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**SCULPTING IN TIME, SPACE AND SPIRITUALITY: THE SOVIET FILM
INSTRUCTOR ANDREI TARKOVSKY AND HIS INNER JOURNEY
THROUGH HIS SEVEN FEATURE LENGTH MOVIES (1962-1986)**

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Every year films of all kinds are produced, and the number of film directors is many all over the world. But among them there are individual geniuses who stand out from the crowd. The Soviet film director Andrei Tarkovsky is one of these geniuses. With his only seven feature length films, he wrote himself into the top history of the film world. The article attempted to analyse and discuss Andrei Tarkovsky's sculpting in time, space, memory, and spirituality as well as how the director thought of himself as an artist who constantly struggled with the authoritarian powers of the state over art, and consequently how themes of artistic expression manifested in his work. The main question is whether the director's films are his inner journey? Was Andrei Tarkovsky a dissident in the Soviet Union or not? What is the intellectual and cultural climate in which Tarkovsky operated? An understanding of the prevalence of religious rhetoric and non-conformist art in both Soviet and Russian history is required to comprehend how potentially radical the themes in Andrei Tarkovsky's films were in the era of the Soviet Union.

Keywords: "Ivan's Childhood", Andrei Tarkovsky, "Solaris", Soviet Union, "Mirror", Russian iconography, "The Sacrifice", "Andrei Rublev", "Stalker", Russian intelligentsia, "Nostalgia".

**СКУЛЬПТУРА ВО ВРЕМЕНИ, ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ И ДУХОВНОСТИ:
СОВЕТСКИЙ КИНОРЕЖИССЕР АНДРЕЙ ТАРКОВСКИЙ
И ЕГО ВНУТРЕННЕЕ ПУТЕШЕСТВИЕ ЧЕРЕЗ СЕМЬ
ПОЛНОМЕТРАЖНЫХ ФИЛЬМОВ (1962-1986)**

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Каждый год производятся всевозможные фильмы, и число режиссеров по всему миру велико. Но среди них есть отдельные гении, которые выделяются из

толпы. Советский кинорежиссер Андрей Тарковский – один из таких гениев. Всего с семью своими полнометражными фильмами он вписал себя в историю мирового кинематографа. В статье предпринята попытка проанализировать и обсудить скульптуру Андрея Тарковского во времени, пространстве, памяти и духовности, а также то, как режиссер думал о себе в качестве художника, который постоянно боролся с авторитарной властью государства над искусством, и, следовательно, как темы художественного выражения проявлялись в его работах. Главный вопрос заключается в том, являются ли фильмы режиссера его внутренним путешествием? Был ли Андрей Тарковский диссидентом в Советском Союзе или нет? Каков интеллектуальный и культурный климат, в котором действовал Тарковский? Чтобы осмыслить, насколько потенциально радикальными были темы в фильмах Андрея Тарковского в эпоху Советского Союза, необходимо понимание распространенности религиозной риторики и нонконформистского искусства как в советской, так и в российской истории.

Ключевые слова: «Иваново детство», Андрей Тарковский, «Солярис», Советский Союз, «Зеркало», русская иконография, «Жертвоприношение», «Андрей Рублев», «Сталкер», русская интеллигенция, «Ностальгия».

Prologue

Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) was a Soviet film director, writer, screenwriter and, furthermore, a very important film theorist. He is widely considered one of the greatest and most influential filmmakers of all time, his films explore spiritual and metaphysical themes and are specially noted for their slow pacing and long takes, dreamlike visual imagery, and preoccupation with nature and memory. Tarkovsky studied film at Moscow's Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography among other under the Russian filmmaker Mikhail Romm (1901-1971), who was mainly a documentalist and among his notable work, you will find, "Lenin in September" from 1937 and "Nine days in one year" from 1962 [1, p. 6-7].

From 1956 until 1986 Andrei Tarkovsky made all his movies, twelve in all with short movies, TV-movies and documentaries. From 1956 until 1979, the film director subsequently directed his first five feature length movies in the Soviet Union: “Ivan’s Childhood” (1962), “Andrei Rublev” (1966), “Solaris” (1972), “Mirror” (1975) and “Stalker” (1979). Among the world’s leading film critics, these five films are all considered to be among the world’s best films.

After years of conflict with the Soviet authorities Andrei Tarkovsky left the Soviet Union in 1979. His last two feature length movies: “Nostalgia” (1983) and “The Sacrifice” (1986) were produced in Italy and Sweden respectively. His entire life’s work was discussed in his book “Sculpting in time” (1986). Andrei Tarkovsky died from cancer of the right bronchial tube in December 1986. Four years earlier the main character of “Stalker” Anatoly Solonitsyn (1934-1982) died from the same kind of cancer. Therefore, there is still debate if the cancer of as well Solonitsyn as Andrei Tarkovsky was caused by the locations used during filming of “Stalker” near an old chemical plant in the surroundings of Tallinn [15, p. 20-21].

Goskino USSR (State Committee for cinematography) and Andrei Tarkovsky

In the Soviet Union Andrei Tarkovsky managed to remain relatively free to pursue his vision, even though he was not a political party man, and his films did not conform to the socialist realist norm that the Communist Party championed. This suggests that the Soviet system was not as monolithic as we might be tempted to think it was. Here we also disregard Tarkovsky’s own tenacity and stubbornness towards Soviet authorities, in four decades he made movie in big country. In the Soviet Union a film director like Andrei Tarkovsky had to face big obstacles. However, on the other hand, these obstacles played an important part in shaping Tarkovsky’s different movies [16, p. 22].

The Soviet film industry, like other walk of life in the empire, was heavily centralized. Goskino, the State Committee for cinematography, a body founded in 1922, oversaw every aspect of filmmaking in the USSR, and always having the final say on each stage of the production of a film, from the film script approval to the

green lighting a film's release. All film studios all over the country, around forty, were all answerable to Goskino. Including "Mosfilm" studio in Moscow, where Andrei Tarkovsky made all his movie in his Soviet era [16, p. 24].

In Andrey Tarkovsky's era first Alexei Romanov (1963-1972) and Philip Ermash (1972-1986) headed Goskino. The first mentioned was a typical Soviet party official, but he was also ready to look through his fingers, if the film project was interesting. The last mentioned, however, was more rigid and in one way or another became a kind of personal nemesis of Andrei Tarkovsky. Maybe one of the reasons why the film director moved to Italy and later Paris in the 1980s. But both directors often approved his movies without even seeing them. Furthermore, they allowed a vigorous travel activity outside the Soviet Union of Tarkovsky and sometimes some from his crew [8, p. 25].

"Mosfilm" was comprised of various departmental heads, who oversaw the different processes of the filmmaking. Including a film council that had the final say in how a film should be distributed, either in Category 1 or Category 2. The first meant wide release in the major cinemas and the second only limited release in smaller cinemas all over the country. With a population of almost 300 million inhabitants, the film's categorization was almost alpha and omega for the director. Except "Solaris", all his movies were categorized in Category 2. Andrei Tarkovsky was very angry by this fact and came to feel that, in a way, he was being persecuted by the Soviet authorities [8, p. 23].

In the offices of Goskino, Tarkovsky's reputation was a mixture between stubborn and reluctant. He refused, constantly, to make cuts in his movies, cuts in accordance with the institute's rules for the creation of films. However, in the eyes of Goskino and "Mosfilm", Andrei Tarkovsky was intellectual and very difficult to understand for the average Soviet cinemagoer. Therefore, the officials were normally not hostile to Tarkovsky. And on the other hand, sometimes Andrei Tarkovsky took their feedback on board and made changes to his films accordingly.

The big prize, however, was Category 2 movies. In some respects, Andrei Tarkovsky enjoyed privileges not extended to other famous Soviet directors, during

the Cold War. Some of these directors resented what they saw as Andrei Tarkovsky's special treatment. Once a script had been approved, a famous film director like Tarkovsky, who enjoyed worldwide reputation, would face very little, if any at all, interference from either "Mosfilm" or Goskino during the following shooting. Normally, the process of getting a script approved was a long and frustrating one, but not for Tarkovsky.

The big problem was that Tarkovsky adapted and rewrote his script up to several times during the shooting process. In a way, it basically was a completely different manuscript the film director showed the council at the time of approval of the green lightning. The approval state was often a little difficult. As a counter move, Tarkovsky could sometimes submit edits of his movies that he knew were far too long, so when the council calls came for cuts, he was then cutting all the parts he was dissatisfied with. Then Tarkovsky could show that he complied with the requests of the officials to shorten the movie. And it was thereafter approved for green lightning. In a way, his highly intellectual films and messy scripts must have been a little too manageable - indeed, simply a little too much for the Soviet authorities [8, p. 24-25].

Russian intelligentsia, dissidents and Andrei Tarkovsky

In the late Soviet Union, the term intelligentsia acquired a formal definition of mental and cultural workers. There were subcategories of scientific-technical intelligentsia and creative intelligentsia. Between 1917 and 1941 there was a massive increase in the number of for instance engineering graduates: from 15,000 to over 250,000. To contextualize Andrei Tarkovsky's placement within the dissident movements of the late-Soviet era, one must first consider the history of these socio-politically active cultural groups which can be traced back to the intelligentsia class in the early nineteenth century. The Russian intelligentsia preceded the Soviet Union by about a century and were instrumental in creating it.

Following the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, relaxed censorship led to a period known as the "Thaw", which lasted into the 1960s under Nikita Khrushchev. The driving force of the Soviet intelligentsia that existed around this time has been identified as "Zhivago's children" by professor at London School of Economics

Vladislav Zubok, after the eponymous character in Pasternak's novel. "Zhivago's children" came about from the explosion of higher education in the late 1940s, as well as the shared experiences of living through World War II.

The destructive events of the war, combined with a certain sense of patriotism that resulted from the victory, helped shape the worldview of "Zhivago's children" and, incidentally, Andrei Tarkovsky himself, who explored these feelings with his 1962 film "Ivan's childhood".

From an artistic standpoint, members of the intelligentsia began to see the revolution as being "betrayed" since under Stalin they were servants of the repressive regime. Due to the stringent censorship of the Stalinist regime, the younger members of the intelligentsia pursued their own forms of artistic expression, which developed further following the death of Stalin and the "Khrushchev Thaw". Members of the "Thaw" generation were often influenced by international styles of film, music, and other modes that managed to permeate into the Soviet Union following the collapse of Stalinist policies. Eventually, the freedom of the "Thaw" experienced by "Zhivago's children" waned in the 1960s. It was into this cultural environment that Tarkovsky made most of his films in the Soviet Union.

However, as Lenin and later Stalin solidified dictatorial power in the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s, a new intelligentsia manifested itself to combat the strict cultural limitations imposed by the new state. Under Stalin, until his death in 1953, this movement struggled against stringent censorship and persecution. This changed following Nikita Khrushchev's rise to power after Stalin's death, during which cultural expression flourished during the "Thaw" period.

Nonetheless, this period of alleviation from repressive censorship dissipated by the 1960s, after which new dissident movements in the tradition of the Russian intelligentsia developed contemporaneously with the Soviet career of Tarkovsky. From a political vantage point, the intelligentsia formed as an unintended consequence of actions taken by Russia's rulers to establish Russia on an equal footing with other European powers. Socially, its rise can be attributed to changes in

the gentry, who were given a significant role in the modernization process, but who could not be granted all the reforms, which they desired as recompense.

Andrei Tarkovsky and his loss of innocence

Andrei Tarkovsky explored the theme of lost innocence in “Ivan’s childhood”. The birch forest that featured in the film provided a temporary escape from the realities of war. The film “Ivan’s childhood” showed the Soviet audience the war in a new way, how it affected a 12-year-old child, depriving him of his family, childhood and eventually life. Trapped in its cycle, a smiling boy, Ivan, turned into an avenger, obsessed with hatred and blood. Ivan became a monster, according to Jean-Paul Sartre. Ivan’s mood can even be seen in reviewing the trophy album with the reproductions by German painter and graphic artist Albrecht Dürer. Curiously flipping through the album, Ivan stopped his gaze on the famous woodcut “The four horsemen of the Apocalypse”. The work is part of a series of Apocalypse, consisting of the 15 woodcuts, which was painted by the artist during 1496-1498 [12, p. 205].

Despite the fatality of the events, the spiritual impulse of the young hero is incredibly important and strong, as well as his desire to sacrifice himself for the salvation of others. Starting with the topics of the Apocalypse and the sacrifice in his art, Tarkovsky would develop them deeper in subsequent films.

“Ivan’s childhood” is a superb depiction of the loss of innocence in childhood. How youth is robbed of childhood? How the sins of the fathers utterly wreck a young soul? It is also a war movie and offers a poignant evocation of how war ruins lives. The movie lyrically individualizes war, depicts how wars happen to individuals, not just nations or cultures. “Ivan’s Childhood” was based on the Russian author Vladimir Bogomolov’s (1924-2003) novella “Ivan” from 1957. Little Ivan was fighting against the Nazis, himself, but soon the communist soldiers were helping him fighting the real evil [9, p. 92].

Originally, this “Mosfilm” production was going to be directed by the Soviet director of Georgian origin, Eduard Abalov (1927-1987). However, “Mosfilm” halted this film project and Andrei Tarkovsky took over. By the 1st of March 1962, various artistic councils at “Mosfilm” had examined “Ivan’s childhood” thirteen times.

Tarkovsky's first movie launched his career emphatically. The movie won the "Golden Lion" award at the Venice film festival in 1962. Other directors taking part in the competition were Roman Polanski, Bernardo Bertolucci and Frank Perry. Tarkovsky's childhood and early adulthood, from his birth in 1932, until his matriculation in the State Institute for Cinematography in 1954, set him up with the appropriate tools to excel as an artist later in life.

Both his grandfather and his father were poets. Although his father left his family in the late 1930s, the poetic influence he had on his young son remained throughout Tarkovsky's career. The director was also profoundly influenced by his mother, Maria, who worked in publishing. He would retrospectively describe his mother as the primary reason for him developing into the artistic filmmaker he eventually became.

However, despite the large influence both of his parents' artistic inclinations had on his eventual filmmaking career, Tarkovsky would often rebel as a child, preferring to daydream more often than complete his studies, and could only be calmed by reading. His rebellious, daydream focused childhood and his affinity for literature led to a development of an interest in dreams as an artistic theme. After briefly enrolling in the School of Oriental Languages to learn Arabic and taking part in a year-long geological surveying expedition to Siberia in the early 1950s, where his interest in the natural environment deepened, he entered the State Institute for Cinematography. Here, he studied under the tutelage of Soviet director Mikhail Romm, whose unorthodox teaching methods allowed Tarkovsky to thrive [9, p. 88].

The film "Ivan's childhood" contained many common elements found in the Soviet cinema in 1960s. Firstly, the starkly realistic depictions of war differed greatly from the heroic representation of Soviet soldiers found in socialist realist films. Additionally, the theme of lost innocence due to the harsh conditions of the wartime Soviet Union connected deeply with the "Thaw" generation, whose members grew up during World War II and its immediate aftermath. Further themes, including memory and dreams, depict a further development of Tarkovsky's signature filmmaking style. The popularity and positive critical reception of the film effectively launched

Tarkovsky's career as a well-known Soviet filmmaker to both domestic and international audiences [18, p. 16].

Andrei Tarkovsky spoke of "Ivan's childhood" as his qualifying examination to see whether he had it in himself to become a director, also, from the perspective under the circumstances for film directors in the Soviet Union. In "Ivan's childhood" the only way for Ivan to enter this new world is by fighting to avenge the death of his parents, his tragedy is that he has had no conventional childhood and can have one only in dreams. For the wounded psyche of Ivan, there was no other reality except war. Despite the fatality of the events, the spiritual impulse of the young hero is incredibly important and strong, as well as his desire to sacrifice himself for the salvation of others. Starting with the topics of the Apocalypse and the sacrifice in his art, Tarkovsky would develop them deeper in subsequent films. "Ivan's childhood" was an autobiographical movie of the director [18, p. 18].

Andrei Tarkovsky, Andrei Rublev: the inner conflict of the director

Through its use of religious and artistic themes and imagery "Andrei Rublev" depicts a cultural environment that can be identified by two major characteristics. First, the culture being depicted is exclusively and definitively Russian. Second, the film's setting occurs simultaneously with a shifting cultural climate in Russia.

Work of the artist should fill the imperfection of the world, facilitate the passions-sufferings, and help people to find hope, dignity, and sense of life. The film director saw the similarity between the complex creative path of the icon-painter and his own way. So, he was particularly interested in overcoming obstacles by the artist on his way to the realization of intentions. The word "passion" in Church Slavonic means "suffering", and Andrei Rublev shown by Tarkovsky goes along this painful path full of passions together with his epoch. He took to heart everything that was happening around: injustice, violence, appalling cruelty of the Middle Ages. The loss of labours and despair of Andrei Rublev were caused by them, he had to realize that the talent was not only a gift of God, but also a hard work, the artist was doomed to. It is a kind of carrying the Cross. Furthermore, the film marked a stark contrast to the socialist realism that could be found in most Soviet films and art at this time. Andrei

Tarkovsky's main goal in making "Andrei Rublev" was to explore a specific type of artistic process, specifically the humanistic approach of the eponymous character [4, p. 27].

Andrei Rublev was reborn to the sound of bell, cast by the power of passion of a young Boriska, and he realized that now he and his art were in need more than ever. In the epilogue of black-and-white film, the soft contours of the faces and the bright colours of the icons and frescoes drawn by Andrei Rublev appeared: "Lord's entry into Jerusalem", "Christ enthroned in Glory", "Transfiguration", "Christmas", and finally, the "Trinity" – the iconographer's masterpiece [2, p. 65].

Due to its subject matter, the film covers a wide variety of themes, including religion, art and the cultural history of Russia. This film serves as a focal point that can be used to contextualize Tarkovsky among the contemporaneous religious and artistic moods of the Soviet Union. After the success of his first feature film "Ivan's childhood", he wished to push his filmmaking talents further by exploring the complex and controversial themes stated above. However, by doing this, he drew the ire of the Soviet state, which refused to release "Andrei Rublev" in the USSR until 1971 in a censored version. Throughout the remainder of his career, he would have a contentious artistic relationship with the Soviet state, often fighting over what content should be included or cut. This strife would eventually lead Tarkovsky to depart the USSR in 1982 to complete his final two films outside of the restrictions of the Soviet film industry.

One of the most controversial themes in "Andrei Rublev" is that of religion. This theme accounted for a major deviation from the state-sponsored atheism of the Soviet Union. The film marked a stark contrast to the socialist realism that could be found in most Soviet films and art at this time. The use of religious themes during this era of the Soviet Union tended to be used more heavily in nonconformist art. Additionally, although practicing religion was frowned upon by the Soviet state, there were several religious dissident groups, that continued to practice their faiths underground [2, p. 2-3].

“Andrei Rublev” gives up painting and takes on a vow of silence after killing a man in the raid, but eventually is convinced to not squander his natural talents at another church. The various church settings not only give “Andrei Rublev” a place to work, but also a place where he can contemplate the spirituality and meaning of his various artistic endeavours. To understand the significance of Andrei Rublev as a historical figure, one must contemplate the characteristics of icons. Russian icons developed from the iconographic tradition of the Byzantine Empire. By using an icon painter as his film’s subject, Tarkovsky wanted to depict the life and experiences of an artist in a distinctly Russian setting. The life of Rublev as depicted in the film are thus reminiscent of Tarkovsky’s own experience as a Russian artist. By illustrating the life of a prominent figure in the history of Russian Orthodox iconography, Tarkovsky revealed his interest in a faith that had undergone extreme repression in the Soviet Union [11, p. 19-20].

Tarkovsky’s main goal in making “Andrei Rublev” was to explore a specific type of artistic process, specifically the humanistic approach of the eponymous character. He wished to reflect Rublev’s artistic process with his own by exploring “the personality of the artist in relation to his time” [2, p. 68]. By comparing himself to Rublev, Tarkovsky could depict the life of an artist living in a culturally repressive state. He also examined the importance of autodidacticism for those under authoritarian rule. To accentuate the artistic themes in which he was interested, Tarkovsky employed several unconventional filmmaking techniques, such as a literary structure, which also validated his comparison of Rublev to himself as influential artists. The film’s epilogue and its irregular filmic approach offer the most apparent example of this correlation between Tarkovsky and Rublev. Through its use of religious and artistic themes and imagery, “Andrei Rublev” depicts a cultural environment that can be identified by two major characteristics. First, the culture being depicted is exclusively and definitively Russian. Second, the film’s setting occurs simultaneously with a shifting cultural climate in Russia. Additionally, these themes connect him to contemporary movements such as nonconformist art and Russian Orthodox dissidents. While his artistic approach carries certain similarities to artists and writers

of the Russian intelligentsia, his political reliance on the Soviet state for funding and equipment do not allow for him to be perceived completely as a dissident filmmaker. However, his rejection of socialist realism for more metaphysical themes did put him at odds with the state; this artistic friction with the government would ultimately drive him from the Soviet Union in the 1980s so that he could pursue making films in Western Europe.

Like “Ivan’s childhood”, the movie “Andrei Rublev” was even more autobiographical. Even though it “Andrei Rublev” also serves to reinforce Andrei Tarkovsky’s own theories about the role of the artist in society, also his own role, in other words. In Andrei Tarkovsky’s own pronouncements on the movie, the film director spoke of his concern for the role of the artist in society and how art reflected the aspirations of society. Andrei Tarkovsky was interested in the theme of the artist’s personality in its relationship to time. Following the director, the artist, on the strength of his natural sensitivity, is the person, who perceives his era most profoundly and reflect it most fully.

For Andrei Tarkovsky there was no doubt that although still a young art cinema was the heir to the older traditions, and that he himself, like “Andrei Rublev” was able to perceive his epoch most profoundly and reflect it most fully. In other words, Tarkovsky reflects on his own role in Soviet cinema the limit was about to be reached for further personal development

The final Soviet years until 1982

“Solaris”

Memory and the past are a recurring theme in “Solaris”, mediated though the modern technology of sci-fi. Andrei Tarkovsky began working on would become his third feature in the autumn of 1968. Perhaps unwilling to court more controversy while “Andrei Rublev’s” troubles continued to play out around him, he proposed filming the Polish author Stanislaw Lem’s novel “Solaris” from 1961, set firmly in the seemingly safe genre of science fiction. But perhaps also because interest in space travel was at its peak, as the space race between the United States and the Soviet

Union was in the decisive phase. In 1972, the movie was played across the country. [5, p. 102].

Although the genre of this film was new, the themes he explored in “Solaris” were like those of “Andrei Rublev”. Whereas that film focused on the life of an artist, and explored his mentality through his relationship with art, the main character of “Solaris” Kelvin is a psychologist whose mental state is examined in relation to science. While the theme of science was new to Tarkovsky’s filmography, the humanistic approach he uses to deal with it is in line with his previous work. He is less interested in the scientific accuracy of the film, but rather how science can be used to reveal poetic truths about his characters [15, p. 363].

As we remember the plot of the novel, the Ocean seemed to materialize the objects of human culture. And in another episode, Tarkovsky instead of a straight quote, suitable to the theme, a painting has played the role of a key to the solution of a complex image of nostalgia for the Earth. Because the film, unlike the novel by Stanislaw Lem, is not a view on the space but it is the view on the Earth from the space. And the beautiful allegory of this nostalgic memories became the work of a genius master Pieter Brueghel the Elder, namely the painting “Hunters in the snow”. This is the image of a distant house and dream-memories of the native planet, about her winter holidays, home comfort, about his childhood [7, p. 54-55].

So the film builds up the new testament parable of the “prodigal son”. In the film, it becomes a cautionary tale about the man and the Cosmos, which is possible to learn, according to Tarkovsky, only by the transition to a higher moral level. On the other hand, a parable about the reconciliation between man and God can be noticed. Yet, in attempting to deal with the on-going problem of his relationship not only with his parents but also with his relationship with the Soviet Union and its communistic system, Andrey Tarkovsky produced a movie of deep pathos and power. However, “*jacta est alea*”, he had decided to leave the Soviet Union [12, p. 215-216].

“Mirror”

In 1975 Tarkovsky released the “Mirror”, one of his most complex and least accessible films. The film is a loosely autobiographical account of his life, ranging

from his childhood during World War II to the 1970s. Its major theme is that of memory; the film has a stream-of-conscious plot structure that is chronologically nonlinear and makes heavy use of oneiric imagery such as physics-defying events like levitation and psychedelic images on the planet surface. His final Soviet film “Stalker” was released in 1979. It marked a return to the science fiction genre, although its dystopian setting differed drastically from the space station of *Solaris*. The recurrent Tarkovskian theme of art is explored, most notably in the character of the Writer, who is contrasted with the professor, who represents the theme of science. The film marked a notable shift in focus towards the Aristotelian dramatic unities of time, space, and action [11, p. 9-10].

“Mirror” is a very personal, and that’s why complex and important film for Tarkovsky. This film, or rather-confession (one of the original titles of the film), created from the memories, dreams, feelings of filmmaker connected with the closest people. The movie is laced with the aesthetics of his favourite artist and spiritual teacher Leonardo da Vinci. Twice in the film an old folio with the works of the great painter appeared. Because originally, he conceived the film as mother confession, which was made to respond to son’s questioning [5, p. 156].

Andrei Tarkovsky’s love for his mother, and his mature feeling of guilt about her, he continued to grow with constant resistance to the rules of life, as they were firmly articulated by mother. That resistance later turned into a desire to return to the childhood, to comprehend the essence of mother’s love, and was reflected in the “Mirror”. Perhaps the most prominent theme in *Stalker* is that of the nature of spirituality and its degradation in an oppressive society. For Tarkovsky a key element of spirituality is faith, and mother plays a very important role in the Bible [7, p. 56].

The childhood memories that Andrei Tarkovsky drew on for “Mirror” fall into three groups: the pre-war scenes set at the dacha; the wartime scenes and the dreams. The first of the movie after the opening sequences shows the main character Maria waiting on a fence. Maria is Alexei’s mother. Alexei describes in voice-over how she would wait for passers-by to reach the bush in the middle of the field, and if they turned towards the house, it meant that it was father returning home. But if they

carried straight on, it meant that they were not father and that they would never return. This would appear to be one of Tarkovsky's own memories. His enduring memories of childhood were, indeed, of waiting for the war to end and for his father to come home. "Mirror" is not a straight autobiographical movie, and very difficult reading it in this way, more it is a pseudo-autobiography [10, p. 62-63].

"Stalker"

"Stalker" released in 1979, is the first film of Andrei Tarkovsky and his late period, which would see his films become pronouncedly more philosophical in tone, and more minimal in terms of plot and art direction. These last three movies of his career are, furthermore, marked by an ever-lengthening take, as well as using almost imperceptibly slow zooms and an ever-greater difficulty in determining whether events portrayed on-screen happen externally or internally. In essence, "Stalker" and the two movies that follow it, are closely linked enough to be said to form a triptych in which Andrei Tarkovsky's main theme is the catastrophic state of the world and the desire to avert the looming apocalypse [4, p. 40].

In his last Russian film Tarkovsky therefore returns to the Trinity again. Only this time it is not picturesque but presented in the images of the main characters. And there is no Rublev's harmony of unity, but on the contrary, the Trinity devoured with discord. In "Stalker" the director played a role of production designer. There is almost no fiction, all attention paid to the fundamental values. Therefore, the situation in the film is extremely austere, the names of heroes are allegories (stalker, writer, professor), as well as the zone itself with its inner sanctum, the Room that grants the wishes. The real world from Tarkovsky painted sepia [10, p. 200].

The colours appear only on the territory of the Zone, but it also keeps the traces of the "disaster". The director again focuses on the theme of the Apocalypse, but now he is also trying to find salvation from it. The dream of Stalker during his halt hints about it.

There are strong Christian motifs in "Stalker" they help the director to convey the main idea: the need to counterbalance spiritual and material. Therefore, the focus is not only on picturesque views, but also on things around. Some springs, syringes,

coins next to a religious image show that the spiritual values of people take second place, giving way to things. The sleep environment becomes an image of Apocalypse, and a picturesque view is Salvation. Alberto Moravia perceived “Stalker” as a very accurate allegory of Kafkaesque type: the humanity trapped itself, but there is a need to have faith that it will be possible to find the way out. The “Stalker” can be seen more as the soul’s landscape after confession rather than a straight autobiography.

The emigrant years in Italy and France

“Nostalghia”

Prior to commencing production of “Nostalghia” Tarkovsky took two trips to Italy in 1979 and 1980. During these visits, he became enamoured with the possibility of producing his next film in that country. At the same time, he grew frustrated with Soviet film regulations. Andrei Tarkovsky wrote: “I wanted to make a film about Russian nostalgia, about the particular state of mind which assails Russians who are far from their native land” [14, p. 202].

After “Mirror” Andrei Tarkovsky’s childhood dreams stopped. Childhood memories, which for years had given so much inspiration and no inner peace, suddenly vanished, as if they had melted away and at last the director stopped dreaming about the house, where he had lived during his childhood. Andrei Tarkovsky had lost himself in a certain sense [6, p. 45].

Another interesting aspect in “Nostalghia” is the film title. By using the Italian spelling of the nostalgia, Andrei Tarkovsky could have been playing with the Greek word “gnostalghia”, which means homing pain. *Gnosos* = home and *alghia* = pain. And “Nostalghia” is full of gnostalghia. The situation echoes Andrei Tarkovsky’s self-made exile at that moment in his life, also, in comparison to the fact that nostalgia inability to escape from the past, can seem like a sickness. This air is also represented in the feature movie “Nostalghia” [3, p. 6].

On the contemporary level, he had left the Soviet Union and moved to Italy. And to find the model for new foreign film, Tarkovsky, travelled to this country with a screenwriter Tonino Guerra. Therefore, along the way, the documentary “Voyage in time” was created. The director was confident that a strong sense of nostalgia is

inherent to all Russian people who are far from home. Throughout the beautiful and infinitely beloved Italy Tarkovsky searched that metaphysical beauty that lies behind the simplicity of Russian nature. Andrei Tarkovsky stated: “It could never have occurred to me when I started shooting that my own all too specific, nostalgia, was soon to take possession of my soul forever” [14, p. 216].

In 1983 after having failed to get a reassurance from the late Soviet leader Yuri Andropov (1914-1984), that he would be given work if he returned home, Tarkovsky announced his decision to remain in the West, elevating ‘Nostalgia’ from premonition to prophecy.

Some years after the release Andrei Tarkovsky recognized just how deeply “Nostalgia” reflected his own situation, and he felt uneasy about that. For some critics that was a part of movie’s problem. The film director was much too self-indulgent, too much of Tarkovsky going the Federico Fellini route of mythologizing one’s own life. His self-pity about his cinematic fate, but perhaps even more serious the disappointment that there was not much difference on the other side of the “Iron curtain” either.

“The Sacrifice”

The last film by Andrei Tarkovsky immediately starts with a painting “The adoration of the Magi” by Leonardo da Vinci. The Magi arrived at Mary with a child, to worship the new-born and to give him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The entire spiritual meaning of the movie will develop from this painting. Furthermore, “The Sacrifice” also goes further than any of his other movies in exploring the tension between the outer and the inner worlds, and much of the film takes place in a world, which seems to be simultaneously a dream and real [13, p. 8-9].

“The Sacrifice” is Andrei Tarkovsky’s last feature film, shot in Sweden and released in 1986. There is the summation of the themes begun in “Stalker” and which continued through “Nostalgia”. “The Sacrifice” is so to say the closing chapter in the film director’s cinematic triptych, and like the two other preceding movies, it is driven by a sense of desperation about the state of the world, but also, an allegory of Andrei Tarkovsky’s inner state of mind. Because the film intuiting, that it would be

his last movie “The Sacrifice” has the unmistakable air of being a last testament [6, p. 47-48].

The message of “The Sacrifice” logically crowns the thoughts of the Director about all his previous films. In this film-testament Tarkovsky tries to show that the only way to overcome the nuclear catastrophe, the only way to the world’s salvation is through faith and self-sacrifice [6, p. 177].

However, it is often assumed that Andrei Tarkovsky knew he had cancer, when he shot the movie from April until July in 1985, which would go some way to explaining why it comes across as his settling of accounts with the West, and has the air of an eleventh-hour sermon. Tarkovsky’s following of the Russian Orthodox Church presents him as a deeply spiritual artist who eventually connected to a religion with which he had a strongly historical and nationally focused relationship.

The fact is, however, that Andrei Tarkovsky was not given the cancer diagnosis until December 1985. Nevertheless, Tarkovsky must have known either that it would be his last film, or the abovementioned triptych idea could mean that “The Sacrifice” was his last movie whatever happened in the future. “Stalker”, “Nostalghia” and “The Sacrifice” are the director’s definitive showdown with the cinematic world he had lived in for more than 30 year, a cinematic world where he tried to fit the universe from his childhood with the regime in the Soviet Union and with the regime in the West. And when he was disappointed in both places, he necessarily had to stop his artistic work and message. New films required new and big challenges, and when Tarkovsky could also feel that he was ill was “The Sacrifice”, the end of cinematic project.

In other words, it is the world itself, that is being glorified in “The Sacrifice”, not the viewers, not the boy, not nature, but life as a whole. Andrei Tarkovsky had reached his zenith within the framework in which he told his cinematic messages. And in the style of people on their deathbeds, Tarkovsky also became a little more optimistic about the future. Therefore, “The Sacrifice” ends of a note of extraordinary beauty, profundity and even optimism. Despite being a difficult film for some to sit

through and despite the gloomy plot and dark mise-en-scène, “The Sacrifice” is a very positive and life-affirming movie.

Conclusion

Due to the cultural repression of the artists in “Andrei Rublev”, many of the characters develop a sense of autodidacticism to produce successful art. For instance, Andrei Rublev’s status as an observer, rather than an active protagonist in the traditional sense, allows him to view his surrounding world and create art that reflects what he sees. A common feature of all Tarkovsky’s films is precisely this since his purpose is ambiguous. On the one hand characterizes a system and on the other hand his own self. Rublev’s autodidacticism is like Tarkovsky’s, who was forced to look beyond the scope of Soviet cinema to bring in various filmic elements from around the world.

Among American filmmakers of his generation, there are a few comparisons to make with Andrei Tarkovsky. Even American directors such as Francis Coppola, Philip Kaufman, Terence Mark, Peter Bogdanovich, Robert Altman and Martin Scorsese, whose movies sometimes share some similar qualities with Tarkovsky’s, are actually a world away from his cinema.

However, the Danish film director Lars von Trier stated the following of the movies of Tarkovsky. A subliminal appropriation of the inner fight of the Russian director about, the landscape, the inner self and the precursor’s glance: “To appropriate the precursor’s landscape for himself, the ephebe must estrange it further from himself. To attain a self yet more inward than the precursor’s, the ephebe becomes necessarily more solipsistic. To evade the precursor’s imagined glance, the ephebe seeks to confine it in scope, which perversely enlarges the glance, so that it rarely can be evaded” [17, p. 266].

By exploring people’s intrinsically spiritual natures, Tarkovsky created a unique film style not only in its rejection of Soviet norms, but in its artistic value as well. As such, he is regarded as one of the premiere figures in both Soviet and international film history who has influenced many filmmakers throughout the world. Tarkovsky’s work revealed a deep sense of personal spirituality. His frequent and

noticeable use of religious and spiritual themes and imagery in his films are at odds with the atheistic policies of the Soviet Union. However, although these themes may suggest that his films are subversive in nature, he is less interested in their political implications. Rather, he uses spirituality to explore people in a humanistic sense.

Tarkovsky's artistic approach to filmmaking has been already developed in his earliest films by the time Brezhnev came to power. As such, Tarkovsky learned to create films that were both of artistic merit and could be produced within the strict guidelines of the Soviet Union. By doing this, his filmmaking style could be seen as an attempt to subvert the artistically repressive Soviet system of the 1970s. Tarkovsky should not be defined as a dissident, but rather as an artist committed to his craft. He tolerated the conditions of the Soviet Union while they allowed him to create the films that he wanted to make. However, the restrictions he experienced eventually became too much for him to adequately produce artistically progressive works. Thus, he decided to immigrate to Western Europe, where he spent the last few years of his life. The influence of the Russian intelligentsia emanates throughout his filmography.

Although he may not have been as vocally political as many of its members, even taking subdued stances to the Soviet regime at times, his view of himself as an artist remained his main unwavering characteristic throughout his professional life. As such, his life can be described as a microcosm of the experience of an artist trying to produce ground breaking work in a repressive political environment. His eventual emigration from the Soviet Union highlights this. After all, it was his drive to create films of artistic merit that convinced him to go abroad, rather than a specifically political motivation.

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