Painting in Time: Time and Art in Andrei Tarkovsky's Art Cinema

by

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Abstract

This dissertation is an attempt to explain how Tarkovsky uses paintings of famous artists such as Andrei Rublev, Pieter Bruegel, Leonardo da Vinci, and Piero della Francesca in order to address the question of cinematic temporality and spirituality in his films. The dissertation expands on what has already been written on the issue of spirituality and temporality with regards to Tarkovsky's aesthetics. It focuses on how time is represented—or how the experience of time is represented—in the paintings shown in Tarkovsky's films and how these manifestations contribute to the spiritual qualities of the cinematic medium. I argue that it is through this specific treatment of time seen as tightly connected to the paintings that Tarkovsky's films acquire their status of spiritual cinema. By incorporating religious art and by focusing on the ideas of spiritual practice, such as contemplation, Tarkovsky explores the question of the transcendental, while tightly connecting it to our experience of time. This thesis coordinates critical theories on time, temporality, memory, autobiography, and nostalgia with film and photography theories, literary theory, and art history.

The thesis is organized around four of Tarkovsky's films in which paintings are used as an essential part of the cinema aesthetic. The first chapter focuses on the connection between time and spirituality via the use of Russian icon painting in *Andrei Rublev*. Chapter Two explores the relationship between time and movement via the landscape imagery of Pieter Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow*, as used in *Solaris*. Chapter Three examines *Mirror* as an image as opposed to script led film in which stillness dominates movement. This stillness is considered in the context of the representation of faces, both in the film and in Leonardo da Vinci's portrait painting *Ginevra de' Benci*. The last chapter explores the idea of time suppression and the nostalgia for time itself. It looks at how Piero della Fancesca's fresco *Madonna del Parto* plays a

role in reconciling the tension between stillness and movement, which eventually represents the tension between nature and technology, spirituality and materialism, originality and reproduction, painting and cinema. Ultimately, this thesis proposes that in their spiritual aspect Tarkovsky's films can be paralleled with the paintings of high art. Like icon paintings, his films can be called "image-mediators". Through temporal defamiliarization they help to reconsider profane linear time in favor of the spiritual timeless observation of phenomena passing through time.

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Introduction

Russian film director Andrei Tarkovsky has captured the attention of worldwide audience and critics for his poetic sensibility and his distinctive visual style. Ingmar Berman expresses his fascination with Tarkovsky's films: "Suddenly, I found myself standing at the door of a room the keys of which had, until then, never been given to me. It was a room I had always wanted to enter and where he was moving freely and fully at ease" (Gianvito 21). What fascinates the most in Tarkovsky's films is the beauty of his cinematic images. His long shots and focus on particular details within the frame have an almost hypnotizing quality. In her book *Cinema and Painting* Angela Dalle Vacche notices that the visual experience with which Tarkovsky provides the viewer can be compared to the experience of looking at the master pieces of many great painters. His films evoke "high art and creativity, rather than technology and mass culture" (Dalle Vacche 4).

There have been several books published on Tarkovsky. Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, in *Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: a Visual Fugue* (1994), give a substantial analysis of many aspects of each of Tarkovsky's film. Their book covers the story of the production of Tarkovsky's films and provides multiple references to other sources related to Tarkovsky's cinema. Another important study is Robert Bird's book *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema* (2008), in which he discusses fundamental components of cinema such as space, time, story, and imagery. Essays in Peter Green's book *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Winding Quest* (1993) identify different themes that were used by Tarkovsky in his seven films and how those themes have developed over time. Jeremy Mark Robinson's book *The Sacred Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky* (2006), for its part, is the best example of scene-by-scene analysis of Tarkovsky's films conducted in the most detailed way. In *Andrei Tarkovsky's Poetics of Cinema* (2010), Thomas

Redwood undertakes close analysis of the narrative composition of Tarkovsky's late-career films, pointing at their poetic significance for the history of narrative film. Tarkovsky's cinema continues to attract critical attention. Some of the most important recent publications on Tarkovsky are the collection of the essays edited by Nathan Dunne and titled *Tarkovsky* (2013), Nariman Skakov's *The Cinema of Tarkovsky: Labyrinths of Space and Time* (2012), Shusei Nishi's *Tarkovsky and His Time: Hidden Truth of Life* (2012), and Layla Alexander-Garrett's *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Collector of Dreams* (2012).

Although most Tarkovsky scholars acknowledge the connection between Tarkovsky's films and other visual arts, painting in particular, only few articles and book chapters explore this topic in detail. My interest in this topic reflects the overall interest of the last couple of decades for the fields of comparative arts and mixed media. The use of painting in film is especially interesting because cinema tends to challenge the status of painting by moving it from the domain of still art into the art of moving images. It gives the possibility to create new artistic configurations and new avenues for self-expression. The interplay between film and painting existed before Tarkovsky and can be found in the works of film directors who influenced his artistic vision, such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Robert Bresson, Ingmar Bergman, Luis Bunuel and others. The works of these filmmakers were also influenced by art, although in a different way and to a different extent. Some of these film directors, including Tarkovsky, studied to be painters before turning to filmmaking practice. Thus these film directors transported a painterly aesthetic to cinema, inadvertently supporting Robert Bresson's statement: "I'm a painter. One cannot have been a painter and no longer be one" (qtd. in Watkins 1). The topic of this dissertation came as an inspiration from Angela Dalle Vacche's book *Cinema and Painting: How Art Is Used in Film* (1996), in which she examines how eight film

directors (Vincente Minnelli, Michelangelo Antonioni, Eric Rohmer, Jean-Luc Godard, F. W. Murnau, Kenji Mizoguchi, Alain Cavalier, and Andrei Tarkovsky) engage in a dialogue with painting. Her approach to film analysis is that of a visual art historian. She asks: what happens to the paintings used or alluded to in the films, and how do films define painting as the realm of high art? Vacche's analysis of the paintings within the films moved me to look at her question from a different angle. Specifically, I wondered what happens to the films in which paintings are used and how the still art of painting becomes actualized within the moving art of cinema.

The relationship between painting and cinema has been discussed by several film and art theorists such as Sergey Eisenstein, André Bazin, Erwin Panofsky, Rudolf Arnheim. Sergey Eisenstein considers cinema as "the contemporary phase of painting", stressing the fact that "cinema inherits certain problems from painting that in general concern what we call 'visual representation'" (Montani 206). French film theorist André Bazin argues that film is "a betrayal of the painting" and that film "profoundly changes [painting's] nature" by unfaithfully reproducing its colors, temporality and spatiality on the screen (165). Art historian Erwin Panofsky in his *Perspective As Symbolic Form* draws a parallel between the history of spatial representation and the evolution of abstract thought, while comparing the virtual space of cinema and the actual space of a painting (21-23). Similar to Panofsky, Rudolf Arnheim, from the perspective of perceptual psychology, analyses the influence of painting on film and the organization of space, lighting, color, and people in two related but different media (151-154). In Tarkovsky's case, his use of art contributes to his poetic vision of cinema and complements his cinematic style that extends the painterly tradition of visual representation.

In his interviews, his diaries, and in *Sculpting in Time,* Tarkovsky often expresses how he was inspired by the old masters of visual arts. In all his cinematic works he directly

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incorporates famous paintings, drawings, or Russian religious icons. "Art itself becomes an underlying and unifying theme in Tarkovsky's work" (Johnson and Petrie 250). However, one can notice that Tarkovsky mostly uses famous art of the Renaissance period, paintings by such artists as Leonardo da Vinci, Pieter Bruegel, Albrecht Dürer, Jan van Eyck, while avoiding direct quotations of modern and contemporary works. By making references to the old masters of painting Tarkovsky not only attempts to connect cinema to already well acknowledged visual arts, but also points to spirituality as a common ground for his films and the paintings they incorporate. In his own words he believed that the image itself "is an impression of the truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our blindness" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 106). Therefore, by bringing a spiritual vision in his films Tarkovsky challenges cinema as a medium of entertainment and turns it into a spiritual practice.

Spirituality plays an essential role in defining the common ground for Tarkovsky's films as well as his choices of paintings to include in them. He believed that cinema is the only contemporary art form suitable for spiritual revival. However, it is impossible to address the question of spirituality in Tarkovsky's films without connecting it to the question of temporality. For Tarkovsky, spirituality is tied to the perception of subjective time and the lived experience therein. Although scholars of Tarkovsky have written on the issue of spirituality and art (Jeremy Mark Robinson, Prakash Kona, Christy L. Burns, Angela Dalle Vacche) as well as on the topic of temporality and film aesthetics (Noriman Skakov, Donato Totaro, Thomas Odde, Gabriel F. Giralt), there has been scant discussion on how time is manifested in the paintings used in Tarkovsky's film, and on how these manifestations contribute to the spiritual qualities of the cinematic medium. In order to correctly frame this problem, it is necessary to consider the fundamental distinctions between two types of media: painting and cinema. The former is still,

distant from reality, authentic. And the latter is full of movement, realistic, and reproducible. Yet Tarkovsky is able to bring these two seemingly contrasting types of media together without apparent tension, and without subordinating one to the other. Moreover, the paintings in Tarkovsky's films become a large part of their narrative and compositional structure, as well as their overall filmic imagery. The question that I ask is then: what role does the static art of painting play when Tarkovsky creates a link between time and spirituality in the dynamic media of cinema? I propose that it is through the specific treatment of time, which is tightly connected to the paintings, that Tarkovsky's films acquire their status of spiritual cinema. While being distant from religious films that rely on the traditional sources of religious authority, Tarkovsky's cinema nevertheless explores the question of the transcendental and pushes the limits of the knowable by exposing the viewer to the experience of time itself.

To approach the question of time and spirituality in paintings and in Tarkovsky's cinema, this thesis is divided in four parts, each focusing on a particular genre of painting in association with one of Tarkovsky's film. In the first chapter I examine Tarkovsky's use of Russian Orthodox icons in *Andrei Rublev* (1966). I analyze the connection between the formal structures of *Andrei Rublev* and Rublev's actual icons. I argue that the compositional structure and visual techniques used in the film in many ways correspond to the visual characteristics and the composition of Rublev's icons. In *Andrei Rublev* Tarkovsky approaches time not from the historical or even chronological perspective, but rather as poetic imagery. In Tarkovsky's expression of spirituality in art, the idea of eternity comes to define the subjective experience in the act of contemplation. I argue that *Andrei Rublev* follows the logic of cyclical time similar to the one found in Russian icon paintings. By resorting to a fragmented narrative based on recurrent themes and motifs, and by favoring the depiction of the spiritual journeys of his

characters, Tarkovsky favors a non-linear approach in the representation of Rublev's life. He explores spirituality at the level of the individual human being while focusing on the subjective perception of time and the very notion of the divine. Just like icons represent a possibility to access a terrestrial dimension of the eternal via rituality, Tarkovsky's cinema provides the viewer with the possibility to perceive cinematic images in a manner that allows reflection on life as a spiritual phenomenon.

The second chapter explores the genre of landscape painting in connection to Tarkovsky's science-fiction film *Solaris* (1972) in which he uses Pieter Bruegel's painting *Hunters in the Snow* (1565). Bruegel's painting becomes imbedded in the main narrative of the film as an agent of memory. Tarkovsky believed, quoting Marcel Proust, that cinema's mission was to elevate 'a vast edifice of memories'" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 59). It is through the painting that *Solaris*' main characters activate their memories and undergo moral and mental transformations. In the article "Time, Memory and History in The Work of Andrei Tarkovsky", Ravi Vasudevan states that the status and function of memory in *Solaris* "tends to move within the registers of the personal and the intertextual," and that "subjectivity is conceptualized at the intersection of representations in painting" (163). Following Vasudevan's statement I ask how and why Tarkovsky connects Bruegel's painting to the memories of the protagonist. For the most part this connection is defined by Tarkovsky's approach to the cinematic movement used within each separate frame, as well as a connecting element between shots. Because memory and consciousness in Tarkovsky's films are often expressed through his depiction of nature, it is the movement of nature that I analyze in relation to the painting and to the consciousness of the protagonists. Time appears not only as an artistic mean exemplified by the basics of montage and

movement within the frame. It also characterizes Tarkovsky's philosophical ideas on what movement means in relation to the subject of time in the art of cinema.

The third chapter looks at the images of stillness in relation to the use of Leonardo da Vinci's portrait painting *Ginevra de' Benci* (1474-78) in Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975). Similarly to *Solaris*, the film focuses on memory, but this time it is of the autobiographical variety. In *Mirror*, Tarkovsky combines the complexity of the convoluted storyline with the simplicity of the still images of his mother which appear several times throughout the film. While *Solaris* explores the memory of the protagonists and the inner movement of their consciousness, *Mirror* targets the time awareness of the spectator as evoked by the instances of cinematic stillness which can be compared to photographic images. In *Mirror*, Tarkovsky draws our attention to what Roland Barthes would call a temporal punctum, in Barthes' words the fact that "the photograph possesses an evidential force, and that its testimony bears not on the object but on time" (Barthes, *Camera Lucida* 88–89). The moments of narrative stillness found in *Mirror* transcend the flow of the narrative. They allow us to experience the past and, therefore, to connect with Tarkovsky's autobiographical perspective on the experiential level. By comparing the portrait stillness of *Ginevra* and the face of the mother in *Mirror* I thus examine how Tarkovsky's autobiography tends to induce a feeling of melancholy associated with the loss of the mother and the childhood. However, I argue that Tarkovsky's type of melancholy is not a disease, but a contemplative practice which is intended to evoke spirituality.

The last chapter examines the film of Tarkovsky's émigré period, *Nostalghia* (1983). In this film Tarkovsky synthesizes all the techniques used in his previous works. Here, concepts pertaining to the manifestation of time which I described in the first three chapters reemerge and are reframed. Built on the contrasting images of Russia and Italy, past and present,

old and new, faith and disbelief, *Nostalghia* challenges temporality in religious context. In this chapter I explore how the idea of a-temporality or time suppression becomes visually manifested in film through the images of double exposure which take place on the border of movement and stillness, of cinema and photography. The nostalgia experienced by the protagonist becomes a yearning for universal harmony as well as a longing for the experience of time itself. I argue that unlike Tarkovsky's *Solaris* or *Mirror*, which focus on the past experiences of the protagonists or on their memory, *Nostalghia* explores the idea of the future. Like other paintings used in Tarkovksy's films, Piero della Francesco's fresco *Madonna del Parto* (after 1457) creates a link between art and spirituality. However, in *Nostalghia,* Tarkovsky makes it explicit that the connection between art and time should be understood in the light of ritual and religious thinking which point to specific 'forms' of future such as redemption, reconnection, etc.

My analysis of the relationship between painting and Tarkovsky's cinema in the context of temporality is conducted with the help of several theoretical references. They involve Henri Bergson's approach to temporality, Gilles Deleuze's analysis of movement-image and time-image, Mircea Eliade's definitions of profane and sacred time, examinations of time in Russian icons (Pavel Florensky, Lev Zhegin, and Boris Uspensky), Sergei Eisenstein's concept of montage, Walter Benjamin's views on the notion of authenticity, as well as Roland Barthes's theory of photography. However, the biggest portion of the analysis relies on Tarkovsky's own reflections on art as written in *Sculpting in Time* (1986). The experience of time, in Tarkovsky's view, is the defining element of cinema as an art form. The goal of my dissertation is to demonstrate how Tarkovsky's films project spirituality as the director draws our attention to the spatiotemporal relationship between the two dominant static and dynamic types of media: painting and cinema.

Chapter One

Time and Spirituality: Icon Paintings in Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*

> "What's the meaning of man's life on Earth? Maybe we are here to enhance ourselves spiritually. If our life tends to this spiritual enrichment then art is a means to get there. Art exists to help people to grow spiritually… Art enriches man's own spiritual capabilities so that he can rise above himself with the use of what we call "free will" (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1983 interview with Donatella Baglivo).

Andrei Tarkovsky is notable for referencing classical art in his films. He mainly uses classical paintings of the European tradition from the Renaissance period by such artists as Leonardo da Vinci, Pieter Breughel, Albrecht Dürer, Piero della Francesca, Jan van Eyck, as well as the icon paintings of medieval Russia. *Andrei Rublev* comes to mind as Tarkovsky's central work in which the director focuses on the art of the Russian icon painting, the life of the artist, and art in general. One of the main questions that Tarkovsky's films pose to the viewer is how time and spirituality are manifested in static art, such as paintings, in comparison to the dynamic art of cinema. Thus, for example, Leonardo da Vinci's paintings are often called dynamic due to the way he portrays the motion of the human bodies. Time in Leonardo da Vinci's paintings can be understood as the increase and the decrease in motion, while simultaneity, in V. P. Zubov's words, "presumes a 'before' and an 'after'; it presumes time to be a form of comprehension of animate, flowing life" (263). Russian medieval iconography[1], on the other hand, approaches the problem of time as the expression of the artist's divine vision in

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[1] The tradition of Russian icon painting emerged as a result of Russian conversion to Orthodox Christianity in AD 988. It strictly followed the artistic models of Byzantine art and was not influenced by the Western European religious art until the beginning of the 17th century. One of the most significant characteristics of Russian painting is the reverse perspective in space organization and the belief in icon's ability to perform miracles.

which the idea of eternity becomes one more layer of time included in the concept of simultaneity. In this chapter I will focus on Tarkovsky's use of Russian icons in *Andrei Rublev*. I will argue that Tarkovsky's film follows the logic of cyclical time similar to the one found in Russian icon paintings. By resorting to the fragmented narrative, recurrent themes and the depiction of spiral journeys of characters, Tarkovsky favors a non-linear approach in the representation of history as well as in the formal composition of the film. In his conceptualization of common religious practices, Tarkovsky does not raise the problem of spirituality from the historical point of view or as a generally accepted concept. Instead, he contemplates the question of spirituality at the level of an individual human being, while focusing on the subjective perception of time and the notion of the divine. Just like icons represent a possibility to access a terrestrial dimension of the eternal, Tarkovsky's cinema provides the viewer with the possibility to perceive cinematic image as the work of art that allows us to reflect on what it means to experience life as a spiritual phenomenon.

At first glance *Andrei Rublev* can be easily perceived as a historical movie about the most famous Russian icon painter who lived in the 15th century. The film's action takes place in medieval Russia and covers the events of the Mongol-Tartar yoke, pagan traditions of celebration, life in the Orthodox monastery, and the struggles among the rulers. The film is divided into eight segments, which chronologically represent different periods of Rublev's life in various Russian monasteries where Rublev presumably worked. The segments are presented in the following order: 1. Buffoon, 1400; 2. Theophanes the Greek, 1405 [-06]; 3. Passion According to Andrei, 1406; 4. Holiday, 1408; 5. Last Judgment, 6. 1408; Raid, 1408; 7. Silence, 1412; 8. Bell, 1423 [-24]. The chronologically arranged film parts imply that Tarkovsky attempted to portray Rublev's life as close to the historical accounts as possible. However, poetic

names for each part also point to Tarkovsky's artistic vision of Rublev's times and the way he interweaves fiction and fact in his work. After watching the first segment the viewer can reasonably assume that Tarkovsky was not much concerned with factual representation of Rublev's life, but rather tried to show the inner world of an artist who lived in medieval Russia, the historical events only serving as a background.

Tarkovsky himself pointed out that the major focus of the film is not to have an accurate depiction of the historical or socio-political content of the era, but to convey an atmosphere of everyday life in medieval Russia along with the personal struggle of an artist who happened to live in this particular historical and socio-political context. Tarkovsky writes:

> For us the story of Rublev is really the story of a 'taught', of imposed concept, which burns up in the atmosphere of living reality to arise again from the ashes as a fresh and newly-discovered truth… [Rublev] has experienced for himself the great, sublime truth of that idea as a statement of the aspirations of his tormented people (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 89–90).

This indicates that Tarkovsky was more concerned with representing Rublev's life through the prism of his own philosophical ideas on art and the subjective presence of the artist rather than portraying events with historical accuracy. Portrayal of the medieval times in Russia becomes a terrain that provides Tarkovsky with the possibility to enlighten Rublev's character primarily as an individual, and only after that as a historical personage.

Tarkovsky's intention to portray the atmosphere of an individual life during a particular historical period does not solely pertain to *Andrei Rublev*. For example, in the autobiographical film *Mirror* Tarkovsky talks about WWII. In one of the film's sequences he creates the atmosphere of the WWII period by inserting documentary images of war events while

representing the memories of the protagonist. Although Tarkovsky used documentary shots, his intention was not to emphasize the factual reality of war but to show the memory and the poetic vision of the protagonist's childhood. In *Rublev*, similar effect is achieved with the use of historical costumes, stylized mise-en-scène sets, stylized speech, and the black and white film – all of which allude to the conceptual imagery of old Russia. I would argue that in both films Tarkovsky goes further than poetization of historical period or event. He tends to poeticize time in general, time as an experience and as the condition for the existence of human consciousness. In filming *Andrei Rublev*, Tarkovsky was not interested in history as a linear process of change; instead he focuses on the subjective perspective of the past, present, and future, and on the subjective perception of time. Cinema, in this case, becomes an artistic tool that can communicate the director's artistic poetic perception on time and the notion of temporality.

Tarkovsky explains his poetic vision on cinema in his book *Sculpting in Time*. He believes that the cinematic image has a power and a potential to broaden our understanding of the world. In fact he argues that "there is only one way of thinking in cinema: poetically" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 150). He explains his point: "When I speak of poetry I am not thinking of it as a genre. Poetry is an awareness of the world, a particular way of relating to reality"(Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 21). He continues: "We cannot comprehend the totality of the universe, but the poetic image is able to express that totality" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 106). Tarkovsky's understanding of poetry echoes Aristotle's comparison of poetry and history. In his *Poetics* Aristotle writes:

> The distinction between historian and poet is not in the one writing prose and the other verse […]; it consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be. Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of

graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars" (Aristotle et al. IX).

In Tarkovsky's films history as an objective notion is rather overlooked in favor of the subjective poetical vision of time. By privileging the poetic representation of Rublev's life over historical account Tarkovsky aims at expressing more universal, religious concerns, such as what it means for an individual to have faith and how faith influences life choices made by an artist. Major transformation of Rublev's objective life becomes paralleled with the changes in his inner world. In particular, it is through the specific treatment of time as cyclical Tarkovsky conveys how Rublev looses faith in humanity after witnessing the Mongol-Tatar raid, and then regains it after he witnesses Boriska's revelational ability to cast the bell. Therefore, Tarkovsky is mainly concerned about the cinematic image and what this image may convey in terms of aesthetics, whereas historical representation of Rublev's story acquires marginal importance.

This also explains why *Andrei Rublev* is not a biographical account on the life of the famous icon painter (despite the misleading film title). In fact, three out of nine of the film parts do not focus on Rublev's life at all, obscuring his central figure. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn said about the film: "It is an impossibly long film packed with extra episodes which have no relation to the main story" (164). Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie also pointed out that the criticism towards the film after it was released in the Soviet Union grew from the incongruity between the title of the film and its content. The film about a well-known Russian artist and a historical figure was expected to be patriotic epic glorifying Russia. Instead, it did not show any sacrificing heroism, neither did it show a positive image of a character in its traditional socialist realist sense. Moreover, as Johnson and Petrie state, Rublev is rather presented as "a passive observer than an actor in the unfolding historical drama" (82–83). Another argument that the

film does not meet biographical genre expectations is due to its non-linear and fragmented narrative. Choosing to "depart from traditional dramaturgy with its canonical completedness and with its formal and logical schematism" (Bird, *Andrei Rublev* 12), Tarkovsky abandons not only linear development from childhood to death but also decides not to focus on Rublev's remarkable achievements as an artist.

Tarkovsky's nonconventional approach to the representation of both collective and personal history in *Andrei Rublev* and his other films (especially *Mirror*) reflects the director's distinctive view on history and time in general. In *Sculpting in Time* Tarkovsky pays significant attention to the idea of time and the way cinema deals with time. However, unlike most film theorists, Tarkovsky sees time not only as a vital aspect for the film media, but also as an aesthetic category for his film imagery. Cinema not only manifests time through the movement of objects (actors, camera) within cinematic shots and by means of montage, but becomes an art form that can most fully represent time as a condition for individual existence. Therefore, when portraying events of either collective or personal history, the director is mainly looking into "the inner, moral qualities essentially inherent in time itself," rather than the factual, objective representation of the past (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 58). In other words, Tarkovsky views time as a spiritual and substantially subjective concept, which is predominantly associated with memories, dreams, apparitions, desires and other similar kinds of human experiences.

Tarkovsky's perspective on time and temporality in cinema also determines his perspective on the notion of poetic cinema and the way he projects poetic vision in his films. Russian Formalists (Eisenstein, in particular) were part of the pioneers who created films that critics characterize as poetic. According to the literary theorist Victor Shklovsky, who developed and discussed the techniques and critical theories of Russian Formalism, poetic cinema "exploits

the formal rather than the semantic features… [It is distinguished from 'prose cinema'] by the prevalence in poetic cinema of technical and formal over semantic features, where formal features displace semantic and resolve that composition" (Shklovsky 65–66). Formalist theorists and filmmakers had a significant influence on the Russian artists of the so-called "Thaw" period of the late 1960's, including Andrei Tarkovsky. However, Tarkovsky's approach to poetic cinema is quite different from those that were employed by preceding film directors, such as Eisenstein or Dovzhenko. For instance, both Tarkovsky's and Eisenstein's poetic films privilege form over the content of the story. In other words, their cinema is less narrative than poetic. However, there is a significant distinction between what can be called poetic in Eisenstein's films and what is considered poetic according to Tarkovsky. Just like Eisenstein, who developed his own unique cinematic montage style, Tarkovsky also created distinctive cinematic techniques and methods that resulted in his own poetic film imagery.

The distinction between Eisenstein's and Tarkovsky's poetic films originates from the considerable difference in the treatment of cinematic time in the directors' works. In Eisenstein's cinema time is aestheticized through the means of montage, as the result of the relationship between two different shots. When different shots collide, they create various symbolic meanings, metaphors and allegories, which are usually planned and anticipated by the director. Though Eisenstein rejects "linear" montage in favor of a "dialectical" one, his logic of the montage pursues the logic of linear time. This means that any statement of Eisenstein's "intellectual montage" should be presented as the result of the shot sequence, whereas the symbolic ("intellectual") effect of this sequence is the result of the preceding shots that are put into the juxtaposition. Formalists believed that a single shot contains no time and that it is rather static and mechanical. Even in later Eisenstein's films *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) and *Ivan the*

Terrible (1944), which proceed in a more static way, the overall dynamics of the films are subjected to new at that time audiovisual montage. In *Ivan the Terrible* Eisenstein employs a poetic device of enjambment which was greatly dependent on the problem of synchronization of audio and video lines. The appearance of stillness in the film can be understood as the manifestation of discordance between the metrical structure of a poetic line and its syntax. In his essay "Montage 1938" Eisenstein compares the device of enjambment with some examples from poetry (Yakov Polonsky, William Shakespeare, James Thomson, Victor Hugo, and others) and quotes the literary critic Viktor Zhirmunsky: "Every non-concordance between syntactical and metrical articulation is an artistically calculated dissonance that is resolved at the point where, after a series of such discordances, a syntactical pause finally coincides with the end of a rhythmic series" (Eisenstein, *Towards a Theory of Montage* 321). Stillness then in Eisenstein's later films can be comprehended as a series of syntactical pauses that play an important role in the overall temporal development of the film.

Tarkovsky, on the contrary, acknowledges the dynamism of the single shot and its effect of the "real time" as opposed to the "artificial time" of Eisenstein's montage. Tarkovsky writes: "The image becomes authentically cinematic when (among other things) not only does it live within time, but time also lives within it, even within each separate frame" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 68). Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* is the film "that could not be further removed from the principle of direct observation [...] Not only is the whole film a kind of hieroglyphic, it consists of a series of hieroglyphics—major, minor and minute" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 67). The poetics of Tarkovsky's films, on the contrary, follow the principle of observation which has little to do with the author's intent. Gilles Deleuze calls such independence of cinematic time from montage as "time-image". At one point of his *Cinema II: Time-Image* Deleuze uses

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Tarkovsky's ideas to help to define what the time-image means. He comes to the conclusion that the direct image of time is not the representation of time in the successive chronology. Time-image can be realized only when "the time in a shot [flows] independently and, so to speak, as its own boss" (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 42). Such scrupulous attention to the single shot resulted in Tarkovsky's unique cinematic style, in which he avoids frequent cutting and favors seamless editing, slow camera movements, and uninterrupted lengthy shots. When time in Tarkovsky's films is perceived as stretched or expended, it is done not by means of cutting (such as in Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin*, for example, when he shows repeated action of the smashing of a plate by cutting and splicing the same movements of the actor), but through the single event depiction in a single shot. Movement occurs then as a flow of time that points not at the objective change of the event but the change (the flow) itself.

Tarkovsky criticized Eisenstein's "poetic cinema" saying that it "gives birth to symbols, allegories and other such figures – that is, things that have nothing to do with the imagery natural to cinema" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 66). He further explains: "The purity of cinema, its inherent strength, is revealed not in the symbolic aptness of images (however bold these may be) but in the capacity of those images to express a specific, unique, actual fact" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 72). Contrary to Eisenstein, Tarkovsky advocates for the cinematic principle that he calls "observation". Therefore, time in Tarkovsky's cinema is not the sequence of shots or events apparently depicted on the screen, but the experience that the viewer receives while "observing" phenomena passing through time. Instead of making an intellectual effort to assemble a jigsaw puzzle of the juxtaposed shots in the montage, the viewer of Tarkovsky's films is prompted to experience cinematic imagery emotionally and intuitively. For this reason, time in Tarkovsky's films is rather projected as a non-linear concept that follows its own

unconventional logic. This means that time in Tarkovsky's films is represented beyond the present moment, but merges experiences from the lived past or anticipated future. Therefore, the history in Tarkovsky's films is poeticized because it manifests itself not as a series of objective and logically constructed sets of events but as an evasive and purely subjective time perception of a concrete individual.

Tarkovsky also avoids portraying the dramatic time of the linear plot development that often can be found in conventional films of the Hollywood type. Dramatic time in conventional films is represented as an artificial construct. Each moment is subordinated to the chain of moments of the story and leads to the final goal of the narrative development. "Constructed to represent the cause-effect chain" (Bordwell, *Poetics of Cinema* 152) conventional narrative exists mainly as the subordination to the movement in which past, present, and future are put into the consecutive order. Time in such narratives has an artificial nature. Deleuze calls such assemblage of movement-images as something that constitutes indirect image of time (Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 30). However, unlike in Eisenstein's films, where time becomes unnoticed by the viewer (because the stress is put on the intellectual statement of the montage) time in conventional films is eclipsed by the action. Tarkovsky, contrary to the Hollywood or Eisenstein's styles, draws our attention to the problem of temporality in film as well as to our human ability to experience time and contemplate what it means to do so, and not on the symbolism or on the action per se. Tarkovsky believed that only cinema among other art forms can most fully capture time "in its factual forms and manifestations" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 63). Time experienced in real life can be experienced again when watching a film. As Tarkovsky explains: "I think that what a person normally goes to the cinema for is time: for time lost or spent or not yet had. He goes there for living experience; for cinema, like no other

art, widens enhances and concentrates a person's experience" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 63). In order to present the viewer with "pure time" or, as he puts it, "time truth", Tarkovsky prefers to record time with minimal cinematic manipulations of the montage. To archive this task on the aesthetical level the film has to move away from the linear logic of the plot development as well as from the abstract logic of time produced by means of the montage (such as rapid juxtaposition of different times and spaces in the consecutive shots, or the artificial expansion/ shrinkage of time by means of cutting). Instead, Tarkovsky aestheticizes what he calls the "real time" that is captured in its factual forms and manifestations.

Tarkovsky's attempt to project "real time" (time that is not altered or artistically manipulated) and to represent this time poetically creates a contradiction between two seemingly incongruous tasks. The depiction of "real time" is usually characteristic for the documentary film genre, which tends to be devoid of fictional material and maintains a historical record of an event. Tarkovsky himself seemed to favor such documentary approach as he commented on what he conceived to be an ideal piece of filming: "the author takes millions of metres of film, on which systematically, second be second, day by day and year by year, a man's life, for instance, from birth to death, is followed and recorded, and out of all that comes two and a half thousand metres, or an hour and a half of screen time" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 66). On the other hand, Tarkovsky's projection of "real time" observed by the camera, as it was noted earlier, has little to do with the objective or factual representation of time. Moreover "real time" can be defined as one of the key poetic elements in Tarkovsky's films. This conflict can be resolved if one takes a closer look at the logic with which the director approaches his cinematic projects.

Tarkovsky called his logic of time representation the "logic of the dream" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 72). Like in a dream, where real and fantasy often become

interlaced, Tarkovsky's films represent unexpected combination of a real, "documentary" time and space elements with the poetically surrealistic shots. The real, everyday reality that appears in someone's dream converts into the "unreal" reality of a dream, where the logic of everyday life becomes violated or disappears. Everyday reality becomes strange, while impossible turns out to be possible. The best example of such dream/reality world can be found in *Mirror*. Johnson and Petrie note that Tarkovsky's *Mirror* "obeys the logic of a dream" to the point that "images and events merge, glide, and overlap, are mirrored and subtly distorted, to create a sense of half-recognition, forcing the viewer to conduct his or her own reordering, filling in the gaps and constructing meaning on the basis of the cues that the director offers" (134). It is important to note that the "logic of the dream" does not only pertain to the film episodes with the representation of character's dreams or fantasies, it is characteristic of Tarkovsky's entire cinematic style and can be found in all of his films. This "logic of the dream" is projected through both – the specific approach to the film narrative development and the way Tarkovsky constructs each shot of the film.

In his book *Films and Dreams* Thersten Botz-Bornstein acknowledges Tarkovsky's unique method of time representation and believes that Tarkovsky's "logic of the dreams" exemplifies the director's use of defamiliarization (*ostranenie*) technique, which was first introduced by Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky in his study of Russian literature. In the "Art as Technique" Shklovsky writes that the purpose of the defamiliarization device is to force the reader to recognize artistic language and to notice the poetic element of art. Shklovsky believed that:

> the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult

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to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an

aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged" (Shklovsky 12).

There are several ways in which the everyday reality becomes defamiliarized in Tarkovsky's

films. One of them, for instance, is accomplished through the representation of unusual points of

view, such as the child's vision of war in *Ivan's Childhood*, or Gorchakov's position of the

foreigner in *Nostalghia*. Another example would be the defamiliarization of ordinary everyday

objects, such as milk jars and curtains in *Mirror,* or empty bottles in *Nostalghia*. Often

defamiliarization in Tarkovsky's films is perceived through the way the director creates

cinematic space and constructs his mise-en-scène. Thus, typical and ordinary objects or

occurrences receive a heightened, almost supernatural quality. One important point that Botz-

Bornstein notices while writing about Tarkovsky's use of defamiliarization is that by means of

defamiliarization techniques Tarkovsky was able to "stylize […] 'normal time' into the 'non-

normal' time of dreams, […] which is produced through experiences, which come to us through

memory"(9). Here, normal time can be interpreted as rational, structured, and objectively

justified, while non-normal time can be understood as illogical, non-structural, and experientially

subjective. In his 1983 interview with Gideon Bachmann, Tarkovsky said: "I am seeking a

principle of montage, which would permit me to show the subjective logic – the thought, the

dream, the memory – instead of the logic of the subject. [I] show things which are not

necessarily linked logically" (Hoberman, J., Bachmann, G. 92–93). Such "illogical" approach in

constructing the film narrative and film imagery contributes to the argument that Tarkovsky

favors the idea that time has rather subjective, anthropological, and experiential characteristics.

He does not approach time as an objective notion or a socially constructed idea. Tarkovsky

approaches time as an essence of the human mind.

Tarkovsky's perception of time as subjective and experiential can be interpreted as the director's response to the existing tradition of contemporary time perception. At the time of cinema's emergence, the European culture of the 19th century had developed a paradigm in which science had taken the foreground position. The industrial revolution and the rapid economical development of the time were accompanied by a general belief that scientific progress could be the solution to most problems of the humanity. As a consequence of the European industrial revolution in particular, clock time replaced earlier existing collective perceptions of time, such as, for instance, the religious or seasonal time paradigms of the medieval era. Lewis Mumford argues that "the clock, not the steam engine [was] the key machine of the industrial age" because it primarily contributed to and reinforced the rapid development in synchronization and functional specialization (14). Besides that, due to the rise of industrial capitalism and the commoditization of labor, time became equated with value. As a measurable unit, it was suitable to be sold or exchanged. As Bluedorn and Denhardt point out: "As a society, we tend to agree on an objective concept of time, one that is *unitary* (subject to only one interpretation), *linear* (progressing steadily forward from part to present future), and *mechanical* (containing discrete moments subject to precise measurements)" (302). In his prominent book *Sociology of Time*, John Hassard also argues that in modern industrial cultures people have adopted predominantly linear time perspectives. He adds that time has come to be "experienced not only as a sequence but also as a boundary condition," whereas the clock has become "the instrument of coordination and control" (Hassard 329).

Artistic movements of the beginning of the 20th century have also followed the general cultural tendency of mechanization and technologization in their artistic trends. For example, Russian artists of the Constructivist movement like Alexander Rodchenko or Vladimir

Tatlin saw ordinary objects of technological progress such as trains, cars, or planes, as ideal subjects of aestheticization. In his statement in *Novyi LEF*, Rodchenko said:

> The shot of a newly-built factory is not a simple object but a source of pride and joy in the industrialization of our country and that is what we must show – the 'how' of photography. To do this we are duty bound to experiment. To photograph simple facts, just as describing them simply; that is nothing new and in that is the harm (228–229).

A good example of Rodchenko's experimentalism would be his well-known photographs *Train* (see Fig. 1. 1) and *Fire Escape* (see Fig. 1. 2) that are taken from an unconventional point of view. Instead of the classic "from the navel" angle, Rodchenko depicts trains from above, whereas ladder is shown from below. Predominance of the diagonal lines in both photographs control our look in a strait forward leaner movement. Created with the unusual perspective of the camera, these lines add a sense of dynamism to the photograph and correspond to the beginning of the 20th century's belief in the acceleration of cultural, economical, and political progress through the means of technology.
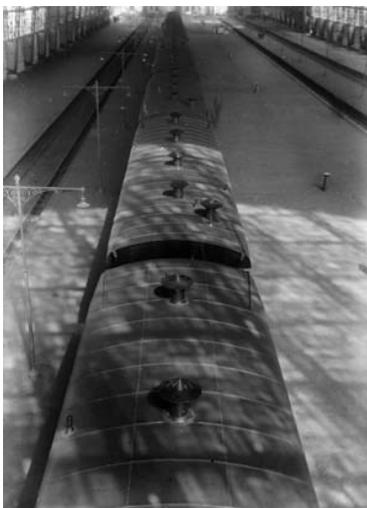
Fig. 1. 1

Fig. 1. 2

The rapid industrialization and technological developments also influenced avant-garde cinematographers. Dziga Vertov proclaimed his technological utopianism in his *The Cine-Eyes: a Revolution*, saying that "the use of camera as a Cine-Eye is more perfect than the human eye for examining the chaos of visual phenomena that resemble space" (Christie et al. 91). The camera with its technological possibilities became more privileged than the human eye. "Make way for the machine!" became the motto not only for Dziga Vertov, but for many futurists artists. The acceleration of the technical development and of the urban lifestyle were greatly represented in Dziga Vertov's avant-garde cinema. As an artist who dealt with temporal art, Vertov integrated cinematic techniques which were able to imprint the speed of modernity into the heightened tempo of his films. Vertov pointed at the capacity of the camera to extend human's ability to measure time. Like a clock that measures the movement of the hand on the space of a dial, cinema was able to record the movement of objects on the celluloid. Though both Rodchenko's and Vertov's works were mostly done in documentary style and had no relation to the traditional linear narrative plot development, their work advocated for a rationalized time and a mechanized perspective of time progression. Rejecting classical art and creating radically

innovative works, avant-garde artists often criticized the past as outdated and restraining. It was the future, they believed, that could bring the light of the artistic and social reforms.

Despite the fact that Tarkovsky was influenced by the avant-garde cinema, he rejected all modern conceptions of time as an objective notion that has a linear progression and can be measured and rationalized. Contrary to the modernist concept of objective and mechanical time, which Mary Ann Doane characterizes as "uniform, homogeneous, irreversible, and divisible into verifiable units" (6), Tarkovsky represents time as non-uniform, heterogeneous, non-measurable, and non-divisible. Therefore, time for Tarkovsky is not a linear chain of events, but an experience in which past, present and future are equally integrated and equally valuable. The reason for Tarkovsky's main objection to avant-garde art is found not in a rejection of experimentalism (in some ways Tarkovsky's films can be considered very experimental), but rather in the tendency of the modernist tradition to be too mechanical, rationalized, and materialistic. In *Sculpting in Time*, Tarkovsky writes: "The whole question of avant-garde is peculiar to the twentieth century, to the time when art has steadily been losing its spirituality. The situation is worst in the visual arts, which today are almost totally devoid of spirituality" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 96). This statement explains why Tarkovsky avoids making direct references to the modernist art and mostly refers to classical visual art, music and literature, and to such artists as da Vinci, Breughel, Bach, Beethoven, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky.

By making references to classical art, music, and literature Tarkovsky not only attempts to connect cinema, as a new art, to other already well acknowledged forms of artistic expression, but also points to spirituality as a common element in his films and in the classical works of art he favors. It was important for Tarkovsky to bring spiritual vision to his films. Image, he said, "is an impression of the truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our

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blindness" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 106). He believed that the goal art is "to explain to the artist himself and to those around him what man lives for, what is the meaning of his existence. To explain to people the reason for their appearance on this planet; or if not to explain, at least to pose the question" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 36) Such a question can be approached only on the individual basis. Therefore, the individual, personal, and subjective is associated by Tarkovsky with the spiritual, whereas the collective, the common, and the objective are linked to the non-spiritual and the material. Art, according to Tarkovsky, should be similar to philosophy or religion as it is also concerned with the questions of human existence and spirituality. This is why the subject of spirituality is raised in all of Tarkovsky's films.

Tarkovsky view on spirituality is apparent in his attempt to treat spiritual and materialistic as a binary opposition. In Tarkovsky's films, materialism is often represented as the self-destructive element of modernity. Each of Tarkovsky's film has a distinctive element in which materialism is shown to be the negative essence of the modern world. It is always contrasted with the spiritual values, such as faith, love, memory, nature, and art. For instance, in *Solaris*, human love is contrasted with the impossibility of love in the technical and scientific environment of the space station. In *Stalker*, Tarkovsky opposes the nature and the intelligence of the "Zone" to the corruptive mind of people who have a propensity to destruction. Whereas in *Nostalghia*, the abandonment of spirituality by the Western civilization is represented through the images of Italy – pragmatic and light-minded Italian translator Eugenia is contrasted to the Russian poet Gorchakov and to his Italian double and madman Domenico.

It can be argued that Tarkovsky's recurrent attempts to address spirituality has its roots in Russian philosophy and the Slavophilism movements of the 19th century. Being predominantly religious, Slavophilists privileged Orthodox religious mysticism over Western

rationalism and materialism. Literary artists who shared or were inspired by the Slavophilism views, such as Lev Tolstoy or Fyodor Tyutchev, praised rural religious life and criticized urban development, rationalism, and industrialization. Tarkovsky's desire to extend such a classical tradition with its religious foundation is explicit, as the question of God often comes up in his writings and interviews. In *Sculpting in Time*, he also emphasizes the importance of tradition: "In all my pictures the theme of roots was always of great importance: links with family house, childhood, country, Earth. I always felt it important to establish that I myself belong to a particular tradition, culture, circle of people or ideas" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 193). Tarkovsky was especially fascinated by Dostoevsky's "spiritual heroes" and tried to represent the writer's characters in his films (Durochka in *Andrei Rublev* and the madman Domenico in *Nostalghia* are obvious references to Dostoevsky's "Fools of God"). Tarkovsky's "spiritual heroes", just as Dostoevsky's, represent the artists' criticism of blatant rationalism and materialism. Beginning with *Andrei Rublev*, Tarkovsky pursued a steady dialogue with the Russian writer until his last films. One of the striking examples of such dialogue can be found in *Nostalghia* through the figure of Domenico. Domenico's formula 1+1=1 on the wall of his house clearly references Dostoevsky's Underground Man and his rejection of the idea of a Crystal Palace as a symbol of 19th century rationalism and progress.[2] Just like Dostoevsky's Underground Man who rejects all faith in the rationalistic law which is accepted by Western society, Tarkovsky's Domenico rejects the idea of a life in accordance with the established social norms.

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[2] In *Notes form the Underground* we read the main character's monologue: "Upon my word, they will shout at you, it is no use protesting: it is a case of twice two makes four! Nature does not ask your permission, she has nothing to do with your wishes, and whether you like her laws or dislike them, you are bound to accept her as she is, and consequently all her conclusions. A wall, you see, is a wall ... and so on, and so on. Merciful Heavens! but what do I care for the laws of nature and arithmetic, when, for some reason I dislike those laws and the fact that twice two makes four?" (Dostoevsky et al., pt.3)

Though Dostoevsky created his literary masterpieces several decades before the appearance of Tarkovsky's films, his ideas remained relevant during the time of Soviet Russia. Dostoevsky wrote his short story *Notes from the Underground* (1864) and later his novel *Devils* (1872) as the response to the novel *What is to Be Done?* (1863) by Nikolai Chernyshevsky, which was highly popular at that time among the Russian radical intelligentsia. In his works Dostoevsky mocked Chernyshevsky's philosophical materialism and utilitarianism. Tarkovsky's statements (both artistic and theoretical) about the loss of spirituality also can be interpreted as his criticism of the predominantly materialistic politics of the Soviet Union—politics which were in part inspired by Chernyshevsky's radicalism. As Joseph Frank wrote: "Chernyshevsky's novel, far more than Marx's *Capital*, supplied the emotional dynamic that eventually went to make the Russian Revolution"(qtd. in Amis 27).While Dostoevsky's works can be seen as an open admonition against the dangers of radical materialism, Tarkovsky's criticism of the antireligious and strictly materialistic ideologies of the Soviet Union was conducted in a much more implicit form. Even in the period of the Khrushchev's Thaw, when government allowed a degree of liberalization in media, art, and culture, Soviet writers and artists had to conform to the conventions of the earlier established norms of artistic expression. To be able to criticize Soviet ideology in their works, writers, poets, and artists had to speak in metaphors and allegories. Thus, authors like the brothers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky had to camouflage their social criticism by putting it in form of the science-fiction genre. In their novels they challenged utopian ideas about the Soviet future and called into question the belief that technological progress can bring happiness to humanity. As we know, Tarkovsky also resorted to the science-fiction genre in his films *Solaris* (an adaptation of Stanislaw Lem's novel) and *Stalker* (an adaptation of the brothers Strugatsky's *Roadside Picnic*). However, Tarkovsky's criticism is

present not chiefly in his choice of genre or protagonists, but in the way he approaches the question of temporality, time, and history in his films.

Marxism determined the socialist understanding of history as linear and finite. As Mircea Eliade writes: "For Marxism, events are not a succession of arbitrary accidents; they exhibit a coherent structure and, above all, they lead to a definite end" (149). Marxist philosophy exemplifies modern understanding of time as linear, unitary, and objective. This time perspective was well represented in Russian films of socialist realism such as in the brothers Vasilievs' *Chapayev* (1934) or in Grigori Aleksandrov's *Circus* (1936) and *Volga-Volga* (1938). Socialist realism as a style of art emerged in the beginning of the 1930s in the Soviet Union. Unlike the "art for art's sake" doctrine of the 19th century, socialist realism served didactic, moral and utilitarian functions which were supposed to help in achieving the goals of Socialism and lead to Communism. In *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, Katerina Clark analyzes soviet novels and comes to the conclusion that "the one invariant feature of all Soviet novels is that they are ritualized, that is, they repeat the master plot, which is itself a codification of major cultural categories. […] Rituals personalize abstract cultural meanings and turn them into comprehensible narrative"(9). According to Clark, the central function of the main fable of the socialist novel – and we can add film – is similar to a ritual attempting to reveal the Marxist-Leninist ideas of historical progress. Historical progress in the Soviet novel also becomes symbolically represented through the personal progress of an individual hero, with the culmination of the individual hero's progress mirroring the culmination of collective progress – Communism. Films of Socialist Realism usually follow linear logic in their plot development, where every action is subordinated to a causal determination and bears a clear, understandable message for the viewer. Tarkovsky's films, on the contrary, present us with multiple gaps in

meaning, compositional structure, and imagery. While time in films of Socialist Realism is presented as a collective and objective notion, Tarkovsky's representation of time strives to correspond to the sacred time as experienced by subjectivity. Contrary to the linear logic of progression, it often follows cyclical patterns of repetition and recurrence. Thus, Tarkovsky's poetization of time, which is projected through the subjective prism of history understanding, leads to revealing something even more significant – the possibility for the viewer to experience the transcendent.

   The difference between linear and cyclical time perception is well discussed by Mircea Eliade in his book *The Myth of the Eternal Return*. Eliade argues that society knows two different times – the sacred and the profane. The sacred time is of the modality of gods and is coupled with immortality, whereas the profane time is of the modality of man, which is coupled with death (Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* 36). Eliade associates sacred time with the cyclical time perspective of the traditional man and his recurrent attempt to return to the mythical times of gods and heroes. The profane time, Eliade believes, is the time of modern society, which desacralizes mythical epoch and privileges the linear time of historical progression. According to Eliade, the main difference between cyclical sacred time and profane "historical" time is that the historical time is concrete and irreversible, whereas in sacred cyclical time "no event is irreversible and no transformation is final" (Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* 89). Building on Eliade's theory, it can be concluded that Tarkovsky represents time as sacred or spiritual because, firstly, his time has reversible characteristics, and secondly, his films often manifest a nostalgia for the lost past. As Tarkovsky puts it, the cinema-goer seeks to make up for the gaps in his own experience, "throwing himself into a search for 'lost time'. In other words he seeks to fill that spiritual vacuum which has formed as a result of the specific conditions of his modern

existence: constant activity, curtailment of human contact, and the materialist bent of modern education" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 83). It is not to argue that Tarkovsky's views can be fully compared to the views of traditional archaic man, but rather to say that Tarkovsky's time perspective has a spiritual substance, which is different from the desacralized temporal perspective of modern society. The traditional man tends to be nostalgic for the lost paradise of mythical times, whereas Tarkovsky's nostalgia is his yearning for the spirituality which, he believes, was lost with the period of modernization, the desacralization of art, and the profanation of religion.

The longing for spiritual times in Tarkovksy's films is often manifested through the imagery of home, childhood, intact nature, Old Russia, and classical art (Renaissance paintings and religious icons). Nostalgia was a common cultural phenomenon for Russian writers and artists who emigrated during the Soviet period. The notion of the homeland runs as the frequent theme in the works of Nabokov, Mandelstam, Brodsky, and other Russian-born poets and writers. In many of these works, longing for the homeland appears first of all as a metaphor of the longing for lost spirituality. In her book *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym analyzes the phenomenon of nostalgia among Russian writers and argues that the modern nostalgia which is presented in the works of immigrants is different from the ancient myth of the eternal return. She says that unlike in ancient societies who believed in the possibility to return to the mythical past, "modern nostalgia is a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values; it could be a secular expression of a spiritual longing, a nostalgia for an absolute, a home that is both physical and spiritual, the endemic unity of time and space before entry into history" (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* 8). Similarly to Eliade, Boym finds the reason for this impossibility of mythical return in the radical change in

the conception of time and its tendency to secularization. She points out that the idea of linear, unidirectional, and objective time became predominant when the idea of progress "moved from the realm of arts and science to the ideology of industrial capitalism" (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* 10). Therefore, in the 20th century, nostalgia in the works of artists and writers becomes a side effect of the technological and economical progress. This is why artists like Tarkovsky often contrapose technology to nature, urban to countryside, progressive to traditional, and finally, materialistic to spiritual.

It is important to note that Boym's statement about nostalgia as mourning the impossibility to return to primordial, spiritual times does not fully apply to Tarkovsky's works. Unlike literary works, visual art, theatre, or music, cinema deals with time directly. Moreover, unlike music, it simultaneously brings together the notion of time and the images of space. Temporality in films gives the viewer the possibility to experience time not only as a unidirectional irreversible phenomenon, but also as something that can be lived again, thus as something akin to cyclical time. This is the reason why among all other arts Tarkovsky privileges cinema. Cinema deals directly with the temporal dimension and allows the viewer to observe life phenomena passing through time. As Tarkovsky states, cinema "uses the materials given by nature itself, by the passage of time, manifested within space, that we observe about us and in which we live" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 177). Thus, through the medium of cinema, Tarkovsky is able to communicate the idea of a possible return to the lost spirituality by offering the viewer to live his/her individual aesthetic experience over again through the means of the virtual cinematic world.

Cyclical time as Eliade's concept of the return to the lost spirituality is demonstrated in *Andrei Rublev* on several different levels, such as the film composition, the

narrative motives, the symbolism, etc. However, because Rublev's icons have such a great significance in the film, it is important for us to look at the art of icon painting and see how cyclical time in icons can be compared to the cyclical time in Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*. Similarly to icons which are considered to be a religious art, Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* claims the status of sacred cinema in which the problem of spirituality is addressed not only at the level of the plot but also through the imagery that conveys the ideas of timelessness and transcendence. The significance of the icons in film is doubtless. The film's entire last part is devoted to icons that are shown in color and in great detail (unlike the black and white footage of all of the preceding parts). On the one hand, these icons acquire a temporal dimension because they are placed in the temporal medium of the film. When the camera moves across different parts of Rublev's icons, zooms in and out and creates new picture frames, the image transforms from a strictly static state to a movable one. On the other hand, icon is an art form in which time is treated differently than in other visual arts. This makes icons a great exemplification of the spiritual time represented in Tarkovsky's films. There are a few researchers who devoted their attention to the icons quoted in Tarkovsky's *Rublev*. The most elaborate inquiries are Angela Dalle Vacche's book chapter "Andrei Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*: Cinema as the Restoration of Icon Painting", Vida Johnson and Petrie Graham's article "Painting and Film: *Andrei Rublev* and *Solaris*", Nariman Skakov's book chapter "Visions of *Andrei Rublev*", and Robert Bird's article "Tarkovsky and the Celluloid Icon". However, these authors center their attention mostly on the spatial characteristics of the icon paintings and on how they are projected on the film medium through certain cinematic techniques used by Tarkovsky. In my opinion, scholars often overlook the temporal dimension while discussing the connection between icons and film in relation to the

question of spirituality. I believe that the Russian medieval icons and the films of Tarkovsky have a common aspect: the cyclical time characteristic.

The reluctance to talk about temporality in icons can be justified by the fact that the question of time in visual arts has long been a controversial topic. American art historian W. J. Thomas Mitchell remarks that art theorists remain in "the tradition of denying temporality in the visual arts" (99). He says: "Nothing […] seems more intuitively obvious that the claim that literature is an art of time, painting an art of space" (W. J. T. Mitchell 95). Austrian art historian Otto Pächt is a case in point, who claims that pictorial art as a medium, "by definition, lacks the dimension of time" (1). However, some scholars, such as Etienne Souriau argue that all arts in general, including the visual ones, involve "psychological time of contemplation", which presupposes temporality as part of the spectator's time spent in the perception of an object. (Souriau 295). Clemena Antonova goes even further and proposes a completely different temporal dimension of time in visual art: the internal, "perspectival" time. According to Antonova, perspectival time "is generated by the spatial organization of the image and depends on the idea that specific treatments of images in space express specific conceptions of time, as happens most notably in narrative" (11). The perspectival approach to the understanding of time appears as the most relevant in regards to the icons used in Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*. What is important here is that the time treatment in icons and in Tarkovsky's film has a direct relation to the spiritual message that both media aim to project.

In order to understand what the perspectival time of icons means and how it is related to the notion of spirituality, it seems useful to look at the investigations of the Russian

icon scholars of the beginning of the 20ᵗʰ century, such as Pavel Florensky, Lev Zhegin, and Boris Uspensky. Together they laid the foundation for our comprehension of the temporal dimension of medieval paintings such as icons. Pavel Florensky was one of the first Russian scholars who made an attempt to theorize the aesthetics of the Russian Orthodox icon. As an Orthodox theologian and priest, he was especially interested in the spiritual aspect of the Russian icon. In his book *Iconostasis*, he focuses mainly on the role of the reverse or inverted perspective in icon paintings. Though the reverse perspective seems to be a strictly spatial quality of representation, Florensky connects it to and explains it through the category of time. Florensky was the first scholar who introduced the notion of the "reverse time" of icons in connection to the reverse perspective found in their spatial construction. His research implied the spatial-temporal unity and the idea that a certain conception of space leads to a certain conception of time. Time in icons, according to Florensky, resembles time in dreams, which has its own direction and duration. Florensky writes in *Ikonostasis*: "[time] runs and runs acceleratedly towards the actual and against the movement of time in waking consciousness. Dream time is turned inside out, which means that all its concrete images are also turned inside out with it: and that means we have entered the domain of imagery space" (41).The theme of time appears in the context of Florensky's religious world-view and plays a significant role in his understanding of spirituality.

Another Russian scholar, Lev Zhegin, dwelled on Florensky's concept of reverse space and time and introduced the principle of simultaneous depiction of different planes in icon paintings. In Zhegin's terms, the temporal aspect of the icon is concentrated in its "dynamic viewing position", that is when perspective is represented in its multiple forms, the object is observed from different angles. According to Zhegin, reverse perspective in icons is "directly

connected with the dynamic of the viewing position: the form of reverse perspective is the result

of the summarizing of the viewer's perception under the conditions of a multiplicity of

viewpoints, that are themselves the result of the dynamics of the viewing position" (ZHEGIN

42). Simultaneous depiction of different planes is often represented through the deformation of

the objects. Thus, for instance, in Rublev's *Annunciation* (see Fig. 1. 3) two buildings are shown

from three different perspectives simultaneously depicting two opposite walls and the inside

view. Here, the objects (buildings) appear distorted because they are shown from different angles

or viewing positions, which in real space would require the viewer to move from one point to

another in order to archive an image similar to what is presented on the single plane of the icon.
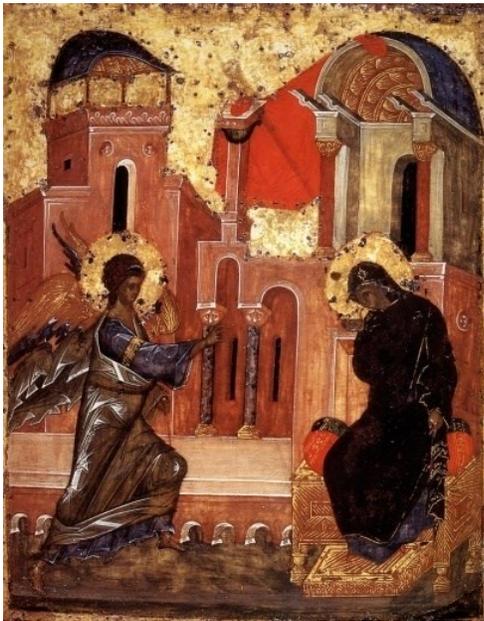
Fig. 1. 3

The semiologist Boris Uspensky was one of the first researchers who studied time

in icons by considering them as a four-dimensional form of art. In his book *The Semiotics of the*

Russian Icon he proposes that one of the main organizational principles of the ancient icons is

the summation of visual impressions. Unlike the linear perspective of the European visual art,

which was mainly developed during the Renaissance, Russian icon painting followed the

tradition of Byzantine art. Byzantine art disregarded linear perspective in favor of non-naturalistic representations (such as the depiction of disproportional objects, the displacement of people and objects, and reverse perspective). Instead of the representation from one point of view, icon painters proposed a dynamic visual position (Zhegin), as well as the dynamic of the object itself (Uspensky). Uspensky writes: "As a result of the summation of the visual impression in time – for example, to convey movement – certain forms of 'torsion' appear, when in depicting a moving figure, the various positions assumed during movement are combined" (Uspenskiĭ 50). As an example of the visual summation in time one can look at the Northern Russia icon of the 15th century *Beheading of St. John the Baptist* (see Fig. 1. 4). Here the artist depicts two heads of John the Baptist –one is intact, and the other is on the ground after beheading. Instead of the post factum representation of the event, the image involves a time which manifests itself through the process of St. John the Baptist's beheading. By fixating successive stages in a movement the artist combines various moments in time on one spatial plane. It is the viewer who has to do the work of the summation in order to understand the meaning behind the image.

Fig. 1. 4

37
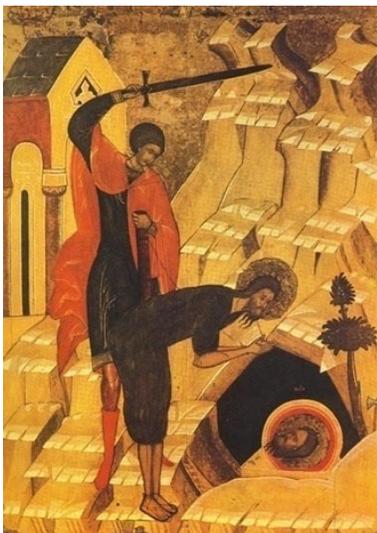
Other examples of the summation of the visual impression in time deal not as much with the representation of different moments in time but rather portray different narratives within the same image. One of such icons Tarkovsky included in the final episode of *Andrei Rublev*. The central figure of *The Nativity* (an icon from iconostasis of the Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Moscow Kremlin, 1405, see Fig. 1. 5), Mary, the mother of Christ, is represented in enlarged proportions if we compare it to the other figures on the image. Mary is surrounded by six other different small images, each representing a particular story from the biblical narrative (such as the adoration of the magi; the bathing of Jesus as a reference to his Baptism; and others). The representation of different stories within the same image implies their interrelation. However, because several stories are illustrated, the icon involves the viewer in a process similar to a montage in cinema, and, therefore brings the dimension of time into the supposedly non-temporal medium.
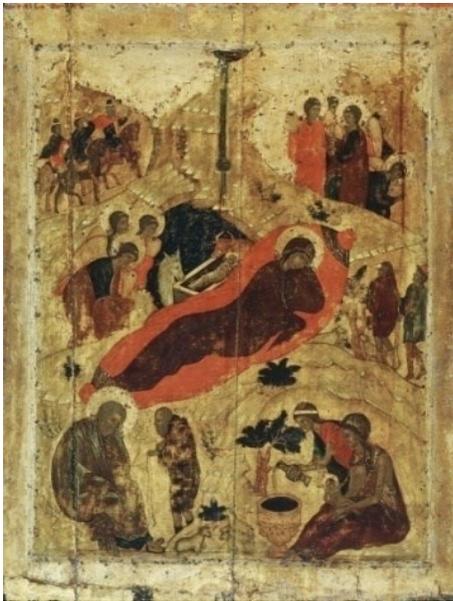
 Fig. 1. 5

Although Florensky, Zhegin, and Uspensky did not elaborate on the question of time in icons as much as on the notion of space, we can suggest that, just like space, time in

icons follows its own logic and is tightly tied to Florensky's idea of reverse perspective. However, the interconnectedness between pictorial space and pictorial time in icons, I believe, should be understood with the respect to both formal features of the icon as well as to its ritualistic aspect. Moreover, the primary purpose of the formal features would be to open up the religious and spiritual meaning of the icon.

While the reverse perspective in icons is counterposed to the linear perspective, reverse time would be assumed to be characterized as non-directional or akin to cyclical time. Visual summation of the object planes, like in Rublev's *Annunciation*, summation of the movements, such as in *Beheading of St. John the Baptist,* or summation of different narratives, such as in *Nativity,* all follow the logic of cyclical time representation rather than linear. In *Nativity* for example, the viewer is given more freedom in determining the order in which the Biblical event can be read. We can look at the individual images in the chronological order, according to the Bible, or change the story sequence in an absolutely random way and revisit the same illustration as many times as desired. The order of the events can be reversed and some stories can be completely omitted. Such an approach to the image largely depends on the viewer or "the reader" of the icon. The aspect of time should also be involved in order to understand the seemingly deformed buildings in Rublev's *Annunciation*. Three planes of the buildings come into view simultaneously, therefore they produce an anti-naturalistic appearance. However, the image makes more sense if the object can be viewed at different moments in time. This is done, presumably, as if the viewer was placed "inside" the image and walked around the represented object (a building or any other structure, or the person). This is what Uspensky called "the position of the beholder"–the viewer that actively participates in the image observation. Time is involved in order to observe the space inside the icon. However, because it is impossible to

represent motion on the painting, temporality is shown through the seemingly deformed objects, which, in fact, are just the representation of different angles of the same object simultaneously projected on the same plane.

One question that often comes up is whether space and time distortions in icons are the result of the medieval icon painters' inability to project reality in its naturalistic way. Specialists in icon paintings, such as Yuri Lotman and C.A. Tsakiridou, point out that anti-naturalistic representation in icons is not the result of the artist's ignorance or inability to paint in a better naturalistic way. Rather, it reflects the religious aspect of the icon and distinguishes an icon from a secular piece of visual art. In order to be perceived as a spiritual image, the icon has to follow certain formal conventions. As C.A. Tsakiridou points out: "A painting that expresses spirituality does so by putting forth a certain kind of form. In the absence of that form, nothing (spiritual) is expressed" (11). Florensky, Zhegin, and Uspensky all pointed at the reverse perspective as the main characteristic of the medieval icon. However, only Florensky made a theoretical speculation on the connection between formal features and the spiritual aspect of the icon. According to Florensky, the reverse perspective derives from the original meaning of the icon painting, i.e. its religious and spiritual purpose. It can be argued that the spiritual foundation of the icon painting resides it its spatial and temporal qualities. Reversibility, thus, is the formal aspect that refers to the icon as spiritual art.

Florensky categorizes time in icons as unidirectional, but the one that flows in the opposite, or reverse direction. However, his idea of time reversibility should not be understood as literally. The qualitative difference between spiritual time in icons and the linear time is not just a reversal in the direction of time perception (from past to future vs. from future to past). Time in icons is non-directional or cyclical. On the one hand, cyclical time in icons is

demonstrated as reversible. The linear and unidirectional flow is disrupted, which is portrayed through the reversibility of the space within the icon image. On the other hand, time in icons becomes annulled when the object planes are presented simultaneously. The representation of the various aspects of icon objects all at once can be associated with timelessness. This simultaneity bears theological foundation and visually represents "the way God sees the world". In other words, God exists outside time and space and sees things simultaneously. As Antonova states: "The simultaneous representation of different planes of the icon image, […] is linked to the theological doctrine of a God, who is timelessly eternal, i.e., exists simultaneously and is not subject to spatial location" (152). Therefore, icon painting underlies the theological idea and somewhat allows to see the world with the eyes of God, who is infinite and timeless. In Florensky's terms, the distortion of the objects, people, and planes in the icon can be understood as the attempt to enter into the spiritual world of God, or the imaginary dream world. The "distorted" space should be simply viewed from a different position, which has a religious foundation. The icon space becomes a sacred space, whereas the icon painting becomes a sacred image. Thus, time in icon can also be characterized as a sacred time, which reveals and unfolds according to the spiritual logic that underlines the theological concept.

According to Eliade's study of mythological archetypes, "spiritual time" is the time of Creation which needs to be continually regenerated. This regeneration happens through periodic repetition of various religious rituals and rites. The New Year season, for example, becomes the "eternal repetition of the cosmogonic act, by transforming every New Year into the inauguration of an era… [It] permits the return of the dead to life, and maintains the hope of the faithful in the resurrection of the body" (Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* 62). When time is regenerated through rites and rituals, it loses its linearity and becomes cyclical. Linear or

historical time becomes annulled because any event can be reversed or transformed through its cyclical repetition. As mentioned above, medieval icon paintings demonstrate time irreversibility also by the abolition of linear time. By following the logic of cyclical time it can be concluded that icon paintings reject "the modality of man, which is coupled with death" and proclaims "the modality of the gods, which is coupled with immortality" (Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* 36). Cyclical time in icons is demonstrated in its formal representation. However, it also correlates to the idea that the icon plays a sacred role in the prayer rituals that Orthodox Christians repeat on a daily basis. Thus, the formal qualities of the icon painting correspond to its spiritual meaning and the religious purpose it serves.

Tarkovsky's special treatment of icons at the end of *Andrei Rublev* prompts to think about the connection between icons as spiritual art and the aspects of spirituality in his films. Unlike in some other films about famous painters, such as *El Greco* (1966) by Luciano Salce or *Van Gogh* (1991) by Maurice Pialat, Tarkovsky never shows Andrei Rublev at work. Several of Rublev's icons, such as *Annunciation*, *Entry into Jerusalem, Nativity, Saviour among Seraphims and the Evangelistic Symbols, Transfiguration, Raising of Lazarus, Baptism, Saviour,* and his famous *Trinity* emerge only in the epilogue of the film as a final result of the artist's creation. The appearance of these icons is rather abrupt and unexpected. However, this last episode can be described as the most powerful part of the entire film. It begins with the image of the grey burning coals. The image suddenly acquires red color and transforms into a colorful depiction of Rublev's icons. The color of the icons is striking compared to the preceding black and white shots. This non-diegetic appearance of the icons creates a noticeable shift in the narrative of the film. Tarkovsky writes about his idea to displace icons towards the end of the narrative: "In our film there will not be a single shot of Rublev painting his icons. He will simply

live, and he won't even be present on-screen in all episodes. And the last part of the film (in color) will be solely devoted to Rublev's icons. We will show them in detail (as in a popular scientific film)" (qtd. in Bird, *Andrei Rublev* 37). The absence of Rublev's icons in the film's narrative and their emergence after the story is over implies that icons at the end of the film have a conceptual significance. This led several film critics to assume that Tarkovsky's artistic maneuver gives some reason for the comparison of Tarkovsky's films with the art of icons painting, and with icons in general. Thus, Robert Efird notes that "the icons in the epilogue are not a representation of the artistic vision through the perceptual filter of the protagonist but rather an extradiegetic resolution to the preceding narrative" (91). In this sense, the epilogue represents Tarkovsky's view not only on the art of icon painting but on the subject of sacred art and on the problem of artistic creation in general. It also becomes a form of response to the important questions raised throughout the story of the film, such as Rublev's inner struggles to paint *The Last Judgment*, Boriska's miraculous ability to cast the bell without any knowledge or skill, and the recurrent discussions on such spiritual topics as faith and love.

The bright colors of the icons at the end of the film are contrasted to the dull appearance of everyday life. It is not by coincidence that Tarkovsky includes the narrator's voice citing Ecclesiastes 1:2 (*Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity*) while depicting Kyrill (Rublev's assistant) and his monastic cell full of icons in one of the first episodes of the film. It refers to the idea that art has a spiritual nature as well as spiritual mission –the ability to transform the mundane into sacred. Tarkovsky writes: "The idea of infinity cannot be expressed in words or even described, but it can be apprehended through art, which makes infinity tangible. The absolute in only attainable through faith and the creative act" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 38–39). In *Andrei Rublev*, the icon is paralleled to the film as both become a

"window" into the spiritual world. While the icon is an ancient art form that has a religious meaning, the film, for Tarkovsky, becomes a contemporary art form that is suited for a revival of spirituality. As Dalle Vacche argues, Tarkovsky attempts to develop "a cinema that will function like a religious icon, with the power to bring God back among us and restore our faith in the inexplicable and the supernatural" (140). Dalle Vacche focuses mainly on the spatial qualities of an icon painting and the representation of space in Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*. However, it is important to look at how the film takes upon itself some qualities of the icon in regards to the representation of time. While cyclical time in icons is primarily characterized by the reverse perspective, in film it is manifested through narrative nonlinearity, such as reversed narrative direction of memories, daydreaming, fragmentarity, the appearance of recurrent motives, and the focus on the subjective experience of an individual as opposed to the objective representation of historical facts.

At first glance, the narrative of *Andrei Rublev* is more or less linear, compared to the rest of Tarkovsky's films. The first version of the film has undergone several cuts which left behind four flashbacks. The final version of *Andrei Rublev* was left only with the two short episodes in which the memory experience is clearly manifested. One of them is a flashback showing Grand Duke's brother in the church making peace with the Grand Duke. Another is shown through Andrei's eyes in "The Last Judgment" part. Despite the impossibility to compare *Rublev* with Tarkovsky's *Mirror* or *Nostalghia,* in terms of the amount of memory and dream sequences depicted, it would be a mistake to think that *Andrei Rublev* lacks the complexity related to the representation of time. *Andrei Rublev*'s apparent fragmentarity mainly comes from the episodes that fall out of chronological order or that do not relate to the story whatsoever. Tarkovsky's focus on cyclical time is primarily manifested through the absence of the linear

logic in the narration of the story. Thus, for example, several film episodes, such as Efim's flight of the balloon, the crucifixion of Christ, or the pagan celebration, have no historical justification. Moreover, these episodes do not fit logically into the main narrative of Rublev's story. Instead of witnessing the objective facts of Rublev's medieval times, the viewer is presented with poetic sketches that are thrown into the film as lyrical digressions from the main story. This temporal discontinuity in these sketches is conveyed through the loose narrative, the apparent absence of action, and the subjective logic of dreams, thoughts, and memory.

The film prologue is a good demonstration of narrative fragmentation in cinema. Here Tarkovsky places unrelated scene of a man flying the balloon as an "introduction" to Rublev's story. The prologue starts with the portrayal of several men near a church who are preparing a balloon made of skins, rags, and ropes for the flight by filling it with hot air from a fire which is placed under the bag. A man (Efim) arrives by boat. Being pursued by a group of people who try to stop the balloon from being launched, Efim manages to climb to the top of the church and flies off. For a few minutes he enjoys the flight over the river landscape. He exclaims "I'm flying!" and shortly plunges back to the earth. The slowly deflating balloon covers Efim, which prompts us to assume that the man dies. At the end of the prologue we see a horse rolling over on the ground in slow motion.

Robert Bird argues that Rublev's prologue "clearly demonstrates Tarkovsky's basic method: a fragmented narrative, long takes joined by jarringly discontinues editing and the reduction of the mise-en-scène to its barest components, especially the four primal elements of water, earth, fire, and air" (22). Indeed, the prologue reveals most of cinematic techniques that Tarkovsky uses in his films. However, fragmentarity, which is prominent for Tarkovsky, can not only be retraced within the composition of the prologue, but also in relation to the film as a

whole. At first glance, the prologue smoothly fits into the general atmosphere of the film. The viewer might assume that the action happens during Rublev's times (early 15th century). However, later on it becomes obvious that the story of a flying man has no relation to the rest of the film narrative. Neither do we see Efim as a character in any of the subsequent parts.

It can be speculated that in the prologue Tarkovsky makes a reference to the well-known Greek myth of Icarus, who made wings of feathers and wax but ended up falling down because he flew too close to the sun. Tarkovsky, who was against explicit symbolism in his films, on the contrary wanted to avoid such reference and, as he stated in his book, "spent a long time working out how to destroy the plastic symbol on which the episode was built" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 80). With respect to Tarkovsky's statement, instead of discussing the symbolic significance of the myth of Icarus to which the prologue presumably alludes, it would be interesting to look at how the prologue fits into the cultural context of the film's creation. Secondly, it would be important to see how the prologue corresponds to the rest of the film with regards to the question of cyclical time and spirituality that we raised above.

The theme of Icarus is often reiterated in 20th century Russian visual culture. In 1909 Russian writer Evgeniy Opochinin wrote a story called *Devilish Flying Man* (*Besovskiy letatel'*). The protagonist of the story is a Russian serf named Nikitka who lived in the 16th century. Nikitka made and attached wooden wings to his body and successfully flew over his city. Later he was executed by a decree of Ivan the Terrible. Opochinin's story of Nikitka received a significant resonance among many artists and became a legend short after its appearance. Thus, in 1926 Iurii Tarich filmed *Wings of a Serf* (Fig. 1. 6) in which he showed a man who constructed wings and flew from a bell tower. In 1940 Aleksandr Deyneka painted *Nikitka – The First Russian Pilot* (Fig. 1. 7). In 1947 Nikolay Vilkov painted *Wings of a Serf*

(Fig. 1. 8). In 1964 (the year Tarkovsky started filming *Andrei Rublev*) Ilia Glazunov painted *The Russian Icarus* (Fig. 1. 9). Tarich's film and all three paintings have much in common with *Rublev's* prologue. All, except Glazunov's painting, portray a belfry (from which the man with wings probably flew off) and the crowd of people watching the flying man. Glazunov's painting also very much alludes to the river landscape shown in Tarkovsky's film. The theme of the Russian Icarus also continued in modern Russia in such works as Elena Chernysheva's painting *Russian Icarus*, 2002 (Fig. 1. 10) and Alexey Zalazaev's sculpture *Nikitka-letun,* 2009 (Fig. 1. 11). During the opening of his exhibition Zalazaev even said that his composition was fully inspired be Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Andrei Rublev* (FMVideoNews).

Fig. 1. 6

Fig. 1. 7

Fig. 1. 8
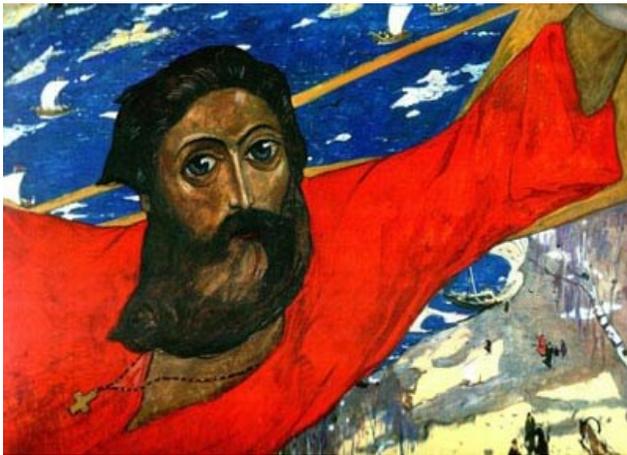
Fig. 1. 9
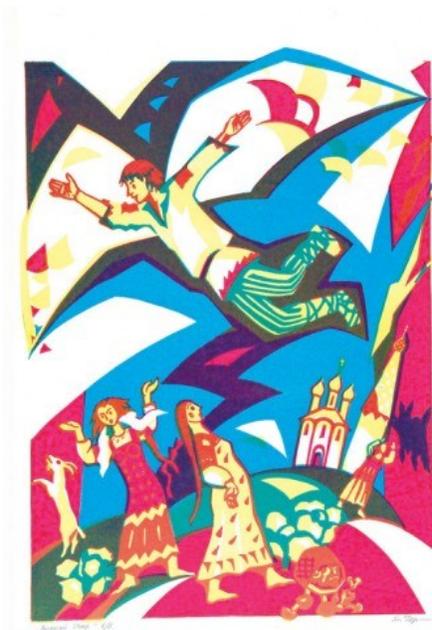
Fig. 1. 10

Fig. 1. 11

As it was mentioned, Tarkovsky started filming *Rublev* in 1964, two years after he finished his first film about the war, *Ivan's Childhood*. WWII made a significant impact on Soviet culture and its politics. The arms race between USSR and the USA greatly influenced the development of aviation and space technologies as well as the general cultural atmosphere of the Soviet Union. In this competition Russia positioned itself as a powerful state with a successful growth in all spheres of life. In trying to be "the first" and "the best", Soviet Union not only contributed to the contemporary development of technology but also tried to reinterpret history for its own benefit. Historical reinterpretations were especially important in the scientific areas, especially those where technological achievements and inventions were taking place. Thus, for example, it is commonly believed that the Montgolfier brothers were the inventors of the hot air balloon. However, Soviet leaders were not satisfied with such a situation and the existing legend about serf Nikitka and his aero invention was presented as a historical fact. Starting from 1956, several Soviet publications (including The Great Soviet Encyclopedia) claimed that Russian man Nikita Kriakutnyi invented the hot air balloon 52 years before the Montgolfier brothers did.

Although this claim was highly debatable, it did not stop the Soviets from celebrating the 225th anniversary of Nikita Kriakutnyi's legendary flight by producing postage stamps (Fig. 1. 12) and erecting Kriakutnyi's monument (Fig. 1. 13) in the Russian city of Nerehta (in the Kostorma region).

 Fig. 1. 12

 Fig. 1. 13

Although Tarkovsky didn't comment on why he chose to include the story about a flying man as prologue to his movie, I would hypothesize that he had at least two reasons in mind. First, we have to consider that *Andrei Rublev* is a commissioned film. The appearance of a film that deals with a religious topic in Soviet times is a paradox, as the Soviet state was against open religious practice and its representation in media. In Soviet times many Russian icons were

destroyed along with churches; some were smuggled out of the country or sold abroad by agents of the Soviet government. Despite that, one of the reasons the government allowed Tarkovsky to shoot the film was that Andrei Rublev's works, first of all, represented the works of a great artist, a genius of the Russian nation. At the Artistic Council, Tarkovsky said: "For this very reason even the wall of a Communist society can withstand Rublev's 'Trinity', […] because it expresses the nation's moral ideal, its aspiration for fraternity, beauty, etc" (Transcript of a meeting of the Artistic Council of the Unit 51, qtd. In:(Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky* 41). The prologue's story about the hot air balloon inventor was Tarkovsky's way to contribute to the glorification of the Soviet state and the Russian nation. Efim's bravery and ingenuity seemed to be a good analogy for Rublev's story as the greatest icon painter.

The second reason for the story chosen for the prologue is tied to Tarkovsky's cinematic style and his philosophical ideas about history and time. It can be said that even though the prologue is shown in a realistic manner, it undermines the historical truth. Tarkovsky is not trying to reconstruct the historical event or praise Krikutnyi's legendary flight, as the Soviet postage stamps did. More likely, Tarkovsky compares the story of Efim with Rublev's story. Both have vague historical foundations, and, to some degree, both distort the historical truth. The displacement of the chronology in the prologue is paralleled with the displacement of the chronology in the film narrative. Despite the fact that Efim is a fictional character and that the details of Rublev's life are unknown to historians, Tarkovsky portrays the life of individuals that lived in the 16th century. But he undermines objective history in favor of the subjective experience of an individual. The narrative of the prologue is presented as a short version of the narrative about Rublev. Both have a cyclical composition and focus on the ascents and the downfalls in an individual life.

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To show that subjective time has a greater significance over historical time, Tarkovsky uses several techniques throughout the entire film, including the prologue. One of them is demonstrated through the POV (point of view) shots. The first shot shown through the eyes of a character is found in the Efim's flight episode. We do not see how Efim sets off from the belfry. Instead the viewer is positioned "inside" the cinematic space and "flies" together with Efim. Just like Efim would, we see the walls of the belfry and the landscape underneath. It is important that Tarkovsky chooses to show Efim's viewpoint before showing Efim himself. This way the psychological dimension of the episode becomes much more essential than the alleged historical fact of the flight. It is Efim's experience that draws the viewer's interest inside the historical context, not vice-versa. Describing the prologue, Tarkovsky notes that one of the questions that comes up after watching it is: "What would this man [Efim] have seen and felt as he flew for the first time?" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 79). Thus, for Tarkovsky it was important not just to portray the event, but to position the viewer into the situation experienced by the individual.

The character's point of view is a common device used in films. Visual arts, such as paintings, on the contrary, do not often represent the character's point of view. Rather, they tell the story from the third person's point of view. The painting tells us: "Here is interesting scenery to look at!" or "Here is an interesting story!" The religious icon, on the contrary, would be a good example of a visual art form that acknowledges the viewer and makes him/her the center of a piece. Such a process was described by Boris Uspensky when he defined the main principles of the space composition in icon painting. In *The Semiotics of the Russian Icon* we read:

The position of the ancient painter is primarily an INTERNAL rather than EXTERNAL one with respect to the representation: he depicts first and foremost not the object itself, but the space surrounding the object (the world in which it is located), and consequently, places himself and us, as it were, within this represented space (Uspenskiĭ 35).

Thus, by going farther than just object representation, icons call the viewer for an active participation that reflects the one expressed in religious practice such as the prayer.

According to Uspensky, to demonstrate the position of the beholder in icon paintings it is necessary to resort to specific techniques such as the distortion of objects, the summation of different planes, and reverse perspective. Film, on the other hand, can directly portray both the organization of space and the time flow on screen. In Tarkovsky's film this is done through the camera work as it defamiliarizes space and time by making perpendicular tracking movements over objects and by creating long continuous shots. These cinematic techniques were introduced by Tarkovsky in *Ivan's Childhood* (in Ivan's dream at the beginning of the film and in the episode in the birch grove), and was subsequently used throughout his entire cinematic career. Such long shots and the tracking movements often represent the inner world of the characters, be it Ivan's memory of the peace times before WWII in *Ivan's Childhood*, Stalker's vision of the "Zone" in *Stalker*, or Alexander's feelings of impending apocalypse in *Sacrifice.* In Efim's flight episode it is the combination of the perpendicular tracking movements and the "bird's eye view" that extend Efim's experience to the spectator. At first glance, Tarkovsky presents Efim's flight as a concrete happening – "an ordinary, dirty peasant, then his fall, his crash, his death" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 79). The episode represents an actual fact that happened in a particular time. However, the orientation with the subjective view of a protagonist makes one wonder about how we perceive time and reality. By

turning to the individual experience, Tarkovsky raises the question of the spiritual meaning of human existence. Thus, the flight of a peasant metaphorically represents the director's attempt to reach out toward the transcendent and beyond the physical realm.

"Passion According to Andrei" is another film section that noticeably points at the significance of the question of time and spirituality raised in Tarkovsky's art. The central part of this episode is the Christ's crucifixion reenacted on the Russian land. The scene of the crucifixion appears in form of the embodiment of Andrei Rublev's conversation with Theophanes the Greek. Rublev tells Theophanes that it is impossible to be an artist if one does not believe in the goodness residing in human beings. Theophanes, on the contrary, is convinced that people are morally corrupted and that art should be dedicated primarily to God, not people. He believes that if Jesus came back on earth he would be crucified again. The scene of the crucifixion intrudes into the conversation. While Rublev continues to speak off-screen, a snow-covered landscape comes into our view. The episode closely follows the biblical story of Christ's crucifixion in regards to the characters and the events – Christ is carrying his cross up the hill, a procession of people is following him, Magdalene and Mary are weeping along the way, etc. While the cross is being raised into place, Rublev's voice-over continues to speak about the fate of the Russian people, their suffering from hunger, plague, Tatar yoke, and endless toil.

Both Rublev and Theophanes' conversation and the scene of the crucifixion incorporate iconographic elements. Like in icons, Tarkovsky's representation of these episodes disregards logical/ linear depiction of space and time. Perhaps the most noticeable shot found in Rublev and Theophanes' conversation is when the artists talk while turning away from each other and from the camera (see Fig. 1. 14). Rublev's slightly bowed posture very much recalls the characters represented on Rublev's icons, such as *The Saviour*, *The Apostle Paul*, and the

angels on *Trinity*. Both artists' faces are also turned away from the camera at an angle similar to one adopted by the characters represented in almost all of Rublev's icons. Just like in icons, the image also implies the idea of dynamism of the viewing position described by Uspensky. However, instead of the concave representation of the object (which would be the main indicator of the multiplicity of viewpoints in icons), Tarkovsky frames two persons that seem to exist and occupy their own space, but are placed in one shot. Unlike the painters of ancient icons who did not have other options to represent different spaces on the plain but to put them side by side, Tarkovsky could have used a simple cinematic technique such as montage. However, as we mentioned earlier, he believes that the aesthetics of the cinematic image can be expressed within each separate shot, with as little use of montage as possible. Thus while the conversation between Rublev and Theophanes could have been presented as a series of shots, they are instead placed on the same plain of the image. This produces a visual incongruity and a discordance in the organization of space similar to what we see on the icon paintings.

 Fig. 1. 14

Likewise, the scene of the crucifixion strikes with its strangeness when we see Christ carrying his cross across the winter landscape. He is dressed in Russian clothes and has Slavic facial features. Here, Tarkovsky makes a reference to the icons not only from their

religious perspective, but also in the way the scene is represented. On the one hand, the displacement of the seasons, or rather the climate (cold Russia instead of hot Jerusalem), makes the representation unusual. On the other hand, one can notice that the scene of Christ's crucifixion is inspired by the tradition of Russian iconography. Robert Bird and Noriman Skakov note that the board which is nailed to the cross contains an orthographically corrupted version of the Greek Inscription – it reads: "Jesus Christ, the God of Suffering". The abbreviated version of this inscription is often found on Orthodox icons of the crucifixion (Bird, *Andrei Rublev* 69); (Skakov 54). Skakov suggests that "the inscription immediately withdraws the scene from the realm of *mimesis*: the winter crucifixion is not an attempt to imitate a certain historical event, it rather presents an *image* of that event" (54). I would agree that the inscription on the board makes a clear reference to Russian iconography. However, it also corresponds to the Gospel narrative. A more interesting detail that often remains unnoticed is that Tarkovsky places several angel-like looking figures in bright white clothes along the way of the Christ's procession (see Fig. 1. 15). One can argue that the angels are barely noticeable. However, it is only because Soviet officials would have restricted Tarkovsky from the more obvious representation. Russian iconographers also included angels in their works. For instance, Rublev's successor Dionisius represented Christ's crucifixion with several angels flying near Christ's upper body (see Fig. 1. 16). Thus, the scene of the crucifixion, which is in Rublev's imagination, appears to the viewer as an icon in cinematic form. Here, the vision of Rublev the painter merges with the creative vision of Tarkovsky in such a way that both try to present not the fact but the spiritual ideas accompanying the visual experience that the viewer undergoes while watching either the painting or the film.
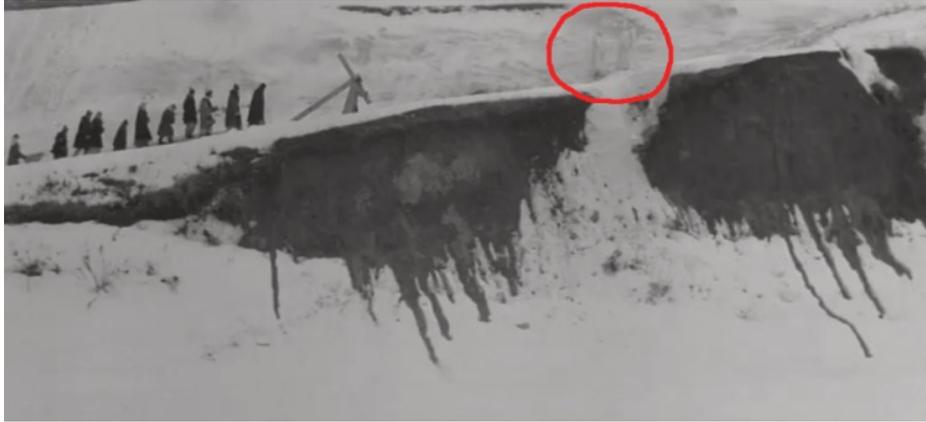
Fig. 1. 15
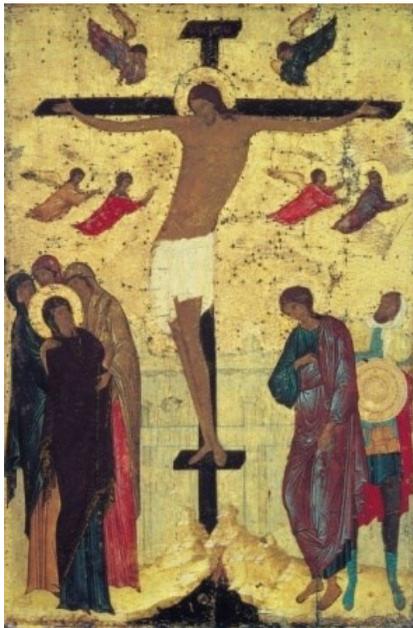
Fig. 1. 16

It is not only that the organization of the space in the episode can be compared to the Russian icons; more importantly we need to look at the displacement of the time and the space of the Biblical story in relation to the narrative of the film. The scene that appears in Rublev's imagination (presumably) occurs in winter (see Fig. 1. 17), whereas Rublev and Theophanes's conversation happens in summer. Scholars of Tarkovsky's work notice that the scene of the crucifixion recalls Bruegel's canvases in which big events are combined with the sub-actions of smaller individuals. (Johnson and Petrie 252) As we have seen before, Tarkovsky

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often made allusions to classical art in his films, with paintings such as *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Vermeer in *Mirror*, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* by Rembrandt in *Solaris*, or *Ruins at Eldena* by David Caspar Friedrich in *Nostalghia*. The possibility that Tarkovsky makes an allusion to Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* in the crucifixion scene is also suggested by the fact that the director shows this painting in his next film *Solaris*. In both films, the winter landscape is associated with the protagonist's inner world, i.e. Kris' childhood memories in *Solaris* and Rublev's imagination of the Christ's crucifixion. Although Tarkovsky does use Bruegel's painting "to activate a moment in our souls as we respond to images that are ancient, but also vary alive, and that are borrowed from a visual tradition" (Dalle Vacche 136), his main goal is to emphasize a season in time as it appears on the painting and in the scenery of the film.

Fig. 1. 17

Bruegel's painting is a good example in the history of fine arts where the representation of a season plays a significant role. Art historian and a medieval studies specialist Norbert Wolf suggests that *Hunters in the Snow* should not be viewed simply as an image of winter that is isolated from the context of the cycle of seasons. He says:

A cycle of pictures of this kind puts its parts in a meaningful order because it is meaning-generating. In calendar depictions of antiquity and the Middle Ages, the ordered day, the

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ordered year, and the ordered course of life were embedded in a mythical or Christian

cosmology in which each particular occurrence found its place in the context of a

metaphysical temporal structure. This also holds for Breughel (Wolf 38).

Similarly, the depiction of the Christ's crucifixion should not be viewed out of the seasonal

context represented in the film. On the contrary, seasons play an important role in *Andrei Rublev*,

as well as in most of Tarkovsky's films. In *Andrei Rublev*, seasons are included in all episode

titles. Episodes two and seven even include the whole seasonal cycle in their titles, which was

Tarkovsky's way to represent the long journey of Rublev happening over a span of twenty-four

years (1400 – 1424). What is common in Breughel's paintings and Tarkovsky's films is that the

artists individualize the different seasons and charge them with subjective meaning. As it was

mentioned earlier, Tarkovsky's winter is closely associated with the protagonist's inner world.

However, on the whole, seasonal changes pertain to a higher principle of order. In Tarkovsky's

case it is the cyclicity of the seasons that contributes to the director's representation of time as

cyclical, a representation which is found not only in the narrative, but in each separate shot as

well as in the film imagery in general.

The episode of the crucifixion of Christ is brief compared to the three hours and

twenty-five minutes of the film. However, it plays a central part in revealing the theological

ideas of Rublev, as well as the elliptical nature of the film narrative. The discontinuity of space

and time in this episode not only manifests itself through alternating seasons, it also combines

Rublev's past, his allusions to future, and his troubled mind of the present. Several parts of the

"Christ's Crucifixion" make atemporal leaps that unite the whole film narrative. The

discontinuity of time and space in Tarkovsky's films is often bridged through the use of the four

elements – earth, air, fire, and water. But in most cases water is privileged. Thus, the river in the

crucifixion scene alludes to the river at the beginning of "The Passion According to Andrei" episode, in which Foma (Rublev's apprentice) washes paintbrushes. It also takes the viewer back to the prologue – the bird's eye view image of the river landscape. In "Celebration" the river is presented as a massive body and some important actions happen there. In "Raid" the river, or rather a small stream, is shown when Foma falls dead after being pierced with Tatar's arrow. At the end of the film we also see a river by which four horses graze in the pouring rain.

Water in any form, whether it is rain, fog, snow, stream, or pond has a significant place as a visual motive in Tarkovsky's films. In his book, Peter Green quotes Tarkovsky's commentary on the use of water imagery in his films: "There is always water in my films… Water is a mysterious element - because of its structure. And it is very sinegenic; it transmits movement, depth, changes. Nothing is more beautiful than water" (139). Water is often considered as a metaphor for the passage of time. In biblical narratives, both Old and New Testaments, water represents truth, knowledge, and eternal life. In John 4:14 Jesus said: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shell give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shell give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (*Official King James Bible Online: Authorized King James Version (KJV)*). Although Tarkovsky was against people ascribing symbolic meanings to his films, Johnson and Petrie argue that water in Tarkovsky's films is linked to spiritual rebirth and purification (Johnson and Petrie 205). It is indisputable that water in Tarkovsky's films plays a primarily aesthetic function. However, it is often linked to powerful emotional images that stand as conceptual anchors of Tarkovsky's art.

Water in *Andrei Rublev* is a structural bridge that connects the key motives of the film: death and rebirth. The scene of the crucifixion becomes a central element in which death and rebirth are offered as a generally accepted religious narrative that does not require further

connotation. Whereas other instances of water representation are tightly linked together, both aesthetically and conceptually. Although water often appears in Tarkovsky's films as is, in Andrei Rublev it goes hand in hand with other objects or events that are shown on the screen. Such are the images of the horses at the end of the epilogue and the prologue, the dead bird and the white cloth in "The Passion According to Andrei", the floating dummy in "Celebration", the milk spilt in water from a flask following the blinding of the stonemasons, or the milk cloud in the stream in "Raid". At first glance, the significance of those images is minimal in relation to the main story about the life of Rublev. But these images bear an enormous aesthetic function and it can be said that they poeticize the narrative. They also appear as, arguably, the most memorable images of the film. Each image metaphorically repeats events that have already occurred, or makes an allusion about what is to come in the future, starting with Efim's death in prologue and ending with the revival of Rublev's creativity at the end of the film. Thus, the image of the rolling horse at the end of the prologue (see Fig. 1. 18), the dead bird in "The Passion According to Andrei" (see Fig. 1. 19), and the spilt milk which follows Foma's death in "Raid" (see Fig. 1. 20 and 1. 21) all allude to the theme of death that permeate the entire film, whether it be the death of Efim, death as it is brought by the Tatars, or the breakdown of Rublev's creativity. Likewise, the heaving cloth in the scene of the crucifixion (see Fig. 1. 22) and the horses in the rain at the end of the film (see Fig. 1. 23) represent life, whether it be eternal life as promised by Christ or the creative life of the artist that Rublev finally regains. It is worth noticing that even though the images of water are nicely integrated into the main narrative, they are often presented as if they were of a non-diegetic nature. By slowing down the camera movement and using close-up shots, Tarkovsky brings these images to the forefront and makes us temporarily forget about the main story. As a consequence, the material substance of water

stands for something abstract. Here, the aesthetics open up the opportunity to think about something that is beyond earthly nature and has spiritual meaning. The linear time is annulled and the images appear in a timeless form. These images require not deciphering but contemplation similar to the praying stance one can adopt in front of the religious icon.

Fig. 1. 18

Fig. 1. 19

Fig. 1. 20
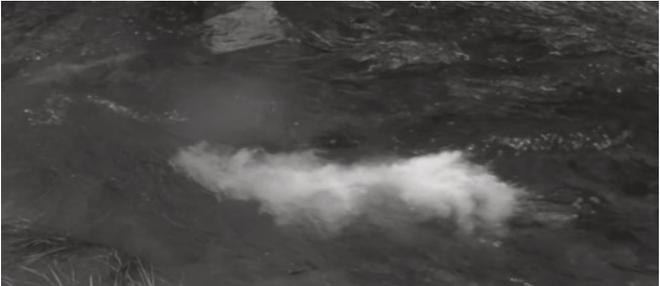
Fig. 1. 21

Fig. 1. 22

Fig. 1. 23

While the scene of Christ's crucifixion on the Russian land is often discussed by

the critics, many leave out the analysis of the scene of the pagan celebration in the "Celebration"

part. In my opinion, the scene of pagan celebration plays an equally important role when it

comes to the analysis of the notion of time and spirituality in *Andrei Rublev*. The pagan

celebration that follows the Russian crucifixion is called Kupala Night. It is an ancient Slavic

tradition in which summer solstice is celebrated. In Orthodox Christianity it is analogous to St.

John's Day. It is believed that Kupala Night was a mysterious night when magical things would

happen. Water and fire were supposed to reconcile and produce purifying effects. The main

rituals people participated in involved bathing in rivers and jumping over fire. The role of water

was especially significant because of the ritual purification (similar to baptism in Christianity).

Tarkovsky shows the main Kupala Night ritual when the dummy of Morena (the Slavic Death

Goddess) is put on the boat and let go down the river (see Fig. 1. 24). The ritual is based on the

idea of the death and rebirth of nature. It was (and still is to some extent) significant for Russian

culture, and it would usually take place with each seasonal change[3]. However, like in the story

about Efim in the prologue, Tarkovsky's goal is not to portray the history of the ancient Russian

celebration. On the contrary, here again Tarkovsky focuses on the personal experience of the

event. This is why the celebration is not only observed by Rublev from a distance: he has to

become part of it. Tarkovsky brings the celebration closer to the viewer through Rublev's eyes.

As Rublev comes closer to the ritual scenes, he becomes sucked into the pagan celebration and

experiences the tradition himself. While Rublev is watching naked people running towards the

river, two men catch him and tie him to a pole. Soon after, a pagan woman unties him and,

presumably, engages in sexual relations with him[4] (a common practice of Slavic pagans during

Kupala Night). Here again, Tarkovsky makes an attempt to go beyond the history toward

individual time. Rublev's participation in the ritual of death and rebirth, which is cyclical in

nature, represents Tarkovsky's vision of individual time as cyclical, not linear.

 Fig. 1. 24

The non-linearity of individual time for Tarkovsky can be compared to the

cyclical understanding of time in ancient societies, such as the Slavic pagans who practiced

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[3] Unlike in Kupala Night tradition of later summer, the dummy of Morena is usually put on fire during the spring season (Maslenitsa ritual).

[4] The final version of the film shows only a slight allusion to Rublev and the pagan woman's sexual engagement. However, the script elaborates this subject quite significantly and even proposes its continuation in future episodes (Evlampiev 61).

various traditional rites and rituals. According to Eliade, the ritual as the repetition of the archetypal act has only one purpose in mind, i.e. "the need of archaic societies to regenerate themselves periodically throughout the annulment of time" (85).The ritual that involved Morena would be one of the characteristic rituals of the seasonal change found in Slavic culture. Morena symbolically represented human sacrifice as repeated through the rite. With the repetition of the rite throughout the year traditional people aimed to imitate the archetype of sacrifice. This allowed them to become closer to the divinity and the spiritual time of the mythical epoch. In the ritual, the profane/linear time was annulled and replaced with the sacred/cyclical time. The episode of the pagan celebration demonstrates Tarkovsky's tendency towards the notion of time as cyclical. Showing and involving the protagonist into the archaic rites that abolish concrete time, Tarkovsky intends to devaluate the mechanical understanding of time as linear and to favor non-linear, spiritual time in its place.

After Russia adopted Christianity in 988AD most of the population was forcefully baptized by the authorities. Those who remained pagans had to hide and practice their traditions secretly. The end of the "Celebration" episode shows some of the pagans struggling against Duke's people and trying to escape from their hands. Rublev, for his part, hides from his fellow monks that he participated in a pagan ritual and only tells them that he scratched himself because the forest is very dense. Rublev's conduct shows that even though he is an Orthodox monk, he accepts and even supports pagan religion. In both "Celebration" and "The Passion According to Andrei", Rublev takes an interesting position. On the one hand, he is not a pagan and condemns pagans for their unholy practices, and yet he voluntarily gets involved in such practices. On the other hand, Rublev is an Orthodox monk, but it seems that he does not completely agree on all the doctrinal aspects of Orthodox Christianity. Precisely, his understanding of Christ more as a

human than a God is shown in his commentary about the crucifixion scene. Rublev speculates that "Jesus may have been born and crucified to reconcile God and man… His crucifixion and death were God's deed. It had to arouse the hatred not of those who crucified Him but those who loved Him, because they loved Him as a man, but He, of his own will forsook them showing injustice or even cruelty." Later, Theophanes notes that Rublev could be exiled from the monks community for such blasphemy. Ultimately Rublev's conduct (neither pagan, not completly Orthodox) represents Rublev primirally as an artist. In many ways it resembles Tarkovsky's own character, his artistic vision and his philospphical ideas on the existance of God.

The notion of time plays a significant role in Christianity. Christianity tries to explain human existence by using an established eschatological time, with beginning as Creation and the end as Last Judgment and Salvation. In the Bible and, therefore, in Christianity time is represented as a linear experience. Unlike several non Judeo-Christian cultures that believe in the repetition of events, most Western societies including Russia view history as a linear process. John Warwick Montgomery says: "The importance of the Biblical conception cannot be overstressed. Here for the first time Western man was presented with a purposive, goal-directed interpretation of history. The Classical doctrine of recurrence had been able to give a 'substantiality' to history, but it had not given it any aim or direction" (42). Having said that, it would be incorrect to think that Christianity completely lacks a cyclical notion of time. While Biblical or prophetic narratives follow chronological or sequential time, most religious practices in Christianity have a *kairotic* time structure. Judaism and Christianity brought the linear conception of time in our everyday life, but the religious practice remains in the domain of cyclical time. As such, the ritual of the Sacrament is one of the most fundamental practices in both Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. "The sacrament of Jesus' suffering is a remembrance in

order to be empowered by hope through a meal within the present moment. In the *kairotic*

moment of receiving of the broken bread and wine that recalls Jesus' passionate suffering and

death, the community also receives the power of hope informed by this memory" (Thompson

126). Other rituals such as baptism, confession, prayer, and worship in general provide the

believer with the *kairotic* experience "in which past, present, and future converge through the

living presence of the suffering Christ" (Thompson 126). Thus, seemingly contradictory

religions such as paganism and Christianity have common temporal aspects in their practices. In

both, repetition is a key point that allows the eternal to be perceived through the re-enactment of

the proposed archetype. In "Celebration", Rublev is physically experiencing such re-enactment.

Whereas, in "The Passion According to Andrei", Christ's crucifixion is imagined in his mind.

Tarkovsky re-enacts the main Biblical event by displacing it spatially (to Russian land) and

temporally (Rublev's times). Instead of reconstructing historical time and space (33AD,

Jerusalem), the abstract categories such as Christ's sacrifice and faith are emerged in the time of

Rublev's life. It is through Rublev's experience that Tarkovsky projects how the idea of

collective traditions and practices can be adopted and internalized for a concrete individual.

  The spiritual struggles experienced by Rublev throughout the whole film as well

as his unconventional understanding of the Gospel in many ways echo Tarkovsky's own

philosophical view on the topics of religion and spirituality. In his interviews and writings,

Tarkovsky repeated multiple times that he believes in God. However, he never said he believes

in the Orthodoxy or any specific religion[5]. He instead views God as a mystic. God is something

unknown, but existing as the manifestation of truth. This truth or spirituality can be obtained

through the personal strivings of one's experience. In his book on the spiritual aspect of

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[5]Perhaps, it would be unreasonable for Tarkovsky to claim himself to be a partisan of Orthodoxy and far less of any other religion because Soviet state was officially atheistic.

Tarkovsky's cinema, Robinson notes that "Tarkovsky's religious cinema doesn't depict Christ or God, but does reveal a world in which the unknown is not in the next country or the next town but right here, in this building, in this room"(275). The reason Tarkovsky decided to depict Christ out of the historical context is to demonstrate that Christ's sacrifice is not a one-time event. It can be repeated in the soul of every person. Tarkovsky's genius lies in the fact that he finds how to represent these *kairotic* moments. For instance, the horses that we see at the beginning of the prologue and the end of the epilogue in *Andrei Rublev* are not just a "symbol of life" (Ciment 91).They elevate the film's imagery above the narrative, thereby creating the opportunity for the viewer to switch into the meditative mode and contemplate something that is beyond the physical world.

Efim's flight in the prologue and the appearance of Christ's crucifixion in the middle of the film foreshadow the epilogue in which Tarkovsky elevates the icon paintings as the artifacts of timeless significance. Both Efim's flight and the crucifixion on the Russian land are presented as events that exist beyond historical significance. The icons in the epilogue, in its turn, are placed beyond the film narrative and appear in non-diegetic form. There are ten of Rublev's icons shown in the epilogue: *The Annunciation, St. Gregory the Theologian, The Entry into Jerusalem, The Nativity, The Savior among Seraphims and the Evangelistic Symbols, Transfiguration, The Raising of Lazarus, Epiphany, Trinity*, and *The Savior* (from Zvenigorod). The striking color of the icons contrasts powerfully with the black and white shades of the film. Here again, Tarkovsky is not interested in simply stating the fact that Rublev painted the icons. Instead, he emphasizes that icon paining is a spiritual art.

According to the scholars of icons paintings, a physical and representational designation of the icons is not significant. This is why the appearance of the image on the icons

is often presented in a distorted form. What's important is that icons play a mediating role in the religious practice exercised by the believer. The icon represents an 'image-mediator' that allows the viewer to access sacred space in a special "form of vision that helps to recognize the presence of a special stratum of cultural phenomena" (Lidov 48). Similarly, Tarkovsky's films aim to function by bringing the viewer into the space that exists in the spiritual realm. The icons at the end of the film become a metaphor for Tarkovsky's spiritual cinema – an 'image-mediator' which connects the physical and the spiritual worlds. Perhaps this is why Tarkovsky dedicates a whole nine minutes episode of his film to the simple visual display of icons.

The parallel between icon painting and Tarkovsky's cinema has been already drawn by several researchers. Both media are noted to become practices that aim to use simple materials to reveal transcendental ideas. Dalle Vacche states: "Tarkovsky's filmic image is meant to function much like an ancient religious icon [because] for Tarkovsky, the filmic image is not a sign standing for something else but a site where something other or divine, lost or repressed, manifests itself directly, in first person, for our eyes" (138). Although religious icons often enclose multiple symbolic references, symbols in icons exist only at the superficial level. In order for the icon to become an "image-mediator" one has to pass through the symbolic exterior and be able to contemplate the image as a simple manifestation of transcendence (Tsakiridou 170). Tarkovsky tried to advocate a similar approach to his films when he stated that "the purity of cinema, its inherent strength, is revealed not in the symbolic aptness of images… but in the capacity of those images to express a specific, unique, actual fact" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 72). Interestingly, the icons at the end of the film become a metaphor for what Tarkovsky did on the celluloid. Precisely, he tried to express an idea of infinity that cannot be described in words but can be apprehended through the visual experience. Icons formed the foundation for such a

film imagery in which the idea of infinity becomes tangible, just like in the art of icon paintings itself.

The colorful icons in the epilogue also offer a form resolution to the story that precedes. At the end of the last part "Bell", Rublev, who struggles with his faith and creativity, finally regains his spiritual and artistic ideals. After the final shot of Rublev, the film transitions from black and white to color and we see the actual icons of Andrei Rublev. Robert Efird states: "The epilogue is not a representation of the artistic vision through the perceptual filter of the protagonist but rather an extradiegetic resolution to the preceding narrative" (92). However, it is not only that the icons in the epilogue become a vivid resolution to the film narrative. They also highlight Tarkovsky's representation of the subjective non-linear time of the film narrative. To support this argument one can examine the way Tarkovsky constructs the narrative and how he uses camera work while showing the icons.

The entire film narrative was constructed in such a way that the logic of linear time was disrupted. This happens at the macro level, when the depictions of historical events in the film episodes do not correspond to each other (the story of Efim in the prologue vs. Rublev's story), or when we see more general inconsistencies in the historical time line. Some episodes describe events that happen in the same year, while others leap several years ahead (the overall time frame is 23 years of Rublev's life). The traits of the non-linear narrative can also be found within the episodes, with flashbacks, flash-forwards, literal and metaphorical allusions to the past and the future. Although *Andrei Rublev* is only the second of Tarkovsky's films and does not have as many narrative gaps as his subsequent ones, it displays some interesting cinematic techniques that distort the perception of temporal reality and can be compared to the visual distortions found in icon paintings.

The most remarkable flash-forward is found in the first episode "The Buffoon". The episode depicts three monks (Andrei, Daniil, and Kirill) travelling from the Trinity monastery to Moscow. With the advent of a sudden rainstorm they decide to stop at a shelter where they find some peasants waiting out the end of the storm. The flash-forward begins with a shot showing two children in the foreground and peasants in the background. A small boy is eating an egg. It is followed by a shot that shows Andrei and Kirill talking about a buffoon. The next shot returns to the boy eating an egg with a girl standing beside him. Without any cuts the camera slowly pans around the room and returns back to the monks. However, now we see only Rublev looking out the window; Kirill is no longer present (see Fig. 1. 25). The change in action during the slow circular pan indicates that time has passed. However, the absence of Kirill and the meditative look of Andrei imply that it has been longer since we last saw the monks than the time it took for the camera to pan around the room. Time here is compressed, although the slow camera motion and the sleeping peasants create an opposite feeling of expanded time. Tarkovsky uses this technique quite often in his other films, especially in the numerous sequences of dreams and apparitions. In most cases such time compression/ expansion is not tied to the narrative dramaturgy; it rather plays an aesthetic role in the film. But in *Andrei Rublev*, this manipulation of time contributes to the general fragmentarity of the film narrative as well as to Tarkovsky's depiction of time as a subjective notion.

Such time compression / expansion is also found at the end of the film. The icons shown in the epilogue appear in a similar way as the sliding camera moves across the fragments of several of Rublev's icons. This compresses time because it presents the viewer with most of Rublev's oeuvre in a short period as if the film was briefly taking the viewer back to Rublev's life as a painter (knowing that we never see Rublev actually painting his icons). On the other

hand, the mobility of the camera and the fragmentarity in the visual display of the icons go beyond the depicted subject matter and the physical parameters, and take the viewer into the realm of abstraction and atemporality. Time is expanded with the purpose of allowing the viewer to take a moment to contemplate the beauty of Rublev's art. Moreover, Tarkovsky's camera technique in "The Buffon" episode, along with the camera work in the epilogue, can be compared to the principle of reverse perspective in icons. In both cases, the actions and the images are shown from what Boris Uspensky has called "the position of the beholder". In "The Buffon", the viewer is placed inside the room and is shown the actions around him/her. In the epilogue, the camera movement creates the mobility of the images, imitating the natural eye movements of a person looking through the set of pictures.

Art historian Nicoletta Misler notes:

The final reading of Rublev's icons does not emerge from a fixed image, 'the immobile eye' of Renaissance perspective,…but rather from fades, superimpositions, and camera movements that imply a fragmented but real perception, comparable to the so-called inverse perspective of the icons, which by virtue of having a vanishing point outside the picture, oblige the viewer to scan the pictorial surface with a moving eye (qtd. in Dalle Vacche 148).

The treatment of movement from the position of the subjective perception is the most significant way in which Tarkovsky poetisizes time. Only through poetization of time Tarkovsky then is able to reveal secret time, which is the possibility of the viewer to get into the mode of contemplation of timeless or transcendental. The horses at the end of the icon sequence correspond to the horses that Andrei contemplates from the tiny window in the shelter (see Fig. 1. 26). As powerful poetic images, they make a connection with the images described earlier in

this chapter (the rolling horse in the prologue, the dead bird and the white cloth in "Passion According to Andrei", the floating dummy in "Celebration", the milk spilt in water from a flask following the blinding of the stonemasons, the milk cloud in the stream in "Raid"). Also, in terms of the form it connects the beginning of the film with its very end. In this sense the timeless moment of Rublev's contemplation of the horses in the shelter is not different from our contemplation of the timeless art created by Rublev shown at the end of the film. The horses illustrate the idea of contemplation itself – contemplation as a spiritual act that is closely bound to the human capacity to create.

Fig. 1. 25

Fig. 1. 26

Andrei Rublev follows the logic of subjective individual time while portraying the life of an artist in Medieval Russia. *Andrei Rublev* as a historical epic film justifies itself only on the level of its historical theme and its epic scale. In reality, the film is mainly concerned with the issues of spirituality tabooed in Soviet times and the artistic vision of reality and human

existence. The film narrative does not generally follow the logic of linear time; instead it presents time as a nonlinear and rather subjective concept. Similarly to the icon painting which, as an "image-mediator", reveals the spiritual side of the world, Tarkovsky's work in *Andrei Rublev* aims to draw attention to certain spiritual problems in contemporary reality. The reverse perspective as a main characteristic of icon painting is used in *Andrei Rublev* as a mean to express the cyclical time and its spiritual substance. With the use of fragmented narrative and recurrent imagery leitmotivs, *Andrei Rublev* becomes a cinematic visualization of the kairotic moment, which can be experienced on the subjective level. Such central to the film episodes as Efim's flight, Christ's crucifixion, the scene of the pagan celebration and the Rublev's icons in the epilogue portray the re-enactment of the spiritual ideals, such as faith, sacrifice, love, creativity, etc. Similarly to religious icon paintings, which are often put in contrast to the Western naturalistic tradition, Tarkovsky counterposes his *Andrei Rublev* to the profane art of the twentieth century that is "almost totally devoid of spirituality" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 96).

Resorting to the topic of the Medieval Russia and the life of an artist, Tarkovsky continues the tradition of Slavophils, who were against radical materialism and utilitarianism. The director's tendency to return to "the roots" very much impacted his view on time as non-linear, non-uniform, heterogeneous, non-measurable, and non-divisible. In the attempt to restore spir*i*tuality lost with the modernism Tarkovsky focuses on time as a condition for *individual* existence. In his poetic cinema Tarkovsky primarily poeticizes time not only by breaking the orthodox concept of narrative cinema as a linear progression of events, but also by turning profane time of history into the secret time of subjective contemplation. Implementing "the logic of the dream" through the defamiliarized objects and the displacement of topography Tarkovsky's main goal becomes to draw attention of the contemporary people to the inner world

of an individual and reconsider profane linear/ clock time in which we live, in favor to the spiritual timeless observation of the phenomena passing through time. Tarkovsky's poetic cinema, in this sense, can be compared to an ancient icon, as both intend to help people to contemplate the invisible and become closer to divinity through the practice of prayer, meditation, and contemplation.

Chapter Two

Time and Movement: Landscape Paintings in Tarkovsky's *Solaris*

Tarkovsky's second feature film *Solaris* appeared in 1972, only a year after the

release of *Andrei Rublev* in 1971. In *Solaris* Tarkovsky moves away from the biographical

historical drama film towards the genre of science fiction–the adaptation of Polish

author Stanislaw Lem's novel *Solaris* (1961).In Solaris we can see how Tarkovsky's cinematic

style acquired its most recognized characteristics. Unlike in *Andrei Rublev*, where Tarkovsky

reinterprets the historical events through the prism of an individual who struggles to live and

create in the brutal medieval times, *Solaris* presents a meditative psychological drama that occurs

in the orbit of the fictional planet of the same name. Tarkovsky reinterprets the genre of science

fiction, which had become popular at that time, attempting to bring new intellectual and

emotional depths to it. With respect to its thematic content, *Solaris* continues *Andrei Rublev's*

focus on spirituality and on the life experiences of an individual. It also focuses on art and the

vision of the artist. Tellingly, Rublev's icon, placed in the room of Kris (*Solaris'* main

protagonist), not only references the previous film but also foreshadows the director's

predilection for visual art as a thematic reference to be used in practically all his future films.

Tarkovsky continues to pose such questions as what does art mean and what role does it play in

regard to the human experience.

The focus of the previous chapter was to look at the notion of time in icons and

discuss how their spiritual nature was revealed in *Andrei Rublev's* imagery and narrative. This

second chapter will look at the idea of cinematic movement through such film components as

narration, mise-en-scène, framing, camera movement, editing, and imagery. It will also examine

how static art, such as landscape painting, contributes to Tarkovsky's implementation of the

ideas of time and movement in his films. Bruegel's painting *Hunters in the Snow*, along with other paintings from the cycle of *The Months,* is a central piece of *Solaris'* space station interior. It externalizes Tarkovsky's way of portraying life experiences in relation to art, which, according to him, is an important aspect of spirituality. Here again, Tarkovsky contemplates the notion of time in relation to memory, to time passed and time not yet lived. *Hunters in the Snow* comprises two important characteristics omnipresent in Tarkovsky's cinema. On the one hand, it exemplifies the stillness or tranquility of immovable objects on the screen, of slow camera movements, and of the long shots. On the other hand, there is an inner dynamism that can appear tightly connected with the changes of thoughts and feelings that happen within the protagonists' inner world. More pressingly, on the level of film media, Bruegel's painting can be viewed in comparison to Tarkovsky's cinematic landscapes. The stillness of the painting is transformed within the movement of the cinematic elements. While the aesthetics of Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* lie in the qualities that characterize the basic language of visual art, such as color, line, texture, symmetry, tension, balance, etc., Tarkovsky's cinematic landscapes add the dimension of time to the artistic expression without losing its painterly qualities. Here, the aspect of time not only appears as an artistic mean exemplified by the basics of montage and the moving objects within the frame. It also characterizes Tarkovsky's philosophical ideas on what movement means in relation to the subject of time in the art of cinema.

In order to better understand Tarkovsky's vision of movement and time in film one should look at the theoretical and historical aspects of movement in cinema. Film scholars have often questioned movement in relation to stillness. First, film technologically derives from photography, and second, materially films are made up from a series of still images following one another. Generally speaking, there are three research currents dealing with the tension

between stillness and motion found in the art of cinema. Roland Barthes proposes that the essence of cinema is found in the still. He writes: "The specific filmic […] lies not in movement […] and the 'movement' […] is not animation, flux, mobility, 'life', copy, but the framework of a permutational unfolding of the still" (Barthes 66-67). Barthes writes about film as one would of individual photograms, paying attention to the film still that is isolated from the flux of the animation. The second current radically distinguishes between photography and cinema. Gilles Deleuze, for instance, opposes the semiological approach and refuses to call film a language in which cinematic movement is viewed as the result of an illusion. To Deleuze, movement and time are the factors, which together determine our understanding of cinema. He argues that we perceive cinematic image not as series of static moments, but that we see the image as "directly and immediately in motion, a moving picture or movement-image" (Bogue 22). The in-between position was taken by such scholars as Raymond Bellour, George Baker, Liv Hausken, and Christa Blumlinger. Raymond Bellour, for instance, argues that Deleuze overlooks the category of time which is presented by the interruption of movement–"the often unique, fugitive, yet perhaps decisive instant when cinema seems to be fighting against its very principle, if this is defined as the movement-image" (Bellour 99). Bellour explores the movements of immobility, which ultimately produce movements of intellect or emotions not offered by the deleuzian movement-image.

Siegfried Kracauer's *Theory of Film* gives a good overview of how movement became a transformative element in the history of visual art. Describing what he calls five main 'affinities' of the visual art media that are painting, photograph, and film Kracauer notes that cinema shares four affinities ('unstaged', 'fortuitous', 'indeterminate', and 'endlessness') with photography. The fifth affinity–'flow of life'–is unique to film medium, because it "represent[s]

reality as it evolves in time"(Kracauer 41). Thus cinema gives rise to a number of unique possibilities for the representation of physical reality as transient. In representing movement on the screen, cinema has a natural propensity to show the 'flow of life' as the actual and the everyday. Similarly to Kracauer, Christian Metz argues that, although cinema presents the spectator with movement that was captured in the past, we see it as being present. In his book *Film Language: a Semiotics of the Cinema*, Metz writes: "Because movement is never material but is always visual, to reproduce its appearance is to duplicate its reality. In truth, one cannot even 'reproduce' a movement: one can only re-produce it in a second production belonging to the same order of reality, for the spectator, as the first" (9). According to Metz and Kracauer, cinema is technologically related to photography. However, both view cinema as quite distinct from photography in its ontological aspect. The cinematic movement gives to the image a sense of presence that is associated with actual life and reality.

The capacity to render time on the screen through movement was something that early cinema creators were primarily preoccupied with. The image of a moving train in the famous film by the Lumière brothers allegedly created a revolutionary affect of shock on the audience only because it captured the movement of a massive machine on a relatively small screen. The era of early cinema was initially focused on the movement of objects within one shot, producing films with the use of a largely stationary camera and little montage. However, the fascination with cinematic movement has quickly grown into the use of multiple cameras, editing, and various visual narrative techniques. When looking at Tarkovsky's works, we should consider that he was influenced by an already well-established Hollywood tradition, but also by European New Wave films, Russian avant-garde, as well as by the Asian films of the 1950s. What distinguishes Tarkovsky is that movement in his films appears not only as the result of

montage or particular manipulations of moving objects on the screen; it also reflects his philosophical perspective on the notion of time. Movement in Tarkovsky's films has a tendency to serve a particular function, i.e. to render "imprinted time" or capture the very movement of reality in its uniqueness. Tarkovsky presents movement as palpable and tangible, which immerses the viewer into the existential uniqueness of the reality presented in film.

Anyone who is familiar with Tarkovsky's films will know of their interplay of motion and stillness. The tendency to stillness is often found in Tarkovsky's long takes, slow camera movements, and his focus on immovable objects in mise-en- scène. It contributes to the contemplative and observational character of his films and positions him among the style category of so-called "slow cinema", along with such art film directors as Ingmar Bergman, Robert Bresson, Michelangelo Antonioni, Aleksandr Sokurov, Béla Tarr, Chantal Akerman, and Theo Angelopoulos. Yet the movement we see in Tarkovsky's films is not an objective demonstration of an image, nor is necessarily the result of an action happening in the story (like in classical cinema). Despite their slowness, each of Tarkovsky's shot is full of movement, whether it is the movement of the nature or objects, or the movement of camera, all of which is eventually the manifestation of the inner change of the characters. In fact, when he writes about the origin of cinema, Tarkovsky states that: "Cinema came into being as a means of recording the very movement of reality: factual, specific, within time and unique; of reproducing again the moment, instant by instant, in its fluid mutability–that instant over which we find ourselves able to gain mastery by imprinting it on film" (Tarkovskiĭ 94). At first glance, Tarkovsky's idea of "imprinted time", as discussed in his book *Sculpting in Time,* echoes what André Bazin calls objectivity in time in his *Ontology of the Photographic Image*. Bazin writes that in film "the image of things is the likewise the image of their duration, change mummified

as it were" (Bazin 14-15). However, in Tarkovsky's view, the capacity of cinema to express actual facts, which exposes reality as it is, by no means has an objective nature. On the contrary, as Tarkovsky states: "Objectivity ha[s] no place in art. [It] can only be the author's and therefore subjective" (Tarkovskiĭ 150). Preserved on the screen as an actual flow of life with its motions and changes, intervals and durations, cinema, according to Tarkovsky, is an art that needs no mediating language and can be perceived directly, as an unconditional reality.

Tarkovsky's refusal to understand time and history as objective and linear has a direct impact on the nature of movement in his films. As discussed in the previous chapter, Tarkovsky criticizes the praise of the technological development of the 20th century. According to him, modern western civilization is losing its spirituality while turning into consumerist culture. His third film *Stalker* (1979) clearly appears to be a dystopia. It depicts a human and environmental disaster that came along because of technological advancements. Following this, *Solaris'* science fiction genre is not as simple as it might seem to be at first glance. Tarkovsky greatly deviates from the original source of Lem's novel and turns it into an individual, psychological drama. Lem insightfully noted that Tarkovsky "did not make *Solaris*; what he made was *Crime and Punishment*" (qtd. in Bird 116). *Solaris* can also be seen as a negative response to Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Tarkovsky presents the mission to Solaris as a failure to explore the alien environment of the planet. The film is also largely devoid of explicit space technology visuals, an absence that gives it a far more *huis clos* type of realism. Therefore, Tarkovsky moves away from what he did not like in Kubrick's film, that is "an unnatural, sterile demonstration of future man's technological achievements" (qtd. in Johnson and Petrie 100). Tarkovsky states that "detailed 'examination' of the technological progress of the future transforms the emotional foundation of a film, as a work of art, into a lifeless schema

with only pretensions to truth" (Gianvito 36). He even considered the scarce presence of science-fiction elements in *Solaris* as too prominent and distracting. Nevertheless, technology is present in *Solaris* through the images of video players, television monitors, photographs, and audiotape recorders. All these gadgets have a communicational function. Their presence in the film only heightens Tarkovsky's argument that humanity is in need of personal contact and communication. Vlad Strukov argues that Tarkovsky broadened the boundaries of the science-fiction genre by presenting his skepticism as regards the ideology of anthropocentrism and, thus, undermining a particular Enlightenment narrative of progress and power: "The film presents a view of technological terrors, and an enigma of the encounter with an unthinkable otherness as perceived in art" (Strukov 59). Instead of the depiction of a fantastical reality, *Solaris* is a meditation on human life and its relationship with subjective experiences, such as emotions and memories. Although some technological elements appear in film, most of them are part of the mise-en-scène, in which Tarkovsky contrasts in representations of Earth locations and of the enclosed space station. Similarly to *Stalker, Solaris* offers a view of the future as dystopian. Ultimately, Tarkovsky's films invite the spectators to explore what humans already possess, i.e. their own present inner world and spirituality.

Movement as a synonym of evolution and technological development was initially introduced by the futurist artists of the beginning of the 20th century. Born only a few years before the beginning of the 20th century, cinema already may have seemed to appear "futurist". The main characteristic of futurism in art was to celebrate technology and urban modernity, and to show the beauty of the machine, of speed, and of change. Movement in such art works was privileged among other artistic means. Thus, Russian film director Dimitry Kirsanov uses double exposure in his experimental film *Ménilmontant* (1926). He seeks to render

the double movement of the streetcars and of the people walking within the same frame. In addition, he makes the camera movement intentionally jerky, which amplifies the sense of dynamism and instability even more. Likewise, futurist painters tried to show the world in constant movement. Balla's *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* (1912) is a good example of such paintings. It depicts the feet of a woman, the legs of a dog, its tail, and a leash all caught in the blur of movement (See Fig. 2. 1).

BALLA
Dog and Person in Movement

Fig. 2. 1

Movement as a metaphor of human evolution and technological progress is often shown in films of the science-fiction genre starting from the period of the Golden Age of Science Fiction (1938-1946). Although, movement in and of itself is a natural and axiomatic phenomenon, film directors use it in order to render a particular idea or emotion on the screen. Consequently, most science-fiction films represent human habitat as mobile and dynamic, equipped with various gadgets and technologically advanced gear. Tarkovsky's *Solaris* differs in a way that the dynamism per se is not apparently found in the film. On the contrary, Tarkovsky privileges the tranquility of the traditional lifestyle, of simple countryside living among the natural environment. Such quiet and simple earth settings, such as the house and the surrounding

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nature shown in the beginning of *Solaris*, are presented as familiar and cozy. Later in the film, Tarkovsky contraposes such settings to busy, noisy city environment, and to the claustrophobic appearance of the space station.

The film setting and its imagery largely contributes to the way in which Tarkovsky communicates the sense of movement. Simonetta Salvestroni notes that all of Tarkovsky's films represent a binary spatial organization. She argues that "each [spatial organization] sets a quotidian world, grey, monological, and violent, against the anti-world, which is dynamic, malleable, and full of color, the dominion of possibility and of choice" (Salvestroni 294). Indeed, in *Ivan's Childhood*, the luminous, vivid dreams and memories of the protagonist are set against the darkness and grayness of the tragic war. In *Andrei Rublev*, a similar antinomy is presented through the black and white footage of Medieval Russia and the colorful images of Russian icons at the end of the film. However, the image of dynamism in both films, to which Salvestroni refers as anti-world, represents subjective and individual spaces of experience rather than an external, objective entity. In this sense, the dreams and memories of Ivan or the artistic world of Rublev fall into the category of the subjective inner world that Tarkovsky is so eager to transmit to the public. Tarkovsky amplifies the movement in his episodes of dreams, of memory recollections, and of apparitions in order to direct our attention to what he considers as most significant. Similarly, in *Solaris,* the "anti-world" is presented not through the space station, but rather lies inside the protagonists' terrestrial experiences such as interpersonal relationships, trust, love, and memories of childhood. The imagery of dynamism associated with Kris' explorations in *Solaris* is not external (like in Kubrick's film for example); it rather involves his personal experiences such as his relationship with his wife, his father, his home, nature, etc.

Such binary organization of two opposing spaces, i.e. inner and outer, or internal and external, influence the way Tarkovsky presents different types of movement on the screen. One type of movement can be characterized as rapid, mechanical, machine-like, and the other as subtle, intuitive, and mental. Tarkovsky demonstrates the first type through the images of the modern city. The city is shown through Berton's (one of *Solaris*' scientist-astronauts) eyes from the inside of a car driving through the busy roads of a big city. The second one is the movement of nature that Tarkovsky shows at the beginning of the film and again throughout. The city sequence is almost five minutes long and comes during the first part of the film. It is shown mostly in black and white with brief moments of color footage. As Berton and a boy sitting beside him rapidly ride through the tunnels and highways of the anonymous city, the traffic and the neon-lit buildings quickly pass them. The car in which they ride resembles a spacecraft about to take off. The ride is accompanied by an initially naturalistic soundtrack, which slowly becomes replaced with the cacophonous tones of electronic noises. The entire episode overwhelms with its loud noise and rapid monotonous movement. Although the camera work remains mostly fixed, it is the speed of the fast moving car that creates the dynamism of the shot and the busy movement that follows it (See Fig. 2. 2).

Fig. 2. 2

The image of the city foreshadows the appearance of the space station. Here, Tarkovsky uses an interesting artistic maneuver. When the viewer is watching the city episode, he/she has not yet seen the images of the space station, but knows about it through the video track of Berton's record. However, Tarkovsky already introduces an unsettling emotional atmosphere with regard to the space station and the space expedition project in general. In his video track record of the Solaris expedition, Berton is accused by his colleagues of being excessively subjective while on duty in his scientific mission. Allegorically, he becomes a victim of the scientific paradigm which denies subjectivism in any form. Likewise, in the "city episode" Berton rides a car that has no driver (to be exact, we do not see a driver). In some shots, Tarkovsky shows Berton from the back as if he is trapped in the car and moved by an impersonal force. In such instances, the car resembles a spaceship or a rocket (See Fig. 2. 3).

Fig. 2. 3

The negative attitude toward the scientific experiments in *Solaris* emerges through Berton's conversation with Kris' father while he is riding in the car. He mentions seeing extraordinary and frightening images of his colleagues' dead son in the Ocean that constitutes the surface of the alien planet. Berton has a gloomy face, and the episode is shown in black and white. Interestingly, the black and white footage appears later in the film when Tarkovsky wants

to convey the feelings of death and despair. It occurs when Kelvin watches Gibaryan's suicide video, and in Kris' delirium about his deceased mother. Tarkovsky's depiction of urban space as gloomy and depressive is symptomatic. In *Stalker*, the city is a maze that the protagonists are trying to escape. In *Nostalghia*, the city is an alien and dangerous place from which Domenico attempts to hide his family. In *Mirror*, the city is associated with anxiety and control. This negative perception of the city environment can be seen in Tarkovsky's notes and interviews as well. In his book he writes, "I don't like big cities and feel perfectly happy when I'm away from the paraphernalia of modern civilization" (Tarkovskiĭ 212). Perhaps this statement was Tarkovsky's response to the extensive urbanization that was happening in Russia during the 1960s and 1970s. Tarkovsky perceives the cityscape as a weapon against humanity. To be more precise, he believes that its busyness hinders contemplative mode of perception and, therefore, prevents a person from spiritual growth.

The images of the city in *Nostalghia*, *Mirror*, *Stalker,* and *Solaris* is associated with the abundant presence of external movement. In all three, such movement has a negative connotation. In *Nostalghia*, Domenico chases his fast running son among the motionless city crowd, with the intention to preserve him from the destructive influence of the modern civilization by locking him in the house. In *Mirror*, the city is the place where the work of Andrei's mother takes place. And as she runs to fix her typing mistake, the camera captures her behind a wire fence. In *Stalker*, the city is associated with a prison which Stalker escapes in a fast moving car. In all the above instances, the purpose of movement on the screen is mainly Tarkovsky's way to artistically convey the dynamism of modern urban life. However, this movement is staged in order to produce mostly negative impressions, associated with danger (*Stalker, Nostalghia*), control (*Mirror*), and alienation (*Solaris*). In all four films, the city

episodes are shown partly a gloomy black and white footage. *Stalker* and *Nostalghia's* city landscapes are polluted with garbage. In *Solaris* and *Mirror,* the noise of the city appears as auditory pollution and produces disturbing effect just as much as the images of the city in *Stalker* and *Nostalghia*.

Tarkovsky often contrasts the modern city to the images of nature. In *Solaris*, the images of nature are rather tranquil. Although the entire Earth sequence is relatively slow with respect to camera work, action, and montage, it is not devoid of movement. However, as it was noted before, by showing subtle movement in nature Tarkovsky aims to convey emotional awareness as well as to point to the idea of the essence of time. This is indicative of Tarkovsky's tendency to include nature in all of his films. *Solaris'* opening scene starts with moving waterweeds and a tree leaf rapidly drifting across a pond (See Fig. 2. 4). As the camera pans, we see other earthly objects, such as mud on the shore of the pond, grass, Kris, and, finally, his contemplating eyes moving around the scenery we just observed. The next shot is even more characteristic of Tarkovsky's fascination with images of nature. As the camera leaves Kris' eyes, it slowly zooms towards the underwater weeds, which are gently moved by the flow of water. Johnson and Petrie accurately described the scene saying that in such episodes "the camera lovingly caresses plants and weeds" (Johnson and Petrie 205).

Fig. 2. 4

Tarkovsky's fascination with nature (especially water) was mentioned by most scholars either in relation to the director's symbolic references (Bird, Johnson and Petrie), or as producing powerful emotional images (Strukov, Evlampiev). Perhaps what influenced Tarkovsky the most is his interest in Japanese poetry, the haiku, and its principle of the observation of life. As Tarkovsky writes: "If time appears in cinema in the form of fact, the fact is given in the form of simple, direct observation" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 66). When nature is captured by camera another layer is created. It is not symbolic, neither narrative, but one that the audience can relate to sensually. One of Tarkovsky's favorite film directors, Akira Kurosawa, uses scenes of nature quite abundantly in his films. Rain especially, tends to animate even the stillest shots of his films. That being said, nature in Kurosawa's films is portrayed mostly in the background. In Tarkovsky's films, nature often becomes the center of the cinematic composition as well as of the movement. It is in the movement of nature where Tarkovsky seems to find the essence of time. For Tarkovsky, time is a material substance, which acquires physical traits that are temporal and dynamic in themselves. In the natural shots of Tarkovsky's films, time is not sequential and does not stem from a linear causality. Tarkovsky is not speaking of time in terms of objective or psychological datum, but prescribes to it an essentially spiritual nature.

The movement of nature that is the focus of Tarkovsky's camera is, first of all, the director's attempt to address our perception of real life as mutable and ever-changing. He says: "Rain, fire, water, snow, dew, the driving ground wind–all are part of the material setting in which we dwell; I would even say of the truth of our lives" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 212). In this sense, his words reflect what film as an iconic medium truly is. However, unlike Panofsky and Bazin, who merely state that the nature of cinema is inescapably temporal, just as physical reality is, Tarkovsky goes further to emphasize that cinema is an artistic medium and that the

temporal reality shown on the screen is not objective. For Tarkovsky, time is an everyday concept; at the same time, it remains a mystery. In a 1983 interview with Hoberman and Bachmann, Tarkovsky says:

> I am convinced that 'time' is no objective category, since time cannot exist without man. [...] We do not live in the 'now'. The now is so short, so close to zero without being zero, that we have no way of perceiving it. The moment which we call 'now' immediately becomes past, and what we call future becomes present and then at once it becomes past. The only possible present is our fall into the abyss which exists between future and past (Gianvito 94).

Perhaps *Solaris* and *Mirror* are those among Tarkovsky's films that best demonstrate that time perception is subjective as well as the reality itself. Subjectivity in *Solaris* is taken to such extremes that time and space are only visibly sharable between people living close together. In truth, all of *Solaris'* protagonists exist in their own spatio-temporal worlds that are hard to share or describe. Although the astronauts come in contact with each other's manifestations (such as Kris' Hari or Snaut's little man) they struggle to explain the relationship between these manifestations and their past.

Tarkovsky's description of time in terms of life-processes and human memory is close to Henri Bergson's philosophy of time. Like Bergson, Tarkovsky sees time as a flow of ceaseless changes that comprise singular, unique events. For both, time depends solely on someone's subjective awareness. It is also associated with personal memory and consciousness. Although there is no evidence that Tarkovsky read Bergson, in his writing Tarkovsky mentions authors influenced by Bergson, such as Marcel Proust and Paul Valery. Like Bergson, Marcel

Proust, and Paul Valery, Tarkovsky understands memory and consciousness as the key concepts of subjective time. Bergson thinks time in terms of duration (*durée*), a synthesis or co-existence of past and present, with a perspective to the future. Moreover, Bergson understands duration as a mental, spiritual reality. This reflects what Tarkovsky wrote in *Sculpting in Time*:

> Time is necessary to man so that made flesh, he may be able to realize himself as a personality. But I am not thinking of linear time, meaning the possibility of getting something done, performing some action. The action is a result, and what I am considering is the cause, which makes man incarnate in a moral sense. History is still not Time; nor is evolution. They are both consequences. Time is a state: the flame in which there lives the salamander of the human soul" (Tarkovskiĭ 57).

Bergson believed that memory constitutes time. In *Introduction to Metaphisics* he wrote: "Inner duration is the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past into the present, the present either containing within it in a distinct form the ceaselessly growing image of the past" (Bergson 40). Likewise, Tarkovsky believes that memory and time merge into each other. Therefore, time becomes a spiritual concept, just like memory.

Despite Tarkovsky's and Bergson's similarities of views on the notion of time Bergson believed that cinema appears only as a complement to instant photography. It gives only the "illusion of life and therefore of movement" (Schwartz 82). Tarkovsky, unlike Bergson, believed that cinema is able to help to make sense of time. Deleuze develops this idea later in his two books on cinema. On the one hand, cinema presents the viewer with the concrete details of physical reality in its temporal dimension. Due to the nature of duration, even if the events shown on the screen had happened in the past, we experience them in present. On the other hand,

cinema is able to transform our memories of the past into visible facts of present reality. Thus, it can change past experience into present ones. This is what Tarkovsky seems to be most concerned about when trying to emphasize the uniqueness of cinema as the most effective artistic medium in reviving of spirituality. It is through his past that Kris overcomes his recurrent sense of remorse and guilt. Through memory, he reconciles with his past and becomes spiritually elevated.

Life, time, memory, and movement, all lie within the concept of subjectivity. Therefore, if, according to Tarkovsky, subjectivity can be projected through the cinematic medium, so can the essence of time be captured on the screen. Movement becomes the key concept in Tarkovsky's films that reflects not the objective change in time, but the subjective, spiritual state of an individual. Such movement has no beginning or end, but goes in a circular motion and appears as a constant vibration. Nature is the most representative example of such vibration through which Tarkovsky addresses the notion of subjective time. He shows the images of nature, such as trees, grass, the pond, and the weeds in *Solaris*, not as static pictures, but as living organisms that move. He does it through what he calls the rhythm of the shot. By rhythm, Tarkovsky does not mean Eisensteinian "rhythmic montage", which suggests the juxtaposition of the length of the sequence and the tempo of the action within the frame. On the contrary, he explains that the sense of time is transmitted from within the shot: "The distinctive time running through the shots makes the rhythm of the picture; and rhythm is determined not by the length of the edited pieces, but by the pressure of the time that runs through them" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 117). The rhythm of the shot in Tarkovsky's understanding creates certain consistency of the time or "time-pressure". The time-pressure is most obviously demonstrated through the images of the flow of natural phenomena, such as water, wind, fire, snow, etc. Tarkovsky

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explains: "Rhythm in cinema is conveyed by the life of the object visibly recorded in the frame. Just as from the quivering of a reed you can tell what sort of current, what pressure there is in a river, in the same way we know the movement of time from the flow of the life-process reproduced in the shot" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 120). The rhythm of nature becomes some sort of analogy or metaphor of what Tarkovsky is trying to achieve throughout the duration of the entire film. This can be traced in slow-motion tracking shots, smooth camera movements, well balanced organization of mise-en-scène, and the focus on objects or details.

In *Andrei Rublev,* nature elements, particularly water, are defined as a structural bridge of symbolic meanings. They connect the key motives of the film: death and rebirth. In *Solaris*, water, shown at the beginning of the film, is the main embodiment of the beauty of Earth and of the natural world to which Kris constantly resorts to in his memories during the Solaris expedition. Just like in *Rublev,* where the theme of water appears in several parts of the film (first in the opening scene of Efim's flight, then in the episode of the crucifixion, in the Tatar raid, and finally in the film's epilogue), in *Solaris* it becomes a metonymy of Kris' home and of Earth in general. The opening episode starts with the waters of the pond near the house of Kris' father. Then, later in the film, it is visually compared to Solaris Ocean. The final scene is even more interesting. Here, Tarkovsky places the house of Kris' father, along with the pond and trees, in the middle of Solaris Ocean. Thus, the waters of Solaris Ocean become the continuation of the water of the pond near the house. The country house and the nature around it appear as the center of the shot and as a powerful statement on which Tarkovsky ends the film. Solaris' ending can be compared to the ending of *Nostalghia* (1983), in which Gorchakov's country house is surrounded with the walls of an Italian cathedral. In depicting the image of the countryside inside an extraneous environment, such as a foreign country (*Nostalghia*) or an alien planet (*Solaris*),

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Tarkovsky privileges his idyll of nature and the country home –with its memories of childhood and family– over materialistic and technological values. Both final shots in *Nostalghia* and *Solaris* visually place the idealized images of the country home in the centre of the composition. The image of home refers to the ideas of spirituality and personal, subjective values. These values are something that a person carries and preserves throughout their life no matter in what environment they are placed.

In order to better understand the full characteristic of the movement used in Tarkovsky's shots of nature, it is necessary to look at framing, camera work, and editing. The first shots in *Solaris* are quite characteristic of the way Tarkovsky frames natural scenery in his film. He places nature in the centre of the shot, and the camera captures it from close distance. The famous shot of the pond waterweeds is a good demonstration of such framing and camera work (See Fig. 2. 5). The weeds are isolated from any context, which brings the audience to dwell on the site. Such a close-up shot is quite unusual for several reasons. First, it emerges at the very beginning of the film. Second, the close-up features the nature site instead of a human face, which typically is used in close-ups[6]. Third, it is not shown as the culmination of an important scene, but rather as a contemplative observation of nature. Béla Balázs notes that close-ups usually express a real sense of emotion helping the viewer to connect with the subject. "If the sudden appearance of such an image is not to appear meaningless, we have to be able to recognize its links with the drama as a whole" (Balázs 37). At the same time, as Balázs states, "it allows us to feel the texture and substance of life in its concrete detail" (38). The scene with water weeds, like many similar to it in subsequent shots, is not of a secondary importance. The

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[6] In his *Cinema 1: Movement-Image* Deleuze equates close-up to a face (either literal or not). He states that all faces are eventually affection-images: "The affection image is the close-up and the close-up is the face" (Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 87). Affection-images move between admiration and desire because faces are taken out of the space and time around them. They combine, the fear of obliteration and the desire to live.

camera spends quite a bit of time (sometimes several minutes) showing nature in motion. Its

significance is later demonstrated throughout the film, when Tarkovsky deliberately returns to

the nature sites previously mentioned at the beginning of the film. More importantly, by

choosing to shoot nature in close-ups and medium shots, Tarkovsky deliberately guides our

attention to the idea of movement and the concept of real time, or lived time. While the close-up

framing of a human face primarily demonstrates the characters' emotions, the close-ups on

nature are the expression of movement itself. It is not that Tarkovsky wants to document the way

nature moves. Rather, he wants to capture the idea of movement and the passing of time. The

centre of the frame is the flow of time and it has to be "close" enough for the viewer to

experience its actuality.

Fig. 2. 5

Time found in the rhythm of the moving nature reveals itself through the camera

work as well. Tarkovsky depicts time as a lived experience. Therefore, his camera becomes an

extension to the character's perception. Unlike in the "city episode", where the camera is placed

into the moving car, the countryside is depicted from Kris' perspective. Kris' face and his eyes,

in particular, frequently appear before or in-between the nature shots. However, because most

nature shots are shown in the close-up, they do not represent an objective visual perception of a

human eye. The human eye typically does not get close enough to the moving pond weeds, for

example. Instead, camera position depicts what Kris is experiencing while being in nature. It demonstrates his subjective feeling through altering of what he might be seeing objectively. Such technique narrows the distance between the audience and the protagonist. It allows us to experience the tangibility of the physical reality experienced by Kris. We, as viewers, understand the scene not as a fact, but see it in temporal dimension, as if sharing the same mental space and time with the protagonist.

Time and space, depicted as experienced by Kris, also brings the sense of fluidity and intuitivity in the direction of movement. André Bazin argues that camera movement needs to be associated with fluidity. He said: "The camera is at last a spectator and nothing else" (Bazin 92). If the camera plays the role of the observer, it gives the action an impression of not being controlled. Also, it promotes the sense that the film is made in documentary style, with a realistic look on the action. In Tarkovsky's films the camera is not only the objective observer. It is also a describer of the characters' subjectivity. As the camera chooses a particular object, the viewer knows only intuitively how it will be approached. This principle was important for Tarkovsky, because he believed that "the film is like a river; the editing [and, we can add, the camera work] must be infinitely spontaneous, like nature itself" (Gianvito 19). Tarkovsky uses fluid camera movement not only for the nature scenes but also when showing paintings. *Andrei Rublev's* epilogue provides one of the most interesting examples. Tarkovsky does not show Rublev's entire icon painting until almost the end of the epilogue. Instead, he captures multiple fragments of different icons one by one, slowly moving the camera from one to another, or placing them in sequential shots via editing. The close up shots, the tracking camera, and the seamless montage allow the viewer to look at the icon paintings as if Tarkovsky himself was looking at them. By using similar camera techniques, framing, and editing in *Rublev's* epilogue and in *Solaris'*

beginning, Tarkovsky puts the quality of the natural world on the same footing as that of the character of a work of art. He states that "works of art are [...] formed by organic process; whether good or bad they are living organisms with their own circulatory system which must not be disturbed" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 124). On the other hand, Tarkovsky puts the emphasis on the act of creation. For him, nature has a sacred meaning. It is created by God and needs to be preserved, appreciated, and admired. In a similar way, works of art are creations done by the subjective artistic vision. Art is also sacred and has a role in the spiritual salvation of a human soul. As Tarkovsky says: "The aim of art is to prepare a person for death, to plough and harrow his soul, rendering it capable of turning to good" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 43). Thus, Tarkovsky approaches to nature and art are similar if one looks at the cinematic techniques he uses while depicting nature scene or painting.

People that worked with Tarkovsky mentioned that he was very meticulous in planning and in everything else he did on the filming locations. Robert Bird notes: "Tarkovsky's films were mapped out in meticulous detail, a single shot sometimes requiring days of rehearsals and enforced inactively waiting for the right light and meteorological conditions" (Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky* 171). However, it is the sense of fluidity of everyday life that Tarkovsky wanted to archive while planning every cinematic detail. Describing one of the episodes from Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai,* in which we see the marble white leg of a dead samurai that is washed with rain, Tarkovsky notes that we can look at the while leg as a symbol of death and defeat. Later he states that the image of a dead man is just a fact. It is deprived of symbolism, because everything might be happening by chance (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 73). This idea of things happening by chance somewhat explains Tarkovsky's view on the non-rationality of human experience, on the flow of time, and most importantly, on the non-rational nature of artistic inspiration. The latter is

well apparent in *Andrei Rublev*. Tarkovsky fully dedicates the last episode of *Andrei Rublev* to the story of Boriska, a young inexperienced teenage boy who claims to know how to forge the bell. In fact, Boriska has no such skills or knowledge and does the bell casting intuitively. He is guided by inspiration and finds the "right" clay by mere chance. Similarly, in *Solaris*, the creation from Solaris Ocean that visit the astronauts appear spontaneously, yet in connection with the consciousness of each individual astronaut. The scientists fail to understand Solaris Ocean because it primarily reflects people's own non-rationality. Tellingly, it is non-rational and spontaneous situations such as the multiple deaths and resurrections of Hari that change Kris' moral character.

The spontaneous appearances of Hari, under the influence of Kris' memory of his dead wife, echo the idea of "involuntary memory". German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus described involuntary memory, stating that, "often, even after years, mental states once present in consciousness return to it with apparent spontaneity and without any act of the will; that is, they are reproduced involuntarily" (Ebbinghaus 2). Marcel Proust famously described involuntary memory as sensations triggered by previous experience. According to Proust, involuntary memory contains the "essence of the past". "In involuntary memory it is not a memory indirectly called upon by the mind to interpret experience. It is something that comes unsolicited from the past completely to *unsettle* the individual in the present" (Gross 377). Tarkovsky's film demonstrates the speculations on immortality manifested through the memory. Just like Proust describes the elusiveness of the process of recalling, Tarkovsky states that the remembering of the past attains something akin to the highest degree of mysticism. Memory is not only linked to the subjective perspective of an individual who recalls, but it also escapes any realm of volition and rationality. The struggle to understand the materializations happening on

Solaris station lead astronaut Gibaryan to suicide. Kris Kelvin is also confused by what is happening and by his emotional responses to it. At the beginning of the film, we see Kris as a skeptical scientist. In his conversation with Berton he says that "he is not a poet", while his father calls him a cruel person. Kris' attempt to understand the materializations happening on Solaris lead him to what seems to be logical actions. For example, he attempts to kill Hari by sending her out in a rocket. However, Tarkovsky also shows Kris' non-rational side. For instance, when he wakes up and sees Hari for the first time, he impetuously kisses her, and only a minute later he realizes that he needs to be rational. Tarkovsky shows the non-rational and mysterious nature of memory. The logical flow of everyday life on Solaris is jeopardized by constant interruptions of the past. The strange "guests", such as a woman in a blue dress, or a little person running around, make no sense to Kris until he is confronted with his own memory of his deceased wife. Even then, it takes several moments for Kris to realize the purpose of Hari's visits.

Botz-Bornstein comments on the connection of Tarkovsky's artistic expression of memory in *Solaris* and the Proustian conceptualization of memory. He writes: "'Spaces' function here rather [...] like a 'Proustian Madeleine' which one can perceive best when 'lying in bed', meaning when suffering from a reduced mobility. In Tarkovsky's works such a space is produced by letting it be perceived not by a conceptually-minded, subjective man convinced of his mathematical capacity or trusting in his stylizing power […], 'but by a man whose being is reduced to nature'" (Botz-Bornstein 25). Indeed, Kris's behavior brings the viewer back to the first episodes of the film. Similar in this to the waterweeds and the trees by the country house, which conform to the ebbs and flows of nature, Kris obeys emotions triggered by his memories. In the opening scene of Solaris, Kris gets caught in the rain. We see how the kids playing outside

run under the shelter. Kris, in contrast, remains under the rain and embraces its heavy pouring power. Unlike Snaut and Sartorius, who represent the skeptical and rational side of science, Kris is ready to confront with the existential anxieties produced by the force of involuntary memory. Commenting on Proust's works, Gross states: "In every instance in *Remembrance of things Past* when an involuntary memory sweeps over a character, it disorients him, makes him uncertain of who he is, even creates a feeling of 'dizziness' or 'oscillation' between an earlier moment re-experienced and the existing one" (Gross 378).The spontaneous appearances of Hari caused by Kris' involuntary memory become the turning point for Kris' moral state. Overcoming the experience of Hari's materializations, Kris redeems himself from the feeling of guilt that was haunting him after his wife's suicide. Thus, the heavy rain at the beginning not only signifies Kris' willingness to submerge himself into the past; it can also be said to metaphorically foreshadow the redeeming process that Kris undergoes as the film approaches the end.

In Proust's novels, practical actions never trigger involuntary memory. It is always some unintended incidental sensation or impression that brings involuntary memory. In Proust's description, these sensations are often non-visual, and rather related to other senses such as taste, smell, or touch. However, cinema, as a visual medium, requires Tarkovsky to speak of raising "edifice of memories" in the form of images (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 59). In order to activate forgotten memories in the viewer, Tarkovsky operates with such categories as feelings, mood, impressions, and thoughts. According to Proust, memories help an individual in contemplative self-understanding, whereas through literature we can realize the search for our own identity and the meaning of life. Similarly, Tarkovsky writes that the spectators seeks "to make up for the gaps in his own experience, throwing himself into a search for 'lost time'. In other words he seeks to fill that spiritual vacuum which has formed as a result of the specific

conditions of his modern existence: constant activity, curtailment of human contact, and the materialist bent of modern education" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 83). Another common element in Proust and Tarkovsky's works and ideas is that both believed in the possibility —even the responsibility— to turn memories into art. In Proust's case, this belief is manifested in the central message of *Remembrance of Things Past.* The novels themselves are memories resurrected into a literary work. Similarly, the majority of Tarkovsky's films deal with memories as well, either personal (*Ivan's Childhood, Mirror, Solaris, Nostalghia*), or collective (*Ivan's Childhood, Andrei Rublev*).

  Solaris explicitly demonstrates Tarkovsky's vision of cinema as artistic medium and its relation to the subject of time and memory. *Solaris* has several episodes that are made in the classical film-within-film format. Each inner film is rather a comment on the outer film. The first episode shows a recording in which Berton reports about his extraordinary experience of the expedition to the Solaris Space Council. The video recording of Solaris's Ocean made by Berton (film within a film within a film) failed to provide convincing evidence of what Berton saw. This influenced the future of the Solaris expedition in a negative way and led to the decision to discontinue the Solaris program. Vlad Strukov puts this episode in parallel with Tarkovsky's own experience with the Soviet film authorities who censored most his films because they could not comply with the standards of "good" Soviet cinema. Strukov notes that the Solaris Space Council reminded the Soviet viewer of "the style of the meeting with that of the official communist party procedures of the time" (Strukov 60). Here, Tarkovsky hints at the great divide between the individual and the authoritative system in Soviet Russia. The institutions of Soviet society oppressed and censored those writers and artists who wanted to reveal apolitical feelings, memories, and thoughts of an individual in their works. *Solaris*, in response, is a rebellion

against the state rationality and all that it brings along with its logic – extensive urbanization, ecological decline, alienation of people from nature, etc.

The second video is a briefly shown TV documentary about Solaris Ocean. It gets interrupted by the third video, Berton's video call to Kris's father. This is a "city episode", as described above. The video shows the recording made by the astronaut Gibaryan who committed suicide because he was not able to accept, both mentally and emotionally, the recurrent appearances of strangers from the Solaris Ocean. This video, contrary to the first, addresses a specific individual (Kris) and contains mostly personal information. It is a suicide note in which Gibaryan talks about his feelings and gives warnings to Kris. Finally, the last video is Kris and Kris' father's recording of different moments from Kris' life. All five mini films are done in documentary style. People in these films address the viewer in a direct way, by looking into the camera. With his frequent use of the film-within-film technique, Tarkovsky raises the question of real and screen time, as well as of present and past. In all five recordings, present and past are not strictly discerned. Gibaryan's suicide video and Berton's video call are technically and visually the same, although one speaks from the past and the other happens in the present. The effect of the presence is mainly achieved because both Gibaryan and Berton look into the camera, as if they are talking to their friends in real time and space. This makes the audience emotionally connect with the person on the screen. It pushes the viewer to believe Berton about his experience during Solaris mission and to sympathize to him. It produces the same effect when we see Gibaryan's suicide note (See Fig. 2. 6).

Fig. 2. 6

Through the video recordings, Tarkovsky makes a commentary on the ability of cinema to transform memories into visible and concrete facts. As Mark Le Fanu puts it:

> From the early sequence where the youthful Burton looks back at his older ruined self from the widescreen wall monitor; to the middle screen in which the video of the dead Giboryan addresses Kelvin 'from the far side of the grave'; to the central and profound moving sequence where Kelvin's own 'home video' shows Hari the image of herself as she was on earth near the snow-covered dacha – everything combines to demonstrate that memory need not be extinction; and that on the contrary we live in significance to the extent that we are prepared to embrace the shadows of our loss" (Le Fanu 59).

The recordings transform past events into present experience. This is especially prominent in the snipped shots of Kris' life in his home video, which comes at the beginning of the second half of the movie. Here, a seemingly documentary recording ceases to comply with solely documentary style. What it looks like is a mix between documentary video and the protagonist's own imagination. The episode starts with the shot showing Kris and Hari watching the recording. They both look into the camera. After that, we see the actual recording in which a ten or twelve-year-old Kris walks in the snow towards a small fire on the ground. The next shot shows

yellowish leaves fluttering on a tree and Kris' mother. The next shot shows Kris's father. He looks into the camera, after which he plays with Kris. A few more times we see Kris, Kris' mother, the burning fire, an older (about 16 year old) Kris, the pond, the country house, and finally Kris' wife Hari.

Kris' home video plays several important functions in the film and demonstrates an example of what Tarkovsky called poetics of memory. On the one hand, it resembles previous recordings that Tarkovsky has introduced in the film. Like in Gibaryan and Berton's videos, the recorded people look into the camera with the aim to address the viewer. However, after closer examination, one can notice that the video rather resembles a reenactment of Kris' memory. Here we not only see the record of what happened in the past, but also Kris' own interpretation of the past while he is watching the recording. The sequence of the events is not chronologically lined up. The winter at the beginning is replaced by summer and vice versa, in a sporadic manner. The images of a younger and an older Kris are intermingled with identical images of Kris' mother. In addition, most shots look more like photographs than the video recording of the people they show. Tarkovsky deliberately stops the movement of the video and focuses on the faces of the people and on their eyes looking into the camera. He creates the chain of gazes that starts with Kris and Hari, who are watching the recording, and finishes on Kris and Hari, who are looking at each other (See Fig. 2. 7).

Fig. 2. 7

       The recording of Kris' life demonstrates that memory for Tarkovsky is primarily a

subjective phenomenon. It gives us the capability to learn about ourselves and the world by

drawing from previous experiences. At the same time, memory is a necessary component of

being a person as well as for building personal relationships. Hari, who is watching the recording

along with Kris, has forgotten her past experiences. But through the gradual reminders of the

past (with the help of media and art) she becomes a human being again. Tarkovsky notes:

"Bereft of memory, a person becomes the prisoner of an illusory existence; falling out of time he

is unable to seize his own link with the outside world" (Tarkovsky 57). In *Solaris* Tarkovsky

makes a strong statement to the fact that we are humans only when we have the memory of our past, regardless of the fact that memory can be selective, fragmented, repetitive, incomplete, and sometimes misleading. Memory allows us to attain the ethical, moral self-knowledge which Tarkovsky believes is "the only aim in life for each person" (Tarkovsky 35). The structure of Kris' father's video recording becomes the turning point for Hari's revival of her memory. It also provides the viewer with a glimpse of Tarkovsky's forthcoming autobiographical *Mirror*.

The video recording of Kris' life is interesting because it not only shows the nature of human memory but also displays the relationship between memory and works of art. In Ancient Greek times memory was often represented through the metaphor of the imprint. In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Socrates says:

> When we wish to remember anything which we have seen, or heard, or thought in our own minds, we hold the wax to the perception and thoughts, and in that material receive the impression of them as from the seal of a ring; and that we remember and know what is imprinted as long as the image lasts; but when the image is effaced, or cannot be taken, then we forget and do not know (qtd. in Herrmann and Chaffin 42).

Aristotle also writes about the workings of memory. He explains that "the process of movement (sensory stimulation) involve[s] the act of perception stamps in, as it were, a sort of impression of the percept, just as persons do who make an impression with a seal" (qtd. in Draaisma 25). In Tarkovsky's works we see how memory becomes the "basis of an artistic reconstruction of the past" (Tarkovsky 28). All Tarkovsky's films were influenced by his childhood memories. Moreover, they are done with the intention to arouse the viewer's memories as well. The film allows us to potentially relive our experiences by reviving memories of the past. Cinema, in this sense, stands for the temporal overlapping of present and past. In *Solaris,* present and past

literally meet when Hari (past) appears to Kris (present). This encounter is Tarkovsky's artistic maneuver to refer to the idea that human consciousness is conditioned according to our past.

Stylistically Tarkovsky places the video recording of Kris' life between photography, home video, and conventional portrait. The rationale behind this is to make the viewer to contemplate on the subject of memory and time. In several instances, Tarkovsky reduces and eventually stops the movement of the shot to the point that it almost freezes in the form of a photograph. By doing that, he makes a reference to photography as the earliest media able to reflect a person's image in the truest way possible. Moreover, portrait photography can capture the personality of the subject in a historical perspective. In a sense, Kris' recording reminds us of a family photo-album. Such appearance of a family photo-album in the form of video in *Solaris* has double meaning. On the one hand, it adds some prospective elements to *Solaris* as a science-fiction movie. Video cameras were produced for general population starting from 1960s, however they were extremely expensive and hard to find up until late 1980s – beginning of 1990s. The possibility to record a home video for Kris' father shows the willingness of the film to construct a believable future. On the other hand, Tarkovsky implies a shift in artistic media in which video has replaced the traditional photographic medium. However, instead of completely replacing it, cinema has inherited and perfected some artistic function of photography. One of them is to provide a medium for the external storage of memory.

Kris' father's video recording showed the fragmentary nature of memory through the montage and the reduction of the camera movement to the photographic stillness of the shot. The portrait, photography-like shots of the family in the recording represent past and, perhaps, memorable events. They describe what Estonian Canadian experimental psychologist Endel Tulving called "episodic memory". In his article "Memory and Consciousness" Tulving

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proposed that episodic memory is a kind of memory that "mediates the remembering of personally experienced events" (Tulving 2). Unlike procedural memory (which deals with knowledge and skill acquisition) and semantic (general or public memory), episodic memory is a personal memory of autobiographical events. According to Tulving, episodic memory is important in our subjective understanding of time because it gives an individual the ability to apprehend their personal past and future. Interestingly, Tulving conducted his research through the case studies of amnesiac people. He concluded that amnesiac people have no difficulty with the concept of chronological time, but they are not capable of what Tulving calls chronosthesia or mental time travel. They fail to remember past events, and also fail to plan or imagine for the future.

Hari would be a perfect example of a person with amnesia whose awareness of subjective time is severely impaired. However, Tarkovsky's aim is not just to describe Hari's situation but to demonstrate how Hari recovers from her impaired condition. In this respect, the stylization of the home video as a family photo-album has a deep meaning for the film. Hari, who is not able to recollect her human past, slowly attains her memory after watching the recording. The family video archive helps Hari to re-experience her past, just as the family album would do. After watching the recording Hari begins rebuilding her family background. This motivates her existence and gives her self-awareness. Hari is a vivid example of lost memory, which allows Tarkovsky to address (through her image) the question of memory as a general concept. Although she is not a human being, her state of amnesia points to the nature of human consciousness and how easily we can forget previously lived experiences. After watching the recording, Hari looks in the mirror and says: "I don't know myself at all" (See Fig. 2. 8). Then she asks Kris if he does. The question sounds as if it is not only intended for Kris, but for

every one watching the movie. This is apparent in Kris' answer : "Same as all people do".

Tarkovsky approaches the question of memory as a difficult and elusive phenomenon. He points

to the nature of human memory as fragmented, incomplete, and fragile. To some extent, we all

experience some degree of amnesia and need to be reminded of our past. What is important for

Tarkovsky is that the memory of our past is proportionate to our current spiritual condition.

However, he also suggests that photography and cinema are great memory reworking

instruments. Art allows for "time travel" when subjective time exceeds and goes beyond the

actual event. Art becomes the gateway through which the person can re-experience his/ her past

and therefore become more spiritual.

 Fig. 2. 8

In *Sculpting in Time,* Tarkovsky comments that the contact between film director

and audience is unique to cinema. "It conveys experience imprinted on film in

uncompromisingly effective, and therefore compelling, forms" (Tarkovsky 179). He later states

that such a cinematic experience fulfills the purpose of the search for lost time: "The viewer feels

a need for such vicarious experience in order to make up in part for what he himself has lost or

missed" (Tarkovsky 179). Kris' recording can be viewed as an allegory of Tarkovsky's entire

oeuvre, in which the director uses cinema as an instrument of time travel helping people to be

aware of the importance of their past. Subjective time in Tarkovsky's films goes beyond the

author's own biography or imagination. Just as Hari appropriates Kris' past, the viewers can subjectively experience a past which is not their own. By the means of memory and art they can appropriate it, and therefore re-experience what has been experienced before. However, Tarkovsky argues that no other art —literature, music, or painting— can be compared to the cinematic ability to convey the image of reality, and therefore the reality of the past in its most truthful form.

Through Kris' video recording, Tarkovsky questions and rethinks the photo-album as the visual medium for family biography. He also overcomes its rigidity as an established visual biographical medium. The process of Kris and Hari watching the recording can be compared to the experience of flipping the pages of a photo-album. But Tarkovsky adds more to it. He deliberately mixes still images of family members in the immobile shots as well as in the action ones. The entire recording goes in several successive states: movement-rest, movement-rest, and so on. During the movie shooting period Tarkovsky wrote in his diary: "It occurred to me that the film made by Kelvin the elder, which Chris takes with him, should be made like a poem. (Base it on one of father's poems)" (Tarkovsky *Time within Time* 37) . Tarkovsky did not mention the exact poem he kept in mind, but the video recording can be compared to Arseny Tarkovsky's poem "As a child I once fell ill...", which Tarkovsky later used in *Nostalghia.* One of the common traits that both the poem and the video have is the alternation of the images of movement and stillness:

> As a child I once fell ill
> From fear and hunger. I'd scratched off the scab
> From my lips and licked my lips; I remembered
> The cool and salty taste.
> But still I <u>go</u>, but still I <u>go</u>, I <u>go</u>,
> I <u>sit</u> on the front stairs and warm myself,

Delirious, I <u>wander</u> as though to follow
The tune of the pied-piper to the river,
I warm myself on the stairs, consumed by fever.
But mother <u>stands</u> and beckons, she seems
Not far away but unapproachable:
I <u>approach</u> a little, it's only seven steps,
She beckons, I approach but she still <u>stands</u>
Only seven steps away, she beckons.
Heat
Grips me, I undid my collar and laid down –
And trumpets started trumpeting, my eyelids
Were struck by light, and horses galloped, mother
Is flying above the cobblestones, she beckons –
And vanished…
And now I dream
Beneath the apple trees, a white ward,
And the white bed-sheet beneath my throat,
And the white doctor looks down at me,
And the white nurse stands beside my feet
Ruffling her wings. And they remained.
But mother came and beckoned –
And vanished…

Analyzing the poem, Nariman Skakov notes that: "All spatio-temporal coordinates in the poem are subjective and volatile. As a consequence of this unsteadiness, the text seems to represent a delirious dream, dominated by images of presence and absence"(181). He then concludes that in this poem "the narrator relates his present reality to his imaginary world" (Skakov 181). The imaginary world in the poem is actually a memory of the childhood and the mother. It describes a longing for the mother and impossibility to reunite with her. It can be added that the pattern of movement and rest in the poem also reflects the dynamism of memory as well as its binary nature as a fleeting and, at the same time, lasting process. The image of the memory of the mother, who stands and beckons, and "seems not far away but unapproachable", is the metaphor for memory in general. The images of the past are always

imprinted in our minds but sometimes are too difficult to access. Just like the poem focuses on the figure of the mother, Kris' video recording concentrates on Kris' mother and, later, on his wife who had a significant role in Kris's life on Earth and represents the essence of his memory. In the recording, Kris' mother and wife also appear as primarily static, while Kris and his father are mostly captured in motion. Such a movement/ stillness dichotomy supports the idea that the recording is not just a factual document, but rather represents Kris' own memory process.

At first glance, the introduction of the logic of the family photo-album in the video format might give the impression that Tarkovsky attempts to show the superiority of the moving images of cinema over the still images of photography. However, after analyzing the recording in the context of the entire movie, one can notice that Tarkovsky's goal is not to animate the family portraits. On the contrary, the movements in the recording tend to decrease from shot to shot. The recording begins with the dynamic image of a walking young Kris. It then reduces this dynamism to a still portrait of Kris' mother in the subsequent shot. Similarly, the recording ends on the still image of Kris' wife who is looking into the camera. As a result, the viewer's attention is drawn to the stillness. This cinematic technique produces an effect similar to what we find in Japanese haiku.[7] In haiku, the use of colorful and provocative images creates a sense of sudden enlightenment, with the focus always being on a brief moment in time. Likewise, in the film, the stillness within one shot allows for the observation of space. Here time manifests itself in the same way as in the poem. However, in this instance, the stillness of the shot bears deeper meaning than that of a pure visual enjoyment. The transition from movement to stasis, and vice versa, demonstrates the relationship between present and past, or what Skakov

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[7] Tarkovsky greatly valued Japanese haiku. However, unlike Eisenstein, who saw in haiku verses the model for the combination of three separate elements that can create something different in kind from any of them, Tarkovsky was attracted by the ability of haiku to convey life as a living image (Tarkovsky and Hunter-Blair 66).

calls in his analysis of Arseny Tarkovsky's poem, a "presence and absence" (Skakov117, 118, 202). The movement in the recording represents the present, whereas the still portrait-like shots are indicative of the past. Tarkovsky withdraws the movement from the portraits, and he does so in the one medium in which movement is the essential characteristic. Thus he deliberately draws our attention to the overall questions he raises in his work: how we experience time and how time manifests itself in visual media. On the one hand, he shows the "outside movement", such as moving people and objects. In this sense, the science-fiction genre of *Solaris* (although not traditional) is a great site of external movement which manifests itself through high speed, advanced technology, and so on. On the other hand, Tarkovsky brings up a stillness which is never a *total* stillness. There is not a single image of a freeze-frame shot in Tarkovsky's films. Indeed, for Tarkovsky freeze-frame shots would mean the loss of time, and therefore death. Thus the "almost stillness" in Tarkovsky's films is full of what one can call internal movement. This internal movement manifests itself through feelings, thoughts, memories, dreams, imaginations, etc. In order to be able to recollect the past, external movement has to be inverted towards internal, mental processes which allow for what Tulving calls "mental time travel". In other words, Tarkovsky is not stopping the movement in the family home video. He rather changes its quality from *external (physical) present* to *internal (mental) past*.

The home video episode has a close visual, as well as thematic, connection to the imagery of Solaris station's library. The library is full of human artifacts, books, and art. Its appearance is drastically different from the rest of the station. Bruegel's painting *Hunters in the Snow* is in the centre of the library. It also has one of the central functions in the development of the narrative. Just like the home video recording, the painting engages with memories and feelings, and helps Hari to become human. The images from the video are linked to the painting

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in two ways. *Hunters in the Snow* is one of the five Bruegel's paintings that Tarkovsky displays

on the walls of the library. Three of them (in the centre) constitute the depiction of seasonal

cycles. They are hung side by side and are shown one by one in the subsequent camera panning

movement. This presentation of the paintings reminds us of the sequence of the seasons in the

home video. Another common feature, shared by both the painting and the home video

recording, is the depiction of landscape. According to Solaris space station designer Mikhail

Romadin, Tarkovsky chose the winter landscape of the Bruegel painting because it reminded him

of a northern landscape of central Russia. Winter appears in the first two Tarkovsky's films,

Ivan's Childhood and *Andrei Rublev*. Following *Solaris, Mirror* also has winter in its scenery. In

Rublev, Tarkovsky uses Bruegel's winter landscape as a visual quotation. *Mirror* displays winter

in the context of the seasonal change. Whereas *Solaris* has both – the display of the actual

painting, and the visual reference to the painting.

Although *Hunters in the Snow* in *Solaris* primarily represents Hari's

transformation into a human being, it also creates a visual parallel between Tarkovsky's films,

non-temporal visual arts, and the genre of landscape. The following discussion on the genre of

landscape will help to explain why *Hunters in the Snow* has such prominent role in Tarkovsky's

works as well as to further understand the subject of movement in the context of the relationship

between temporal (cinema) and non-temporal (painting) art.

Landscapes as a depiction of nature existed as early as around 1500BC. The term

landscape as a genre denomination appeared in the 17th century. Shortly after, it was used to

convey vistas in poetry and eventually became a term for real views. In pictorial art, landscape

has two main characteristics. First, it offers a view that is emancipated from the dominance of the

human figures. Second, landscape offers itself for contemplation. Starting from the earliest films,

the depiction of the natural world took a great place in the history of cinema. Landscape

occupied a dominant position in the "travel films" of the 1900s. On the one hand, it involved the

depiction of exotic places. On the other hand, local landscapes demonstrated cultural

transformation of the modern world in which rural nature was put in contrast to metropolitan

space. In Soviet cinema, landscape had a predominantly ideological function. In early Soviet

cinema landscapes reflected the technological and agricultural revolution in which peasant

farming transformed into mechanized collective factories. In his *The Old and The New*, Sergei

Eisenstein pictures peasant farming and country houses as something that has to be eliminated

because of their backwardness. In the film, he creates a model of a collective farm as a symbol of

modernization. When Alexander Dovzhenko represented nature in a more lyrical way in *Earth*

(1930), he was accused in naturalistic pantheism (Dobrenko 313–14). Excessive representation

of nature without political implication was heavily questioned and condemned in Soviet Union

of earlier period.

In 1930s, landscape in films intended to reassure people under Soviet regimes that

everything was okay in the Soviet Union. The films of Grigory Alexandrov, of Alexander

Medvedkin, and of Ivan Pyrev are classified as collective farm musicals (Beumers 116). They

showed pastoral landscapes with idealized countryside in which people and machines worked

together. Films such as *Miracle Worker* (1937) by Medvedkin or *The Rich Bride* (1937) by Pyrev

explicitly quoted well-known landscape paintings of "Itinerants" (*"Peredvizhniki"*), including

Issak Levitan, Ivan Shishkin, Vasily Polenov, and Aleksei Savrasov. Emma Widdis notes that

although in some films of the 1930s "technology is paradoxically absent from the film's visual

surface, it is present as the ideological subtext of the genre's celebration of Stalinist

Collectivization" (Harper and Rayner 78). At the time, the tradition of the Russian landscape

genre was accepted and allowed to continue, but to do so it acquired a new ideological framework, one that would not contradict industrialization and collectivization.

Perhaps the period of the "Thaw" (1953-1968) was the first time when nature in Soviet art became somewhat emancipated from Soviet ideology. Depictions of nature, of Spring in particular, became metaphors for change. Landscape in films and poetry could demonstrate the author's subjectivity and individuality. It could also help reflect the protagonists' feelings as well as elicit general feelings of happiness. *The Sun is Shining for Everyone* (1959) by Konstantin Voinov, for instance, begins with a scene of soldiers celebrating the end of the war in front of the sunny landscape. The sunny landscape creates the atmosphere of happiness and freedom that is associated with both the end of war, and the termination of Stalin's regime. Tarkovsky's post war movie *Ivan's Childhood* (1962) also ties the imagery of nature to the emotional aspect of the film. Here, wartime is associated with the gloomy images of dead trees in a swamp. Prewar times, on the contrary, are depicted through Ivan's vivid dreams of sunny, warm summer days.

Multiple scenes of nature in Tarkovsky's films contribute to his style in several ways. The main role of such shots is to create and enhance aesthetic intensity in his poetic cinema. It conditions the emotional aspect of the film's narrative and imagery. It amplifies the cinematic texture with figurative associations, such as Christian and non-Christian symbolism[8]. Tarkovsky's nature lives on its own when shown in extreme close-ups and long takes. But it is also inextricably bonded to humans, providing the main living environment and ground for their interactions. Finally, the natural world plays an essential role in Tarkovsky's attempt to bring

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[8] Gerard Loughin's "Tarkovsky's Trees" gives one of the detailed examinations of the symbolism imbedded in Tarkovsky's landscape imagery.

about his idea of "imprinted time", by rendering the time flow through the movement of natural elements. By turning to recurring themes of nature such as images of horses, trees, water, snow, etc., Tarkovsky creates a specific context that has both intertextual and intratextual significance.

Tarkovsky viewed landscape settings in film as part of a subtextual language that has the purpose of bringing private and universal associations. He writes:

> I felt all the time that for the film to be a success the texture of the scenery and the landscapes must fill me with definite memories and poetic associations. […] if an author is moved by the landscape chosen, if it brings back memories to him and suggests associations, even subjective ones, then this will in turn affect the audience with particular excitement (Tarkovsky 28).

The main landscape that Tarkovsky uses in Solaris' settings is closely connected to the imagery of Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow*. The painting not only visually refers *Solaris* to *Andrei Rublev,* it also links Tarkovsky's cinema to the well-established tradition of classical visual art. Here, both the subject matter and the form of the medium play a significant role in how Tarkovsky implements the idea of movement and time on the screen.

Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* belongs to what is called "world landscape" (Harris 378). It depicts a panoramic view with small figures, using a high aerial viewpoint. Although *Hunters in the Snow* as a painting is non-temporal art, it renders movement through its subject matter. Bruegel places *Hunters in the Snow* within one of his five seasonal paintings. All five landscapes depict different seasons through the complex use of colors. They display people in their seasonal activities and portray the essence of agricultural life in late medieval times. Robert L. Bonn notes:

In painting seasonal *realism* down to the last detail, Bruegel may have idealized the seasons, but when we look at this set of paintings as a whole, we are left with the sense that he had a larger purpose in mind, namely, for us to see and feel the complete way of life, that is, the annual cycle of activities that comprised the culture of the 16th century Flemish peasant" (Bonn 26).

Indeed, seasonally cyclical stages of life reflected the dominant medieval understanding of life. The industrial and post-industrial societies of the past two centuries view life as linear and have little concern for seasonal changes. Tarkovsky, who as we know criticized excessive urbanization and mechanization, uses Bruegel's landscapes as the portrayal of an ideal habitat for humans. He makes a parallel between nature in Bruegel's paintings and the depiction of seasons in his film. As a result, Tarkovsky's films project the idea that despite the changes brought with technology people are indivisible from nature and their innate understanding of time is cyclical.

Movement in *Hunters in the Snow* becomes even more obvious when we see the painting next to the rests of Bruegel's seasonal series. This is what Tarkovsky did in arranging the Solaris library space. He places three Bruegel's seasonal paintings (*Hunters in the Snow*, *Dark Day*, and *Harvesters*) in the centre of the painting display, with two other Bruegel paintings (*Tower of Babel* and *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*) on each side. All five paintings are arranged within the semicircle dent in the wall above a couch. The semicircle arrangement amplifies the cyclical meaning of the seasonal change of nature. Being very meticulous in relation to the details, Tarkovsky chooses circle as the dominant shape for arranging the library space. The library room itself is round, as well as many objects in it – table, globes, candleholders, couch, chandelier, etc. (See Fig. 2. 9). The library is the central location of Solaris station, and *Hunters in the Snow* is the central piece of the library. It is in the library that the

narrative reaches its culmination – the peak of Hari's transformation into a human being, and Kris' change of heart.

 Fig. 2. 9

Tarkovsky also uses circular movement when depicting the famous levitation scene which takes place in the library in front of *Hunters in the Snow*. As Kris and Hari start spinning around the room the camera spins around them. The levitation scene transfers the library episode into an unrealistic realm and transmits the feeling of ultimate happiness. Peter Green notes that the phenomenon of levitation in *Solaris* is "associated with ideas of consummated love and with flight, akin perhaps to the dream-like motive of […] Chagall's paintings of lovers floating in the air" (Green 86). It can also be related to the lines of Arseny Tarkovsky's poem that was discussed earlier: "And mother came and beckoned me and flew away…".This is the first levitation scene in Takovsky's films. In later films (*Mirror, Nostalghia, Sacrifice*), other scenes of levitation portray the figure of a woman, especially of a mother. The abundance of round objects in the library, the levitation in a circular motion, and the fact that Kris and Hari are located in a space station all contribute to the idea that a circular motion in space coupled with a cyclical movement in time is the universal principal. Thus the idea of levitation connects several texts referenced in the films (The poem, the painting, and other

Tarkovsky's films). Bruegel's painting and Kris and Hari's levitation are common in one particular purpose – the demonstration of the idea of the contemplation of nature, as well as the contemplation of the inner self. Kris and Hari's inner changes are the result of such a contemplation. Through the observation of one of Kris' winters, they both return to the past, making mental time travel possible.

While winter perhaps is the most obvious theme that connects Tarkovsky's films and Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow*, it is the idea of levitation in both film and painting that dominates the overall impression of the library episode. Bruegel channels the idea of levitation through the double perspective used in his painting. We see the hunters in the foreground and we also observe the faraway scene of the valley (small houses, with tiny people skating on the ice). We instinctively associate ourselves with the elevated hunters who are looking down upon the faraway village. Tarkovsky explores the painting's double perspective through the means of movement – montage and camera movement, in particular. After showing Hari's face, he shoots the details of the painting as if we were seeing them with Hari's eyes. First, we see the snow under the hunters' feet, then the hunters, and then the camera takes us to the details down the hill with the small villagers. Following that, we watch Hari and Kris' levitation intermingled with the shots of the painting. Just like the double perspective in the painting that brings the viewer into the centre of the experience, we are brought to perceive Hari and Kris' levitation as our personal experience. Tarkovsky achieves this through the multiple close-ups of the painting and the characters that we see throughout the levitation episode. Robert L. Bonn suggests that "Bruegel leads us to see ourselves, […] as at one with nature" (Bonn 22). In a similar way, when we see the levitating Hari and Kris, we mentally participate in their levitation.

Nariman Skakov notes that the scene of levitation transfigures the interior of the station's library. It distorts the space through Tarkovsky's depiction of extraordinary phenomena such as zero gravity (Skakov 87). Such distortion also reinforces *Solaris'* temporal inconsistency. Tarkovsky breaks temporal boundaries by way of suspending historical or linear time in favor of sporadic surges of memory, implemented through the power of Solaris Ocean. The fact that the dead Hari can live, die, and live again, negates or equalizes past, present, and future. Time in *Solaris* exists only in a mental realm and has no objective underlying. Memory and Solaris Ocean become the only entities that bring about time. Tarkovsky demonstrates this not only through the plot, but also through its narrative development. The displacement of time projects itself in the form of a mental image of the protagonists. In the film, those images often appear as flashbacks. They create memory landscapes, primarily constructed from personal experiences. While Kris' main memory is Hari (as well as the image of nature from Earth, or of his house), Hari's memories undergo a process of becoming. Their materialization go hand in hand with Hari's own materialization. In order to find mental space for her memories she needs to be physically present and experience things in the moment. At the same time, in order to know herself she needs to remember herself in the past. In the levitation episode, we see that Hari is capable of remembering the past through the flashback of Kris's home video and the observation of the painting.

The flashback involving Kris' home video comes after the levitation scene (See Fig. 2. 10). It shows a young Kris who is tending to a fire on the snow. The visual connection of the flashback to Bruegel's painting is obvious and striking as we see burning fire on the snowy ground in the painting as well. However, the flashback constitutes only the second half of the original footage, which begins with the image of a young Kris walking toward the fire. Just like

Hunters in the Snow, it offers a double perspective, with the large figure of Kris on the hill and the faraway valley down below. By showing only the second half of the footage, Tarkovsky purposefully invites the viewer to create the connection between the home video and the painting. Not only are Hari and Kris' memories engaged, but the viewer is also made to make a mental leap to what happened in the past.

Fig. 2. 10

Tarkovsky's intention to link Bruegel's painting to Kris' home video suggests that any piece of art, whether it is a painting or film, relies on memory as a fundamental principal of creation and, as Tarkovsky states: "the basis of an artistic reconstruction of the past" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 28) . More specifically interesting is the fact that Tarkovsky chooses painting to be the medium through which memories can be explored or recalled. Perhaps the reason is that stillness manifests itself in space whereas memory of a particular time reveals itself through

spatial means. According to Gaston Bachelard, "memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are" (Bachelard 9). In our given context, space is rather understood as mental space, not physical. The categories of time, however, are needed for the reactivation of the past which is the process of recalling, or what Tulving calls "mental time travel". The images of movement and stillness penetrate Tarkovsky's films as if one cannot exist without another. In *Solaris*, Bruegel's painting is never still. Similarly to Rublev's icons in *Andrei Rublev's* epilogue, it is approached with the moving camera that tracks, pans, and zooms in and out.

Tarkovsky's tendency to penetrate still images with movement and disrupt movement with stillness reveals itself in the construction of the entire film narrative. Instead of constructing a cause-and-effect narrative, Tarkovsky's films use the principles of intuition and association. Tarkovsky achieves it primarily through the multiple insertions of slow and almost still footages in the general storyline. In *Solaris* this is conveyed through the multiple images of nature and everyday objects, as well as the images of Solaris Ocean. The latter plays a special role in the demonstration of internal movement. Besides being part of nature (although cosmic), it explicitly represents the brain with its capacity to remember and re-experience the past. Despite contrasting imageries of Earth and Solaris in the movie, Tarkovsky ultimately unifies them through the image of water. Just like in *Andrei Rublev*, water in *Solaris* appears as a recurrent theme. It becomes part of the dialectical development of *Solaris's* imagery. Water as an element can be found in different forms (ice, rain, snow, steam), and it reflects both concepts of movement and stillness. The scenery of nature around the country house with the half-frozen pond in the opening episode can be characterized as quiet and motionless. The waters of Solaris Ocean, on the contrary, always move. The external tension between the Earth and Solaris, as

well as movement and stillness, reflects Kris and Hari's internal conflicts. When Kris resolves

his moral conflict, the tension between movement and stillness attains a state of reconciliation at

the end of the film. Tarkovsky recaps the images of water in the last ten minutes. When the

camera zooms in on Kris' ear in an extreme close-up, he finally shows an explicit reference to

the brain in the image of Solaris Ocean (See Fig. 2. 11). Through Kris's ear, we see the moving

waters of the Ocean. After which the images of water of the pond by the house emerge in still,

almost frozen form. The final shot shows the pond and the country house surrounded by the

waters of Solaris Ocean. This last episode of *Solaris* illustrates Kris' final return to Earth and his

home. It is unclear whether Kris actually returns to his home or if we see Kris' mental image

being replicated by Solaris Ocean. In either case, the confronting images of the external space of

Solaris and the internal space of home become reconciled. In the combination of the still pond

and moving Ocean, Tarkovsky also reconciles stillness and movement as two aesthetic

categories.
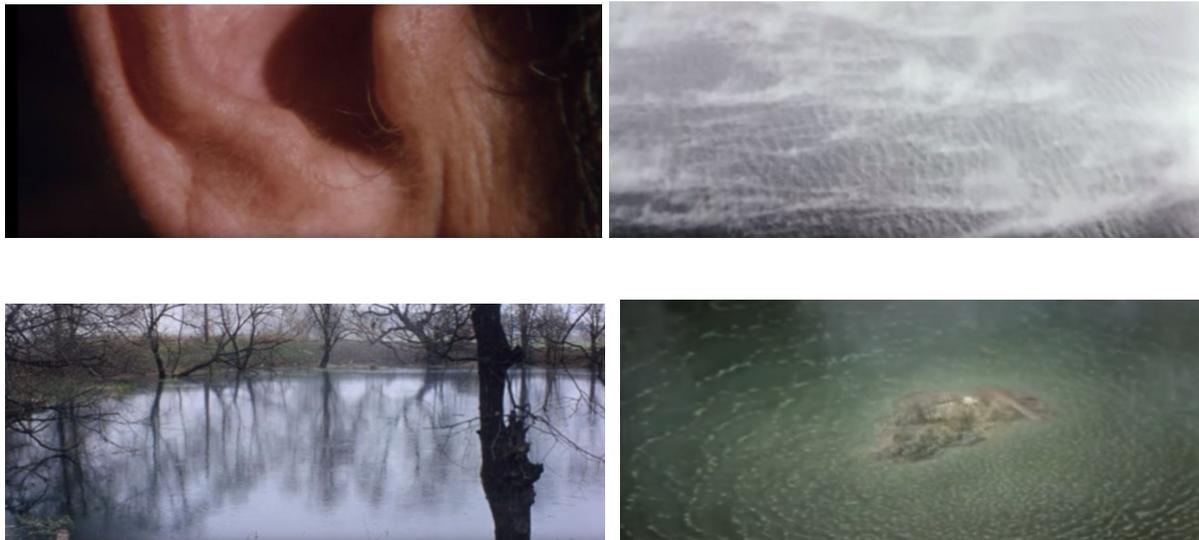
Fig. 2. 11

Solaris is truly a non-conventional science-fiction film. Tarkovsky not only challenges the subject matter but also confronts the clock's authority as it permeates the culture of the industrial and post-industrial age. Refusing to understand time as linear and unidirectional, Tarkovsky endows *Solaris* with its own temporal logic. As a science fiction film *Solaris* proposes time travel that goes both directions: future and past. Tarkovsky rethinks the discourse of progress with the way he renders movement on the screen, creating the "contrasting vision of an atemporal order" (Powell 144). In its binary spatial organization, *Solaris* presents us with two types of movement, external and internal. The first one is associated with the objective understanding of time as linear. The second represents time as cyclical and subjective. In *Solaris*, Tarkovsky advocates against dehumanization of space as well as dehumanization of temporality. The concept of movement plays a significant role in this regard. Through the images of Kris and Hari, Tarkovsky shows that time is largely constituted by memory and personal experiences, whereas the movement in *Solaris* is closely linked to memory and the thought processes of the protagonists. Instead of thinking of movement in connection with evolution and technical progress, as in most science-fiction films, Tarkovsky focuses on movement as a natural phenomenon that reflects the spiritual state of an individual. The principle of fluidity and intuitivity plays a significant role in the way Tarkovsky projects such movement on the screen. It is well reflected in the construction of the mise-en-scène (images of nature), the camera work (tracking camera), the montage, and the narrative development (Hari as an embodiment of Kris' involuntary memory). With his use of film-within-film format, Tarkovsky thinks of cinema as a temporal medium in which movement plays essential role. As we have seen, the interplay of movement and stillness in Kris' home video bears intretextual and intratextual significance with regard to poetry and paintings. The use of Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* becomes a visual

representation of a mental space in which stillness is demonstrated as a landscape of personal memory. By exploring Bruegel's painting through the use of the moving camera as well as by including it in the levitation episode, Tarkovsky rethinks spatial and temporal boundaries in conventional works of art.

Chapter Three

Time and Stillness: Portrait Painting in Tarkovsky's *Mirror*

> Besides my other numerous circle of acquaintances I
> have one more intimate confidant-my melancholy. In
> the midst of my joy, in the midst of my work, she
> waves to me, calls me to one side, even though
> physically I stay put. My melancholy is the most
> faithful mistress I have known, what wonder, then,
> that I love her in return.
>
> -Soren Kierkegaard[9]

Tarkovsky's *Mirror* is an autobiographical film, released after *Solaris* in 1975.
Mirror is considered to be one of the most influential cinematic projects that came out in the
Soviet Union after the Second World War. It is the most visually and structurally convoluted
film in Tarkovsky's entire oeuvre. It deals not only with the autobiography of an author, but
includes the biography of two Soviet generations—people who were born before and after
WWII. The story develops within the context of Russian, European, and world history. It is
linked subjectively by dreams, memory, and imagination. The narrator is represented only
through his voice and functions as the main connector between otherwise disjointed scenes.
Talking about the narrative features of the film, Vida Jonson and Graham Petrie point out that
"instead of the linear, objective narrative structure, 'Mirror' offers a confessional interior
monolog. In place of a hero it present[s] the disembodied voice of the narrator" (Johnson and
Petrie 133). The loose flow of visually oneiric images in the film has been compared by some
critics (Sullivan 452, Ratschewa 28) to the technique of stream-of-consciousness in literature. Its
complex, layered structure makes *Mirror* one of Tarkovsky's most difficult films, as well as the
most personal. In absence of a single narrative line, *Mirror* is full of spatio-temporal distortions.

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[9] Soren Kierkegaard, "Diapsalmata," in Either/Or, Penguin, 1992 (p. 44).

This makes the watching of the film go beyond the experience produced by conventional storytelling.

The autobiography in *Mirror* is the combination of fictional and documentary elements. It includes newsreel footage and casts Tarkovsky's own family members (his mother Maria Vishnyakova, wife Larisa Tarkovskaya, and father Arseny Tarkovsky [voice only]). The plot has a complex narrative structure in which the memories of the protagonists move freely in the forms of flashbacks and dreamlike imagery. Struggling to provide a comprehensive synopsis, scholars of Tarkovsky (Skakov, Johnson and Petrie) compare *Mirror* to the semi-experimental films of directors such as Alain Resnais, Frederico Fellini, and Ingmar Bergman. Like them Tarkovsky examines the problems of internalized, subjective time. However, Tarkovksy's uniqueness lies in his ability to radically deconstruct the traditional understanding of time and space in autobiography, and at the same time to poeticize it. Instead of constructing his story as a series of changes that evolve over time, he tends to dwell on the fragments, which illustrate the memory of his childhood and create melancholic atmosphere in the film. As a result, *Mirror* is perceived as a static film with no narrative and character development. Images in *Mirror* are imbued with a contemplative stillness similar to what is found in portrait paintings of Leonardo Da Vinci and Johannes Vermeer which Tarkovsky uses (or makes a reference to) in his film.

Such a visual exploration of cinema's emotional and spiritual states brings Tarkovsky into the realm of minimalist storytelling. Instead of following a script throughout the filming process, Tarkovsky style is close to "database filmmaking" in which the story is formed by selecting scenes from a given collection[10]. In *Sculpting in Time* Tarkovsky notes that in

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[10] Database principle in film production was first described by Lev Manovich. He argues that database media "do not tell stories; they don't have a beginning or end; in fact, they don't have any development, thematically,

working on *Mirror* his point of principle was "not to have the picture worked out and arranged in advance, before the material had been filmed" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 122–23).

Instead, he decided to give freedom to the visual nature of the proposed idea, liberating it from the constraints of screenplay. In Tarkovsky's words, "it was important to see how, under what conditions, the film could take shape as it were by itself: depending on the takes, on contact with the actors; through the construction of sets, and in the way it adopted to places chosen for location" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 122–23). The decision not to rely on the script is justified by the autobiographical genre of *Mirror*. In particular, it was important for Tarkovsky not just to tell the story of someone's life, but to convey the feeling of memory and remembered time. *Mirror* is not concerned about historical facts; instead, Tarkovsky aims to unify viewers in the potentially similar way people perceive their past. He mentioned some responses he personally received from the viewers. Interestingly, the most satisfying ones to Tarkovsky were those letters in which random film viewers admitted that *Mirror* reminded them of their own childhood. "A woman wrote from Gorky: 'Thank you for *Mirror*. My childhood was like that […] Only how did you know about it?'" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 10). Film critic Mark Le Fanu writes: "*Mirror*, despite being personal, speaks somehow with the authority of third-person narrative art. Autobiography in the film is woven into history, lending it a grandeur and a classicism" (69). I would argue that Tarkovsky was able to achieve such an effect by concentrating on the visual (image) in opposition to the verbal (narrative) aspects of his film. This demonstrated that the power of images can go beyond the restrictive dictates of the plot.

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formally or otherwise which would organise their elements into a sequence. Instead, they are collections of individual items, where every item has the same significance as any other" (Manovich 80).

The images of *Mirror* are essences in themselves meaning that each image can stand by itself and create an effect on the viewer independently from the preceding or following images. The photographic stillness of such images makes us to recall the way Tarkovsky shows Rublev's icons at the end of *Andrei Rublev*. Although he includes the icons in the sequence of shots, each individual image has a powerful visual impact on the viewer. In a similar way, still images in *Mirror* project themselves as icons-photographs which directly refer to the represented object. In his book *Camera Lucida* Roland Barthes stipulates that the main source of interest of the photograph is found in the duality of *studium* and *punctum*. Interesting photographs have a *punctum* which can be described as a detail that stands out from the general field of interest (*studium*). In *Mirror*, Tarkovsky draws our attention not to formal but temporal punctum, which, in Barthes' words, points at the fact that "the photograph possesses an evidential force, and that its testimony bears not on the object but on time" (Barthes, *Camera Lucida* 88–89). Moments of narrative stillness transcend the flow of the narrative, allowing us to experience the past, and, therefore, to become connection with Tarkovsky's autobiography on the fundamental experiential level. This goes directly against Eisensteinian dialectical approach to cinema and the understanding of cinematic image as a result of the juxtaposition of two contrasting images. It is also different from Jean-Luc Godard's conception of image as existing only in the plural intermediate space between two images. As Godard comments: " '[For me] it's always two, begin by showing two images rather than one, that's what I call image, the one made up of two' and elsewhere, 'I perceived ... cinema is that which is between things, not things [themselves] but between one and another'" (qtd. in Latsis 777). Instead, for Tarkovsky true cinematic image is a poetic image that is self-sufficient and often independent from its surrounding images.

Tarkovsky was not the first Soviet filmmaker who privileged compilations of individual images and shots over plot-driven film production. As early as in 1929, Dziga Vertov introduced his "kino-eye" as a way to implement non-related and often static shots in a dynamic and subjective form of cinema. In such a presentation of filmic material, when a series of individual images is privileged over the continuity of the story, the end result possesses an abundant potentiality of meanings. As Siegfried Kracauer notes in his *Theory of Film*, "Plot insists that images carry only one meaning—whatever is significant to the narrative. Take away the plot and one is left with images that are indeterminate, their multiple (poetic) meanings left intact" (68). Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) was created with the purpose of demonstrating that the camera can achieve something that the human eye cannot. In this regard, Tarkovsky's project is less experimental. It focuses on the effect of the technique, rather than the technique itself. In particular, Tarkovsky's main idea was to convey the memory of his childhood within the phenomenon of autobiographical time (time as projected in autobiographical narrative) and to contemplate on what it means to artistically express the memory of someone's life.

Like all the films of Tarkovsky, *Mirror* focuses on the very idea of time, but it does so in an even greater degree. It touches upon several aspects of time, including individual and collective history, subjective time, dream time, memory, and the history of arts. Tarkovsky expresses his concern about the common lack of understanding of time in the first scene that follows the prologue. In the dialogue between the doctor and Maria (Aleksei's mother), the problem of time appears to be the main concern of modern civilization:

You know, I fell and found strange things here – roots, bushes… Has it ever occurred to you that plants can feel, know, even comprehend… […] They don't run about like us

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who are rushing, fussing, uttering banalities. That's because we don't trust nature that is

inside us. Always this suspiciousness, haste, and no time to stop and think.

Perhaps Tarkovsky felt an urge to talk about time not only because he wanted to emphasize the

change in its perception in the modern world, but also because he believed that, as an artist, his

"work relies on memory, and is a means of crystallizing it" (Gianvito 45). Remembered time is

what induces self-reflection. And self-reflection would be one of the elements in the

consideration of the spiritual and artistic vision of the world.

Autobiography, in this sense, proves to be the best genre to convey the idea of

memory and self-reflection as seen by the artist. Unlike biography, which widely relies on

different documents and viewpoints, autobiography is in the vast majority of cases based solely

on the author's memory. Cinematic autobiography especially reflects the idea of auteur cinema

in which the author's psyche becomes part of the film's system: "a formal component, the

overriding intelligence organizing the film for our comprehension" (Bordwell, "The Art Cinema

as a Mode of Film Practice" 59). To depict his views on time as a purely subjective affair,

Tarkovsky favours autobiographical memory in which time appears mainly as fragmented and

non-sequential. The film represents remembered time as a gathering of people, objects, and

experiences arising as disjointed images and shots. Tarkovsky also gives great responsibility to

the spectator. However, unlike Eisenstein, who relies on the spectator's intellectual work,

Tarkovsky tries to awaken our emotional side of intelligence which has a direct relation to our

personal feelings and experiences in the past. Thus, to perceive *Mirror* as a whole the viewer

needs to mentally and emotionally recollect all of the individual instances of the film. Then can

the narrative and discursive fabric of the past be consciously created, resulting in the unified

structure of the finished project. For instance, at the end of the episode which shows military

training of young boys Tarkovsky shows a close-up of a red-haired girl who is smiling at the camera. The episode follows Aleksei's story about his first love which he tells to his son Ignat over the phone. However, instead of showing just the image of the girl Tarkovsky unfolds the entire story of military training. The red-haired girl then becomes the fragment of memory, and a starting point for the memory recollection. Tarkovsky relates this process of recollection to the practice of cinema itself:

> Cinema in general is a way of gathering some sort of shattered fragments into a unified whole. A film consists of distinct parts of different colours and textures. It is possible that each part does not make any sense at all individually, if you remove it from its context. It exists only as a whole (qtd. in Skakov 103).

Although there is no narrative harmony and the memories manifest themselves as chaotic elements, randomly recollected by the voice-over narrator and the images of the past, *Mirror* remains comprehensive piece of art. However, its fragmentary and its focus on individual, seemingly autonomous images withdraw the viewers' attention from the narrative and makes them dwell on "icons" more than on the course of a story.

Despite the dynamism of the events it depicts, *Mirror* is an image-led fiction film. It is dominated by its aforementioned atmosphere of stillness. Stories from the past are loosely connected by the portrayal of the protagonists who are projected within the disjointed memory moments. In the meticulous composition of his mise-en-scène, Tarkovsky visually favors non-narrative art forms such as architecture, landscape painting, still life, and portrait painting. The use of portrait paintings in *Mirror* especially demonstrates how the idea of stillness fits into cinema with regards to autobiographical memory and the concept of time. Besides portraits, the

multiple images of mirrors in the film, with the various types of reflections they produce, become a metaphor not only of the past, but of cinema in general. Tarkovsky said: "Anyone who wants can look at my films as into a mirror, in which he will see himself" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 184). Just like a mirror does, the camera frames a particular spatial fragment. And in this fragment, Tarkovsky aims to reflect the image of an individual and the complexity that stands behind the surface. Most shots that involve mirrors capture people reflected in them or, even more often, looking into them. Some of these shots (images of Maria, Ignat, and the doctor's wife) reference classical portraits and explicitly transmit their senses of stillness and immobility, which I would argue play a key role in the cinematic structure of *Mirror*.

The numerous images of mirrors in the film suggest that Tarkovsky wanted to bring our attention to their role in the genre of self-portrait. Without the reflecting surface it is not possible to create a self-portrait. Although self-portraits have existed since mid-medieval times[11], philosophical shift towards human-centered ideals and the access to glass mirrors in the 15th century made it possible for the creation of an actual self-portrait genre in visual arts. Tarkovsky implicitly compares *Mirror* to the first self-portraits of the Renaissance not only by making a direct reference to Leonardo da Vinci's self-portrait (See Fig. 3. 1) but also by paying homage to Parmigianino's *Self-portrait in Convex Mirror* (See Fig. 3. 2) in one of the most extended mirror sequences of the film (See Fig. 3. 3).

[11] In his book *The Self-Portrait : A Cultural History* James Hall traces back the origines of self-portrait to English monk St. Dunstan and his *Self-Portrait Worshipping Christ*, c. 943-57 (Hall 22–24).

Fig. 3. 1

Fig. 3. 2

Fig. 3. 3

Autobiographical memory, which was once considered an internally stored knowledge of linear and coherent life accounts, soon came to be repeatedly questioned by philosophers, psychologists, and writers such as Nietzsche, Bergson, Freud, or, Proust, and

others[12]. They claimed that the conception of time as objectively linear was not sufficient and that our understanding of time is rather tightly connected to our subjective memory of lived experiences. They also argued that autobiography does not exclusively belong to literature, but exists as an everyday phenomenon in its own right. In his analysis of autobiographical time Jens Brockmeier writes that:

> Autobiographical accounts, or fragments of it, are common and elementary practices of the self, neither bound to a particular age, education or social habitus, nor to the act of linguistic form of writing in the narrow sense. Rather, it is in many forms of discourse, oral and written, that we order our experiences, memories, intentions, hopes, desires, fears, and concerns in an autobiographical perspective (53).

Working in the medium of images Tarkovsky continues the tradition of self-portraits represented in visual arts. The direct reference to Leonardo da Vinci's self-portrait (*Portrait of a Man in Red Chalk*, 1512) exemplifies Tarkovsky's projection of his "auteur" self-awareness in the film, as well as his preoccupation mainly with visual aspects of cinematic art.

Unlike autobiographies based explicitly on documentary material, Tarkovsky's *Mirror* tends to keep documentary realism to a minimum. He limits it to newsreel footages which play a significant role in the film and will be discussed later. Other than that *Mirror* is rather an exploration of subjectivity grounded in Tarkovsky's memories of what happened in the past of Russia. Tarkovsky did not want to present his film as a plausible slice of his life which would

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[12] In his article « Time in Autobiography » Berton Pike argues that temporal linearity in autobioraphies of such writers as Locke and Rousseau was oppressive. Therefore, it was questioned by the succeeding philosophies. Pike writes : « The Romantics suggested solutions in two directions: on the one hand, to anchor eternity in the individual consciousness [...], or on the other hand to attempt to transcend time and space altogether as categories of consciousness, [...]. But the nineteenth century generally found a more comfortable resolution of the problem in the concept of History as a progressive cosmic force » (Pike 330).

produce visible evidence in persuading the viewer of the truthfulness of what is told. On the contrary, he tried to avoid using too much documentary material and abandoned his original idea to include episodes containing interviews with his mother (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 129). Though the photographs from his family albums played a significant role in the recreation of costumes, hairstyle, and individual poses, it is not the historical verisimilitude that interested Tarkovsky, but his own aesthetic interpretation of the memory of his past in image form.

In terms of its general timeline, *Mirror* can be said to have three periods. They are united by the disembodied voice of the narrator, who is seen only once. The first period shows the life of a five-year-old Aleksei and his mother before the Second World War. This period is mostly conveyed through Aleksei's dreams as an adult. The second period covers Aleksei's teenage years and World War II. Finally, the present times (presumably the 1970s) is what Johnson and Petrie call "the vantage point from which the narrator moves freely backwards through time" (135). All three periods follow the logic of dreams in which events, people, and objects merge and overlap. The aforementioned documentary newsreels, on the contrary, are presented in their chronological order, from the 1930th through the 1950th. With their inclusion, Tarkovsky provides a clear distinction between subjective time and memory, and the representation of historical facts. Despite its relatively large timeline and the abundance of events happening throughout its duration, the narrative of *Mirror* distils an impression of tranquility, as if its content was part of the same temporal nature. But the film nevertheless lacks a developmental trajectory. The characters remain undeveloped and the events are often repeated. Even the newsreels covering different conflicts over a 20 years period end up suggesting the same idea of indistinct war and suffering.

Mirror's overall impression of stillness can be explained through Tarkovsky's artistic view on the individual order of time in conjunction with his autobiographical account. Instead of dealing with the classical time modalities of past, present, and future, he explores the idea of timelessness and permanence. Unlike in the biographical genre, or in other third person narratives, autobiographical time is complicated by the fact that subjective time is multi-layered and encompasses various existential forms including emotions, perceptions, dreams, desires, etc. Instead of focusing on what happened (events; actions), Tarkovsky is concerned with the spiritual aspect of the past. He bases *Mirror* on its characters' inner worlds. He "[films] the soul" (Martin 129) through "the story of [his hero's] thoughts, memories and dreams…without his (hero's) appearing at all" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 29). Autobiographical time in *Mirror*, however, is rather static. It demonstrates a self-reflective understanding of one's position in time. In this regard the stillness in the film ends up transmitting a melancholic mood about the images of the past. These are the images of the mother, the house, and of the objects in the house, as well as the images of art found in multiple references to the portrait paintings of Leonardo da Vinci, Johannes Vermeer, Caspar David Friedrich, and others.

In his study on autobiographical time psychologist and philosopher Jens Brockmeier argues that the "autobiographical process does not follow chronological time but creates its own time, narrative time" (59). Autobiographical narrative revolves around one protagonist, and it takes into consideration not only actions, but feelings, thoughts, memories, and intentions. In searching for the tools to understand autobiographical time, Brockmeier proposes to look at the structural properties of the narrative process. He distinguished six narrative models of autobiographical time: linear, circular, cyclical, spiral, fragmentary, and

static (Brockmeier 61). In *Mirror,* one can find elements of all these narrative models. However, in my opinion, the cyclical and static models essentially dominate over the other ones.

The cyclical understanding of time was our primary object of discussion in the first chapter, where we have related the cyclical time of Andrei Rublev's icon art to the overall cinematic style of Tarkovsky. It seems that the principles of cyclical time exist in all of Tarkovsky's films, but they play out on different levels. For, example, in *Andrei Rublev*, cyclical time is most apparent at the levels of imagery and mise-en-scène. In *Stalker*, it presents itself at the level of character development with the classical features of a hero's journey, as discussed by Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Campbell 28). In *Mirror*, cyclical time emerges within the dialogues themselves, as well as in the repetition of episodes. For instance, in the dialogue between Ignat's parents, the father accuses his wife (Natalia) of being like his mother (Maria). Ignat himself appears like a prototype of his father and represents the connection between the two artists, Andrei Tarkovsky (the film director) and Arseny Tarkovsky (the poet). The use of the same actors (Natalia and Maria are interpreted by Margarita Terekhova) for different roles can be confusing, especially when watching the film for the first time. But by doing so, Tarkovsky makes a statement that past and present become connected in our consciousness. Just as the present cannot escape the influence of the past in memories and dreams, the past is not possible without the continuous present (at least in the practice of cinema).

Mirrors also play an essential role in the representation of cyclical time in the film imagery. When Natalia looks into a mirror, she sees an old woman. Is this her thinking that she looks like her mother-in-law, or does she see, or rather imagines herself in the future? From the philosophical perspectives of Heinrich Heine and Friedrich Nietzsche, history is famously

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condemned to repeat itself. We all presumably go through similar life path as individuals and as civilization. This is why in *Mirror,* the cyclical model is ultimately connected to the static model of time. The repetition of faces (the use of the same actors for Ignat and Aleksei, as well as for Natalia and Maria), like the repetition of events, creates the sense of stagnation and reinforces the impression of a general lack of development in the plot. Tarkovsky creates a visual impression that nothing dramatic happens with time, and that people remain the same. "You are just like mother" says Aleksei to his wife Natalia.

Despite their interconnection, we can ultimately argue that the static mode of autobiographical time in *Mirror* overpowers the cyclical one. Stillness in the movie occurs at both the content and the formal levels. We have already seen that the film lacks a developmental trajectory. As an autobiographical movie, it forsakes the idea that life has a direction. Although, the main protagonist starts his journey as a young boy and finishes it on his deathbed, we do not see any development in the personality of any of the characters. Tarkovsky had already worked with static character in his first film, *Ivan's Childhood*. Commenting on the character of Ivan, he states: "[Ivan's] character moved me by its intensely dramatic quality, which I found far more convincing than those personalities which are revealed in the gradual process of human development […]. For me the most interesting characters are outwardly static, but inwardly charged with energy by an overriding passion" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 17). Unlike Kris or Hari in *Solaris*, Ivan, like the characters in *Mirror,* is not imbued with a developmental trajectory. Ivan deals with war without any moral considerations. He is presented as a courageous person from the start, and this never changes. *Mirror*, on the other hand, presents us with a narrator possessing an oneiric nature. He tells us about his life as he remembers it, which by nature already deals with events that have already happened. Moreover, stillness emerges in

Mirror on the visual level, in which still shots play essential role in the structural texture of the film. Not only these still shots mostly focus on the image of one character (Maria) but also on inanimate objects (such as a house or things in the house) which by definition cannot have any development in personality.

Describing the static model of autobiographical memory, Brockmeier proposes that narratives in which it dominates often "owe their form to the genre of the tragic" (67). They present us with the still picture as well as the unique idea of a usually catastrophic event, with all actions revolving around it. In our common language, metaphors such as "frozen in time", "as if the clock stopped", "stopped breathing", etc. are used to describe experiences that are similarly out of the ordinary in their uniqueness. Autobiographies based on them are often written or told by people who went through war trauma or concentration camp internment. An American Holocaust analyst Lawrence Langer writes about the narrative accounts of Holocaust survivors:

> If I have discovered anything in my investigation it is that oral Holocaust testimonies are doomed on one level to remain disrupted narratives, not only by the vicissitudes of technology but by the quintessence of the experiences they record. Instead of leading to further chapters in the autobiography of the witness, they exhaust themselves in the telling. They do not function in time like other narratives, since the losses they record raise few expectations of renewal or hopes of reconciliation" (Langer xi).

Tarkovsky did not go through such extreme human experiences. By all accounts his childhood was not out of the ordinary either. However, he often described it as difficult and, to some extent, traumatic. His father Arseny left his family in 1937, when Andrei was only five. And in 1941 he was sent to fight in World War II. In interviews, Andrei Tarkovsky often described the impact of

his missing father on his persona. That impact is shown at the very beginning of *Mirror*, when we see Aleksei's mother Maria sitting on the fence and looking away at the road leading to their house. The voice of the narrator-protagonist comments: "Usually we spotted our people as soon as they appeared from behind a bush in the mid-field. If he turned from the bush towards our house then it was father. If not, it meant it was not father and that father would never come". From that moment on the idea of loss is carried throughout the film and gains various visual characteristics which are found in the images of crying children in the newsreel footages, sadness in the face of Aleksei's mother, or the images of empty house. All of it brings melancholic element in the depiction of childhood in Tarkovsky's films.

The war negatively impacted Tarkovsky's life as well as the lives of all children in the Soviet Union. Tarkovsky's first partially-autobiographical film, *Ivan's Childhood*, deeply contemplates that. Tarkovsky's situation was different from Ivan's. He was evacuated in Yurievets and waited there for the war to end and his father to return home from the warfront. Tarkovsky's generation was too young to serve, but went through tragic deprivation of physical necessities in addition to the trauma caused in so many instances by the absence of a parent. One of the newsreels in *Mirror* comments on the wartime separation of children from their parents. It shows events from the Spanish Civil War in the mid-1930s. The images of the children about to be evacuated to the Soviet Union is emotionally moving, especially in the scene of a father who repeatedly kisses his daughter. This newsreel stock in *Mirror* stands in contrast to another scene in which Aleksei's mother Maria visits a wealthy doctor's wife and sees her cherubic baby dressed in laces and lying in his bed with a happy smile. This wealth and shameless display of ease make Maria sick and she and Aleksei run away from the doctor's house despite his wife's invitation to stay for dinner. In *Ivan's Childhood,* Ivan dies. But Tarkovsky, having survived his

own difficult childhood, internalizes it and self-reflectively makes it the foundation for who he came to be as an adult. Thus scenes that involve childhood are never neutral in Tarkovsky's films. They are always emotionally charged. Tarkovsky's children are shown as suffering and deprived, such as Foma in *Andrei Rublev*, Ivan in *Ivan's Childhood*, or Stalker's daughter Martyshka in *Stalker*. Only in dreams (such as in the famous episode with the horses and apples in *Ivan's Childhood*) are Tarkovsky's children embodying the happiest emotions in his films.

Maya Turovskaya notes that references to Tarkovsky's childhood appear in most of his films and scripts regardless of whether they were realized in the final version or not. Often they involve nature and recall the Bruegel-like scenes made explicit in *Solaris*. Turovskaya suggests that childhood memories are directly connected to Tarkovksy's depiction of the character's inner world and that they enact an influence on his chronotope. She explains: "The 'subject time' into which is fitted this or that aspect of an individual's or a people's history is always, in [Tarkovsky's] work, synchronous with the whole of Time, stretching away in all directions untrammelled by limitations" (Turovskaya 90). In this regard the winter scenes in *Mirror* not only create visual connection between all of Tarkovsky's films, but also refer to childhood as the foundation, and often the predicament behind a person's spirituality and artistic creativity. Tarkovsky mentions this crucial role of childhood for the development of personality in his interviews and his writings. In *Sculpting in Time*, he writes: "If someone tells us of his impressions of childhood, we can say with certainty that we shall have enough material in our hands to form a complete picture of that person" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 57). In Tarkovsky's films childhood is charged with ambiguous emotions. It is difficult, but at the same time a desirable state, especially for the nostalgia it later produces. As a matter of fact in *Mirror* childhood never really goes away. People get older, but childhood remains with them in the

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nostalgic desire to mentally return to it, or even more powerfully in the desire to bring that childhood back to the present. Stephanie Sandler points out that in order to recover from the loss of childhood, Tarkovsky "fills the screen with images of remembered pleasure and vulnerability, most evocatively in pictures of sleeping, dreaming, or barely awake children, their beds draped by lovely curtains and lacy fabrics that seek to shield them from harm or pain" (Sandler 665). *Mirror* represents this through its aforementioned spatio-temporal disruption of the linear narrative logic of character development. The last episode of the film shows little Aleksei and his sister walking with their aged mother (See Fig. 3. 4). By that point in the film, the narrator has died, his mother has gotten old, but the idea of childhood stays intact and appears to somewhat compensate for the loss.

Fig. 3. 4

The impossibility to physically return to the past makes Tarkovsky to rely on the memory that is located in specific places, such as his old house, the objects in the house, or the nature surrounding it. In order to capture the emotional atmosphere of childhood, he gives specific charge to the objects that surrounded his own. Peter King notes that Tarkovsky is meticulous in the portrayal on his childhood house, "with its attention to the small detail of the rural dwelling, with its exploring kittens, billowing curtain, spilt milk, falling objects and

childish tricks" (72). He emphasises that "all of these experiences are so particular in their detail as to be pure memory: they are not stereotypes but singular memories" (King 72). Things like milk jars, dark rooms, curtains and windows often travel from film to film in visually static, almost frozen form. For example, the image of the China set on the patio table in Kris' father's house in *Solaris* visually reminds the cup of tea we see in one of the scenes in *Mirror*. These objects act as anchors for Tarkovsky's aestheticisation of spaces, and especially the spaces of childhood in *Mirror*.

Each individual episode in narrator-protagonist's life explores the geography of memory. That said there are two important spaces in Mirror—the old country house and Aleksei's apartment. The country house is strongly associated with Maria and childhood. Whereas the apartment represents the most recent period of the narrator's life. In both spaces the memory releases itself in an exclusively visual way. For example, when we hear Aleksei's voice talking to his mother on the phone the camera explores the dark rooms of the apartment in a long dolly shot. It focuses on the walls which are decorated with paintings and photographs. Andrei Rublev's *Trinity* is visible hanging from one of the walls. The captions saying in transliteration "Andrei Rublev" suggest that it might be the poster for Tarkovsky's film *Andrei Rublev* which was shown at the 1969 Cannes Film Festival. Despite the conversation between Aleksei and Maria, the scene remains visually static. This stillness is reflected in the walls of the apartment and the slow camera movement that slowly pans across them. The film spends several minutes focusing on that space. Aleksei's and Maria's voices gradually become less important as the main focus transitions to the visual exploration of Tarkovsky's memories. Thus the personal history of Tarkovsky's life becomes condensed in the space of the apartment.

The stillness in the images of the house and the apartment can be compared to the lack of commentary in the newsreel footages interspaced throughout the film. Gathered from many different sources, these footages show geopolitical conflicts that took place in Russia, Berlin, Spain, China, Prague, and Hiroshima. Instead of making connections between the newsreels and the characters, Tarkovsky leaves no comments. He lets the spectators fill in the gaps, implicitly relying on their potential knowledge of the historic events as well as their personal relation to these events. The same happens when we see the dark rooms of the country house or the space of the apartment. The location of the country house in *Mirror* was especially important for Tarkovsky. He wanted to have it build on the exact spot where he lived as a young boy. This location is not much different from other similar areas that can be found across Russia. However, Tarkovsky wanted it to be there so that his memories would be more easily materialized in the images of the film. In the newsreel footage Tarkovsky turns collective memories into personal ones. In the images of the country house, his personal memories become accessible to everyone. And, because Tarkovsky's personal memories have resonated with the memories of the viewers of his film, they (memories) become part of the collective history of Tarkovsky's generation.

The memory of people in *Mirror* is associated with a handful of characters— mother, father, wife, grandmother, and sister. The presence of the protagonist's father is limited to a few short fragments in which he appears only for few minutes. The absence of the father, who as we've seen was literally missing from Tarkovsky's life, manifests itself primarily through the emptiness found in the images of the country house. In her essays "On Grief and Reason, On Poetry and Film" and "The Absent Father, the Stillness of Film", Stephanie Sandler argues that the absence of the father demonstrates the vulnerability of domestic space. The spectacle of a

burning barn or of the falling ceiling in the house are the main images of destruction. But Sandler

argues that the burning house and the falling ceiling nevertheless transmit the idea of stillness.

She writes: "At key moments, absence is figured when motion stops, allowing the film to

approach ideas they are most prohibited touching. Stillness brings the film closest to the

inexpressible: it allows the taboo topic or person to be contemplated and studied, if incompletely

understood". While Sandler is mainly concerned with the absence of the father in the film and

the loss associated with his character, I would add that stillness is also an attempt to imprint the

beauty and memory of Tarkovsky's mother. Indeed Tarkovsky mentioned in interviews that

Mirror is a film about his mother (Gianvito 112). He has based its sequence of events not only

on his memory, but also on interviews with his mother and on her photographs. Thus it is not

only the loss of the father that Tarkovsky expresses in the stillness of the film, but also his desire

to immortalize his mother. The film, thus, is an attempt to overcome corporeal reality through the

eternal truth of art. The stillness form not only reveals the subject of a missing father, it also

creates a condition which allows the viewer to enter a spiritual mode of contemplation and think,

however fleetingly, about eternity.

The most memorable and visually vivid images of *Mirror* are associated with the

figure of the mother (whether it be Aleksei's mother Maria or Ignat's mother Natalia—both

being acted by the same actress Margarita Terekhova). The figure of the mother is involved in all

episodes of the film starting with the opening scene, in which Maria is sitting on the fence, and

ending on the image of aged Maria, who is acted by Tarkovsky's real mother. The images of

Maria are the most visually explicit images of motherhood in the film. Most of them recall still

photographic shots. Perhaps such an impression of stillness comes from Tarkovsky's reliance on

family photographs as the base for the film's visual truthfulness to his own childhood. The

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stillness conveyed in Maria's images directly reflect the overall melancholic nature of *Mirror*. It also reminds Roland Barthes' book *Camera Lucida*, written as an extended contemplation on a precious photograph of his mother.

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes describes his mother and how he desperately tried to recollect her image after she died. Barthes was close to his mother until her death in 1977. He writes that when he went through some if his mother's photographs none of them could bring the true feeling of her beloved face. Instead, they only partially reminded him of her image. He said: "According to these photographs, sometimes I recognized a region of her face, a certain relation of nose and forehead, the movement of her arms, her hands. I never recognized her except in fragments, which is to say that I missed her being, and that therefore I missed her altogether" (65–66). Finally, he rediscovered his mother as a little girl depicted in what he called the Winter Garden Photograph. Barthes compares this experience to the one Marcel Proust described in the memory of his grandmother: "when leaning over to take of his boots, there suddenly came to him his grandmother's face, 'whose living reality I was experiencing for the first time, in involuntary and complete memory'" (Barthes, *Camera Lucida* 70). Although *Camera Lucida* came to existence as the results of Barthes meditation over a series of photographs, he explains that only he had meaningful access to the Winter Garden photograph. For everyone else, Barthes says, it would be "nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the 'ordinary'" (73). Tarkovsky also enjoyed a close relationship with his mother, especially when he was a child. He comments on her heroic nature—a woman who was able to survive the war and provide for her children. He said: "The best things I have in my life, I owe to my mother" (Boyadzhieva 84). No doubt that some of the photographs that Tarkovsky used as a foundation for his film imagery had exclusive personal meaning to him.

Two photographs of Maria Tarkovskaya in Zavrazh'e in 1932 especially resemble the image of

Maria in *Mirror* (See Fig. 3. 5 and 3. 6). However, it is important to remember that the film does

not deal with the original photographs directly and involves the recreation of Tarkovsky's past in

form of cinematic staging. One of the achievements of Tarkovsky in *Mirror* is that he was able to

condense his personal feelings and memory into the artificially constructed cinematic material.

Images of *Mirror* are suffused with melancholy, as if we were viewing the pictures of our own

past. The universal longing for childhood appears in series of images of the mother, especially

her beautiful face.

Fig. 3. 5

Fig. 3. 6

The predominance of the mother figure among other family relatives in Tarkovsky's films, particularly in *Ivan's Childhood* and *Mirror*, illustrates the object of Tarkovsky's affection. Although there are many women in Tarkovsky's films, the ideal of Tarkovsky's woman is a nurturing mother. Even in *Stalker*, the main protagonist's wife acts as a mother for both their daughter Martyshka and her husband. A woman who does not have motherly qualities is conversely depicted as threatening. A good example of the disruptive female character in Tarkovsky's cinema would be Eugenia in *Nostalghia*. Gorchakov is confused by Eugenia's personality and does not know how to treat her. In response to his confusion, Eugenia pulls her blouse on one side and shows him her breast: "What are you all after?", she asks. "These? Here! But not you. You're a kind of saint." Eugenia offers herself to Gorchakov as a sexual object, but she understands that he is really looking for a mother figure. The half-naked portrait she composes in that moment references Piero della Francesca's fresco of *Madonna del Parto* (1457), an iconic depiction of the Virgin Mary shown as pregnant (See Fig. 3. 7 and 3. 8), which Gorchakov and Eugenia went to see at the beginning of the film.

Fig. 3. 7

Fig. 3. 8

Scholars such as Johnson, Petrie, and Robinson note that Tarkovsky's women are problematic in the sense that they are always dependent on men and are consequently shown in relationship to them as wives, daughters, sisters, lovers, or mothers. Johnson and Petrie state that "[b]y idealizing women and focusing on their special power to offer emotional and physical comfort to the distraught and suffering heroes […] and on their miraculous child-bearing ability—both unattainable to men—Tarkovsky does not allow women a normal range of thoughts and feelings" (Johnson and Petrie 246). Indeed, Tarkovsky's representation of women is quite different from that of men. Tarkovsky's interest in female characters echoes the one of Michelangelo Antonioni who especially loved filming women. Antonioni stated that the psychology of women is compelling because women are "more instinctive, more sincere… They express themselves better and more precisely" (qtd. in Rohdie 183). Tarkovsky, on the other hand, was primarily concerned with the "spiritual regeneration expressed in the image of a woman" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 220). The most vivid example of such women is Hari in *Solaris*. As she gradually builds up her existence, she also helps Kris to overcome his own moral conundrums.

Women in Tarkovsky's films are idealized not only because they "offer emotional and physical comfort" to men. In women Tarkovsky also sees the power of spiritual awakening, similar to the one he finds in art. He connects this power to women's ability to create new life, and thus potentiality. In Tarkovsky's films, women are associated with physical birth as much as with the idea of spiritual rebirth. The images of pregnant women and nurturing mothers are connected to multiple elements symbolizing the idea of rebirth. Those include images of the seasonal changes of nature, of pagan rituals, of symbolism associated with flowing water, etc. Tarkovsky compares the process of creativity to the idea of birth. In the creative process the piece of art is born like a child. (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 43, 97). Each individual, according to Tarkovsky, has to be born not only physically, but spiritually as well. Jeremy Mark Robinson compares Tarkovsky's view with the one found in Goethe's *Faust* as well as the Renaissance alchemist of Prague, Paracelsus, "who said that the second, spiritual birth had to occur in the Mother; one has to die to / in the Mother first" (309). Character's such as Andrei Rublev (*Andrei Rublev*), Kris Kelvin (*Solaris*), Stalker (*Stalker*), and Gorchakov (*Nostalghia*), demonstrate their struggle in the rebirthing process. They all have a female character by their side who is helping them to go through this process of spiritual rebirth.

That said, at first glance the idea of rebirth is absent from *Mirror*. As noted earlier, the film lacks a developmental trajectory. The film lacks such a developmental element in its narrative that we can find in *Andrei Rublev*, *Solaris,* or *Stalker*. Characters remain undeveloped and the narrative randomly wanders from place to place. However, it can be argued that the film in itself represents the idea of spiritual rebirth in which the image of the mother plays a redeeming or cathartic role. The subject of the rebirth is Tarkovsky himself as well as presumably the viewers who are watching the film. In *Sculpting in Time* Tarkovsky writes about

the feeling of reconciliation that descended upon him when he finished *Mirror*: "Childhood memories which for years had given me no peace suddenly vanished, as if they had melted away, and at last I stopped dreaming about the house where I had lived so many years before" (128). A similar response was given by early Soviet viewers who admitted that they had experienced a feeling of emotional relief after watching the film (Synessios 3–4). Most of the film's redeeming qualities can be explained through its contemplative nature. The images of the mother, the house, and the nature have universal meaning. They are immortalized and likened to classical art.

To convey the idea of immortality, Tarkovsky tries to render a sense of what we can call timelessness in the context of this study. Timelessness in *Mirror* is associated with the absence of motion in the images of Maria and the images depicting the spaces of childhood. It is certainly paradoxical that Tarkovsky would turn to the idea of still art while praising cinema for its ability to manifest time through movement. Every single one of Tarkovsky's shots does contain some type of movement, and yet stillness dominates *Mirror's* imagery. The stillness in these shots transmits the melancholy of loss with its strange beauty, something that Tarkovsky strives to immortalize through the medium of cinema in the same way that early photographs were trying to capture the fleeting expression of a human face. Photography-like images of the mother appear as if outside of time. Despite them being subject to the movement of the camera, still images of the mother become cinematic imitation of stillness. Even if they are not absolutely still (and they never are), they pay homage to stillness and photography. Whenever Tarkovsky chooses to show Maria's face, the images seem to escape the narrative and become motionless. Similarly to the way Gilles Deleuze describes the affection image, Mary Ann Doane argues that the cinematic imitation of stasis happens when the forward movement of the narrative is disrupted by the close-up in which the face of a person is enlarged and the space is frozen by the

expense of the movement. She gives the example of Greta Garbo's face in Rouben Mamoulian's *Queen Christina* (1933). In the final shot, the slow tracking shows Garbo's face in an extremely tight close-up, capturing Cristina's mask-like face expression (See Fig. 3. 9). Doane comments on that scene:

> All movement is marginalized, signaled only by the wisps of hair and collar blowing in the wind, but the face itself has the inertness of marble. In its tightest position, the close-up reveals a face whose mobility is not compromised by the slightest tic, thwarting even the blink of an eye […] Here we are confronted with the cinema's mimicry of photography […] The close-up in this instance blocks conventional access to interiority provided by the face while making that interiority more mysterious and desirable through its unreadability, its refusal to be written across the features (Doane, "Real Time: Instantaneity and the Photographic Imaginary" 32).

Fig. 3. 9

Maria's face can be compared to the face of Garbo in this example. *Mirror* starts with a slow panning shot similar to the one found in *Queen Christina's* final episode. The camera focuses on Maria, who is sitting on the fence, and slowly zooms towards her figure. However, unlike in

Mamoulian's film, where Garbo's face is clearly exposed to the camera, Maria is initially

looking away from the camera (See Fig. 3. 10). Instead of zooming into a facial close-up, the

camera passes her head and opens the viewer to the wild field with grass and trees. As Maria

contemplates this panorama, the viewer is offered an equal opportunity to contemplate the beauty

of Tarkovsky's film imagery. Only after that do we see Maria's face in a close-up shot (Fig. 3.

11). Her facial expression is neutral and hard to read. This only enforces the contemplative

scenery of the natural landscape of the preceding shot. The use of the close-up, Doane writes,

"seems to exemplify a desire to stop the film, to grab hold of something that can be taken away,

to transfer the relentless temporality of the narrative's unfolding to a more manageable

temporality of contemplation." When Maria's face appears in the subsequent shot, we not only

can apprehend the direction of her gaze, but also contemplate the beauty of her face which is

captured in the stillness of the shot.

 Fig. 3. 10

 Fig. 3. 11

The stillness of the portrait-like shots offers an opportunity to contemplate the expression of Maria's face. At the same time, it puts the viewer into a contemplative mode. Discussing the interplay between stillness and movement, Laura Mulvey states that when it comes to the presence of women on screen, they "[tend] to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" (Mulvey 63). Whenever we see the main female protagonists in *Mirror*, whether it be Maria or Natalia, the movement of the camera does stop in their instant of contemplation. But Maria's image cannot be limited only to such an erotic or the very least sensual characteristic. She is much less eroticised than Natalia. For instance, when Natalia comes to the mirror and looks at her face, lips and cheeks, she is predominantly concerned with her attractiveness. When her gaze turns towards the camera, her face, with half-closed eyes and open mouth, attempts to look seductive (See Fig. 3. 12). The still images of Maria, on the contrary, do not have much of an erotic element to them. From the first shots of the film Maria is presented as a wife who is waiting for her husband to come back from the war. In her conversation with the doctor she rejects his flirting. When the doctor leaves, Tarkovsky shows Maria in a close-up shot in which her face

appears serious and nostalgic, similar to what we could see before the doctor's appearance (See Fig. 3. 13).

Fig. 3. 12

Fig. 3. 13

Through the opposition of the two different female personalities of Maria and Natalia, Tarkovsky's contrasts different places in *Mirror*. Despite being embodied by the same actress, these two women character occupy different times and different spaces of the film. While Maria is primarily associated with the old house and the nature around it, Natalia is placed in an apartment located in the city. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Tarkovsky was fond of the idea of a life surrounded by nature. He associated city with the tyrannical deprivation of space and the loss of the essential need of an individual to "simply enjoy watching nature" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 212). Thus the space of the apartment in *Mirror* is one of conflicts. It

is in the apartment that Natalia constantly argues with her husband. It is in the apartment that

they watch the newsreels that include footage from the Spanish Civil war, the siege of

Leningrad, and the death of Hitler. Natasha Synessios notes that the war footages are cut up into

fragments evoking "staccato, sharp, confused, erratically moving" images (Synessios 11–12).The

same sharpness and snappiness is found in Natalia's voice when she chastises Aleksei or Ignat.

In the apartment we also witness the scene of physical violence between the Spanish family who

visit Natalia and Aleksei. When the daughter of the Spanish couples starts dancing to a song, her

father slaps her, abruptly cutting off the music.

Doane writes: "the very rapidity of changing images in film is potentially

traumatic to the spectator and allows the cinema to embody something of the restructuration of

modern perception" (Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* 15). The disturbing images in

the apartment space of *Mirror* represent Tarkovsky's criticism towards modern temporality,

when individuals are mainly "involved in dynamic outward activity for the sake of a 'progress'"

(Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 232). When Natalia spills the contents of her purse, she blames

herself for constantly being in a hurry. This episode echoes the doctor's comment on the

perception of time in people who are always in a rush and do not trust the nature inside them.

During the argument with Aleksei, Natalia is mostly looking into the mirror or at her reflection

in the window. However, unlike the newsreel footage, which is full of rapid movement, Natalia

is shown in still close-up shots. There is no rapidly changing images that would explicitly reflect

the idea of mechanic temporality and of the conflict between two characters. Despite the lack of

movement in Natalia's images, Tarkovsky's criticism of modern time perception is still apparent.

It is present in Natalia's face and the way the camera treats her appearance.

Jean Epstein noted in his early writing on cinema *Bonjour Cinéma* (1921) that the camera work in cinema has a powerful capacity to connect the body of the spectator to what is happening on the screen. Malcolm Turvey explains Epstein's idea: "For Epstein the effects of camera mobility on the spectator are unambiguously located in the corporeal density of the spectator's body" (Turvey 34). If the actions on the screen are followed by the camera, the movement becomes unnoticeable because we, as spectators, will also follow that movement. Cinema and media theorist Vivian Sobchack points out that "the film's body functions like our own, evolving through its perceptive activity an expressed bodily style of being in a world" (Sobchack 209). Only if there is a discordance between the narrative and the camera movement does new meanings arise due to the inconsistency in camera mobility and the spectator's perception of movement. When Natalia walks between the apartment's rooms, the camera diligently follows her. When she stops to look in the mirror, the camera also stops and the viewer examines her face just like she does. In this case, the close-up does not interrupt the narrative flow of the film. It does not, in Doane's words, "exemplify a desire to stop the film, to grab hold of something that can be taken away, to transfer the relentless temporality of the narrative's unfolding to a more manageable temporality of contemplation" (Doane, "The Close-Up" 97). Instead, the close-up here is a mere continuation of the action which flows despite the disruption of movement that the stillness of the close-up could potentially induce.

The sequences of Aleksei's childhood, which are tightly connected to the portrait-like images of Maria, differ in the movement of the camera as well. Unlike the camera movements in the apartment sequence, which yields to the main narrative flow, the camera in the sequences of Aleksei's childhood follows its own logic and can be perceived as a separate entity. For instance, when Maria tells her children that the neighbour's barn is on fire, everyone in the

room leaves to go watch the fire. However, the camera remains in place for several more moments, showing the kitchen table. Then, it slowly pans out and again stops on the dirty mirror that reflects the fire and the children who are watching it. It then picks up speed and pans out of the dark room in the direction where everyone is standing. The camera in this episode clearly represents the narrator whose presence is invisible. It is projected through the point of view of the camera. Later, in the apartment episode, the invisible narrator is once again represented through the camera which glides in a tracking shot through the rooms. And later again, when Maria and Aleksei walk home from the doctor's house, the camera leaves them as Aleksei walks into the dark house and pans to the side to show the curtains which are moved by a gust of wind. It then catches up with Aleksei's movement only to lose it again in the following shot in favour of a mirror at the back of the room. The invisible presence in the house can be interpreted as the personification of memory which as we know does not follow a linear flow of time. It remains in a different temporality as if wanting and holding back the movement of the narrative. As Stephanie Sandler notes that the paradox of stillness in Mirror exists because "stillness realizes as physical motion with no obvious destination". The independent camera never stops moving; however, when it deviates from the narrative, it creates a temporal vacuum which can be accordingly described as stillness. Tarkovsky connects the images of the mother to the memorable spaces of childhood with the idea and the visual form of stillness. Whenever the camera separates from the story, the spectator is brought back to the idea of stillness, which is initially introduced in the still photography-like shots of Maria we've mentioned before. The mother, then, ceases to be a filmic character, and becomes an object of contemplation, along with the house, nature, and the other spaces of childhood (See Fig. 3. 14 and 3. 15).

Fig. 3. 14

Fig. 3. 15

The essence of stillness in *Mirror* is the observation of an image that leads to a

state of aesthetic contemplation. The spectator is put in an observational mode in those instances

that seem to be independent from the overall narrative movement. The stillness of those portrait-

like shots, intermingled with the moving images, introduces the temporality of stillness inside the

temporality of motion. This stillness is aimed not at capturing specific moments in the past, like a

documentary would, but to illuminate the spirit of the depicted past, or its memory. Tarkovsky

allows slight movements inside the still shots instead of completely freezing the time within

them. The stillness that thus becomes slightly *temporal* creates a rift in the boundary between the

subject and its representation. According to Tarkovsky, cinema, unlike photography, can

reconcile existence and representation by showing the real flow of time. Cinema provides for the

observation of life as it flows within time, overcoming the alienating mechanism of the technical reproduction. In *Mirror*, Tarkovsky shows that when we remember an image from the past, we remember it in the present. When we look at the still portraits of Maria, her face expression and her pose are immobile, but her hair moves under the wind, and her eyes blink. These images are not the snapshots of the past, instead, their stillness exists in the present moment of memory about the past. "In the process of memory […] the 'now' is as important as the 'then'. Memory is a relationship between pasts and a particular present." (Radstone 199). On the one hand, Maria's appearance is a facsimile of a real person (Margarita Terekhova) whose presence on the screen represents past events. On the other hand, Tarkovsky transforms her performance in front of the camera into an ongoing *presentness* which is withdrawn from the past, and made into a spiritual act of remembering. Images of Maria thus acquire the characteristics of timelessness which Tarkovsky saw in classical paintings.

Tarkovsky deliberately compares Maria's images to Leonardo da Vinci's painting *Ginevra de' Benci* (1474–8), a well-known portrait   aristocrat in 15th-century Florence. The painting appears in one of the most emotional episodes of the film—the return of Aleksei's father from the war. Aleksei and Aleksei's sister run to embrace their father. Before showing the embracing family, Tarkovsky shows Maria, who is standing not far from the rest of the family (See Fig. 3. 16). Then he shows the face of the son (See Fig. 3. 17), and after that we see Leonardo da Vinci's painting (See Fig. 3. 18).

Fig. 3. 16

Fig. 3. 17

Fig. 3. 18

The apparition of the painting following the shot of Aleksei's face implies that the image of the

painting is taking place in the boy's thoughts, in his memory or imagination. He was flipping

through a book about Leonardo da Vinci in the preceding shots (later, the same book appears in

Aleksei's apartment). Aleksei's face is alert and scared, whereas Maria looks neutral and even indifferent.

Tarkovsky admired Leonardo Da Vinci's art and compared it to the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and Leo Tolstoy—artists who according to him had an "amazing capacity to examine the object from outside, standing back, looking from above the world" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 108). Women in Tarkovsky's films can somewhat remind us of motherly figures in Leonardo da Vinci's paintings. Sigmund Freud wrote that it was the memory of Leonardo's mother "that drove him at once to create a glorification of motherhood" (qtd. in Williams 155). The same could be applied to Tarkovsky. Jeremy Mark Robinson finds that both Tarkovsky and da Vinci were attracted to the idea of doubles in character representation. He compares da Vinci's twin mothers in *Virgins of the Rocks* (1483-86) to Maria and Natalia in *Mirror*[13], whereas two mothers in *Virgin and Child with St. Anne* (1510), for their part, resemble women in *Nostalghia* as well as in *Mirror* (Robinson 245–46). The similarity between Ginevra and Maria is indeed striking. Their hairstyles and even their faces have much in common. It is especially noticeable in Maria's appearance at the beginning of the film, when Maria watches the doctor leave her house (See Fig. 3. 19 and 3. 20).

 Fig. 3. 19

[13]When Aleksey's son Ignat flips through Leonardo's images, he stops at *Virgins of the Rocks* and looks at it for a few seconds.

Fig. 3. 20

It was important for Tarkovsky to make a comparison of faces. He crops

Leonardo da Vinci's painting and brings Ginevra's face forward. Similarly, Maria's shot is

blurred in the background and has a sharp focus on her face. The juxtaposition of the painting

and Maria's face creates a pictorial association between two feminine figures. Through their

visual likeness, Tarkovsky compares their inner characters. He especially wanted to emphasize

what he perceived as the feminine ambiguity. In *Sculpting in Time* he writes about Ginevra's

painting: "It is not possible to say what impression the portrait finally makes on us. It is not even

possible to say definitely whether we like the woman or not, whether she is appealing or

unpleasant…There is something inexpressibly beautiful about her and at the same time repulsive,

fiendish" (108). The character of the mother needed to be a complex character as well; this is

why Tarkovsky never gives the viewer a definitive understanding of Maria's character. It is

impossible to define her as either a good or a bad person. Maria is "beyond good and evil"— she

is just a mother.

Through Leonardo da Vinci's portrait Tarkovsky introduces another element of

timelessness into the film imagery. Tarkovsky writes that the artistic image is an image that

"stretches out into infinity, and leads to the absolute" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 104). "[It] is to

be a kind of detector of infinity […] towards which our reason and our feelings go soaring, with joyful, thrilling hast" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 108). Tarkovsky believed that the sense of infinity in art is brought about by the completeness of the image, its complexity and the sense that it possesses an essence which is at once immediate and ever-elusive. Tarkovsky found such completeness in Leonardo da Vinci's paintings and tried to juxtapose them with the face of the mother in order to imbue her with a sense of immortality. In Turovskaya's book we read Tarkovsky's words about his inability to accept the idea that his mother will one day die. He says: "I will protest and shout that she is immortal. I want to convince others of her individuality and uniqueness"(61). The impetus that led to Tarkovsky's *Mirror* project was his desire to analyse his mother's character in such a way as to prove her immortality. Immortality was for Tarkovsky the absolute truth and reaching it was his goal as an artist. He states: "The true artist always serves immortality, striving to immortalise the world and man within the world" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 168). I would argue that in order to achieve the idea of immortality depicted in Maria's face, Tarkovsky also juxtaposes the stillness of the portrait painting with the still images of the mother. The structure of the images, then, becomes more complex. Besides the specific organization of the space (ambiguity and complexity in color, lighting, mise-en-scène) Tarkovsky brings up the temporal aspect of infinity in which stillness, as we have seen, plays a crucial role.

There are two defining ideas that are applicable to Tarkovsky's films—observation and contemplation. In Tarkovksy's understating, observation is a defining principle of cinema. It opens up the possibility for the image to grasp truth and bring us spiritually closer to the divine. "For the cinema image is essentially the observation of a phenomenon passing through time […] The cinema image […] is basically observation of life's facts within time,

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organized according to the pattern of life itself, and observing its time laws" (Tarkovsky &

Hunter-Blair 67–68). Time in cinema, according to Tarkovsky, plays an essential role in

allowing observation to take place because it projects actual life which was caught on the screen.

He finds an example of life observation in Japanese poetry. However, unlike Eisenstein, who

saw the syllabic metric of the haiku as an ideal basis for the conception of montage[14], Tarkovsky

perceived the three lines of haiku as a unified, given whole. It is the idea of wholeness that

attracted Tarkovsky in haiku, as well as in the films of Akira Kurosawa for that matter. If the

image becomes a symbol, its meanings should be unlimited and inexhaustible. They should not

be reducible to allegories, parables or ideologies, but reflect the complex totality of life.

Observation in Tarkovsky's films is brought about through the composition of the

shots. Often he emphasizes the significance of each separate frame by long takes, slow camera

movement, or by focusing on the stillness of a scene. In *Mirror*, Tarkovsky points at the

reluctance of the modern people to slow down and spend time to observe the flow life. His films,

in this sense, are opportunities to engage in the philosophical practice of observation. As we

know Tarkovsky purposefully focuses on scenes of nature, of empty houses, or of simple

everyday objects; their symbolic meanings always being too broad to draw definitive conclusions

on their narrative function. In this sense the display of classical paintings on the screen can be

understood as Tarkovsky's attempt to compare the practice of film spectatorship watching to a

museum visit. His films purposefully offer a refuge from the pace of modern life in a highly

urbanized world. Although one can point to specific semiotic meanings in classical paintings,

Tarkovsky's imagery invites us to look further than that. In the sequence where *Ginevra de'*

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[14] In "Cinematographic Principles and Ideogram" Sergei Eisenstein compares haiku to ideograms saying that both provide "a means for the laconic imprinting of an abstract concept" (Eisenstein, *Film Form* 31). Eisenstain calls haiku and ideograms "shot lists" or "montage phrases" in which the "combination of two or three details of a material kind yields a perfectly finished representation of another kind-psychological" (Eisenstein, *Film Form* 32).

Benci painting appears, he deliberately cuts out the juniper tree on the canvas behind the image of Ginevra and puts the emphasis on her face.[15] The face projects no symbolic meaning, but reflects a human character and emotions[16].

The connection between the idea of observation and the character of Maria is brought through the combination of the stillness within the frame, the slowness of the camera movement, and the framed object of the painting. Several vivid episodes depicting such an arrangement are shown within the first ten minutes of the film. When the family leaves to watch the fire, the camera lags behind and stops on the shadowy interior of the kitchen. For no apparent reason an empty glass bottle falls off the table and rolls on the floor. What does that mean, one might ask? Tarkovsky's answer would be that there is no symbolism at all here. All we are shown is the observation of the scene itself, which can presumably be equated with the memory of the invisible narrator. In the preceding episode, after the doctor leaves and Maria walks back to the house, we see two small children who eat at the table and play with a cat. Then the camera slowly pans through the complete darkness of the room to the figure of the mother who stands motionlessly in the far corner and looks straight at us (See Fig. 3. 21). She then walks away, and the camera lags behind her through the beautiful image out the window (See Fig. 3. 22). By the time the camera reaches Maria, she is already sitting behind the next window, again looking straight at us (See Fig. 3. 23). She turns her head toward the window and the camera pans outside into the yard by the house (See Fig. 3. 24). In this shot, the perspectives of Maria and of the spectators merge into one, as they're all oriented toward the scenery outside of the house.

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[15]According to Maike Vogt-Luerssen, the juniper tree behind Ginevra's head stands as a symbol of sorrow, pain and loss in the Middle Ages, or symbol for chastity in the Renaissance (Maike Vogt-Luerssen: Die Sforza III: Isabella von Aragon undihr Hofmaler Leonardo da Vinci, 2010, p. 76.)

[16] In Deleuze's understanding, close-up abstracts the face from all spatio-temporal coordinates. He writes that a close-up of a face "implies a change in dimention, this is an absolute change : a mutation of movement which ceases to be translation in order to becomes expression" (Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 96).

Fig. 3. 21

Fig. 3. 22

Fig. 3. 23

Fig. 3. 24

The sequence reminds us of Kris' home video in *Solaris*, in which Tarkovsky alternates moving and still shots of Kris and Kris' family members. However, unlike in *Solaris* which juxtaposes stillness and movement through a montage compilation, the sequence described above is done in one continuous shot. Here the still images represent not as much the memory of a person as they do Tarkovsky's principle of observation itself. Despite the continuous camera movement, the perception of stillness brought by the immobile figure of Maria, by the house, and by the objects in the house, dominates. The camera and the invisible narrator, along with the viewer, become *one subject* in the act of observation. Whereas Maria, the house, and the nature are exhibited as objects to observe. Tarkovsky transmits the traditional cinematic space of images into a space in which cinematic art is compared to classical art of classical painting.

But Tarkovsky makes the idea of observation in *Mirror* into something even more complex. Observation in Tarkovsky's films is not the ultimate objective. It invites the spectator to delve into a deeper level of awareness which can be equated with contemplation. Unlike the act of observation, which involves merely looking at something, contemplation presupposes a profound thinking about something, a reflective activity. In the Greek Platonic tradition, contemplation is considered the most critical component for reaching *henosis* (Greek word for mystical "oneness", "union" or "unity"). In the Eastern philosophical tradition contemplation refers to a state of meditative consciousness, or *Samadhi* (in Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism). In the meditative absorption or trance, the mind of the contemplating person becomes still so that the awareness of the present moment can intensify. This is somewhat similar to the understanding of contemplation in Christianity. The content-free mind of the contemplating person directs them towards the awareness of God as a living reality. The Catholic Church's

theologian St. Thomas Aquinas wrote: "It is requisite for the good of the human community that there should be persons who devote themselves to the life of contemplation" (Pieper 45). In the tradition of Orthodox Christianity contemplation (*theoria*) means to have the Vision of God or to see God. It can be reached through the practice of asceticism (*Hesychasm*). *Hesychasm* denies the possibility to use logic or rational thinking in order to understand God; instead, it proposes that the contemplation of God can be archived only through actual experience.

Andrei Rublev, *Stalker,* and especially the last two Tarkovsky films (*Nostalghia* and *Sacrifice*) depict characters that strive for a higher, austere spirituality. Andrei takes the vow of silence. Domenico in *Nostalghia* locks himself and his family in their house for seven years. Alexander burns his house in an act of sacrifice. Tarkovksy was seeking spirituality himself as an artist, and was openly trying to project it through his films. He believed that "art is born and takes hold wherever there is a timeless and insatiable longing for the spiritual, for the ideal" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 38). Tarkovsky himself went through much emotional pain, suffering, and humiliation, while making and releasing his films, to such an extent that some came to call him a "martyred artist" (Johnson and Petrie 3). Robert Bird proposed that Tarkovsky's mysticism reflected his desire to "chase the genie of spirituality back into the bottle of modernity by using the most modern of the arts" (Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky* 13). The idea of spirituality then not only manifests itself through the spiritual journey of the characters in the films; it also shines, so to speak, through the film imagery in general. With the specific treatment of cinematic temporality (such as long takes, lack of dynamism in narrative development, and the disruption of cinematic movement with the still shots) Tarkovsky brings the viewer into a contemplating mode, turning his cinema itself into a contemplative practice that opens up the possibility for spiritual experience.

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As noted earlier, we do not see any characters in *Mirror* going through a process of spiritual rebirth. The idea of contemplation is rather brought by the intense distortion of spatio-temporal realities. Multiple mirrors in the film reflect literal physical spaces and, at the same time, they reflect the other, spiritual side of the world. Similarly to the icons in Andrei Rublev, they reflect the idea of the sublime, and by doing so they allegorically point at the contemplative nature of Tarkovsky's films. Contemplation is a broad term and encompasses various religious and non-religious practices such as meditation, artistic improvisation, prayer, yoga, visualization, storytelling, and so on. In Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, contemplation tends to lean towards melancholy. Different in its definition from nostalgia, melancholy signifies Tarkovsky's longing not as much as for the concrete past of his childhood, but for the spiritual experience in itself. Tarkovsky realizes his memory of the past as the contemplative practice of an artist for who melancholy is more of an aesthetic emotion than the state of emotional depression.

The history of visual arts is profuse in the depiction of melancholy. The famous engraving *Melencolia I* (1514) by Albrecht Dürer is perhaps the most discussed and the most influential piece of acedia within the Western tradition of visual arts (See Fig. 3. 25). Not surprisingly Dürer had a significant influence on Tarkovsky. In *Ivan's Childhood*, we see Dürer's *Apocalypse* in great detail. Ivan compares the horsemen of *Apocalypse* to Nazi motorcyclists. The idea of the end of the world returns in Tarkovsky's last film *Sacrifice*, in which melancholic motives are primarily represented in the images of nature—massive landscapes that recall the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich—and the dry tree by Alexander's house. The art historian Erwin Panofsky wrote that "the influence of Dürer's *Melencolia I*—the first representation in which the concept of melancholy was transplanted from the plane of scientific and pseudo-scientific folklore to the level of art—extended all over the European

continent and lasted for more than three centuries" (qtd. in Daniel 39). For the first time in

history melancholy was not portrayed as a simple pathology or an imbalance of the humors, but

as a dignifying sentiment in the mind of an artist. Dürer's engraving, which glorified

melancholia, demonstrated the need for Renaissance society to turn towards humanism. Erwin

Panofsky points out that "this humanistic glorification of melancholy entailed, and even implied,

another phenomenon: the humanistic ennoblement of the planet Saturn […] It is this new and

most humanistic conception of the melancholy and 'Saturnine' genius that found expression in

Dürer's engraving" (Panofsky 166–67). Panofsky notes that Dürer's engravings have eminently

personal connotations. *Melencolia I* not only expresses the Renaissance value of intellectual and

aesthetic activity that is found in melancholic temperament. It also personifies Dürer's personal

melancholia. Similarly, Tarkovsky's films can be seen as the manifestations of Tarkovsky's own

metaphysical contemplation, which he called "observation of life". In *Sculpting in Time*,

observation of life primarily means the observation of patterns of life that are happening in time.

However, the "observation-image" is also an image of metaphysical contemplation, one that not

only deals with the present time but involves mental time travel to the memory world of the past.

Fig. 3. 25

Solaris would probably be the first among Tarkovsky's films to projects melancholia in a visually explicit form. Its representation of winter, influenced by Bruegel's *Hunters in the Show,* has a great visual resemblance with the images of winter in *Mirror*. Likewise, the space of the library on Solaris space station visually reminds us Dürer's *Melencolia I*. Just like in Dürer's work, which combines representation of different pictorial traditions that dealt with melancholia, Tarkovsky's library merges together objects from different epochs. Piles of books, sculptures, drawings and paintings on the walls represent Tarkovsky's reliance on previous artistic traditions as well as his nostalgic disposition toward classical art. Moreover, the idea of melancholy in the library is expressed at the level of spatial composition: it is found in the placement of geometrical objects within the library room. Tsu-Chung Su discusses that Panofsky directly associated geometrical objects with the idea of melancholia. Su notes that the objects of geometry in Dürer are symptomatic expressions of melancholia and that they "capture the aura of melancholia" (Su 157). Predominance of circular forms in the library, in such objects as globes, chandeliers, round furniture and round walls, refer to the idea of the roundness of planets, and of Earth in particular since the library was built in the space station to remind its occupants of life on Earth (See Fig. 3. 26).

Fig. 3. 26

Another important indicator of melancholy in the library episode is Bruegel's painting *Hunters in the Snow*. It was important for Tarkovsky to use a painting with a snow scene, as snow was something that reminded him his own childhood. There is an element of melancholic sadness in the painting. The sun is down, but the hunters who return home from the hunt are empty handed. All they are left with is to contemplate on the view of their village and the sleeping nature around it. This is precisely what Hari does during the levitation scene. As she spins around, the camera examines Bruegel's painting in detailed close ups. Then she recalls Kris' home video from his childhood, which is visually compared to the painting. In *Mirror*, *Hunters in the Snow* is again associated with the childhood. Tarkovsky meticulously creates *Mirror's* winter scene in such a way that it strikingly resembles the one that we see with the painting in *Solaris*. By doing so he connects the two films on the basis of their autobiographical elements and the melancholy therein. Childhood, here, is a lonely experience. With its apparent lack of laughter and friendly relations with other children, Tarkovsky's childhood possessed a highly self-reflective nature. Its introspective tendency falls in line with the melancholic moments that we find in the visual references to Bruegel's painting in the movies[17].

Although, there are many compositional elements in *Mirror* that evoke the melancholic mood, such as spilt milk, dripping water, and empty natural landscapes, I would argue that the still images of the mother we've previously discussed are the main indicator of melancholy in the film. The idea of melancholy and the figure of the mother were connected for the first time in the concept of loss in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory of sexuality. According to Freud, loss manifests itself through the loss of the partial object (the mother's

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[17]It can be argued that Tarkovsky's use of *Hunter's in the Snow* as a visual reference for his imagery has influenced the appearance of the same painting in Las von Trier's *Melancholia* (2011). The painting in Las von Trier's film is examined in a close up shot and is shown in the prologue, indicating its importance in setting the melancholic theme for the rest of the film.

breast) in early childhood. When the child grows up, the mother—the love object—is likewise lost (Freud 94). In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) Freud describes melancholia as a profound psychological condition, a state of chronic depression which is the result of the loss of a loved object. Although, Freud does not mention the figure of the mother in *Mourning and Melancholia*, his concept of the loss of the mother was later developed by others such as Melanie Klein and Julia Kristeva. Their psychoanalytic theories make little distinction between melancholy and the pathological state of depression in which the melancholic person directs his depressive aggression away from the objects, and inward on the self (Kristeva 48).

In *Mirror*, melancholy can be described rather as an aesthetic emotion than as a state of depression. Unlike nostalgia, which has a specific object for its longing, melancholy is a reflection on an absent or undefined object. It is also created by contradictory feelings. It conveys hopelessness and hopefulness, the pleasure of solitude and the desire to overcome loneliness. On the one hand, Tarkovsky's memories in *Mirror* are clearly directed toward a concrete object: his childhood, and his mother in particular. On the other hand, the narrative of Tarkovsky's personal memories is replaced with the narrative of his art. Besides contemplating on the particular events that happened in his childhood, he reflects on the general, universal images which are found in the lives of all individuals (childhood home, nature, everyday objects, the figure of a mother). These images induce two feeling, which enable the contemplative reflection involved in melancholy—solitude and ambiguity.

In his writing and films Tarkovsky is critical of modern European civilization. The idea of apocalypse in *Sacrifice* describes a critical state of humanity in which loneliness and spiritual emptiness are the main problems. Solitude was also something that Tarkovsky felt as an artist, his films having been often misunderstood, criticized, and sometimes rejected. In this

regard the burning house in *Sacrifice* stands out as an autobiographical element. It is the house that Tarkovsky personally wanted to have, but never did. Alexander's house is a copy of an idealistic Russian house, which we also find in *Solaris* and *Mirror*. Its image concentrates the existential loneliness portrayed in all of Tarkovsky's films. When we see Maria seated alone by her house and waiting for her husband to return home, it symbolizes the idea of longing. It is perceived as profoundly melancholic. Similar emotions are experienced when we watch the static representations of the objects in the house. One of the best examples of Tarkovsky's use of the house objects in order to convey the emotion of melancholic loneliness is found in the sequence in which Ignat finds himself alone in his father's apartment. While Ignat is reading an excerpt from *Pushkin's Letter to Chaodaev* to Natalia's friend, the camera switches between them. Then it stops on a still shot of the cup of tea that Natalia's friend was drinking and that now sits on the table (See Fig. 3. 27). Natalia's friend asks Ignat to open the door. He reveals a woman who appears to be his aged mother. She quickly leaves Ignat, saying she has mistaken the apartment number. When Ignat comes back in the room, Natalia's friend is gone, as well as the cup on the table. All Ignat sees is the wet spot it left on the surface (See Fig. 3. 28). As the spot evaporates the music intensifies, becoming unpleasantly loud and cacophonic. Ignat is not only confused by the strange visitor, he is also scared to be alone. In this episode, the idea of being lost in time is carried over into the spatial domain of the organization of the image. Similar shots are found throughout the entire film. The objects or places they show often look distressed or forgotten. Despite that they are examined with the great attention. And thoughtful engagement is required from the viewer in order to make sense of the scene.

Fig. 3. 27

Fig. 3. 28

Another indicator of melancholy in *Mirror* is the ambiguity of feelings which comes from the contemplation of Maria. Tarkovsky notes that Maria's face is similar to the face of Leonardo da Vinci's Ginevra because of its ambiguous appearance. Besides being simultaneously beautiful and repulsive, both Maria's and Ginevra's images involve such emotions as sadness and longing. But at the same time their appearance proves uplifting. By combining displeasure and pleasure they project the complex feeling of the sublime[18]. The displeasure is provided by the feeling of loneliness and sadness in Maria's face. Whereas the pleasure comes simply from looking at her aestheticized image. It is not necessary that we see

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[18]In his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* Immanuel Kant argues that the nature of melancholy is similar to the aesthetic emotion of the sublime because of its complexity. Just like the sublime, melancholy includes negative and positive elements, which involve deeper reflection than a simple emotion.

Maria with a voyeuristic intent. Instead, we enjoy the overall harmony found in the composition

of the shot. The ambiguity makes us look at Maria as an object of nature rather than a sexualised

being[19]. She is also tightly connected to the objects of the house, which as we've seen are most

often observed by the camera in long still shots. In addition to stillness and calmness, these shots

play an ambiguous role in the overall film narrative. Beautiful like paintings, they interrupt the

continuity of the story only to intensify the melancholic atmosphere of the film.

Once again, we see that both feelings of loneliness and ambiguity receive their

most complete aesthetic realisation in the visual stillness favoured by the film. Tarkovsky

purposefully links Maria to the art of portrait painting, the objects in the house to the pictorial

genre of still life, and the sceneries of nature to the genre of landscape painting. According to

Walter Benjamin the inherent stillness of painting reveals its distinction with cinema. He argues

that unlike cinema, painting invites the spectator to take a position of contemplative absorption.

The stillness of the painting allows us to grasp an always distant object. Cinema, on the contrary,

distracts the viewer from contemplation. This destruction is found in the overwhelming flux of

the moving images. Benjamin writes in *Illuminations*, quoting Georges Duhamel, that "no sooner

has [the viewer's] eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. It cannot be arrested […]. I can

no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images"

(Benjamin et al. 238). Commenting on Benjamin's distinction between cinema and painting in

relation to the experience of contemplation, Michael Taussing pointed that distraction "refers to a

very different perceptive mode, the type of flitting and barely conscious peripheral-vision

perception unleashed with great vigor by modern life" (Taussig 148). When Tarkovsky places

painting-like shots within the cinematic fabric, he frees them from the destruction of the

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[19]Interestingly, Tarkovsky himself associated the image of his mother with nature (Gianvito 45).

narrative and positions the viewer in a contemplative mood. The still image then becomes a reflecting surface in which each of us can find our own sublime.

In transforming the stillness of the portrait-like shots of Maria into a site of melancholic loss, Tarkovsky was perhaps also speculating on the modern condition of visual arts. Tarkovsky's nostalgia regarding pre-avant-garde art is manifested in the melancholic mood that permeates the still shots in *Mirror*. Like Benjamin who contemplates on the loss of the aura with the invention of photography, Tarkovsky talks about the loss of spirituality in cinema. Both were concerned with the idea of time in the face of modern technologies and rampant urbanization. Benjamin expressed his nostalgia for the daguerreotype with its slowness of exposure which allowed the time for performance to take place in front of the camera. Benjamin thought that early photographs resembled painted portraits and had a more penetrating and lasting effect on the spectator than the more recent photography. As Benjamin writes: "The procedure itself caused the subject to focus his life in the moment rather than hurrying past it; during the considerable period of the exposure, the subject as it were grew into the picture, in the sharpest contrast with appearances in a snap-shot" (Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings* / 245). Tarkovsky's films depict a longing for spirituality that existed before the technological revolution of the twentieth century. Finding himself in the country where cinema either helped to promote an ideological propaganda or served only as benign an entertainment, Tarkovsky wanted to bring back a form of art that would communicate the idea of beauty in connection with spirituality. Accordingly, in referencing visual art Tarkovsky always chooses artists whose paintings depict religious faith (Piero della Francesca, Fra Angelico) and intense mystical feelings (Jan van Eyck), as well as those who glorified the existence of the human being (Pieter Bruegel, Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer).

Mirror acts as a spiritual autobiography. It presents us with a constellation of images and memories associated with the narrator's childhood. It provokes fierce self-reflexivity and allegorically functions as a mirror for the soul. The images of childhood in *Mirror* are never sentimental or banal, yet they compel everyone watching to relate to them. By choosing to privilege visual over narrative aspects of film, Tarkovsky demonstrates that the power of images can go beyond the events in the plot. Multiple instances of stillness in the shot found with the face of the mother and the spaces of childhood represent narrative stillness. This stillness transforms the story (and the history) of the past into the contemplative practice of the present. By comparing Maria to the portrait paintings of Leonardo da Vinci, Tarkovsky creates a form of cinematic sublime in which the human face represents the desire for transcendence. Through the stillness of painting-like images Tarkovsky creates a visual poetry of yearning. The melancholy in *Mirror* is evoked in the context of a quiet reflection in which we are prompted to look towards the infinite and the eternal.

Chapter Four

Time and Nostalgia: *Madonna del Parto* in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia*

       Nostalghia came as a result of Tarkovsky's desire to create a film "about the particular state of mind which assails Russians who are far from their native land […], the fatal attachment of Russians to their national roots, their past, their culture, their native places, their families and friends."(Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 202). The story of Gorchakov, who travels to Italy to research the life of Russian émigré composer Pavel Sosnovsky, resembles Tarkovsky's own situation when he decided to make a film outside of the Soviet Union and eventually emigrated to Europe. Tarkovsky himself emphasized the explicit autobiographical connection between Gorchakov and himself when he said that "the protagonist virtually becomes my alter ego, embodying all my emotions, psychology, and nature. He's a mirror image of me" (qtd. in Mitchell 5). In *Sculpting in Time*, he wrote: "How could I have imagined as I was making *Nostalghia* that the stifling sense of longing that fills the screen space of that film was to become my lot for the rest of my life; that from now until the end of my days I would bear the painful malady within myself?" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 202). As the story of a Russian man in exile, the film is also a meditation on the cultural phenomenon of emigration of Russian intelligentsia, which happened in several waves throughout the existence of Soviet Union: "The film is about the state of the soul and the feeling of a Soviet intellectual in a foreign land" (Gianvito 91). It fits into a dialogue of homesickness which can be found in the works of Vladimir Nabokov, Marina Tsvetaeva, Joseph Brodsky, and many other prominent Russian exiles. Tarkovsky purposefully chose to spell the word as *Nostalghia* so that the title is not a translation, but a transliteration of the Russian word for nostalgia. It reflects the idea that Russian nostalgia has a special

connotation which is difficult to understand (translate) unless someone goes through a similar experience.

Although *Nostalghia* was mainly created after Tarkovsky and Tonino Guerra's *Tempo di Viaggi* (sixty-three-minute television film), some of the crucial details of what later became *Nostalghia* (such as Domenico's self-sacrifice) appeared in Tarkovsky's personal writing as early as 1970, long before Tarkovsky traveled to Italy (Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time* 17). *Nostalghia* is not just a film about longing for home. Just like in his previous movies, Tarkovsky contemplates the spiritual state of an individual and contemporary society, as well as art and the role of the artist. Nostalgia, as a longing for space (home), is equally a longing for time (eternity). Bringing the concept of nostalgia into his films, Tarkovsky links spatiality and temporality within the medium of cinema. Moreover, he reinforces his subjective take on time as a nonlinear and subjective phenomenon. In this chapter I will argue that in his exploration of the phenomenon of nostalgia, Tarkovsky touches on the question of authenticity in arts, and in cinema in particular.

Translation and reproduction stand out as the main reference points that help us to understand what defines authenticity in Tarkovsky's film. They also constitute the essence of the nostalgic imagery projected at the levels of visual motifs, shot construction, character depiction, narrative development, and the presence of dreams and apparitions throughout the film. While the question of translation in *Nostalghia* was mentioned by an array of critics and was thoroughly discussed in such articles as Noriman Skakov's "The (im)possible translation of Nostalgia" in 2009, and Zoran Samardzija's "1+1=1: Impossible Translations in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia*" in 2004, there has been no real exploration of how Tarkovsky's use of reproduction (paintings and architecture in particular) contributes to the authenticity of his

cinematic imagery. The use of Piero della Francesco's fresco *Madonna del Parto (Madonna of Childbirth)* and the cities of Italian architecture play especially important roles in exemplifying how Tarkovsky approaches reproduction in visual arts and cinema. Reproduction of Italian architecture largely defines Tarkovsky's time treatment in the film. As Gorchakov moves from one architectural setting to another in the movie, the experience of nostalgia changes. It emerges as the result of time suppression and later develops into the experience of the sublime, whereas the reproduction of Piero's *Madonna del Parto* plays a role in the exploration of how authenticity in Tarkovsky's films becomes connected to the question of time and spirituality. It also functions as the reflection of Tarkovsky's own moral state, his nostalgia for spirituality and the eternal.

Tarkovsky sets a nostalgic mood from the very beginning of the film. The opening credit sequence starts with a foggy Russian landscape. The black and white shot portrays a dog, a white horse, and four small figures which are moving away from the camera towards the river. It is accompanied by a melancholic Russian folk song about a woman whose husband did not return home from the war. As the four figures spread out and stop in the middle of the shot, the Russian folk song becomes overlaid and eventually overpowered by Verdi's *Requiem*. In the next shot, the black and white Russian landscape changes to a muted-coloured Italian field through which a Volkswagen drives from right to left and finally stops in the middle of the screen. As in his other films, Tarkovsky uses powerful images of nature in order to set the appropriate atmosphere for his film. The beauty of the Russian river landscape or the foggy field of Italy are typical of Tarkovsky's depictions of the countryside, which we find at the beginning of *Solaris* or in his representation of the "Zone" in *Stalker*. However, in *Nostalghia*, Tarkovsky quickly switches from scenes of nature to views of Italian architecture – old churches and

buildings, hotel rooms and city squares. The scenes of nature mostly reappear in the form of dreams and apparitions, constituting a large part of Gorchakov's subjective reality.

The contrast between the images of Russian nature in the opening credits and the subsequent shots of Italy reinforces Tarkovsky's signature cinematic techniques established in his earlier films. In particular, the entire film is built with the tendency to contrast such opposites as: nature – city, Russia – West, dream – reality, eternal – temporal, and spiritual – materialistic. Nature and city exist as oppositions in all of Tarkovsky's films (less so in *Andrei Rublev* and *Sacrifice*). The modern city in *Solaris* is portrayed as highly technologized, whereas the city in *Stalker* appears as a place of pollution in the attempt to reflect on the environmental negligence of the 20th century. However, the representation of city and nature in *Nostalghia* are quite different from what we see in other films. The architecture of old Italy evokes feelings tied to relics and antiquarian rarity. It is primarily associated with the Quattrocento period of fine arts, sculpture, and architecture. Instead of being full of dynamism (like the modern city in *Solaris*), Italy is portrayed as a place of stagnation and acts as an externalization of Gorchakov's feelings. A similar technique is used for the scenes of nature in the film. Apart from the very beginning, where Russian countryside is followed by a vast view of the Italian landscape, nature is predominantly associated with Gorchakov's memory of Russia and appears mostly in his static dreams. Instead of associating nature with the flow of time, Tarkovsky often portrays it with a static, photographic image. Thus, Tarkovsky changes the way time is manifested in the filmic imagery. Rather than contrasting the linear, technical, or objective time logic of the city to the subjective time of nature, he introduces the idea of time suppression (a-temporalization of space) in both images of the city and nature.

In preparation for filming *Nostalghia,* Tarkovsky was very meticulous in choosing the right city landscapes and buildings. When traveling across Italy in search of the filmic location with Tonino Guerra, Tarkovsky considered some places (such as southern Italy and Amalfi) to be too beautiful and touristy for the purposes of the film (*Voyage in Time 8:27*). Instead, he preferred to set the scenes of the film in the countryside of regions such as Tuscany, northern Lazio, and the Province of Rieti. Tarkovsky was primarily looking for the architecture that would reflect the inner world of his three characters: Gorchakov, Eugenia, and Domenico. As a consequence, the film has two types of architectural landscape. The first is associated with Eugenia and has a museum-like appearance. The second is closely connected to Domenico and bears some degree of architectural dilapidation. As the film develops, Gorchakov travels between the two landscapes. Gorchakov begins his journey visiting what he calls the "beautiful sites" and gradually moves towards Domenico's spaces of decay and ruins. Thus, architecture not only provides the backdrop for the foreign locations but creates the context for Gorchakov's emotional state. Tarkovsky uses architecture as an opportunity to create a form of time that will characterize the nostalgic feelings of the protagonist. More interestingly, the experience of time that the viewer receives from observing the architecture in the film becomes the common ground on which Tarkovsky connects architecture and Piero della Francesca's fresco. This gives us an understanding of how and why time plays an important role in the question of reproduction and authenticity in the cinematic image.

Tarkovsky's explicit concerns about authenticity can be found in his writings. In *Sculpting in Time,* he repeatedly comments on the importance of creating an artistic image that would be unique to cinema. He advocates against the adaptation of the features of other art forms to the screen because, in his own words, it "will always deprive the film of what is distinctively

cinematic, and make it harder to handle the material in a way that makes use of the powerful resources of cinema as an art in its own right" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 22). Tarkovsky wanted to recreate life in the cinema "as a person feels it and sees it" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 22). Therefore, according to him, the key in archiving the authenticity in cinema lies in the artist's ability to create such objective representations of reality that they project the author's own subjective impressions. In her article "Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia*: Refusing Modernity, Re-Envisioning Beauty" Christy L. Burns writes that "in Tarkovsky's films, the visual is a means of providing a depth model that resists postmodern culture's inclination to seek artificial 'cures' for loss and depression by means of exchanging clichés, purchasing consumer objects, or, especially in film, for entertainment as distraction" (Burns 108). Thus, Burns suggests that in order to express such feelings as fear or need, classical movies would rely on frenetic movement and speed, whereas Tarkovsky dwells within emotions (Burns 108). In order to achieve authenticity in cinematic image, Tarkovsky targets the viewers' emotions, not their reason. He brings Gorchakov's emotional state to the surface of the filmic imagery by making nostalgia visually tangible.

The interplay between stillness and movement seems to be the main manifestation of how Tarkovsky examines Gorchakov's emotional state and how he addresses the question of authenticity in his films. In *Sculpting in Time* Tarkovsky writes:

> The image becomes authentically cinematic when (amongst other things) not only does it live within time, but time also lives within it, even within each separate frame. No 'dead' object—table, chair, glass—taken in a frame in isolation from everything else, can be presented as it were outside passing time, as if from the point of view of an absence of time (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 68).

Tarkovsky uses the principle of constant movement throughout *Nostalghia*. Such an experience of time duration is represented through the focus on the nature scenes, and more specifically through the four elements of nature (earth, water, air, and fire) in which time is manifested as an unrestricted and spontaneous flow. The apparently still landscapes or portraits always have some element of movement – whether it is a slight ripple on the still water surface, the movement of pond weeds under the influence of the water current, the tree branches moved by wind gusts, or blinking eyes on otherwise still faces. Even when *Tarkovsky* shows what he calls "dead" objects, he turns our attention to the movement of the camera (zoom-ins and panoramic views in particular). However, as it was discussed in the previous chapters, Tarkovsky avoids mechanical or linear movement and favors the internal movement of an individual's thoughts, memories, and feelings. As a result, his films are perceived as slow and static rather than dynamic. Tarkovsky represents his subjective take on reality through techniques such as long takes, slow motion and stillness within the narrative flow.

With respect to the treatment of time in *Nostalghia,* Tarkovsky takes a different approach from his previous films. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, time and space in *Nostalghia* are largely explored through architecture. Nature in *Nostalghia* acquires either a dreamlike appearance or becomes incorporated into the Italian city views. Nature, including the country house of Gorchakov's dreams, somewhat merges with the Italian city and becomes a main locus with which to reflect on Gorchakov's emotional representations of homesickness, his nostalgic feelings and thoughts about his country house and family. Tarkovsky associates nature with the stillness of immovable objects in which the flow of time appears to be suppressed. This tension between time and space is manifested as a fracture in Gorchakov's inner world as the result of his separation from his homeland. The physical spaces in which Gorchakov finds

himself become defined by his mental condition. The interior space of the hotel, the specific

camera techniques employed, and the mise-en-scène all create a sense of spatial restriction. The

idea of constraints is introduced on both the thematic and the visual levels. In a conversation

with Eugenia, Gorchakov advises her to throw away the translated book of Russian poetry that

she is reading. He says that poetry is not translatable like the whole of art. However, there is a

way to understand each other: it is to abolish the frontiers between countries. Although his

statement sounds political, the following shot of Gorchakov's memory of his family emphasizes

that the frontiers therein are mainly spiritual. For the duration of the film Gorchakov is trying,

although without any hope, to collapse the borders between the reality of his present and the

object of his nostalgia. The entire conflict of Gorchakov and Eugenia's relationship seems to be

built not only on the impossibility to overcome cultural barriers between two people, but also on

Gorchakov's impossibility to reconcile his past with his present. In order to visualize the idea of

constriction, Tarkovsky creates a form of spatial detachment between Gorchakov and Eugenia.

For example, during several of their conversations Gorchakov and Eugenia do not face each

other, but look in different directions. Thus, in the episode described above Gorchakov is shot

with his back to the camera, whereas Eugenia's face, in the next shot, is turned towards the

camera. The discontinuity becomes apparent even within a single shot when the interacting

characters look in different directions. The episode by St. Catherina's pool is a good example of

this character dynamic. Here Eugenia and Gorchakov are turning their backs on each other while

talking about faith (See Fig. 4. 1). This particular shot emphasizes the incompatibility of physical

spaces (Eugenia / Italy vs. Gorchakov /Russia) as well as mental (Italy /present vs. Russia / past).

Here Tarkovsky makes a close visual connection with *Andrei Rublev,* and the episode in which

Rublev and Theophanes argue on the subject of faith (See Fig. 4. 2).

Fig. 4. 1

Fig. 4. 2

In his article "The (im)possible Translation of Nostalgia" Noriman Skakov states that "The opposition between bordered and unbordered space becomes one of the most important translation-related tropes employed in the film, indeed translation is interpreted as a sort of movement in space". The beginning of the film indicates that such movement is impossible. The narrative shows that Gorchakov and Eugenia's relationship is resistant to any development. The only movement we see is Gorchakov's attempt to displace his present with his inner world of memories. Yet those memories have no influence on his present reality. Gorchakov's nostalgic feelings are a reminder of what Kris (*Solaris*) experienced while being on the Solaris expedition. However, unlike in *Solaris*, where memory becomes a vehicle for the transformation of Kris' and Hari's inner worlds, Gorchakov's past and present remain separated until the very end of the

film. Tarkovsky indicates such separation primarily by the use of colors. The present is represented in muted color, while the past is shown in black and white. In *Solaris*, on the contrary, memories of Earth's natural scenery are always portrayed in vivid colors. Another difference in the relationship between past and present in *Solaris* and *Nostalghia* can be found in the way Tarkovsky treats time. In *Solaris*, the past is mainly associated with the movement found in the images of nature. The passage of time as represented through the eternal yet ever-changing movements of nature aligns with the spiritual change of the protagonists. The movement that we see on screen becomes a manifestation of the subjective movement of thoughts and feelings. In contrast, the memories of Gorchakov lack any type of movement. Instead, they are artificially static, especially when shown in a natural setting.

To express the idea of time suppression, Tarkovsky limits the movement of the camera as well as the action within each shot. It becomes especially obvious if the scene is shot inside a building, when double framing is used with the help of windows, arches, and door openings (See Fig. 4. 3).

Fig. 4. 3

Here double framing has at least two functions. On the one hand, having the inside and the

outside part of the frame within one screen contributes to the idea of the division of spaces. Such

separation adds a visual articulation to the dichotomy already presented in the thematic of the

film. It forms a dialectic of division, which in Gaston Bachelard's words "blinds us as soon as

we bring it into play in the metaphorical domain...[because] it has the sharpness of the dialectics

of *yes* and *no*, which decides everything" (Bachelard 211). The division visually supports earlier

discussed binary oppositions, which are laid out as a foundation for the film's narrative

development. The concept of a "doorway shot" is a common cinematic technique. One of the

most discussed films which uses the doorway shot is John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956). Ever since *The Searchers,* critics have tried to find a larger symbolism in the separation of interior and exterior spaces. The character in the doorway is given a choice between one world or another, but ultimately, as Clay Steinman wrote: "one either lives looking out, or, in [Ford's] film, being looked out at"(19). Unlike the characters in Ford's western, Gorchakov is not making a choice. He remains between two worlds (past and present) until he meets Domenico. Here again, Tarkovsky avoids creating any symbolic references but instead makes a visual reference that directly pertains to the formal qualities of the film. The inner frame in *Nostalghia* is always placed in the centre of the screen. It usually contains the small figure of a person whose relation to the outside or inside part of the frame has little or no meaning. The purpose of the frame is to constrain the space, which is already limited. Even if something is happening within the smaller frame, the movement is minimal and appears hardly significant because the inner frame usually takes less than one third of the screen and leaves a large portion of unoccupied space on the outside.

The use of double framing is an apparent indication of the formal technique of mise-en-abyme. However, instead of mirroring the film within the film, Tarkovsky makes a reference to static visual arts such as painting and photography. As we know references to paintings are found in all of Tarkovsky's films. In most previous instances when paintings were used, they tended to incorporate some form of cinematic dynamism, or simply the inner movement of the narrative. In *Solaris*, for example, Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* aligns with the imagery of Kris' memory and, as a result, becomes a stimulus for Hari's transformation. In *Nostalghia* things are different. The influence of the cinematic movement on the still objects represented in the film is not essential. Instead, the film imagery itself tends to adopt a stillness

which is found in painting, photography, and, most importantly, in architecture. The motionlessness of architecture, especially, creates the effect of immobilization in *Nostalghia*. This not only echoes Gorchakov's feelings of longing for his home; it also creates a nostalgic mood whose object is the lost cinematic movement in itself. It is important to note that such a form of time suppression is mostly associated with the first half of the film. As the narrative progresses and the mise-en-scène changes, so does Tarkovsky's treatment of time. But before this change occurs, the film is clearly dominated by a painting-like stillness that affects time as much as it does space.

That said, time suppression acquires several other connotations within the film. First of all, as mentioned earlier, it represents Gorchakov's reluctance to live in the present. In the scenes where Tarkovsky portrays Gorchakov's emotional state and his inability to overcome homesickness, he deprives his character of any purpose or interest. The most vivid examples would be Gorchakov's lack of interest in Eugenia or his indifference to the beauty of Italy. If the movement is present, it has no apparent direction or purpose. Vida Johnson and Graham Petrie accurately describe Gorchakov's state of lethargy in one of the scenes in which "for 2 minutes 45 seconds Andrei 'does' nothing except open and close shutters, switch lights on and off, drink some water from the tap, swallow a pill, open and close a closet door, and pick up a book lying on his dresser" (Johnson and Petrie 166). Gorchakov's repetitive actions exemplify the lack of dramatic development in the film and its reliance on recurrent motives rather than on actual events. As Jeremy Mark Robinson puts it: "Although Gorchakov suffers terribly from nostalgia [...], he doesn't really do anything about it... What Gorchakov does could be regarded as a kind of suicide" (Robinson 490–91). As the cinematic time passes, subjective time remains unchanged, as if frozen. Thus, the suicide to which Mark Robinson refers in his book can be seen

as a metaphor for the suppressed time of Gorchakov's subjectivity. Stefan W. Schmidt, when describing the nostalgic experience in the film, writes:

> Memory is the present existence of the past, not the representation of something that existed. In nostalgia, however, this ability does not so much coexist with the present but rather consumes it. The continuation of the past turns into fixation, thereby becoming the only reality, and new experiences are devalued as we can see in Gorchakov's reluctant behavior (Schmidt 36).

For the most part, time becomes suppressed or overpowered by the images of Italian architecture or the stillness of the images of the past. Gorchakov's homesickness can then become strongly associated with the burden of the past, which he is unable to overcome until he meets Domenico. Before that, the film's imagery unfolds as a *tableau vivant* in which movement is prohibited. The letter written by Pavel Sosnovsky (a Russian émigré composer), and read by Eugenia before she leaves, describes precisely that: a theatrical *tableau vivant* and the prohibition of movement therein. In this letter Sosnovsky recalls his dream, the image of which exhibits a parallel with Gorchakov's own condition. Tarkovsky quotes Sosnovsky's letter from *Nostalghia* in *Sculpting in Time*:

> I was producing an important opera... played by nude men made up with white paint, who were obliged to stand for a long time without moving. I too was acting the part of one of these statues, and I knew that were I to move a fearful punishment awaited me, for my lord and master was there in person, watching us" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 211).

Tarkovsky extrapolates the prohibition of movement described in Sosnovsky's nightmare to the images of stillness he uses in Gorchakov's dreams / apparitions. In turn, this emphasizes the overall image of Gorchakov's suffering. Gorchakov's inner world, his emotional state, becomes exposed through Tarkovsky's cinematic treatment of time, in particular the restraint of movement and the residing on stillness.

A similar treatment of time happens on the level of shot composition within each separate frame. In *Nostalghia,* Tarkovsky does something that he has never done in his other films. He creates a double layered image which expresses movement and complete stillness at the same time. The background of the shot consists of the photographic (still) image of a Russian landscape: house, trees, and the white horse. The foreground is occupied by the cinematic (moving) images of four people and a dog in front of the house. Several similar shots are found exclusively in the episodes of Gorchakov's memories / apparitions; they point to the nature of nostalgic memory and the type of nostalgic narrative used in the film. Their painting-like composition also makes a reference to Renaissance paintings, especially those of Leonardo da Vinci.

In her book *The Future of Nostalgia* Svetlana Boym analyses different types of nostalgic narrative in literature and visual art. She distinguishes between two types of nostalgia which characterize one's relationship to the past: restorative and reflective. The key difference between these two types is that the first one puts an emphasis on *nostos* (home). It attempts to reconstruct or rebuild the lost home by evoking the images of one's national, collective past. The second type dwells in *algia* (longing) and focuses on individual memory. Instead of trying to reconstruct the monuments of the past, reflective nostalgia "lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time" (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*

41). Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia* certainly gravitates towards the reflective type of nostalgic narrative. Instead of aiming for the recovery of collective pictorial emblems, it meditates on individual history. Boym notes that restorative and reflective types of nostalgia are also different when it comes to the treatment of time in narratives. She writes: "If restorative nostalgia [...] attempt[s] to conquer and spatialize time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalizes space" (Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* 49). Therefore, places in restorative nostalgia often appear to be distorted or defamiliarized so that they create the sense of distance which tells the story.

Tarkovsky often tends to temporalize space within a single shot. The most vivid example of this can be found in *Mirror*. The house in *Mirror* is the locus of the protagonist's memory. Here, the temporalization of the space of the house happens through the movement of the camera as well as the movement of objects in the house. Tarkovsky makes this movement especially palpable when it mimics the movement of nature. For instance, in one scene, Tarkovsky shows how the camera slowly moves through the interior of the house and stops on the curtains, which move under the influence of the wind from the open window. Another example from *Mirror* is a scene where parts of the ceiling are mixed with water and begin to fall like rainfall inside the house. Memories in *Mirror* embody full mental presentness of the character within the past. Therefore, the temporalization happens as the result of a mental time travel to the past. Specifically, the past is perceived as an experience of time which subjectively flows like the unrestrained movement of nature. The characters in *Mirror* dive into their past and live within it. So do the viewers of the film, as stated in one of the letters to Tarkovsky by a factory worker from Leningrad. He writes: "*Mirror* [is] a film I can't even talk about because I'm living it" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 10). The temporalization of space is what precisely

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creates the feeling of dwelling within emotion. The passage of time brings up memories of the past to be experienced in the present.

The temporalization of space in *Nostalghia* happens somewhat differently than in *Mirror*. In order to portray Gorchakov's home in Russia, Tarkovsky uses a still image of the landscape. The stillness of the countryside in the background of the image is especially interesting because, unlike nature in other Tarkovsky's films, it is completely still. The trees and the white horse stay frozen for the duration of the entire memory scene. The place of the past becomes only partially temporalized with the movement of people (family) in the foreground and the rising sun behind the house. The monochrome image emphasises a strong contrast between the background (immovable white horse in particular) and the foreground (figures of people in black). When the camera pans from one family member to another, each person (and even the dog) turns their head to the side as if they are waiting for something to happen. After the sun rises above the house they all turn back and look at the sun (See Fig. 4. 4).

Fig. 4. 4

The main difference between the images of memory in *Mirror* and *Nostalghia* is that *Mirror* does not deal with nostalgia as a longing for an idealized place and time. The

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memories of Gorchakov, on the contrary, represent an idealized past. Instead of mentally living in his remembered past, like Andrei from *Mirror*, Gorchakov creates a place and a moment that perhaps has never existed in a way we see it on the screen. Here, Tarkovsky's trademark, a country house, is not a specific place but appears as an idea of a house. As Maya Turovskaya explains:

> This is not the family home of *Mirror*, unique and authentic; it is more an emblem, extracted from that image, an icon of Russian life enshrined in the hero's imagination. The immediacy of the life being lived before our eyes which was so striking in Ivan's dreams or in the earthly epilogue to *Solaris* is no longer there; the reference to the past has become abstracted, and it seems quite natural that the sequence should gradually slow into complete stillness (Turovskaya 119).

The temporalization of the space paradoxically occurs through its a-temporalization. It is accomplished through the discrepancy found in the movement and the stillness. In *Mirror*, still objects of the house, like curtains, jars, ceiling, etc., become alive, whereas in *Nostalghia*, the normally moving nature is frozen. The aforementioned movement of the four people in the foreground makes that especially noticeable. The stillness of nature around the house in *Nostalghia* apparently points to a disjointed temporality.

From a technical standpoint the shot of Gorchakov's memory represents a type of double exposure, except that it combines two media: cinema in the foreground and photography in the background. As an end result, a painting-like image is produced. The very idea of background and foreground is profoundly tied to the art of painting. Art historian Lawrence Gowing, who studied Vermeer's compositions, acknowledged that the dramatic relationship

between the background and foreground planes first appeared in Renaissance art (Gowing 34). As a matter of fact, even before Vermeer many of Leonardo da Vinci's paintings demonstrated a sharp division between the foreground and the background. Backgrounds of such paintings as *The Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, *Ginevra de' Benci* and *Mona Lisa* have aerial and flattened views, whereas the foregrounds are painted in great detail and with a better consideration of visual perspective. Harry Berger Jr. argued that the counterpoint between the foreground and the background in Leonardo da Vinci's paintings is a direct reflection of the artist's worldview. In his understanding, Leonardo da Vinci's paintings represent a perfect collaboration of abstraction and vision. This kind of seeing, at once scientific and artistic, discerns the essence of things in visible (physical shape) and graspable (cognitive) forms. Berger notes that da Vinci's aerial viewpoints affect how we perceive time and space in his paintings. "Panoramic vision gives way to the analytic mode when this awareness [between telescopic and microscopic, foreground and background] becomes central" (Berger Jr. 246). A similar effect of awareness happens in the shots of Gorchakov's memory, with two differences. The first is that instead of combining the aerial views of nature with the detailed picture of people in the foreground, Tarkovsky uses two different media: photography and cinema. Second, in the collaboration he sets between abstraction and vision, Tarkovsky combines not scientific but religious and artistic worldviews.

It is worth noting that the objective reality (Italy) and Gorchakov's subjective world of dreams / apparitions are not completely portrayed as two contrasting oppositions. As Johnson and Petrie write: "what we are witnessing here is not wholly a dream, not is it everyday reality: it hesitates on the border between the two" (Johnson and Petrie 167). Gorchakov's dreams / apparitions do not necessarily provide him with a refuge, but simply describe his inability to move in either direction – back to the happy times of the past or forward to an

optimistic future with Eugenia. Therefore, his home of the past is not seen as a possible place to return to, but as the exemplification of the impossibility of such a homecoming. Tarkovsky expresses such feelings in his diary, dated 25 May 1983: "A bad day. Terrible thoughts. I'm frightened. I am lost! I cannot live in Russia, nor can I live here [in Italy]." (Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time* 328). The story of Sosnovsky who did return back to Russia but remained unhappy and eventually committed suicide reinforces this idea. Home then becomes a place that does not exist in reality, but only acts as an idea. Tarkovsky thus takes Gorchakov's nostalgia for home to the abstract level of a nostalgia for universal harmony. As Peter Green pointes out: "To limit the identity of [Gorchakov's] yearnings specifically to Russia would be to reduce the dimensions of the film" (Green 108). Nostalgia for home is then not tightly connected to a specific place and time but represents longing for the wholeness of existence or for the absolute.

On the one hand, the expression of time flowing on screen, as shown in Tarkovsky's films, invites us to understand temporality as an ontological feature in which subjective time is a non-linear time that incorporates all three time planes: past, present, and future. On the other hand, the episodes of Gorchakov's memories indicate the pinnacle of visual stillness that marks the distortion of temporality as experienced by humans. As humans, we cannot perceive the world outside of time. However, a-temporality as a concept can be approached through art with the use of static shots, such as photographs. It can be argued that in *Nostalghia,* Tarkovsky furthers the concept of religious thinking that he explored in *Andrei Rublev.* Here, the idea of sacred time can be equated with the religious idea of eternity[20], whereas

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[20] Christian religion makes a clear distinction between time that it associates with the physical world (has a beginning and an end) and God's time (never-ending, ever-existing). Augustine equated time with matter and believed that God created time along with the Universe (Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. XI, chap. 13, § 16). Thus, time is a part of God's creation and God exists outside of time. The idea of stillness would be the most accurate description of God's realm: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

stillness in the memory scenes can be interpreted as the representation of Gorchakov's nostalgia for the eternal home or paradise. The house of nostalgia becomes sacred, similar to a temple, and therefore it exists in the sacred a-temporal demotions. In his book *The Sacred and the Profane*, Mircea Eliade writes:

> Religious man's profound nostalgia is to inhabit a 'divine world,' is his desire that his house shell be like the house of the gods, as it was later represented in temples and sanctuaries. In short, this religious nostalgia expresses *the desire to live in a pure and a holy cosmos, as it was in the beginning, when it came fresh from the Creator's hands* (Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* 65).

This idea of sacred time was introduced in *Andrei Rublev* as a disruption of linear or historical time in favor of cyclical time. In *Nostalghia,* it is represented through a-temporalization which can be understood as both not belonging to history and existing outside of a regular time flow.

The religious motives are introduced in the beginning scenes of *Nostalghia* when Gorchakov's translator Eugenia goes to Monterchi cemetery chapel to see Piero della Francesca's *Madonna del Parto.* From the conversation between Gorchakov and Eugenia we learn that they drove many kilometres across Italy to see the Madonna. However, at the end of their trip Gorchakov refuses to go into the chapel, saying that he is sick of looking at the beautiful sites of Italy. Eugenia sets off to see the fresco; meanwhile Gorchakov immerses himself in his reverie, seeing his Russian country house and the nature around it. Why, after traveling halfway across Italy to see the Madonna, does Gorchakov not enter the chapel? Scholars like Robert Bird, James Mcgillivray, and Slavoj Zizek suggest that the painting of Madonna is mainly used in order to portray the female characters (Eugenia and Gorchakov's

wife Maria) of the film. It creates an intensely male-centred universe in which Tarkovsky projects two opposing archetypes of femininity. The idea of motherhood represented in the Madonna is idealized and contrasted to the highly-sexualized image of Eugenia. Following that logic, the purpose of using the painting is to promote Tarkovsky's own patriarchal vision in which the image of Virgin Mary (who is later in the film compared to Gorchakov's wife Maria) is privileged over the image of a whore (Eugenia).[21] Thus, Robert Bird believes that Gorchakov's refusal to see the painting points at him being uncomfortable with the very act of looking and suggests monasticism (Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky* 176). This monasticism later becomes expressed in the rejection of Eugenia and therefore transmits Gorchakov's and eventually Tarkovsky's own misogynistic attitude. Along the same lines, James Mcgillivray argues that by contrasting the ritualistic meaning of the Madonna (which is associated with the power of granting fertility and easy birth) and Eugenia's lack of desire to fill the traditional feminine role, Tarkovsky appropriates the painting within the sexual dimension (175). Therefore, according to Mcgillivray, Tarkovsky's use of the Madonna can be understood as a radical adaptation of the painting's meaning in which the cult of the Virgin Mary lays the ground for Tarkovsky's own invented ritual expressed in the indictment of Western feminism (172).

It has been noted by several of Tarkovsky's critics (Green, Johnson and Petrie, Robinson, Bird) that the filmmaker often denigrates women in his films. As Peter Green states, "In nearly all of his films women are either relegated to a domestic, serving role or are elevated to motherhood and saintliness" (Green 112). Eugenia in *Nostalghia* is probably the most vivid example of such denigration. Eugenia is rejected by Gorchakov as a woman and is ridiculed as a

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[21] In Russian Orthodox Christianity Virgin Mary is called Bogoroditsa (Богородица), which means Mother of God. In icons, she is almost always with the baby Jesus. Instead of pointing at Mary's virginity, Orthodox Christianity stresses motherhood.

person. Two episodes would especially stand out. One is when Gorchakov slaps Eugenia on her behind, and the other is when Eugenia awkwardly falls in the hallway after slipping in her high-heel shoes. Robert Bird points out that Tarkovsky's negative attitude towards women who resist the traditional feminine role is introduced in the very first scenes of *Nostalghia*, at the time when Eugenia goes to see the Madonna and talks to the church sacristan. Bird writes that it "contains some of the most misogynistic lines in Tarkovsky's oeuvre" (176). Such comments as Bird's substantiate claims that Tarkovsky is sexist, especially in regards to *Nostalghia*. They also target the mainly ideological surface of Tarkovsky's film.

To only view Tarkovsky's films as political statements would be to diminish the mastery of his filmmaking. In his films, Tarkovsky tried to avoid any ideological assumptions, knowing that ideology can become a substitute for the film's aesthetics. In Tarkovsky's view, the ideal piece of art is similar to music which is "dispassionate, free of ideology" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 177). Relying on such understanding, Tarkovsky rarely focuses on social problems, and rather pays attention to the idea of spirituality as represented through the image of an individual. Moreover, Tarkovsky's exploration or illustration of the protagonist's inner world often serves as a background to the overall aesthetics of the film. Thus, it would be appropriate to analyze the scene with Piero's *Madonna* in relation to the entire film imagery instead of looking at it as a singled-out comparison to the film's characters. Thomas Redwood suggests that Gorchakov's absence from the scene at the chapel "explicitly establishes *Nostalghia's* narrative range as being wider than that of its protagonist's 'subjective' experiences" (Redwood 191). In other words, Tarkovsky's incorporation of the painting goes beyond the illustration of the protagonist's feelings of apathy or his possible misogynistic views. Instead, it gives us the opportunity to reflect on the differences and similarities of different visual art media and see the

relationship between the old art of painting represented in the Madonna's fresco and the theme of spirituality raised in Tarkovsky's cinema.

Unlike Rublev's icon paintings in *Andrei Rublev* or Breughel's *Hunters in the Snow* or in *Solaris*, Piero's painting is not examined by the camera for a long period of time or in great detail. However, its appearance has a significant visual and thematic impact on what will emerge later in the film. The close-up shot of *Madonna del Parto* comes into view on two different diegetic levels[22]. At the first diegetic level, it is shown as part of the chapel interior. It becomes the main object of Eugenia's focus after she has a conversation with the sacristan of the chapel. The painting is mainly associated with Eugenia's character and surrounds the reality of Eugenia and Gorchakov's story. Tarkovsky also shows *Madonna del Parto* as if detached from the foregoing story line. Gradually, yet noticeably, Tarkovsky changes the lighting of the painting and brings it closer to the camera. With such changes of lighting and framing, the painting appears as if taken outside of the narrative time and space. However, in several subsequent shots we see that the painting actually remains within the diegesis. With one exception, it travels from the objective reality into the subjective world of the characters, which is demonstrated by the shots of Eugenia and Gorchakov's faces (See Fig. 4. 5). It moves from being the main object of Eugenia's focus to the realm of Gorchakov's imagination. The latter does not go inside of the chapel, yet we see his eyes turned to the camera as if he was looking at the painting together with Eugenia. Such a composition places Eugenia and Gorchakov on two opposite sides of the same painting. One represents Eugenia's view on religion and art and the other provides us with Gorchakov's nostalgic feelings. The shot with the Madonna's painting is

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[22] The acknowledgment of multiple diegetic levels in Nostalghia was noticed by Tomas Redwood's *Andrei Tarkovsky's Poetics of Cinema*. He claims that Gorchakov's objective and subjective experiences remain ambiguous and none of the levels of diegetic reality are entirely distinguishable (183).

reminiscent of the non-dietetic images of the icon sequence at the end of *Andrei Rublev*. The notable distinction between the two is that the icons in *Andrei Rublev* emerge as the final product of Rublev's struggle and as his artistic legacy, whereas in *Nostalghia* the image of *Madonna del Parto* exemplifies the idea of faith and sacrifice, which Tarkovsky associates with Gorchakov and develops later in the film.

Fig. 4. 5

The parallel between Rublev's paintings and Piero's *Madonna* becomes more clear with the subsequent shots. Right after showing Piero's *Madonna,* Tarkovsky moves to what seems to be the typical dream /reverie sequence that we find in all of his films. The switch from the present, objective reality to Gorchakov's subjective world of memory is indicated by the change from color to black and white tones. After a few seconds of looking straight into the camera, Gorchakov bends down and picks up the white feather, the object with which Tarkovsky connects two separate places (the inside and the outside space of the chapel) as well as two

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different worlds (Eugenia's and Gorchakov's objective and subjective realities)[23]. Then Gorchakov turns around and sees the dream / apparition of his country house in Russia. At this point the episodes described above can be understood together as a straightforward reference to two different perspectives – Eugenia's, who is presented as a casual observer of the Madonna, and Gorchakov's nostalgic reverie, which is represented in Tarkovsky's canonical image of home. It is at this point that the line between Gorchakov and the materialistic character of Eugenia is drawn. This introduces the concept of duality, which, in Peter Green's words, "provides a key to an understanding of [Tarkovsky's] film" (109). This contrast of perspectives expands throughout the film, until Gorchakov and Eugenia separate and leave their conflict unresolved.

The juxtaposition of Piero's painting and Gorchakov's dream sequence implies religious connotations. After paying closer attention to the image of Gorchakov's reverie, it appears to be a direct reference to *Andrei Rublev* in which the art of icon painting is compared to Tarkovsky's own iconographic style of film making. In particular, the episode of Gorchakov's dream / apparition starts with the shot of a muddy puddle and the contrasting white shawl stamped into the ground (See Fig. 4. 6). The image strikingly resembles the images of the ground that we see throughout *Andrei Rublev*, especially those which show the contrast of the white spilled milk and the background (See Fig. 4. 7), or the dead white bird in the surrounding mud (See Fig. 4. 8).

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[23]The white feather resembles the patch of gray hair on Gorchakov's head. This is a third point of association which brings up the main character of Tarkovsky's *Stalker* who also has a patch of gray hair on one side of his head.

Fig. 4. 6
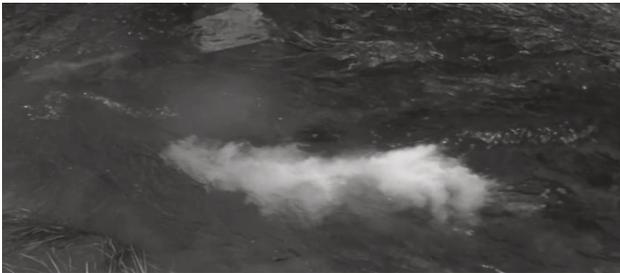
Fig. 4. 7

Fig. 4. 8

The image of the house that follows makes an even tighter connection to *Andrei Rublev* and

prompts the viewer to interpret the scene from a religious standpoint. After Gorchakov picks up a

white feather from the ground he turns his head towards the country house. The landscape of the

countryside appears to be still except for one small but significant detail – an angel with big

white wings is walking towards the house (See Fig. 4. 9). In *Andrei Rublev,* Tarkovsky used

figures of angels in Christ's crucifixion scene in order to connect it to the art of icon painting

(See Fig. 4. 10). *Nostalghia* bring this image back, but with the involvement of a Western

religious painting. The image of Piero's *Madonna del Parto* foreshadows Tarkovsky's own

cinematic icon. Like the original Madonna's painting, which primarily served a ritualistic

purpose, the imagery of *Nostaghia* is intended to bring the viewer closer to a transcendental truth by means of the visual expressions of the protagonist's spiritual state. Precisely, the film addresses the problem of spirituality through the depiction of Gorchakov's and later Domenico's moral state and the sacrifice which they make at the end of the film.

Fig. 4. 9

Fig. 4. 10

Gorchakov's act of sacrifice is foreshadowed and illustrated by the Madonna's painting and the religious ritual around it. When Eugenia tells the sacristan that she came just to have a look at the Madonna he replies: "Unfortunately, if there are any casual onlookers who aren't supplicants, then nothing happens." When Eugenia asks what is supposed to happen, the sacristan says: "Whatever you like, whatever you need most. But you should at least kneel down." One noticeable detail in the conversation between Eugenia and the sacristan is that during the conversation the sacristan does not look at Eugenia. His face, shown in a close-up, is

turned in the opposite direction (at a 45 degrees angle from the camera), whereas the image of Eugenia is out of focus. Such an arrangement of interlocutors suggests that the argument of the sacristan is not directed exclusively at Eugenia. The sacristan proposes that faith is necessary for a change to happen and that, therefore, the image of the Madonna should be approached with faith. Introduced in *Andrei Rublev*, such an understanding of art as a powerful medium for spiritual transformation and as a spiritual practice becomes fully developed in *Nostalghia*. In particular, Tarkovsky uses this film to contemplate how the idea of spirituality manifests itself in different media (painting vs. cinema) in connection with the temporal-spatial organization of the image. Thus *Nostalghia,* like *Andrei Rublev,* presents us with a spiritual connotation of time. But instead of focusing on the cyclical nature of time, as he does with icon paintings, Tarkovsky examines the interplay between stillness and movement as the representations of the relationship between material and spiritual, temporal and eternal. The incorporation of Piero's painting *Madonna del Parto* into the film can be compared to the use of Pieter Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* in *Solaris* or Leonardo da Vinci's *Ginevra de' Benci* in *Mirror.* However, Bruegel and da Vinci's paintings were used to address the characters' process of spiritual transformation associated with their past experiences. They exemplify the movement of inner thoughts and feelings that are connected to the memories of the characters' past. Piero's Madonna, on the other hand, illustrates a movement towards the future, associated with the idea of faith and sacrifice. It thus implies the involvement of ritualistic practices such as prayer (rejected by Eugenia), and sacrifice (accepted by Domenico and Gorchakov).

Since Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", film critics, for the most part, have emphasized the medium's ability to capture a human-centered world that is essentially realist. Although critics such as André Bazin, Béla

Balázs, and Siegfried Kracauer valued those cinematic techniques that would create a result different from normal life experiences, they believed that the film media primarily deals with aesthetic experiences providing cinemagoers with a sense of reality. In his analysis of realism in film criticism, Jeffrey Pence notices that "cinema has been linked to the demise of cultish understanding of art and the progress of critical reason, thanks to its capacity to represent and reveal in heretofore impossible ways" (31). Unlike cinema, even the most realist style of painting preserves some distance from reality; in doing this the painting inherits a unique aura. Thus, Pence comments on Benjamin's comparison of the painter's art with the art of cinematography and concludes that the tension between the two is compatible with the tension between religion and science:

> On the one hand, the blue flower, painting, and magic represent the ongoing trances of religious consciences and practice that continue after the Enlightenment, regardless of their loss of unquestioned supremacy in organizing cultural life. On the other hand, technology, cinema, and surgery represent the continuing power and prestige of rationality in governing cultural life (Pence 38).

Tarkovsky's films allow for the reconciliation of the two. On the one hand, Tarkovsky deals with a medium that permeates reality with mechanical equipment such as the camera. On the other hand, his films are saturated with a deep longing for an unmediated and equipment-free reality which he finds in Renaissance paintings. Thus, Tarkovsky uses reality directly, and at the same time he produces a total picture, a unique image, which alludes to the immaterial dimensions of reality.

In Tarkovsky's discussion on the topic of art and science, he states that both are instruments for finding what he calls absolute truth. However, artistic discovery, unlike the scientific type, occurs as a unique image every time a person comes into contact with a particular piece of art. Tarkovsky explains:

> It appears as a revelation, as a momentary, passionate wish to grasp intuitively and at a stroke all the laws of this world—its beauty and ugliness, its compassion and cruelty, its infinity and its limitations. The artist expresses these things by creating the image, *sui generis* detector of the absolute. Through the image is sustained an awareness of the infinite: the eternal within the finite, the spiritual within matter, the limitless given form. Art could be said to be a symbol of the universe, being linked with that absolute spiritual truth which is hidden from us in our positivistic, pragmatic activities (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 37).

The comparison of artistic discovery with the experience of a revelation points to the very process of the acquisition of absolute truth. Besides taking an active position (like in science), the artist and the art beholder need to be ready to humble themselves and be acted upon by the power of a god or supernatural being. In order to solidify his analogy between religious and aesthetic experiences, Tarkovsky combines two elements. He relies on the religious subject matter of the film, such as images of icons, angels, Madonna, and Christ. And he also draws our attention to the very experience of seeing by creating what S. Brent Plate calls a 'religious visuality' which oscillates "in between space, between language and image, between film and audience, between film and world" (Plate 30). In re-examining the position between different media such as painting, architecture, sculpture, photography, and film – all of which implicate

stillness versus movement –Tarkovsky also re-examines the idea of reproduction and authenticity in cinema.

In 1979 Tarkovsky wrote in his *Diary*: "We filmed Piero della Francesca's *Madonna of Childbirth* in Monterchi. No reproduction can give any idea of how beautiful it is" (Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time* 196). Unlike Tarkovsky, who saw the original fresco in *Capella di Cimitero* in Monterchi, we as spectators are only presented with the reproduction. No matter how well the painting is represented on the screen its original meaning and authenticity (its aura in Benjamin's sense) will be lost. As John Berger states: "It is not a question of reproduction failing to reproduce certain aspects of an image; it is a question of reproduction making it possible, even inevitable, that an image will be used for many different purposes and that the reproduced image, unlike an original work, can lend itself to them all" (24–25). What Tarkovsky is left with is only to create the experience of authenticity through the medium of cinema by attempting to overcome its limitation as a reproduction medium. Piero's fresco painting thus becomes a reference material. Its ritualistic meaning can be compared to the spiritual agenda behind Tarkovsky's films.

First, Tarkovsky explores the status of religious art within the contemporary cultural context. Eugenia's attitude towards the painting of the Madonna echoes what Walter Benjamin argued in his essay "The Work of Art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction". His main idea is that as the society became more secularized and more technologically advanced, the works of art gradually moved from being solely cultic to acquiring a display value, and, finally, to serving political agendas. Benjamin gives the example of some religious images, or carvings on medieval cathedrals that are hidden or cannot be openly seen by the spectator at the ground level but represent an integral part in worshiping the divine. Benjamin states:

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As individual instances of artistic production became emancipated from the context of religious ritual, opportunities for displaying the products increase. The 'displayability' of a portrait bust, which is capable of being dispatched hither and thither, exceeds that of a god statue, whose fixed place is inside the temple (Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* 12–13).

In Benjamin's understanding, the ability to display constitutes the core meaning of the reproduction, allowing the work of art to enter in the practice of politics. In the Soviet time, cinema as a reproduction medium has proven itself to be involved in the political practice of propaganda. Socialist realism was the leading and the most financially supported genre in Soviet film production. Tarkovsky, on the contrary, tried to explore existential questions and for that reason was excessively criticized by the Soviet authorities. Tarkovsky believed that modern art had taken a wrong turn by either serving propagandistic agendas or commercial entertainment industry (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 63). In his view, art should mainly explore and enhance a person's spirituality. Therefore, instead of serving political or entertainment means, it ought to help an individual come closer to the transcendental. Cinema, then, in Tarkovsky's view, is a ritualistic practice, comparable to the one inherent to religious icons. Tarkovsky has already explored this idea in *Andrei Rublev*. However, in *Nostalghia* he adds another level to his understanding of art as ritual by exploring the connection between art and sacrifice.

The history behind Piero's *Madonna* exemplifies the weakening, or even the complete destruction of the ritualistic value of art, which according to Benjamin and Tarkovsky started happening as the result of the technological development. Originally the fresco was painted around 1457 on the walls of Capella di Cimitero of Santa Maria della Momentana in the town of Monterchi near Arezzo. When the building was destroyed in 1785 by an earthquake, the

fresco was detached and placed over the high altar of the cemetery chapel. In 1992, the already

detached fresco was moved again, now to the museum (Museo della Madonna del Parto) in

Monterchi. Although Tarkovsky saw the original painting in Monterchi, he did not use the

original image when he returned to Italy in 1982 to film *Nostalghia*. Instead, Tarkovsky used the

reproduction of Piero's painting located in the crypt of San Pietro in Tuscania (about 120

kilometers away from Monterchi). Thus, Tarkovsky does not only produce the cinematic

reproduction of a painting, but creates the reproduction of a reproduction. He also manipulates

the architectural reproduction. He does so in particular with the use of the suture technique,

which visually creates two apses in the San Pietro church. A detailed description of Tarkovsky's

distortion can be found in James Mcgillivray article "Andrei Tarkovsky's Madonna del Parto" in

which he argues that the second apse is created in the standing location of Eugenia. Therefore,

according to Mcgillivray, Tarkovsky uses the reproduction of the Madonna and creates an

additional apse with the purpose of making a new cult associated with Eugenia's character. In

my opinion, such manipulations are only the details of the filming process. After all, unlike

Alexander Sokurov who filmed his *Russian Ark* (2002) directly in the Hermitage, Tarkovsky

either was not able or did not feel the need to film original paintings in any of his movies and

simply used reproductions from art books.

When Tarkovsky saw the original *Madonna del Parto* in Monterchi in 1979, the

fresco still had some cultic value. However, it was already earmarked to be moved to a museum.

Tarkovsky comments in his *Diary*: "When they wanted to transfer the Madonna to a museum,

the local women protested and insisted on her staying" (Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time: The

Diaries 1970-1986* 1996–197). It seems that it was not only the beauty of Piero's Madonna

which attracted Tarkovsky's attention, but the painting's status of still being included in the

religious ritual. Therefore, Tarkovsky decides to show the ritual associated with the painting right at the beginning of the film. Eugenia witnesses the ritual associated with the cult of Mary as if by accident, when she is about to leave. In this ritual, several women carry a life-size statue of Mary and place it near Piero's *Madonna of Childbirth*. One of the women kneels down in front of the statue and prays (along with the rest of the women behind her). After this, the kneeling woman opens the statue's dress and lets out a flock of small birds (See Fig. 4. 11). Then the camera shows a series of shots: the rack of the burning candles at the altar, Eugenia's face, and the close-up of Piero's *Madonna of Childbirth*. By showing the ritual, Tarkovsky draws our attention to the original purpose of art as a subject in the practice of worshiping.

Fig. 4. 11

In all of his previous films, Tarkovsky chose to film well-known paintings by such artists as Dürer (*Ivan's Childhood)*, Andrei Rublev (*Andrei Rublev, Solaris, Mirror,* and *Sacrifice*), Leonardo da Vinci (*Mirror* and *Sacrifice*), Pieter Breughel (*Solaris*), Jan van Eyck (*Stalker*). Piero's *Madonna del Parto,* on the other hand, is a relatively unknown and highly controversial fresco. Madonna's representation as visibly pregnant is extremely unusual unless the painting belongs to vernacular art (Lightbown 193). It has been argued that *Madonna del*

Parto received its popularity from an ancient fertility cult, whereas the unusual location of the mortuary site also gives the suspicion that Piero dedicated the painting to his deceased mother who lived in Monterchi[24] (Banker 101). In any case the contrast between the visibly pregnant Madonna and Eugenia is quite striking. However, the painting has more direct relation to Gorchakov than Eugenia. Tarkovsky uses the images of pregnancy as a way to elaborate on the ideas of faith and sacrifice, which he develops later in the film through the character of Domenico. It also becomes a metaphor of artistic creation and the sacrificial character of the artist. Traditionally the Virgin Mary has been looked at as a perfect example of obedience to God. She undergoes a series of ordeals by sacrificing herself and eventually witnessing the sacrifice of her son. Thus, by using the image of the Virgin Mary as a canonical example of a woman of faith, Tarkovsky not only explores Eugenia's personality but extrapolates on the idea of faith and sacrifice as a universal, non-gendered determining principle of spirituality, which Tarkovsky believed to be an indispensable attribute of the artist.

Sculpting in Time provides several passages in which Tarkovsky compares childbirth to the process of artistic creation. In one of them he states: "It is a mistake to talk about the artist 'looking for' his subject. In fact, the subject grows within him like a fruit, and begins to demand expression. It is like childbirth . . . The poet has nothing to be proud of: he is not master of the situation, but a servant" (Tarkovsky &Hunter-Blair 43). The metaphor of childbirth would represent one of the few examples in which the idea of subordination in faith and sacrifice can be understood on both individual and collective levels. The important point of the whole ritual of the Virgin Mary then is to demonstrate and exercise subordination to God (Kearns 50). When

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[24] Piero's dedication of *Madonna del Parto* to his mother creates another link between the painting and Tarkovsky's films. The caption of the last shot of *Nostalghia* states: "Dedicato all memoria di miamadre" (To the memory of my mother). Likewise, it echoes the use of Leonardo da Vinci's *Ginevra de' Benci* (also dedicated to the artist's mother) in Tarkovsky's film about his mother, *Mirror*.

Eugenia expresses her inability to kneel down in front of the Madonna's fresco, it suggests that she is not only rejecting the traditional feminine role but also refuses to kneel down in front of the divine. In other words, her character represents the desacralization of the modern world in which such ideas as spirituality, faith in God, and sacrifice tend to lose their value or become radically reinterpreted. As Tarkovsky states, "Modern man [...] does not want to make any sacrifice, even though true affirmation of self can only be expressed in sacrifice. We are gradually forgetting about this, and at the same time, inevitably, losing all sense of our human calling" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 38). In this sense Eugenia represents Enlightenment, or at the very least a rationalist perspective towards Piero's *Madonna*. She approaches the religious painting with secular interest, and not as a means for communication with the divine.

Tarkovsky understands art primarily as an aesthetic experience that has a direct relationship to the ineffable. The reproduction of a painting thus has the potential to reach dimensions of reality that would go beyond normal apprehension. He writes: "reproduction of real-life sensations is not an end in itself: but it can be given meaning aesthetically, and so become a medium for deep and serious thought" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 23). Tarkovsky's statement echoes David Jasper's argument that film's potential for spiritual exploration is located in the medium itself: "cinema comes closest to stimulating theological reflection... not by its themes or specific motifs, by its very form and nature" (Jasper 240). Given Tarkovsky's inclination to connect aesthetics with spirituality it can be argued that his cinematic realism is poetic and spiritual at the same time. As Michael Bird explains in his article "Film as Hierophany": "a realism which is poetic (sensitive to beauty) is simultaneously a realism which is spiritual (sensitive to meaning)" (May and Bird 15-16). Led by such convictions, Tarkovsky did not like abstract art but mostly was fascinated by the masters of the Italian Renaissance

(Raphael, Vittore Carpaccio, El Greco, Piero della Francesca, Jan van Eyck). These paintings, he believed, are filled with harmony and uncanny beauty: "the Beauty of the Idea" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 50). Tarkovsky comments as such on Carpaccio's paintings:

> As you stand before them you have the disturbing sensation that the inexplicable is about to be explained. For the moment it is impossible to understand what creates the psychological field in which you find yourself, unable to escape the fascination of the painting which transfixes you almost to the point of fear (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 50).

What Tarkovsky describes here is an enigmatic aesthetic experience of the sublime that inspires awe, reverence, and admiration to the point that these feelings transcend rational thought. The sublime involves pleasure from looking at something incredible and, at the same time, pain or fear that comes with the realization of something incomprehensible. Jeffrey Pence puts it the following way while quoting Jean-Francois Lyotard: "Pain arises as 'the mind experiences its own limitation.' Pleasure results from the necessary meditation of an Idea of reason at the threshold of imaginative or cognitive failure, at which point 'the mind discovers that it can conceive of something like infinite'" (Pence 58). The sublime in Tarkovsky's films is found at the border of religious experience and the experience that comes from observing "the Beauty of the Idea".

The experience of the sublime has been described throughout the history of Western thought by such philosophers as Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Max Dessoir, Rudolf Otto, and Jean-Francois Lyotard. However, in arts it enjoyed its greatest popularity during Romanticism, partially as a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Romantic artists (Joseph Wright of Derby, Caspar David

Friedrich, Joseph Mallord William Turner, Thomas Cole) searched for the sublime in a nature that has the potential to overwhelm our rationality with emotions. The cinematic sublime, for its part, is usually associated with what can be called post-romantic sublime. It focuses on an array of different themes (apocalypse, post apocalyptic and post war world, natural disasters) and often includes images of violence and destruction. The definition of the sublime in film is more complex because it is created through the combination of the theme, the framing, the montage, and the film's overall narrative. Film theorists had different names when referring to the overwhelming sensations of the sublime. Walter Benjamin talked about the shock of sensation, Jean Epstein called it *photogénie*, whereas Paul Willeman categorized it as the cinephiliac moment.

In large part, the sublime in Tarkovsky's films comes from the tension that exists between space and time, or, in other words, between stillness and movement. The scenes of Gorchakov's dreams / apparitions which combine still and moving images are the most vivid examples of such tension at the level of shot composition in the first part of the film. After Gorchakov meets Domenico he stops dreaming of his homeland and his inner world becomes turned towards Domenico's character. The settings of the hotel interior disappear with Eugenia's departure and the recurrent double framing of the doorways and window openings of the hotel change to the fluid interior of Domenico's house. As Gorchakov opens the doors to Domenico's house, he sees a miniature landscape with a flowing river and trees in front of the window opening showing the Italian mountain scenery (See Fig. 4. 12). This vision recalls the painting-like images of Gorchakov's memories of his homeland. However, this time the background depicts still mountains of Italy whereas the foreground is reminiscent of the Russian river shown during the opening credits (See Fig. 4. 13).

Fig. 4. 12

Fig. 4. 13

The reversal of the background theme in the image of the landscape seen from Domenico's house exemplifies the turning point for Gorchakov's nostalgia. If at the beginning of the film he was purposelessly wandering from place to place, from now on Gorchakov slowly becomes convinced by the indispensable act of his sacrifice. Gorchakov accepts Domenico's offering of bread and wine (the main elements of the Eucharist in Christianity), after which their identities merge. The phenomenon of blurred characters can also be found in Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, in such characters as Andrei and Ignat, as well as Maria and Natalia. For the most part they point at the connection between memory and the cyclical nature of history. However in *Nostalghia*, as Peter Green argues, "it can be seen as part of the process through which the director seeks to resolve the conflict of exile" (Green 113). If Gorchakov decides to participate in

the ritual described by Domenico, not only will his nostalgia be cured but the entire world will be redeemed (redemption is a theme Tarkovsky continued to develop in his last film, *Sacrifice*). Gorchakov's earlier suggestion regarding the abolition of the frontiers between Italy and Russian, past and present, temporal and eternal becomes possible only if someone has faith. Thus stillness on screen, which was associated with the impossibility to obtain paradise, changes to movement and this movement becomes associated with hope. The performance of the ritual itself becomes a pinnacle of the tension between time and space. As Gorchakov attempts to carry the candle across St. Catherina's pool, the movement acquires purpose. But at the same time the movement can be understood only within a religious context. Otherwise the episode appears as the manifestation of a disproportionate relationship between space (several meters of St. Catherina's pool) and time (nine minutes of Gorchakov's carrying the candle).

Gorchakov's earlier statement about the abolition of frontiers echoes Domenico's argument for unity. Being a former mathematician, Domenico rejects the laws of rationality fundamental for Western culture and paints on the wall of his house the equation "1+1=1". He puts drops of oil on his palm and says that one drop plus another drop makes one big drop. The non rationalistic logic of Domenico declares the sublimation of opposites and allows us to imagine moving beyond the regular dichotomies and limits of the existing configurations of the world. In order to express the idea of unity at the visual level, Tarkovsky resorts to the combination of what he kept separated in the first part of the film: movement and stillness. The stillness represented through the hotel interior and the immovable nature in Gorchakov's dreams becomes replaced by a fluidity of movement which is added both to the architectural structures and the nature scenes. On the one hand, this change represents the possibility of a resolution for Gorchakov's homesickness. It exemplifies Domenico calling for action from Gorchakov's and,

at the same time, Gorchakov's willingness to heed that call. On the other hand, the presence of movement in the otherwise still forms of art, such as architecture and sculpture, creates the tension which characterizes the feeling of sublime as described earlier here.

The architecture in the second part of the film is dominated and defined by the image of Domenico's house. Its interior is completely dilapidated: the roof has holes, the floor is flooded, and the walls are scuffed (See Fig. 4. 14 and Fig. 4. 15). As such the house recalls the shots of architectural ruins that Tarkovsky used in *Stalker* for the depiction of the "Room" in the "Zone". According to Robert Harbison, ruins represent the idea of how the world will end and the feeling of where we as people see ourselves in history. He states: "Ruins are models or heralds of the disintegrating mind and collapsing principles of the age after the end of stable belief, the half-loved companions of post-religious man haunted by ghosts of faith" (Harbison 106). Ruins in Tarkovsky's films are used as a critique of the loss of spirituality and as a metaphor of social decadence. In *Nostalghia* they exemplify the idea of alienation. Domenico's house is not taken care of because he is rejected by society and his children have been taken away. On the other hand, ruins embody the change of state, or the breakdown of our consensual understanding of reality from confined and rational to opened and irrational. The destruction of stone in ruins can therefore be compared to dematerialization. As German art historian Wilhelm Worringer wrote about the feeling of transcendence he found in architectural ruins: "The antonym of matter is spirit. To dematerialize stone means to spiritualize it" (qtd. in Selz 13). Thus, ruins in *Nostalghia* represent the idea of alienation of humanity and at the same time illustrate the film's transition from the domain of rationality associated with Eugenia and the space of the hotel interior to the realm of spirituality which is linked to Domenico's character and the irrational act of sacrifice.

Fig. 4. 14

Fig. 4. 15

The aesthetic significance of ruins in arts has been acknowledged by different scholars who focused their attention on both the ancient and modern remains of monuments. Numerous articles have been written on the phenomenon in contemporary art called "destructive sublime". In Europe the elements of destructive sublime can be found in postwar rubble films (Wolfgang Staudte's *The Murderers Are among Us*, in 1946; Roberto Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero,* in 1948; Robert A. Stemmle's *Berliner Ballade*, also in 1948). In North America it has been largely expressed through photographic images of urban destruction that has been influenced by economic collapse (Detroit), terrorist attacks (New York), or hurricanes (New Orleans). In his article "Photographing Disaster: Urban Ruins and the Destructive Sublime",

Miles Orvell argues that destructive sublime in the 20ᵗʰ century is a type of poetic sublime in which ruins become a "symbol of time and nature's revenge upon human exertion" (Orvell 652). The images of the "Zone" in Tarkovsky's *Stalker* would fall under the category of destructive sublime as described by Orvell. It is a place of ruins intertwined with nature. It becomes aestheticized and appears sublime through the power of decay. As Linda Patrik writes:

> When a ruin appears to be in the process of returning to nature, merging more and more with natural landscape, it appears picturesque. No matter that the ruin was not originally a work of art; its original function and aesthetic value are less relevant than the sublimity or picturesqueness gained through its ruination" (Patrik 53).

John A. Riley notes that the ruins in *Stalker* are stained by time, "where 'time is out of joint' and where an experience of the oneiric is possible both for characters and for willing audience" (Riley 23). As the boundaries between nature and the remains of human activity blur, so does the experience of time and space. The "Zone" in *Stalker* becomes a magical place in which the physical laws of time and space are subject to the individual perceptions of its visitors. Similarly, in *Nostalghia*, ruins express longing for unity and the painful realization that unity is impossible in mortal life.

Svetlana Boym argues that contemporary culture has developed particular optics that frame our relationship to ruins. She writes: "Contemporary ruinophilia relates to the prospective dimension of nostalgia, the type of nostalgia that is reflective rather than restorative and dreams of the potential futures rather than imaginary pasts" (Boym, *Ruinophilia: Appreciation of Ruins*). Ruins have a direct relation to the past. At the same time they make us think of the "future that never took place, tantalizing us with utopian dreams of escaping the

irreversibility of time" (Boym, *Ruinophilia: Appreciation of Ruins*). In *Nostalghia*, ruins serve a double purpose. On the one hand, like in *Stalker,* they represent the decline of spirituality in contemporary culture. On the other hand, they embody Gorchakov's emotional state in which nostalgia is a yearning for the past but also a view towards the future. Ruins bring together terrestrial and at the same time celestial strata. The decay of matter signals the possibility of the revival of the spirit in which the fracture goes towards irrationality, subjectivity, and ultimately towards spirituality.

Ruins in *Nostalghia* also appear as a place for divine worship. Gorchakov gets drunk and falls asleep inside the flooded church (See Fig. 4. 16). He has a dream in which his monologue is reminiscent of Christ's prayer to God before crucifixion. Gorchakov's next dream shows how he wanders inside the ruins of San Galgano Abbey and hears Eugenia's voice as she prays for him (See Fig. 4. 17). Both the flooded church and the gothic building are deficient because of dilapidation. Their roofs are non-existent, as if the openings granted a direct access to the celestial realm. Before falling asleep Gorchakov talks to a girl named Angela. She lives in the flooded church and appears as the embodiment of ultimate happiness. With the image of Angela, Tarkovsky creates a direct link to Gorchakov's first dream/ apparition in which an angel walks in front of the Russian country house. The flooded church becomes a temporal paradise, which references the paradise Gorchakov dreamed about earlier in the film. The only difference is that the paradise in Gorchakov's dreams of homeland was a-temporalized through the stillness of the shot, whereas here moving images of nature and the dilapidated buildings bring temporality back. Thus, stillness introduces the idea of eternity and the celestial strata, whereas movement exemplifies our subjective relationship with God. The movement of the living nature within the

walls of the flooded building serve as a visualization of Gorchakov's feelings which are different

from what was shown before.

Fig. 4. 16

Fig. 4. 17

The episode of the flooded church marks the end of Gorchakov's nostalgia and

ends his fixation on the past in favor of the future. Stefan W. Schmidt, who comments on the

nature of memory *in Nostalghia* said: "We don't necessarily miss a certain place but how it felt

to be in that place. Home places are those with which we become intimate. Therefore nostalgia

can be understood as denial of intimacy" (Schmidt 36). Despite it being his first time in Italy,

Gorchakov becomes intimately comfortable in the flooded church without any rational

explanation as to why he feels like that. He says: "Here it's like in Russia. I don't know why."

The homeland mentioned by Gorchakov here is not an abstract idea, but a tangible substance

represented in the images of nature. Nature in the church is similar to water weeds in the pond near Kris' house in *Solaris*, or the trees by Andrei's childhood home in *Mirror*. With the emergence of movement found in the nature inside the flooded church the abstract imagination of paradise turns into present experience, allowing for future actions.

At the end of Gorchakov's dream in the flooded church the white feather falls from the roof opening to the puddle of water. Tarkovsky immobilizes the camera on the puddle in an invitation to contemplate the bright reflections of light and the ruins under the water's surface (See Fig. 4. 18 and 4. 19). The motif of water combines two contrasting themes. On the one hand, it is imbedded in the images of ruins and contributes to the idea of the fluidity of time. On the other hand, its stillness reflects beauty and spirituality. This brings us back to the earlier scene with the falling feather, which follows the images of Piero's *Madonna del Parto*. The idea of sacrifice introduced in the painting returns at the moment where Gorchakov is ready for it. Although Gorchakov never saw the painting he experiences spiritual change, a state of mind which, according to Tarkovsky, can be evoked by the true art.

 Fig. 4. 18

Fig. 4. 19

The painting of the Madonna, the reflective surfaces of water or mirrors, and ultimately the film itself all become manifestations of the existence of a spiritual presence. In the dream Gorchakov looks in the mirror but sees Domenico as his other self (see Fig. 4. 20 and 4. 21). Reflective surfaces used in *Nostalghia*, such as the puddles in Domenico's house or in the flooded church, offer a new spatial and temporal framework revealing alternative worlds. Noriman Skakov suggests that in his films, Tarkovsky ultimately makes "a leap from the territory of space to the realm of time" (Skakov 107). However, he continues, "this leap into time is possible only by means of deconstructing space" (Skakov 107). The mirror then undermines the linearity of reflections and exists on the borderline between material and spiritual reality. It has a similar spatial context as the one found in religious icon paintings because both are reflective surfaces of spiritual and spiritualizing power. A similar effect happens with the reproduction of *Madonna del Parto*. The lost aura of the original work of art revives through the cinematic reflection in which religious meaning and the ritual is brought back. Thus, instead of simply undermining the authenticity that once existed in the still art of painting, Tarkovsky's film appropriates it within the context of moving images.

Fig. 4. 20

Fig. 4. 21

The last shot of the film is perhaps the most analyzed image of *Nostalghia*. It is the climatic episode of the film in which Gorchakov's life is extended by the long cut of the still image of double exposure (See Fig. 4. 22). Svetlana Boym writes: "A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images – of home and abroad, of past and present, of dream and everyday life. The moment we try to force it into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the surface." The final shot conveys a utopian element in the image. Tarkovsky brings multiple worlds together by placing opposing elements of Italy and Russia in one shot. Such an arrangement allows for the possibly to transcend the limits by taking the image from real to the imaginary realm. The shot prompts a multiplicity of interpretations of Gorchakov's inner state. Did the world remain fragmented or did it achieve unity? Tarkovsky

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himself commented on the final shot: "It is a model of the hero's state, of the division within him which prevents him from living as he has up until now. Or perhaps, on the contrary, it is his new wholeness in which the Tuscan hills and the Russian countryside come together indissolubly" (Tarkovsky & Hunter-Blair 213). On the one hand, the final shot shows the relativity in our earthly existence. On the other hand, Gorchakov's metaphorical return to his home is a return to a new home in which the destroyed limits are those of the self.

Fig. 4. 22

The final shot is predominantly still. The only movement comes from the camera slowly zooming out, finally coming to a stop. The lower part of the background is the Russian country house surrounded by the trees. The foreground shows Gorchakov sitting in front of the small pond. All of this is surrounded by the Italian cathedral of San Galgano Abbey. The last shot of *Nostalghia* combines the elements from Gorchakov's earlier dreams, but now he is part of it. Despite its incredibly beautiful composition the image remains somewhat incomplete. It wavers between gain and loss. Although Gorchakov achieves the paradise he dreamed about, this paradise cannot exist in the temporal world. To resolve this problem Tarkovsky adds another

layer to the image. As we contemplate the stillness of the shot snow starts falling into the roofless building of San Galgano. Perhaps Tarkovsky understood that complete cinematic harmony can only be achieved if, in addition to reconciling Russia and Italy, he can also reconcile stillness and movement. The paradise that could exist earlier only in the a-temporal world now is brought to the temporal realm of existence. Thus, the main goal in resolving nostalgia is to create a link between time and spirituality, which ultimately determines the authenticity of any art, whether it be architecture, painting, or cinema.

Conclusion

I started my research by asking: what role does the static art of painting play when Tarkovsky creates an explicit relation between time and spirituality in cinema? After analyzing four films I come to the conclusion that every painting used in Tarkovsky's cinema has a major impact on how he creates the experience of time in his films. The experience of time in Tarkovsky's films serves a single purpose which is to draw our attention to the perception of time and, by doing so, to elevate our spirituality. By resorting to spatiotemporal distortions, Tarkovsky challenges our conventional understanding of stillness and movement as they are found in painting and cinema. His films suggest moving beyond the mechanical projection of stillness and movement in arts; they advocate for a subjective experience of time directly associated with feelings, not with reason.

Tarkovsky shows the relationship between painting and cinema as a constant exchange of their temporal characteristics. On the one hand, when placed into the filmic fabric, the paintings acquire movement. This happens with the images of icons at the end of *Andrei Rublev*, or with Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* in *Solaris*. On the other hand, Tarkovsky borrows painting-like stillness and redirects it towards his cinematic imagery. He does it when portraying the image of the mother in *Mirror* (with the help of da Vinci's *Ginevra de' Benci*), or with the images of time suppression in *Nostalghia*. As a result, Tarkovsky creates an original form of temporal defamiliarization which invites us to reconsider profane linear time in favor of the spiritual observation of phenomena passing *through* time. Tarkovsky's films can be called an "image-mediator", in that they attempt to reveal the spiritual side of human existence and aim to draw our attention to concrete spiritual problems in contemporary reality such as alienation, mechanization, urbanization, disbelief, and so on.

Tarkovsky sees the problem of the spiritual decay of contemporary people in the 'authority of the clock' as it permeates the culture of the industrial and post-industrial ages. He attempts to overturn it by challenging our understanding of public and personal history as a linear and unidirectional phenomenon. For example, *Andrei Rublev* appears to belong to the genre of epic historical films. However, instead of an objective representation of history, Tarkovsky poeticizes time by turning it into an individual drama. He breaks the orthodox concept of historical film as a linear progression of events and turns the profane time of history into the sacred time of subjective contemplation. Tarkovsky does it by adopting the temporality of icon paintings in which the reverse perspective is a main characteristic of their cyclical temporality and their spiritual substance. Therefore, the film becomes a cinematic visualization of *kairotic* moments which can only be experienced on the subjective level. The most obvious manifestation of cyclical time in *Andrei Rublev* is the appearance of recurrent visual motives which act as the re-enactment of spiritual ideals such as faith, sacrifice, love, creativity, etc.

Tarkovsky's reinterpretation of personal history happens in his autobiographical film *Mirror*. Instead of focusing on cyclical temporality*,* this time he draws our attention to stillness. While cyclicity points to the idea of re-enactment or repetition of spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, and contemplation, stillness establishes the conditions for a spiritual change. Stillness in Tarkovsky's works is supposed to transform the story (and the history) of the past into the contemplative practice of the present. It provokes self-reflexivity and allegorically functions as a mirror for the soul. Tarkovsky chooses the face of the mother as an image that represents yearning for the past. However, after comparing it to Leonardo da Vinci's portrait painting *Ginevra de' Benci* the longing for the past turns into a desire for transcendence. By juxtaposing the face in the portrait with the stillness of the mother's face Tarkovsky creates a

visual poetry of yearning which evokes quiet reflection and prompts to turn our gaze towards the infinite and the eternal.

With the use of paintings in cinema Tarkovsky also explores the phenomena of memory and consciousness within the context of temporality. In *Solaris*, Tarkovsky advocates against the dehumanization of space and time which we see in his portrayal of the modern city and of Solaris station. The film ultimately shows that time is largely constituted by memory and personal experiences. Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* becomes a visual representation of personal experience, a mental space for the protagonists. The use of the painting helps to break spatial and temporal boundaries in conventional works of art by redefining what movement is. Instead of thinking of movement in connection with evolution and technical progress, as most science-fiction films do, Tarkovsky focuses on movement as a natural phenomenon that reflects the spiritual state of an individual. The film, then, just like the painting, becomes a landscape of personal memory. Like the painting, it evokes mental time travel and helps in re-experiencing the past.

In *Nostalghia*, Tarkovsky presents us with an idealized memory of the past which exists on the borderline of an idealized version of the future. While in *Andrei Rublev*, *Solaris*, and *Mirror* time was looked at in the context of the interplay between stillness and movement, in *Nostalghia* Tarkovsky collides them together. The idea of nostalgia is portrayed as a spatiotemporal tension which is represented through the tension between stillness and movement on the screen. Piero della Francesco's fresco *Madonna del Parto* becomes a central element of the film despite the facts that it is shown only for a few seconds. Placed among a series of oppositions (Gorchakov – Eugenia, Russia - Italy, past – future, faith – disbelief, stillness – movement), its purpose is to reconcile that which seems not to be reconcilable. On the one hand,

by being part of the architectural structure the fresco contributes to the idea of time suppression and illustrates stillness on the screen. On the other hand, through its subject matter it carries the ideas of faith and spiritual awakening and supports Gorchakov and Domenico's sacrificial actions. Ultimately the *Madonna del Parto* resolves a problem of artistic authenticity. Despite being a reproduction within a reproduction it brings back the lost aura of the original work of art. The religious and ritualistic meaning of the painting are revived as cinematic reflections. Thus, instead of simply undermining the authenticity that once existed in the still art of painting, *Nostalghia* appropriates it within the context of moving images.

Tarkovsky's films demonstrate that time can be experienced aesthetically and as a spiritual phenomenon, whereas cinema can be a powerful medium for spiritual awakening. The main function of the paintings used in Tarkovsky's films is to help turning film into spiritual practice by aestheticizing time. By bringing painting in his films Tarkovsky rethinks the cinematic medium as the one that reproduces reality, is defined by movement, and is dealing with objective reality. When Tarkovsky uses paintings in his films they stop being authentic and still. The films, on the other hand, acquire those qualities which the original painting once had. Paradoxically, the collision of stillness and movement, authenticity and reproduction, objective and subjective reality, turns into the reconciliation in which cinematic temporality becomes reconsidered through the mutual interchange between the two media (See Table 1 and 2).

Painting	Cinema
Authentic	Reproduction
Still	Moving
Represents subjective reality	Reproduces objective reality

Table 1 Main characteristics of painting as opposed to those of cinema.

Paintings in Tarkovsky's film	Tarkovsky's cinema
Reproduction	Authentic
Incorporated in movement	Dominated by stillness
Used in the context of objective reality	Represents subjective reality

Table 2 Change in the characteristics of painting and cinema when painting is used in film.

When analyzing the role of paintings in Tarkovsky's films I primarily focused on Tarkovsky's own perspectives on the questions of aesthetics, time, and spirituality, which he expressed in his films and writing. My future research will be directed towards incorporating history and placing Tarkovsky's works in the context of other art cinema directors who used paintings in their films. Tarkovsky himself acknowledged the influence of Michelangelo Antonioni, Robert Bresson, Ingmar Bergman, and Luis Bunuel on his cinematic style. However, there is not much scholarly research on the similarities and differences of how other film directors used the works of visual arts (paintings in particular) in comparison to the films of Tarkovsky. Furthermore, there are several film directors who were influenced by Tarkovsky's visual aesthetics, such as Lars von Trier, Krzysztof Kieslowski, Béla Tarr, Claire Denis. My

interest especially goes towards three Russian film directors whose artistic vision aligns with the artistic vision of Tarkovsky. There is an acknowledged influence of Caspar David Friedrich's landscapes in Aleksander Sokurov's *Mother and Son* (1997) which echoes Tarkovsky's way of connect nature sceneries and human emotions. Andrei Zvyagintsev's *Banishment* (2007) is the most straightforward example of Tarkovsky's influence in action. Zvyagintsev uses Leonardo da Vinci's painting (*Annunciation*) in order to connect the aesthetics of religious art with his own film. Like Tarkovsky, Zvyagintsev constructed a house and a church specifically for his film; both resemble the country houses in *Mirror* and *Sacrifice* while making allusions to Andrew Wyeth's paintings. *Yes and Yes* (2013) by Valeriya Gai Germanika contemplates in a 'Tarkovskian' manner the question of the relationship between art and cinema as well as the inner world of the artist. The work of these prominent Russian film directors testify that Tarkovsky's cinematic heritage has a great significance in how film engages with other visual arts, and how we as viewers engage with those films which were influenced by the masterpieces of visual art.

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