while Marcel criticized the ‘American way of life’, he also opposed the idea of only the U.S. that had implemented the advanced technologies. Faber did not take Marcel seriously and defined his ideas as ‘artistic nonsense’. However, when Marcel criticized Faber’s work at UNESCO, Faber felt himself under a personal attack. Therefore, a character that fundamentally rejected the technology stood up against Faber and became his ‘Other’. Marcel deemed the technology, which negated the primary aspects of life, such as art, culture, and nature, as dangerous. It was once again revealed by the arguments between the two that Faber approved of a life only as long as it is under the service of the technology.

According to the Germanist Manfred Eisenbeis, the exact opposite polar of Faber was Hanna Landsberg, his former girlfriend and the mother of his child.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 61.

<sup>240</sup> Manfred Eisenbeis, *Max Frisch. Homo Faber* (Klett, 2008), 86.

Hanna believed that her life had been ruined by three engineers (Joachim, Piper, and Faber). On the one hand, she belittled the modern life that she saw under the monopoly of men; on the other hand, she inwardly entered into a competition with men. It would not be possible to say that Hanna's view of life was less problematic than Faber's, since their gender roles had been based on stereotypes and personal wounds. This affected not only their views on nature, technology, and life, but also their relationships with other people.

Hanna was very successful with her career and raised her child by herself; therefore, unlike Ivy, she was in an equal position to Faber. She had studied history of art, a very distant field to Faber's, and she was working as an archeologist at Athens. Faber belittled her interest in art, culture, and mythology, to the extent of thinking that it was an uncanny hysteria:

“I called her a sentimentalist and arty crafty. She called me Homo Faber. Sometimes we had out-and-out rows, for example when we came out of the theatre, which Hanna was always making me go to; on the one hand Hanna had Communist leanings, which I couldn't bear, and on the other a tendency to mysticism, or to put it less kindly, hysteria.”<sup>241</sup>

Hanna, who was continuously leading a life mingled with mythology due to her expertise, believed in gods and fate in a funny way according to Faber: “Hanna worked in an Archaeological Institute, gods were part of her job, I had to keep reminding myself of this; no doubt we too, without being aware of it, have a deformation professionnelle. I had to smile when Hanna talked like that.”<sup>242</sup>

Hanna, unlike Faber, lived her life in harmony with the nature and did not value statistics at all, especially when Faber tried to manipulate her with his efforts to justify himself. When Faber asked Hanna why she believed in destiny instead of statistics, he received an answer that had hit him like a ton of bricks: “If I had a hundred daughters, and all of them had been bitten by a viper, there would be some sense in it. Then I should only lose three to ten daughters.

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<sup>241</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 57.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.



Amazingly few! You're quite right. ... I've only got one child."<sup>243</sup> Every life was unique and valuable for Hanna and she thought that this could not be generalized with statistics by no means. Whereas, Faber was horrified that a woman as educated and successful with her career as Hanna believed in supernatural. He relayed that Hanna spoke about the myths as if they were the laws of physics and stated that it could not be anything but hysteria.<sup>244</sup>

Hanna, while criticizing that Faber had built his life on positivism and technology, accused Faber of using technology to avoid the necessity to experience the real world. According to Hanna, Faber tried to control and exploit the nature with the help of technology because he could not live in harmony with it. Moreover, Hanna claimed that Faber's point of view about the life was incomplete and wrong. According to her, Faber, who could not accept his nature and mortality, could not internalize the life for that very reason. It could be seen clearly that Hanna accused Faber directly of Sabeth's death: for Hanna, Faber, who saw life as a simple arithmetic operation of addition, got close with Sabeth acting as if he had not been 50 years old and there had not been a great age gap with the young woman before him, and indirectly caused her death.

Hanna, who assumed the role of the opposite polar of Faber and his real 'Other', was the only one Faber really loved in spite of all their differences: "Only with Hanna was it never absurd."<sup>245</sup>

#### **4.4.3. A Character between Technology and Mysticism: Sabeth**

Sabeth, the daughter of Faber that he did not know about, was a character that the clash of opposites and uncanniness appears on her personality, and contributed to the great transition which the protagonist gone through both with her existence and absence in the novel. The father and the daughter met for the first time on a ship that had been created by technology and travelled from the

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<sup>243</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 168.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

Unites States, the symbol of modernism, to Europe, the land where the myth was born.

Sabeth was the synthesis of Faber and Hanna, this was beyond a shadow of doubt. Faber unconsciously realized this and was drawn to her. He realized how much Sabeth had reminded him of Hanna immediately after their first encounter; however, he silenced this intuition at once, but he could not ignore the similarity between Hanna and Sabeth regardless of how hard he tried.

“I told myself that probably every young girl would somehow remind me of Hanna. I had begun to think a great deal about Hanna again lately. Where was the likeness? Hanna had black hair, Sabeth reddish blond, and it seemed to me very far-fetched to compare the two of them. I did it out of sheer idleness. Sabeth was young, as young as Hanna had been in those days, and moreover she spoke the same High German, but after all (I told myself) there are whole ethnic groups that speak High German.”<sup>246</sup>

There were references to the father-daughter relationship between Faber and Sabeth throughout the novel. Faber spoke about Sabeth’s childishness numerous times, he was fascinated by Sabeth’s joy, curiosity, and vivaciousness. Whereas Sabeth accused Faber of treating her as a child instead of a woman. Actually, Faber was not sure of exactly how he saw her and what this relationship was: “She was seriously disappointed, a child I was treating like a woman, or a woman I was treating like a child, I didn’t know myself which it was.”<sup>247</sup>

He tried not to think about the possibility that he may have been the biological father of Sabeth, even after he learnt that she was the daughter of his former girlfriend Hanna because he did not want to believe that his relationship with Sabeth may have been incestuous. He thought about the decision of abortion they had made with Hanna in a nearly obsessive manner and managed to make himself believe that he could not be the father of Sabeth.

However different Hanna and Faber, the mystic and the engineer, may have been from each other, their children Sabeth was a clear synthesis of the two

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<sup>246</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 97.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

polars. The mind and the spirit, the engineer and the artist were intertwined in the same body with her. Sabeth was brilliant, eager to learn, and well-educated like her parents. Her interest in technology gave reserved natured Faber a great enthusiasm.<sup>248</sup> Sabeth even wanted to see the engine room with Faber. While Faber told her about the mechanism of engines, Sabeth, who was listening to him with great interest, understood it with no difficulty.

On the other hand, Sabeth was intensively interested in arts and culture: she read a lot of books, went to opera, and wished to see as much museum and artworks as she could. She did not degrade the nature to scientific phenomena unlike Faber; the nature was a source of happiness for her. Sabeth's open-minded nature towards changes was one of the things that impressed Faber the most.

Sabeth was by no means a one-sided fanatic unlike both Hanna and Faber's withdrawn natures. According to Pelster, she was the real human, the balanced child of mysticism and technology.<sup>249</sup> Maybe this was the reason why Sabeth had been so uncanny. Sabeth was not a reconciliatory character; on the contrary, she was the reconciliation itself, which was the fruit of the conflict between the antagonists, Hanna and Faber. Faber started a gradual journey towards himself through Sabeth and eventually had a transition. Just like he came across himself/his other self in the vision through a mirror in an unexpected moment. It could not remain unsaid that after all was done, Faber saw Sabeth as a controllable creature, a product of 'Homo faber'. Faber saw himself and Hanna, who was his 'Other' self that he could stop neither conflicting with nor loving her, in her, this irresistible pull dragged them into an incestuous relationship, and this encounter eventually resulted in a tragedy. Sabeth, as both the product and the victim of the egoism of her parents, was the only character that had no wrongdoing in this tragic end.

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<sup>248</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 92.

<sup>249</sup> Pelster, *Max Frisch. Homo Faber*, 84.

## CONCLUSION

ὦ φῶς, τελευταῖόν σε προσβλέψαιμι νῦν<sup>250</sup>

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze the novel *Homo Faber* as the tragedy of modern human being within the framework of Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny (Unheimlichkeit). The reason for choosing the main character Walter Faber of the novel as the 'mythical criminal' of modernity is that it reveals an individual's identity formation process, the conflicts s/he experiences by the roles given to her/him by the society and the nature -also his/her own nature- and the alienation process following the World War II when *Homo Faber* is written, the period when the scientific advances and technology were the sole coin of the realm.

In order to determine the scope and the limits of the concept of the uncanny from the beginning of the study, the biography of the novel's author Max Frisch was examined in details and the questions such as how the spiritual world reflected to the character in the creation process, at which degree this novel is an autobiographical piece were tackled. This analysis showed that Walter Faber character has many similarities with Max Frisch, who was an architect and a father himself. Ambivalence storms experienced by Frisch who was torn apart between his artist and father roles in his own life left some definitive marks in the novel. The focus point of Max Frisch's works -which we can see in his diaries, too- was almost like a personal duel making 'certain idols' regarding the other people, getting himself into a role and subsequently the physical and/or spiritual death arose from this. *Homo Faber* is one of the best examples of this general framework. Walter Faber, the main character of the novel is an engineer who is alienated to his own core, reduced human identity to technological development, as the novel progresses he becomes the main actor of a big tragedy upon encountering feelings and love belonging to the nature and human.

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<sup>250</sup> Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, 1183 "Oh light, would that I saw you for the last time."

The second chapter of the thesis includes content, language and format analyses of the novel and the characters from a deep perspective. In that sense, the novel's original title *Homo Faber: Ein Bericht* (Homo Faber: A report.) is interesting. Walter Faber, as an engineer, considers his writings as a "report" instead of a diary. However, the detailed analysis in this section clearly indicated that the protagonist himself also experienced this ambiguity. Faber's way of writing (his way of narrating events and the words he uses) are quite subjective preventing it to be a report and manipulates the reader. Similarly, the time frame in the novel is very far from being objective, shaped by tidal in the mind of Faber and confuses the reader's mind as well. Many literary critics agree that Faber's situation in the novel is very typical for the modern human being: Faber tries to cover his emptiness within the lack of self-confidence and deficiencies in establishing real relations with this narrative style.

Following a detailed analysis of the novel and the protagonist, it was time to understand the concept of the uncanny of Sigmund Freud and read the novel again within this framework. Freud has created a much more comprehensive concept with clear limits by examining Jentsch and Schelling's use of 'uncanniness': According to him, the uncanniness is a bivalent concept and a form of a 'thing' known deeply in the mind but alienated to human through the suppression process. In order to highlight the bivalency of the concept, Freud states that it is, in fact, our 'Double' or 'dark twin'. At that point, he makes a reference to Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank: our dark twin, as the mother of uncanny ones, has a function of being a support mechanism for us while struggling with our fear of death and protecting our ego against destruction. However, this dark twin, our alternate self (the Other), becomes the harbinger of death, an uncanny mark instead of being assurance of immortality after a point. Walter Faber the engineer has created an alternate self from himself while dealing with the fear of death as highlighted by Freud, known his dark twin as 'unheimlich' (uncanny) and alienated to nature, his body, woman and of course the myth for denying his mortality and controlling everything within the illusion he created. During his journey, starting from America, the motherland of the technology where his

artificial engineer identity sustains its protected life to Greek lands where the mythology bushes out, he felt the breath of his dark twin at his neck, he had dilemmas with nature and women continuously highlighted his own mortality to him.

In the fourth chapter, which was the backbone of the thesis, it was showed that the suppressed 'Other' of 'Homo faber' was like a hidden relative taking over the control. This was how the 'uncanniness' leitmotif continuously had itself felt in the novel through the struggle between the nature and technology. We called Walter Faber as the 'mythical criminal of modernity'. But, what is Faber's fault? What shifted him to 'hamartia'? In order to answer these questions, we initially had to focus on the relation of 'modern human being' created with him/herself after Enlightenment, the relationship between the nature and technology. In this regard, we needed Zygmunt Bauman's help. According to Bauman, the modern human being and, therefore, the modern science arose from human's will for exploring and dominating the nature. However, this is also resulted in the 'marginalization' process. The contemporary human being started experiencing the world of technology as a nature created, shaped and dominated by him/herself. However, on the other hand, science and technology forced human to be separated from their cores, 'natures'. That dropped him/her into the arms of a 'struggle'. The modern human being became the 'Other' of him/herself. The uncanniness felt by Walter Faber encountering his 'Other' everywhere, was discussed in terms of the protagonist's relations with technology, nature and minor characters and subjected to a detailed examination. The fear and stiffness of Faber against life and feelings are assessed within the framework of Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer's ideas regarding Enlightenment, and it was concluded that the protagonist used the sovereignty of instrumental rationality as a consolation and defense mechanism against his being. Faber's 'hubris' exactly lies here. The engineer, not believing in providence and fate, thinks that he can sustain his life with mathematical formulas and probability calculations. He even applied these probability calculations when he suspected that the girl he is getting sensually close with may be his own daughter.

When we talk about the tragedy of the modern human being, we should mention Oedipus as the most famous mythological criminal, since the mythological references dexterously embedded in Max Frisch's novel. Oedipus and Faber both believed that they may control their faith by being defeated by their arrogance and approached to coming incest disaster with each step taken. Both swim blind by closing their eyes to truths in the sea of ambiguity. Vernant and Vidal-Naquet say while mentioning the tragic end of Oedipus:

“And at the end of the road that he, despite and against everyone, has followed, he finds that even while it was from start to finish he who pulled the strings it is he who from start to finish has been duped. Thus, at the very moment when he recognizes his own responsibility in forging his misfortunes with his own hands, he accuses the gods of having prepared and done it all.”<sup>251</sup>

Finally, Oedipus could not resist this pain and probed his eyes out. According to Freud, even if it is a softened form, it is a substitutive of castration penalty, physiologic blindness – as by Cassandra, The Oracle of Delphi and subsequent – opens the eye of the heart<sup>252</sup> and enables ‘real’ observation of truths. That’s why Faber says “Why not take these two forks, hold them up right in my hands and let my head fall, so as to get rid of my eyes?”<sup>253</sup> However, he only thinks about punishing himself in such a way, he actually did not perform it. Because, he assesses that they see the instrumental rationality only in physiological terms (başar). In fact, it may be understood that Faber did not experience a complete change as the result of the tragedy he went through. Despite holding himself responsible for preparing this disaster with his own hands just like Oedipus, he fails to make a real payoff with himself, tries to make himself exculpate anyway.

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<sup>251</sup> Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, 116.

<sup>252</sup> Difference between eye (başar) and eye of heart (başiret) can be seen in this way in Arabic. It is essential in the islamic mysticism to see with ‘başiret’, not with ‘başar’.

<sup>253</sup> Frisch, *Homo Faber: A Report*, 240.

While Oedipus is excluded by humans with incest and father homicide, disqualified, dismissed from the city state and become an *'apolis'*, Faber is not excluded even by Hanna, mother of their dead daughter Sabeth. Vernant and Vidal-Naquet make the comment: "...Oedipus is discovered, at the end of the tragedy, to be identical to them monstrous creature referred to in the riddle that he, in his pride of 'wise man' believed he had solved."<sup>254</sup> However, nothing happens to Faber, he is taken to a surgery whose result is not known and his story ends there for us. In fact, the uncanniness of his being relies here. Faber, is a pathetic slave of instrumental rationality, a mythological criminal stuck in an engineer's body, representative of modern human being and both alive and dead like Schrödinger's cat for us at the end. Faber is even debarred from a high fall by the God of Enlightenment.

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<sup>254</sup>Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, 138.



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