DELEUZE AND RUSSIAN FILM: TRANSCENDENTAL EXERCISE OF THE FACULTIES ON (POST-)

TOTALITARIAN SCREEN

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Deleuze and Russian Film:

Transcenendental Exercise of the Faculties on (Post-) Totalitarian Screen

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This dissertation provides a new philosophical periodization of Russian film history according to

Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema* volumes. Chapter One argues that Deleuze's film-philosophy should not

be disengaged from its larger metaphysical basis provided in his *Difference and Repetition*, since the

latter structurally organizes his overall argument in *Cinema* volumes. I demonstrate that Deleuze's

reading of Euro-American cinema is framed according to his theory of the dynamic genesis modeled

after the three syntheses of time and the doctrine of the faculties derived from Kant's *Critique of*

Pure Reason and *Critique of Judgment*: the first synthesis of the present provides the ground for the

movement-image, the second synthesis of the past underlies the structure of the Bergsonian crystal-

image, and the third synthesis of the future gives the way to the thought-image. Viewed in the

context of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze's *Cinema* project presents itself as a cinematic

version of the epistemological progression of the image from matter to the virtual through the

faculties of sensibility, memory and thought. Chapter Two contextualizes this progression within the

historical evolution of Russian cinema. Given its long imprisonment within the doctrinal confines of

socialist realism, Russian cinema begins its ascendance toward the virtual only after Stalin's death in

1953, i.e. in the Thaw era when the Soviet action-image undergoes a definitive crisis. Chapter Three explores the second synthesis of time exemplified by Andrei Tarkovsky's crystal-images. I argue that Tarkovsky's emphasis on time and memory shares intrinsic affinity with Bergson's philosophy and that his visual poetics of specular reciprocity could be explained as that of resonance between divergent film components. Chapter Four examines the emergence of the Soviet thought-image in Alexander Askoldov, Vadim Abdrashitov, Necrorealism and Alexander Sokurov, whose poetics follows the logic of the third disjunctive synthesis which foregrounds caesura between film components as the main principle of cinematic representation. In the light of such alternative genealogy, I argue that the historical coincidence of the collapse of the Soviet empire and the appearance of the thought-image in Russian cinema in the late 1980s testifies to the revolutionary potential of cinematic thinking promoted by Deleuze.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved fiancée Tanya Apanasovich. You are the light and

meaning of my life, and nothing of this would have happened without you!

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List of Abbreviations

Gilles Deleuze's texts are cited with the following abbreviations:

ATP - *A Thousand Plateaus*, by Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

B - *Bergsonism*, by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York: Zone Books, 1988.

C1 - *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

C2 - *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

CC - *Essays Critical and Clinical*, by Daniel Smith and Michael Greco, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

CPK - *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

DR - *Difference and Repetition*, by Paul Patton, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

LG - *The Logic of Sense*, by Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

NP - *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, by Hugh Tomlinson, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

PS - *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, by Richard Howard, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

WP - *What is Philosophy?*, by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Andrei Tarkovsky's text is cited with the following abbreviation:

ST - *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, University of Texas Press, 1989.

Introduction

This dissertation provides a new philosophical periodization of the history of Russian cinema according to Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema* books. Despite Deleuze's infamous disclaimer that his project is not a history of cinema but rather a taxonomy of cinematic images and signs, I argue that the presence of historical continuity and rupture is undeniable in his theorizations of various trends in European and American cinema. Although many scholars have criticized Deleuze for his overreliance on conceptual schemata at the expense of the cultural specificity of films, in my thesis I attempt to demonstrate that it is precisely through Deleuze's highly idiosyncratic metaphysics, derived from his rereading of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in terms of *Critique of Judgment*, that we gain a new understanding of the historical dynamic of Russian cinema. For Deleuze, the history of art (e.g. music, literature, painting, theater) is not a chronological succession of various aesthetic traditions replacing one another. It is rather a passionate and autonomous movement of the image from sensible matter toward thought and pure ideas. In the light of such epistemological progression, the history of cinema manifests itself as that of liberation from and continuous resistance to dogma and of the prefiguration of a completely new, not necessarily human experience in which the ideologically prescribed patterns of feeling and thinking are dismantled in favor of unpredictable and subversive assemblages between senses (e.g. seeing, touching, speaking, listening, etc.). And yet, such transcendental reconfiguration of the faculties (e.g. perception, memory, understanding), which disrupts the smooth operation of the power discourse, has its own internal consistency and historicity within a specific national context. In this regard, Soviet cinema, notorious for its utter subordination to the state censorship, presents itself as a particularly interesting testing ground for Deleuze's model of "transcendental empiricism."

In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze frequently refers to the early Soviet avant-garde yet in his second volume references to Soviet cinema almost disappear as if it never had its own tradition of the time-

image (except Andrei Tarkovsky, of course, to whom Deleuze does dedicate a few paragraphs). In my dissertation I begin there where Deleuze stops in his discussion of Soviet cinema, namely with the Stalinist slaughter of the avant-garde movement, and proceed with the close analysis of how the Soviet film image continued its ascendance toward the virtual of the time-image, despite the vigilant control of the Communist officials. By utilizing Deleuzean film concepts as both philosophical and historical categories, I outline a new trajectory of the evolution (as well as epistemological taxonomy and hierarchy) of Russian cinema that begins with the crisis of the Soviet action-image in the Thaw era, continues with Tarkovsky's complex memory-images and culminates in the thought-image of Alexander Sokurov that foregrounds audiovisual disjunction or dissonance as the main principle of cinematic representation. In my alternative genealogy of Russian cinematic thinking, which blends Deleuzean methodology with psychoanalysis, auteur studies, art history and historical approach to film, I intend to question the traditional historiography of Soviet cinema, where the evolution of cinematic style has been usually periodized according to the chronological succession of the political leadership styles of the Communist rulers (e.g. socialist realism and Stalinism or *chernukha* and Gorbachev's perestroika), as if film aesthetics and institutional forms were supposed to mirror each other. Although I do not entirely dismiss the chronological framework of such historiography, I argue that the genesis of the time-image in Soviet cinema has followed its own logic of development by transcending the externally imposed ideological confines.

My historical contextualization of Deleuze's film-philosophy equally contributes to the growing corpus of Deleuzean film studies, often characterized by a considerable skepticism towards theoretical structures he deploys in his *Cinema* books. As I will argue, rather than reusing his film concepts independently of their deeper metaphysical genealogy, we should take his *Cinema* project in its entirety, i.e. as a coherent philosophical system, as it would help us shed light on the emergence and subsequent development of the movement – and time-images in a given national

and historical context. In the *Cinema* books, Deleuze, of course, does not focus on the historical evolution of film forms in any particular national tradition, even though he does refer to external historical conditions for the crisis of the action-image in post-War European cinema. By amassing various film examples from different cultures and, at times, chronologically incompatible periods, he is primarily concerned with the philosophical consistency of his theory which is "about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices" (C2 280). Nevertheless, the relation between Deleuze's philosophical concepts and film history as such still remains rather abstruse and puzzling for most readers who continue to ponder on what logic underlies his classification of cinematic images and signs and how it became possible that the Bergsonian divide of movement and time, which structures the composition of the two volumes, coincides with the historical break between classic and modern cinema. Even though at the close of *Cinema 2* Deleuze celebrates the philosophical capacity of films to produce concepts by claiming that "we must no longer ask ourselves, 'What is cinema?' but 'What is philosophy?'" (ibid.), the methodological conjunction between cinema and philosophy is, unfortunately, far from having been clarified by the author.

We may certainly criticize Deleuze for prioritizing philosophy over the contextual specificity of films he cites or for being a Eurocentric film reader relying exclusively on Euro-American cinema or even a poor metaphysician in need for empirical evidence to support his theoretical argument. But to save Deleuze from such criticisms as well as take full use of his *Cinema*'s books in our future applications, we should rather look deeper into the organizing framework of his film concepts, a framework which secretly sustains his explicit references to Peirce and Bergson, and then explain how it could be related to a particular national cinema. That is to say, before we historicize Deleuze's *Cinema* books, we should first of all clarify their theoretical architectonics in more detail, which is largely informed by his metaphysics elaborated in *Difference and Repetition*.

As he writes in the preface to its English edition, "*Difference and Repetition* was the first book in which I tried to 'do philosophy'. All that I have done since is connected to this book" (DR xv). In the light of this claim, Deleuze's *Cinema* books will be viewed as a cinematic adaptation or remake of his magnum opus where the same old structures are deployed, although in disguise of film concepts.

As I demonstrate in chapter 1, Deleuze's cinematic taxonomy is by no means random, it is constructed according to the logic of the transcendental formation or exercise of the faculties derived from Kant's doctrine of the faculties and syntheses of apprehension, reproduction and understanding. According to Deleuze, in Kant's philosophy the faculties and the threefold synthesis of cognition are modeled on the empirical consciousness and psychology and are, therefore, not transcendental enough: their operation is governed by an externally imposed common sense rather than by their own internal laws. To liberate the faculties from their imprisonment in the common sense, Deleuze argues, we should push them to the limit of their capacities beyond empirically prescribed confines. That is, our faculties become transcendental by transcending their average, socially regulated functioning and thus transforming into (or "becoming") something utterly new. What is more interesting, though, is that Deleuze's emancipation of the faculties proceeds according to a strictly set order of successive stages: a violent encounter with a traumatic event forces sensibility to sense and perceive what is insensible or imperceptible, which, in turn, forces memory to remember what cannot be empirically remembered and integrated into active consciousness and, finally, pushes thought to think what is unthinkable in terms of the socially regulated model of recognition and understanding. In the first chapter I provide a detailed exposition of how this passage from the actual to the virtual, i.e. counter-actualization, is constructed by Deleuze in philosophical and psychoanalytic contexts. But we may certainly trace the same developmental logic of progression in many other contexts Deleuze engages with throughout his career, such as literature and music, to name but a few. For example, in Deleuze's reading of Proust in the 1970s, the three-

stage ascendance towards the virtual becomes the model for the protagonist's spiritual evolution that proceeds from sensibility through memory to thought or contemplation of essences. In their discussion of the *ritournelle* in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Deleuze and Guattari propose a similar evolution of music where the classic artist first organizes the forces of chaos according to the order of *succession* of forms that are hierarchized in relation to one another, that is, according to binary distinctions. Then, the romantic artist no longer confronts the gaping of the chaos but is rather determined by the *resonance* between the territory and imaginary or virtual earth. Finally, the modern artist, who addresses the *future* people yet to come, deals with the *unthinkable* forces of "immaterial, nonformal and energetic Cosmos" (TP 343). In Deleuze's reading of Beckett in the 1990s, we again witness almost the same three ways by which Beckett exhausts language to the extent of pure virtuality: through inclusive disjunctions within a *combinatorial*, then by making inventories of *memories* while transmitting other voices through his characters, and lastly by making *empty* images (e.g. holes, gaps, and silences) that merge with "the detonation, combustion and dissipation of their condensed energy" (CC 161). Deleuze's developmental model of the production of the virtual, which begins with the mind's immersion in matter and culminates in the creation of new ideas, may share some affinity with the Hegelian evolution of consciousness toward the Absolute Spirit. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari themselves admit that their philosophical history of music which, at the final stage, "opens onto the forces of the Cosmos" "seems rather general, and somewhat Hegelian, testifying to an absolute Spirit. Yet it is, should be," they argue, "a question of technique, exclusively a question of technique" (ATP 342).

It is precisely because Deleuze repeats the same metaphysical *technique* or structure in almost all his readings of the arts, a structure which Badiou even terms "monotonous,"[1] despite its conceptual variations, it would be strongly detrimental to ignore its presence in the *Cinema*'s books

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[1] Alain Badiou, *Clamour of Being*, U of Minnesota Press, 2000, 14.

as a three-part framework organizing his taxonomy of film concepts. As I will argue, Deleuze's exposition of the transcendental exercise of the faculties in cinema is similarly developmental: just as in *Difference and Repetition* thought is born after the violence of the encounter is transmitted first to sensibility and then to memory, in *Cinema 2* we also arrive at a new image of thought only after cinematic perception is forced to see what is imperceptible (which results in the disruption of the sensory-motor schema of the movement-image) and memory is subsequently removed from its utilitarian purpose and placed into the domain of the virtual. To reiterate, Deleuze elaborates this evolution of the film image to thought in all cinema in general or what was available to him at the time, i.e. mostly European and American films. Nevertheless, we may trace this dynamic in any other national tradition, such as Soviet cinema where the same transcendental exercise of the faculties could be systematically observed beginning with the late 1950s.

In the light of this approach, my study is primarily focused on how Soviet films, despite being part and parcel of the state cultural production, continuously resist meeting the ideological expectations of the Communist censors. Just like in Deleuze's *Cinema* books, such resistance to dogma is by no means spontaneous but gradually follows its own logic of deterritorialization. Chapter 2 closely examines how this deterritorialzing progression toward the virtual, triggered by Stalin's death in 1953, was launched by the Thaw cinema where the socialist realist aesthetic of the action-image was superseded by a new emphasis on the inner world of an individual, which problematized the overall purpose of revolutionary action and gave rise to characters' aberrant movements in disconnected spaces. Chapter 3 is dedicated to Tarkovsky's cinematic Bergsonism which advanced the submersion of memory into deeper layers of the virtual, already initiated in the Thaw cinema. Given that Tarkovsky was the only Soviet director who systematically pursued the transcendental exercise of memory throughout his entire career, this chapter stands out more as an auteur study rather than a survey of various types of the crystal-image, which we may read in

Deleuze's *Cinema 2*. Chapter 4 traces the emergence of the thought-image in late Soviet films and its full manifestation in Sokurov's cinema. Although considered to be Tarkovsky's heir, Sokurov, as I will argue, radically departs from the Bergsonian poetics of the former, a transition which ultimately corresponds with Deleuze's trajectory of the transcendental development of memory into thought. And yet, as this chapter demonstrates, Sokurov could still be viewed as a philosophical successor of Tarkovsky, but only in a strictly Deleuzean sense. By realigning the key representatives of Soviet-Russian cinema along the epistemological progression toward the virtual, I hope to not only illuminate the direct relevance of Deleuze's metaphysics to film history and practice, but also establish a new genealogy of Russian cinematic thought.

Chapter 1: Deleuze's Film-Philosophy

1.1. Deleuze's *Cinema* Volumes: Taxonomy or History?

Deleuze's French Preface to *Cinema 1* opens with a rather straightforward assertion: "This study is not a history of cinema. It is a taxonomy, an attempt at the classification of images and signs" (C1 xiv). That Deleuze's study is *not* a history of cinema but rather a taxonomy of cinematic images and concepts compared to "Linnaeus's classifications in natural history" and "Mendeleev's table in chemistry" (ibid.) is clearly justified by the compositional organization of his *Cinema* volumes faithfully following Peirce's triadic matrix of signs and Bergson's dichotomy of matter (body) and spirit (mind) as well as supplanted with detailed theoretical commentaries on each philosopher. As Paola Marrati explains, the *Cinema* books as a whole are modeled after Bergson's *Matter and Memory*: chapter 1 of *Matter and Memory*, which argues for the absolute identity of motion, matter and image and thus immerses consciousness into "the material universe as a universe of figures of light and movement,"[2] runs parallel with *The Movement-Image*'s philosophical narrative, while its second and third chapters, dealing with the non-psychological conception of past in general, constitute the metaphysical background of *The Time-Image*.[3] And yet, despite Deleuze's fidelity to his philosophical metanarrative and self-proclaimed aversion to a "history of cinema," toward the end of *Cinema 1* his classificatory metaphysics unexpectedly has recourse to a historical account of the crisis of the action-image in post-war European cinema, which creates an irresolvable tension

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[2] Paola Marrati, *Gilles Deleuze: Cinema and Philosophy*, JHU Press, 2008, 19.

[3] To be more precise, Marrati argues that Deleuze's *Cinema* project both follows and exceeds Bergson's philosophical tenets. Whereas for Bergson "sensorimotor perception is in the service of the – legitimate - needs of the living" (60) and is thus pragmatically tied to action, Deleuze, on the contrary, aims to "undo the sensorimotor link of human perception both in order to go back toward the acentered universe of movement-images - toward matter not yet incurved by the human gaze - and to go beyond it toward dimensions of time, spirit, or thought freed from the demands of action and pragmatic perception" (40). By pushing cinematic perception and memory toward their "inhuman" limit, Deleuze, according to Marrati, "prefers another Bergsonian theme: the creation of the new" (41). As I will argue below, Marrati's exclusively Bergsonian reading of the *Cinema* books is limited and insufficient, since the excess of human capacities beyond their anthropological limit is a theme that could be much better explored through Deleuze's engagement with Kant rather than Bergson.

between his speculative and historicist arguments. As he writes, "Why is the Second World War taken as a break? The fact is that, in Europe, the post-war period has greatly increased the situations which we no longer know how to react to, in spaces which we no longer know how to describe" (C2 xi). As François Dosse observes, many commentators "were quickly caught off guard by a thesis entirely organized around an extremely trenchant observation of a historical break from which emerged two modes of being for the image: the movement-image before World War II and a time-image after it. Some asked how such a philosopher could be so easily drawn into the very historicism against which he had always argued so vigorously."[4] Indeed, why does Deleuze turn to a "history of cinema" in order to support his metaphysical argument with empirical evidence? How does the historical break between the classic and modern cinema coincide with the Bergsonian dichotomy of movement and time and is thus inscribed as a structural component of his taxonomy? Does it imply that Deleuze's taxonomy is methodologically flawed or that his study is, after all, a "history of cinema," albeit with a twist?

Unfortunately, Deleuze never quite explains the enigmatic conjunction between his metaphysical structures and historical insights. Indeed, had he clarified this tension, he would have avoided a number of criticisms from his colleagues. Jacques Rancière, for example, ultimately dismisses Deleuze's distinction of the classic and modern regimes of cinema as a "fictive rupture" allegorically supported by carefully chosen film examples. Rather than being "two ages of cinema," he argues, Deleuze's movement- and time-images are no more than two distinct philosophical perspectives, according to which the same images and films can be analyzed either in terms of movement and matter or in terms of time and thought. As he maintains, while moving from the first volume to the second, "we pass from images as elements in a philosophy of nature to images as

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[4] François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives,* Trans. Deborah Glassman, Columbia University Press, 2010, 414.

elements in a philosophy of spirit."[5] Alain Badiou is similarly critical about Deleuze's using film references as illustrations of his theory of movement and time: as he writes, "in the volumes on the cinema, what one learns concerns the Deleuzian theory of movement and time, and the cinema gradually becomes neutralized and forgotten."[6] "This is why film buffs have always found it difficult to make use of two hefty volumes on the cinema…" [7] James Williams, a prominent Deleuze scholar, thinks that it is not cinema that "becomes forgotten and neutralized" under the pressure of philosophical concepts. It is, on the contrary, Deleuze's "formal metaphysics" that gets weakened and muddled through the "representational frame" of film images.[8]

Despite Badiou's skepticism regarding the "use of two hefty volumes" for "film buffs," Deleuze's interdisciplinary marriage of film and philosophy has spawned a plethora of Deleuzean studies of cinema with new emphases on genre, national contexts, gender, and sexuality. And yet, the question of the *problematic* relation between Deleuze's metaphysical framework and the historical evolution of cinema is rarely addressed in such studies. In fact, most scholars prefer to focus on either purely theoretical issues of Deleuze's film-philosophy or the aesthetic and socio-cultural aspects of film practice as such by taking the Bergsonian divide of the history of cinema as a given.[9] The latter tendency is most tellingly exemplified by Richard Rushton's introductory study *Cinema after Deleuze* where he keeps to the minimum the totalizing pressure of Deleuze's metaphysics and strives to employ "a more 'nuts and bolts' approach to films and filmmakers" "against myriad efforts to define what Deleuze's philosophy of cinema might be." This does not mean, Rushton argues, that his study is "unphilosophical or even anti-philosophical." On the

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[5] Jacques Ranciere, *Film Fables*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2006, 116.
[6] Alain Badiou, Deleuze: The Clamor of Being, U of Minnesota Press, 2000, 15.
[7] Ibid., 14.
[8] James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, Edinburgh University Press, 2011, 160.
[9] See, for example, Antoine de Baecque's *Camera Historica: The Century in Cinema*, Columbia University Press, 2012. As the author admits, "Following Deleuze, I would venture that the true break in the history of cinema is embedded in the history of the century and that it illustrates the interpenetration of form and chronology" (2).

contrary, for him "the best way to come to terms with the philosophical stakes of the *Cinema* books is to *examine the films themselves.*"[10] In a similar vein, in his *The Desiring-Image: Gilles Deleuze and Contemporary Queer Cinema* Nick Davis argues that by foregrounding a new *desiring-image* as "a sequel to Deleuze's cinematic conceptions of movement and time"[11] he aims at "prioritizing movies that challenge Deleuze's assumptions or flex his categories" and thus "allow the filmmakers to serve as theorists of desire in their own right."[12] Teresa Rizzo's *Deleuze and Film: A Feminist Introduction* equally prioritizes a close reading of film examples in her Deleuzean feminist analysis of the bodily and affective nature of the cinematic viewing experience, yet what eventually remains out of her application of Deleuze's *Cinema* books is but a handful of his film concepts with their basic division into movement and time images. As Rizzo admits it herself, "While Deleuze's *Cinema* books are significant reference points, [she] will attach as much, if not more, importance to Deleuze's philosophical collaborations with Guattari."[13] Doing philosophy exclusively through films by no means contradicts Deleuze's scholarly intentions who himself compares filmmakers with thinkers. Yet divorcing his innovative film concepts from their larger philosophical background significantly depletes his methodology rooted in multilayered metaphysics and thus makes it no different from any other cultural studies approach. Felicity Colman's glossary-like study *Deleuze and Cinema: The Film Concepts*, in this regard, appears to purposefully downplay the importance of the philosophical logic of Deleuze's taxonomy by isolating relevant concepts from his volumes and applying them to all kinds of screen-based media. In her reluctance to explain the criteria by which such concepts are organized into a "cine-system," Colman even blames Deleuze himself for failing to provide a more explicit account of the logic which underlies his classification of images. As she

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[10] Richard Rushton, *Cinema After Deleuze*, Continuum International Publishing, 2012, 1 (emphasis in original).
[11] Nick Davis The Desiring-Image: Gilles Deleuze and Contemporary Queer Cinema, Oxford University Press, 2013, 8.
[12] Ibid., 6.
[13] Teresa Rizzo, *Deleuze and Film: A Feminist Introduction*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2012, 2.

suggests, "Although he hints at what this 'new logic' might be, Deleuze stays with his main taxononomic project."[14]

The most powerful critique of Deleuze's overdoing philosophy at the expense of the historical conditions of cinematic production has been articulated by David Martin-Jones in his recent *Deleuze and World Cinemas*, which provides a thorough re-consideration of Deleuze's "film concepts" in national and historical contexts of other non-Western cinemas, such as Italian "spaghetti western," Argentine melodrama, Hong-Kong and American action blockbusters and Bollywood cinema. One of the major stakes of David Martin-Jones's argument is that Deleuze's cine-system as a "product of Western philosophical canon"[15] unavoidably universalizes cinema as some ahistorical totality by confining it to predominantly European and American cinematic traditions arbitrarily divided into two major image types around the turning point of World War Two. Precisely because "contemporary cinema continues to develop," Martin-Jones argues, "the Eurocentric division between movement- and time-image must be continually rethought in various contexts worldwide."[16] By contextually deterritorializing Deleuze's *Cinema* books, Martin-Jones thus presents himself as "a-Deleuzian" in a sense that he neither promotes nor dismisses Deleuze's legacy but is rather "keen to constructively critique his ideas in order to increase their applicability and relevance."[17] Even though he positions himself at the interdisciplinary crossroad of Film Studies and Deleuze Studies, through his persistent demonstrations of how "Othered films can "talk back" to"[18] Deleuze's "Eurocentric conclusions," it becomes evident that Martin-Jones' "creative re-interpretation"[19] of Deleuze's film-philosophy stems primarily from Film Studies rather than philosophy. As he makes it clear, his "contextualizing approach is more typical of Film Studies"

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[14] Ibid., 145.

[15] David Martin-Jones, *Deleuze and World Cinemas*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2011, 11.

[16] Ibid., 15-16.

[17] Ibid., 10.

[18] Ibid., 8.

[19] Ibid., 9.

since he engages Deleuze's ideas with those of other scholars "working on cinema rather than philosophy."[20]

In order to "save Deleuze's work on cinema"[21] for our future applications, Martin-Jones suggests, we should contextually expand his methodology both historically and geographically. This is certainly a laudable agenda yet the problem with such rhetoric about "saving Deleuze" is that by contextualizing his "film concepts" cinematically Martin-Jones definitively decontextualizes them philosophically. On the one hand, Martin-Jones criticizes Deleuze for his "over-reliance on Bergsonian philosophy" that results in his "often ahistorical analysis of films."[22] On the other, Deleuze's Bergsonian division of cinema into movement- and time-image is said to be "*based* on his limited range of examples and a Eurocentric emphasis on the Second World War as defining moment of rupture."[23] It is therefore unclear where exactly Deleuze, according to Martin-Jones, derives his conceptual framework from: either from Bergsonian philosophy, which would make him an *ahistorical* philosopher of cinema, or from European/American cinema, which would make him a Eurocentric *historian* of cinema. Because the internal relation between Deleuze's metaphysics and a history of cinema is never clarified, Deleuze takes the blame for being both. To resolve the question whether the infamous rupture between movement- and time-image is of metaphysical or historical nature, one would need to extend the discussion of the philosophical background of Deleuze's cine-system. Martin-Jones, however, strategically shuns any further investigation of the philosophical underpinnings of the *Cinema* books. Instead, he critiques Deleuze for being overly philosophical and assimilates his concepts into other (fashionable) frameworks of cultural/film analysis, such as globalization and postcolonial studies, Marxism, historical analysis, urban studies, diaspora studies, gender studies, etc.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 7.

[22] Ibid., 9.

[23] Ibid., 16, emphasis added.

Both Colman's taxonomic dogmatism and Martin-Jones's a-philosophical multiculturalism in the name of "a-Deleuze" actualize to the fullest the tendency of divorcing and purifying Deleuze's film concepts from their metaphysical background. In fact, this tendency in the current *applied* Deleuzean film studies has been further reinforced and consolidated by the recent anthology *Deleuze and Film* edited by David Martin-Jones and William Brown, which proudly boasts itself to introduce the "forth generation"[24] of Deleuzean film scholars who take the *Cinema* books "on a world tour during which they encounter cinemas from around the globe."[25] It is, of course, admirable to see how Deleuze's film-philosophy is "put into productive partnership with cinemas from all over the world"[26] in the collection's pan-global approach, yet one may also notice that in their decisively egalitarian intention to democratically rehabilitate the aesthetic centrality of the movement-image by engaging with more popular genres (e.g. action blockbuster, horror movie, melodrama, US film noir) most contributors significantly lower the philosophical stakes of the *Cinema* project, which are, after all, to do away with the dogmatic image of thought and create new ideas. As Deleuze states, "the essence of cinema – which is not the majority of films – has thought as its higher purpose, nothing but thought and its functioning" (C2 168).

It is against this predominantly Anglo-American tendency of conceiving Deleuze's *Cinema* volumes outside their deeper philosophical background that this study aims to propose a Deleuzean

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[24] William Brown and David Martin-Jones, "Introduction: Deleuze's World Tour of Cinema" in *Deleuze and Film*, ed. David Martin-Jones, William Brown, Oxford University Press, 2012, 3. The so-called "forth generation" is invoked by Brown and Martin-Jones in reference to Dudley Andrew's chronological survey of the three generations of Deleuzean film scholars in Anglo-American film studies (see Dudley Andrew, "La réception américaine" in *Gilles Deleuze et les images*, ed. François Dosse and Jean-Michel Frodon. Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 2008, 145-163). According to Andrew, the first generation includes such theorists as Steven Shaviro, D.N. Rodowick, Ronald Bogue, Gregory Flaxman and Claire Colebrook, who illuminated Deleuze's invaluable relevance to film studies. The second generation is characterized by a more pragmatic deployment of Deleuzean philosophical concepts in the context of actual films: Barbara Kennedy applies Deleuze to mainstream Hollywood movies, Patricia Pisters to European art cinema and Laura Marks to intercultural or diasporic cinema and video. The third generation, according to Andrew, creatively transforms Deleuze's philosophy of cinema by prioritizing the cultural and medium specificity of given films. David Martin-Jones, for example, effectively ties Deleuzean film theory to historical and national contexts, while Garrett Stewart adapts it to post-cinematic digital films.
[25] Ibid., 1.
[26] Ibid., 15.

reading of Russian cinema that attempts to reconcile his metaphysics and historical approach to film. Given that Deleuze's taxonomy of images and signs is far from being arbitrary, to read and use the *Cinema* books adequately it is fundamentally important to take into account the organizing principle by which his concepts are woven or threaded into various taxonomic series and then look at how this mode of conceptual organization resonates with the historical dynamic of cinema's evolution**.** To put it simply, it is not Deleuzean concepts, uprooted from their inherent metaphysical context and genealogy, that we should apply to cinema (by following Martin-Jones's lead). Rather, it is the very logic by which such concepts are arranged into a dynamic cine-system that we should extract from a given film history. Why do we need to recognize a deeper metaphysical narrative underlying Deleuze's discussion of cinema? Why wouldn't we limit ourselves to those film concepts that the cinema books explicitly offer, as most film scholars do while applying Deleuze's film-philosophy to other contexts? As I will demonstrate, Deleuze's *Cinema* books taken as a systematic whole can offer film critics much more than his isolated concepts alone; namely, it can illuminate how film art in a given historical and national context undergoes its own autonomous evolution from its subjection to the mimetic and ideological representation of movement and actions to the abstract expression of new ideas in the virtual beyond clichés and established traditions. It is not by accident that Deleuze's discussion of cinematic thought and ideas takes place only at the very end of the second volume, while earlier chapters are dedicated to cinematic perception, affection, and memory, among other subjects. What is at stake for Deleuze in his *Cinema* books is precisely how cinema learns to *think* by passing the stages of movement, contemplation and memory. In the light of such epistemological ascendance, the history of cinema manifests itself as that of the continuous resistance to and liberation from the dogmatic image of thought (which is the main theme of *The Movement-Image*) and of the production of a new spiritual subjectivity based on time rather spatial movement (which is explored in *The Time-Image*).

Even though Deleuze does not explain how the historical break between the classic and modern cinema coincides with the Bergsonian dichotomy of movement and time, we may say that the transition from the kinetic regime of images to the temporal one in Euro-American cinema should be viewed as that toward *counter-actualization*, a process which, according to Deleuze, is triggered by the traumatic encounter with the unknown and is responsible for the production of new ideas beyond the dogmatic image of thought (i.e. clichés, stereotypes, ideologies, etc.). Elsewhere Deleuze elaborates on how any event, besides being *actualized* in the objective world socially and historically, i.e. "in a state of affairs, in a body, in a lived" (WP 156), also *counter-actualizes* itself as ideal immaterial effect "inside what occurs," (LS 149) i.e. in the domain of the virtual beyond personality and historical facticity. Whereas the actual or empirical side of the event is grasped in the linear temporality of the present (i.e. Chronos), its virtual or transcendental side is expressed in the temporalities of the past and the future (i.e. Aion). That is, we actualize the event through actions yet we counter-actualize it through thought. By counter-actualizing the event, we extract or subtract the abstract meaning from a physical and historical occurrence and thus maintain our independence from materiality. According to Deleuze, everyday perception captures things in their actuality and materiality, while art and philosophy go in an opposite direction: they extract the virtual from the actualized world. Throughout his entire career Deleuze engages with artists and philosophers who religiously dedicate themselves to the struggle against the dogmatic image of thought which controls the actualization of the event. Each of them counter-actualizes the event in his/her own individual way: psychosis (Artaud), masochism (Sacher-Masoch), alcoholism (Fitzgerald), art and homosexuality (Proust), collective enunciation (Kafka), dissonance (Schoenberg), etc. Yet regardless of the content of their practices of counter-actualization, all of them, for Deleuze, steadily and invariably undergo one and the same passage toward the virtual (or thought), which is governed by the logic of three syntheses of the unconscious (or desire) and time: connection, conjunction,

disjunction. Cinema, in this regard, is no exception for Deleuze; it also *develops* according to the

logic of three syntheses that is fundamentally different from the chronological or factual history.

Although in the *Cinema* books he never explicitly mentions the model of three syntheses as the

organizing principle of his taxonomy, elsewhere he points out that in cinema "there are *different*

levels of development, each of them perfectly coherent, rather than lines of descent or filiation.

That's why one should talk of natural history rather than historical history" (N 49, emphases added).

In what follows, I will argue that these "different levels of development" stand for three syntheses of

the unconscious and time which Deleuze deploys in all his other works to explain the production of

the virtual in art and which he traces through or extracts from the chronological development of

cinema.

That Deleuze's triple synthesis could serve as the underlying metaphysical model for his

taxonomy of film images has certainly been noticed by a number of critics. Joe Hughes views the

operation of this dynamic in the triad of perception-, affection- and action-images in *Cinema* 1,

while explaining *Cinema 2* according to the principle of the so-called "static genesis" that governs

the process of actualization from the virtual to the actual.[27] David Deamer, unlike Hughes, argues

that *Cinema 1* is structured according to Kantian *active* syntheses of apprehension, reproduction and

recognition, while the taxonomy of time-images is organized according to Deleuze's *passive*

syntheses.[28] The most exhaustive account of this matter is provided by Jean-Michel Pamart who

argues that Deleuze's taxonomy is structured according to the logic of the genesis of the faculties

through active and passive syntheses elaborated in chapter 2 of *Difference and Repetition*. It is this

chapter of Deleuze's magnum opus, Pamart emphasizes, rather than Bergson's *Matter and Memory*,

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[27] Joe Hughes, "Schizoanalysis and the Phenomenology of Cinema," in *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Cinema*, ed. Ian Buchanan, Patricia MacCormack, Bloomsbury Academic, 2008, 15-28.
[28] David Deamer, "A Deleuzian Cineosis: Cinematic Semiosis and Syntheses of Time," *Deleuze Studies* 5.3. 2011, 358-382.

that serves as a "veritable matrix"[29] for his *Cinema* volumes. By taking Deleuze's exposition of three syntheses of time as an interpretative model, he traces the unfolding of Deleuze's idiosyncratic history of cinema in parallel with the successive movement of passive and active syntheses governing the progression of sensibility via memory to thought. Whereas the movement-image, Pamart argues, employs the Kantian model of cognition that presents the genesis of the faculties according to the active syntheses of imagination, reproduction, and understanding, the time-image transforms this model into that of transcendental empiricism and thus pushes human faculties to their inhuman limit according to passive (or unconscious) syntheses, thanks to which the faculties evolve into powers, or active forces. The Deleuzean passage from the movement-image to the time-image is therefore explained as that from the empirical use of faculties to their transcendent exercise disengaged from their anchors in reality. As a result of such conversion, Pamart argues, film images in modern cinema are equally pushed to their transgressive limit of representation: for example, perception-images turn into op-signs, flashbacks into crystal-images and sheets of past, reflection-images into thought-images or cuts, movements into the body's attitudes and postures, monologues and dialogues into the autonomous use of speech.

Pamart's Kantian reading of Deleuze's *Cinema* books, which in fact modifies and extends Dork Zabunyan's similarly Kantian interpretation of *The Time-Image* in terms of chapter 3 of *Difference and Repetition* that presents Deleuze's theory of the transcendental exercise of the faculties[30], comes closest to understanding how Deleuze's film concepts are interconnected with each other: it clearly demonstrates that the internal logic of the *Cinema*'s taxonomy should be derived not from Pearce or Bergson or even Anglo-European film history but rather from Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* which is itself a modern rewriting of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in

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[29] Jean-Michel Pamart, *Deleuze et le cinéma: l'armature philosophique des livres sur le cinema*, Kimé, 2012, 112.

[30] Dork Zabunyan, *Gilles Deleuze: voir, parler, penser au risque du cinema*, Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2006.

terms of his third critique.[31] In recent secondary literature, Deleuze's overall project is often viewed as neo-Kantian or counter-Kantian: it takes up most tenets of Kant's conceptual apparatus yet it pushes them into the opposite direction, namely towards the divergent and transcendent exercise of the faculties beyond the limits of common sense. As Joe Hughes, for example, argues, "Deleuze's philosophy is best understood as a reconfiguration of Kant's."[32] Constantin Boundas also insists that "Deleuze retains and in fact repeats the Kantian architectonic, with a fidelity unparalleled by anyone else of his generation"[33] but he does so by modeling the theory of the sublime of the third critique on the cognitive formation narrative of the first two. As I will demonstrate below, the *Cinema* books would make much more sense if we clarify its metaphysical architectonics through Deleuze's reconfiguration of Kant's three syntheses of cognition presented in chapters 3 and 2 of his *Difference and Repetition*. To reiterate, such detailed theoretical recourse seems important for our purposes since it is not isolated concepts that we will apply to Russian cinema but rather the philosophical logic that organizes them into a generative system, i.e. a logic which governs the mind's progression from sensible matter to thought. That is, before we see how Russian cinema treads its own path to thought as its "higher purpose," it is necessary first to trace how this passage is carved out in Deleuze's metaphysical narrative. Section 1.2. focuses on Deleuze's critique of the dogmatic image of thought based on the Kantian model of recognition and common sense and his alternative route to thinking through the violent encounter with the unknown that launches the transcendental exercise of the faculties. Section 1.3. examines how this dynamic is orchestrated through Deleuze's triple synthesis of the unconscious and time. Section 1.4. demonstrates how the same metaphysical model is inscribed in the *Cinema* books. To a certain extent, my argument in this

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[31] Serge Cardinal similarly views Deleuze's time-image as the fullest manifestation of his theory of "transcendental empiricism." See Serge Cardinal, *Deleuze Au Cinéma: Une Introduction à L'empirisme Supérieur de* L'image-Temps. Presses de l'Université Laval, 2010.

[32] Joe Hughes, *Philosophy After Deleuze*, Bloomsbury, 2012, 1.

[33] Constantin Boundas, "The Art of Begetting Monsters: The Unnatural Nuptials of Deleuze and Kant" in *Current Continental Theory and Modern Philosophy*, ed. Stephen Daniel, Northwestern University Press, 2005, 261.

dissertation, which is about the transcendental exercise of the faculties on screen, is being structurally developed and restated in a rather spiral form of progression, beginning from its most abstract presentation in Deleuze's metaphysics (i.e. through his theory of the faculties and syntheses of time) and moving on toward its concrete manifestation in cinema in general and Russian films in particular.

1.2 The Image of Thought and the Transcendental Exercise of the Faculties

Dogmatic Image of Thought

In his preface to the English edition of *Difference of Repetition*, Deleuze characterizes the third chapter, – a chapter in which he foregrounds the violent and shocking nature of thought as an alternative to its dogmatic image - as "the most necessary and the most concrete, and which serves to introduce subsequent books" (DR xvii). As I will demonstrate, Deleuze's account of the dogmatic image of thought will provide the philosophical framework for the movement-image, while his program for a new critical image of thought, based on the transcendental exercise of the faculties, will serve as the matrix for the time-image.

Just like as the *Cinema* books the modern time-image is developed out of the ruins of the classical movement-image, *Difference and Repetition* proposes a new way of thinking against the background of the classical image of thought. Throughout the history of European philosophy, Deleuze argues, the nature of thought has always been taken for granted as something given and innate. And yet, for Deleuze, the implicit self-evidence of thought is being maintained and protected by a number of pre-philosophical presuppositions. For Descartes, for example, thinking is the only thing that cannot be doubted and thus becomes the "true beginning in philosophy" (DR 129). But this "innateness" of thought, according to Deleuze, rests on Descartes' own subjective assumption that "everybody knows" and "no one can deny that to doubt is to think, and to think is to be" (DR

130). This assumption has nothing to do with the nature of thought itself but is "the form of representation" which, by dismissing scholarly expertise in thinking, delegates a "natural capacity for thought endowed with a talent for truth" (DR 131) to the everyman. As Daniela Voss points out, for Deleuze the essentializing claim of Descartes' *Cogito,* which foregrounds "a good will on the part of the thinker and an upright nature on the part of thought" (DR 131), "is a hindrance not only to a philosophy but also to a political thought,"[34] since those individuals of "ill will" who do not manage to think and "to know what everybody knows" (DR 130) are necessarily excluded from the discourse of representatives.

The universalizing nature of the Cartesian belief that "everybody knows" what it means to think is supported by the assumptions of *common sense* and *good sense* that "constitute the two halves of the *doxa*" (DR 134) and guarantee an *a priori* communicability of thought. Within the domain of common sense defined as "the unity of all the faculties in the subject" (DR 133) (or *concordia facultatum*), our cognitive faculties (imagination, memory, understanding and reason) collaborate together in order to establish the identity of the object in question and thus presuppose "the unity of a thinking subject, of which all the other faculties must be modalities" (ibid.). According to Deleuze's critique, "For Kant as for Descartes, it is the identity of the Self in the 'I think' which grounds the harmony of all the faculties and their agreement on the form of a supposed Same object" (ibid.). Whereas the presupposition of common sense warrants the transcendental unity of all the faculties with regard to an unspecified object, "good sense" determines the distribution of the faculties for each particular case "from the point of view of empirical selves and objects qualified as this or that kind of thing" (DR 134). That is, "good sense" similarly designates the convergence of the faculties upon a same object, which is, however, contextualized in a given situation. As Descartes states about his thought experiment about the piece of wax, "It is of course

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[34] Daniela Voss, *Conditions of Thought: Deleuze and Transcendental Ideas*, Edinburgh University Press, 2013, 32.

the same wax which I see, which I touch, which I picture in my imagination, in short the same wax

which I thought it to be from the start."[35]   That is to say, thanks to the unifying operation of thought,

for Descartes the identity of the object (the piece of wax) is maintained through *all* the faculties in

both time and space. In this regard, Deleuze emphasizes the temporal nature of good sense:

> Good sense is based upon a synthesis of time, in particular the one which we have determined as the first synthesis, that of habit. Good sense is good only because it is wedded to the sense of time associated with that synthesis. Testifying to a living present (and to the fatigue of that present), it goes from past to future as though from particular to general. (DR 225)

Good sense is embedded in the first passive synthesis that organizes the flow of time into a

succession of instants and thus "constitutes time as a living present, and the past and the future as

dimensions of this present" (DR 76). The immersion of good sense in the present is particularly

relevant to Deleuze's characterization of the temporality of the movement-image: as he writes, "the

movement-image constitutes time in its empirical form, the course of time: a successive present in

an extrinsic relation of before and after, so that the past is a former present, and the future a present

to come" (C2 271). As I will argue below, for Deleuze the destruction of the dogmatic image of

thought requires one to move beyond the limits of the habitual temporality of the present towards

the past and the future, a path demonstrated by the time-image.

The harmonious exercise of all the faculties directed at a supposed same object and unified

by a dominant faculty, - either by the faculty of understanding (as in the first Kantian Critique) or

that of reason (as in the second one), - follows one and the same transcendental principle, which is

that of *recognition*. The form of recognition, as a sovereign model which "defines the orientation of

the philosophical analysis of what it means to think" (DR 134), is under the harshest attack from

Deleuze. In the most systematic manner, he derives its model mainly from Kant who, despite

discovering "the prodigious domain of the transcendental," "traces the so-called transcendental

structures from the empirical acts of a psychological consciousness: the transcendental synthesis of

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[35] René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Volume 2, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 21.

apprehension is directly induced from an empirical apprehension" (ibid.). In the synthesis of the sensible manifold, Kant grants the culminating faculty of recognition with authority to subordinate all other faculties to what has already been recognized, precisely because recognition "has never sanctioned anything but the recognisable and the recognized" and "will never inspire anything but conformities" (DR 134). As a result, pure difference is cancelled out and thought is imprisoned in the vicious circle of the Same by referring any new encounter back onto the form of the already known. The consequences of subjecting difference to the model of recognition are disastrous not for philosophy alone. The transcendental rule of recognition in thought is responsible for the production of a civilly docile subject forced to comply with the status quo and established values of a given political regime. As Deleuze writes, "Recognition is a sign of the celebration of monstrous nuptials, in which thought 'rediscovers' the State, rediscovers 'the Church' and rediscovers all the current values that it subtly presented in the pure form of an eternally blessed unspecified eternal object" (DR 136). Deleuze admits that Kant's Critique has "everything:" "a tribunal of justices of the peace, a registration room, a register." Yet what it lacks is "the power of a new politics which would overturn the image of thought" (DR 137).   It is precisely by substituting Kant's model of recognition with his theory of the sublime experience from the third critique that Deleuze manages to liberate the faculties from the confines of the Same.

The postulate of recognition inevitably leads to a much more general postulate of *representation* that subordinates difference to a number of classificatory concepts (e.g. identity, resemblance, similitude) which in turn distribute faculties in a proper order. That is, within the domain of representation, difference is understood in terms of identity, judged by analogy, remembered and imagined via oppositions and perceived through similarities. By becoming the object of representation, difference is therefore "crucified" (DR 138) as it can never be presented in itself except in the form of "identical, similar, analogous or opposed" (ibid.). To rescue difference

from the shackles of representation, Deleuze entirely revisits the Kantian doctrine of the faculties, according to which difference would be encountered as "unthinkable," "immemorial" and "imperceptible."

Toward a New Image of Thought

The point of departure in Deleuze's new theory of thought is an *event*, i.e. an encounter with the unknown which, instead of being recognized and assimilated into the world of representation, subjects a thinking agent to its own destructive force. That is, the consciousness' activity of recognition is replaced by one's openness and passivity before a "fundamental *encounter*" (139) which in turn gives birth to a new activity of thought. By referring to Artaud, Deleuze emphasizes that the true beginning in thinking begins precisely with the thought's inability to think under the violence of event:

> Artaud said that the problem (for him) was… simply to manage to think something. For him, this was the only conceivable "work": it presupposes an impulse, a compulsion to think which passes through all sorts of bifurcations, spreading through the nerves and being communicated to the soul in order to arrive at thought. Henceforth, thought is also forced to think its central collapse, its fracture, its own natural "powerlessness" which is indistinguishable from the greatest power… (DR 147)

That is to say, beyond abstract possibilities imposed on thought by its dogmatic self-image thought must be confronted with its own impotence or natural *incapacity* to think, which should be accepted as its own "*de jure* structure," or genetic condition. In contrast to "natural capacity for thought" and the harmonious exercise of the faculties in the work of recognition, Deleuze argues for "an acephalism in thought just as… an amnesia in memory, an aphasia in language and an agnosia in sensibility" (ibid.) as if in the face of an event one begins to think and feel from scratch. Contrary to Descartes' championing the average person as a natural thinking agent, Deleuze foregrounds the figure of the idiot (DR 130) or Dreyer's mummy (C2 178) who does not know "what it means to think." And yet, one should not mistake Artaud's "powerlessness to think as a simple inferiority" (C2 170). It should rather be viewed as Deleuze's radical version of phenomenological reduction

(going much further than Husserl's *epoché*) that serves as the very first stage of the becoming-active

of thought. As he writes,

> Thinking, like activity, is always a second power of thought, not the natural exercise of a faculty, but an extraordinary event in thought itself, for thought itself. Thinking is the n-th power of thought… But it will never attain this power if forces do not do violence to it. Violence must be done to it as thought, a power, the force of thinking, must throw it into a becoming-active (NP 108).

Yet between the impotence of thought as its initial *natural* state and its eventual becoming-active

there lies a rather long and torturous passage of apprenticeship throughout which all the faculties

undergo the destructive force of an encounter. Deleuze admits that Kant's doctrine of the faculties

"has become discredited today" (DR 143) and some commentators similarly express their

skepticisms about his attempt to rehabilitate this apparently psychologistic theory.[36] But for

Deleuze, the doctrine of the faculties could still do a good service for philosophy provided it is

liberated from its imprisonment in humanistic psychology regulated by a given common sense. For

Deleuze, common sense is not a transcendental given but a subjective principle imposed by

knowledge's demands for universal communicability, it promotes "the idea of a good nature of the

faculties, of a healthy and upright nature which allows them to harmonize with one another and to

form harmonious proportions" (KCP 21). Deleuze discards Kant's scenarios proposed in the first

two critiques where the harmonious accord of the faculties is regulated under the chairmanship of

either active understanding or moral reason. Yet he turns to the third critique where Kant shows that

faculties are indeed capable of entering into free and uncontrolled exercises, in which each faculty is

pushed to its own limit, forming a dissonant accord with each other beyond the mediations of

conceptual understanding. For Deleuze, "Kant was the first to provide the example of such a

discordant harmony, the relation between imagination and thought which occurs in the case of the

sublime" (DR 146). According to Deleuze's sublime refashioning of Kant's transcendental

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[36] See Christian Kerslake, "Transcendental cinema: Deleuze, time and modernity," *Radical Philosophy*, 130 (March-April 2005), 7-19, 9.

psychology, faculties, after being unhinged from their collaborative service to a common sense, are

no longer subordinated to the model of recognition and thus confront one and the same

unrecognizable object of the encounter (i.e. pure difference or intensity) separately on their own,

which in turn disrupts their habitual functioning and pushes each of them to the limit of their

capacity. It is precisely when a given faculty goes beyond the limit of its proper empirical use

toward "the extreme point of its dissolution" and "discovers at this point its own unique passion"

(DR 143) that it becomes truly "metaphysical" (DR 140) or "transcendental." As Deleuze writes,

> The transcendental form of a faculty is indistinguishable from its disjointed, superior or transcendent exercise.
> Transcendent in no way means that the faculty addresses itself to objects outside the world but, on the contrary,
> that it grasps that in the world which concerns it exclusively and brings it into the world. The transcendent
> exercise must not be traced from the empirical exercise precisely because it apprehends that which cannot be
> grasped from the point of view of common sense, that which measures the empirical operation of all the
> faculties according to that which pertains to each, given the form of their collaboration. That is why the
> transcendental is answerable to a superior empiricism which alone is capable of exploring its domain and its
> regions (DR 143).

Deleuze's method dubbed as "transcendental empiricism" is therefore based on the transcendent or

superior exercise of the faculties. Instead of recognizing the object of an encounter in their

convergent collaboration, faculties are broken apart and pushed to their outmost limit. Yet what's

most interesting in Deleuze's narrative is that his transcendental operation of the faculties follows

the exact same path trodden by Kant's threefold synthesis of cognition in the first critique: namely,

the synthesis of apprehension in the intuition, the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination and

the synthesis of recognition in the concept. Whereas in Kant's version the synthesis of apprehension

(or perception), which collects the sensible data, and the synthesis of reproduction (or memory),

which reproduces what has been apprehended in the first synthesis, are unified by the

consciousness' active synthesis of recognition (or understanding), which guarantees the unity of the

subject as well as the object, in Deleuze's revision the third synthesis is no longer carried out by

consciousness and thus provides no unity of the previous two syntheses. Following Husserl's

observation that Kant's first two syntheses are, in fact, passive, Deleuze's similarly claims that they

are not active but unconscious, each of them is "not carried out by the mind, but occurs in the mind" (DR 71). By eliminating or castrating (to use the psychoanalytic term from *The Logic of Sense*) the totalizing function of the third synthesis of recognition and replacing it with the *impotence* of thought, Deleuze lets the faculties free from the constraints of a common sense and pushes each of them to confront the violence of encounter. I will not dwell on the details of Deleuze's rereading of Kant's theory of cognition that are well studied in a secondary literature. For our purposes suffice it to keep in mind that Deleuze fully preserves the linear structure of the Kantian threefold synthesis yet turns it into the "volcanic line" (DR 227) or "chain of force and fuse along which each [faculty] confronts its limit, receiving from (or communicating to) the other only a violence which brings it face to face with its own element, as though with its disappearance or its perfection" (DR 141). That is, by reaching its own genetic element along the sequential passage of passive syntheses, each faculty is reborn anew as "transcendental" (for the transcendental status of the faculty Deleuze uses Latin terminology) and "transmits a shock to the other faculties" (DR 236), all the way to the thought.

We may thus outline three successive stages of Deleuze's apprenticeship in the transcendental exercise of the faculties triggered by the encounter. First stage is the encounter itself manifested by the traumatic sign or object which is ungraspable by itself yet forces the subject to contemplate or sense it.

> Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. In this sense it is opposed to recognition (DR 139).

Whereas in recognition the object is immediately attained by all other faculties, in the encounter sensibility is left alone to deal with its incomprehensible material impression. As Deleuze argues, "on the path which leads to that which is to be thought, all begins with sensibility… The privilege of sensibility as origin appears in the fact that, in an encounter, what forces sensation and that which

can only be sensed are one and the same thing" (DR 144-5). What transcendental sensibility retains

from the object of the encounter is a "free form of difference" or "intensity" which is registered as

unsensible or "imperceptible" from the point of view of "the empirical exercise of our senses" (DR

141). The "imperceptible" sign of encounter, which raises sensibility "to the nth power" (DR 140),

is often described as a "problem":   "that which can only be sensed (the *sentiendum* or the being of

the sensible) moves the soul, 'perplexes' it - in other words, forces it to pose a problem: as though

the object of the encounter, the sign, were the bearer of a problem - as though it were a problem"

(ibid). Deleuze's formulation of the encounter's perplexing effect on sensibility as a *problem* is

important here, as it emphasizes the fact that his theory of "transcendental empiricism" is not

ontological but necessarily *epistemological*. For Deleuze, only problems "furnish the conditions

under which the faculties attain their superior exercise" (DR 146). It is precisely the disturbingly

unsolvable problem posed by the encounter that is being passed on to the next faculty,

transcendental memory, which constitutes the second stage of Deleuze's apprenticeship.

Whereas empirical memory grasps and recalls a present problem on the basis of its

resemblance with past experience provided by the model of recognition, transcendental memory

recalls it exclusively within the context of the past as such, beyond any resemblance between past

and present, and locates it within the domain of the virtual. As Deleuze writes,

> Empirical memory is addressed to those things which can and even must be grasped: what is recalled must have been seen, heard, imagined or thought… Transcendental memory, by contrast, grasps that which from the outset can only be recalled, even the first time: not a contingent past, but the being of the past as such and the past of every time. In this manner, the *forgotten* thing appears in person to the memory which essentially apprehends it. It does not address memory without addressing the forgetting within memory. The *memorandum* here is both unrememberable and immemorial. Forgetting is no longer a contingent incapacity separating us from a memory which is itself contingent: it exists within essential memory as though it were the 'nth' power of memory with regard to its own limit or to that which can only be recalled (DR 140).

The memory's transcendent exercise, therefore, coincides with the obliteration of empirical

memory, namely forgetting, as it recalls what is essentially forgotten in actuality. Whereas empirical

forgetting equals the negation of memory, for transcendental memory forgetting becomes its highest

power as it points to the immemorial past in general. Transcendental memory is, of course, a highly

speculative presupposition which Deleuze borrows from Bergson, who foregrounded the concept of

pure recollection or Memory as such in order to argue for the self-preservation of the past outside

human memory. As Deleuze himself admits, "We have great difficulty in understanding a survival

of the past in itself because we believe the past is no longer" (B 55). Below I will address this

difficulty since Deleuze's reading of Bergson constitutes an integral part of the Kantian

metaphysical framework of his *Cinema* books. But at this point of Deleuze's apprenticeship suffice

it to note that the transcendental exercise of memory serves to introduce the problem received from

sensibility into the domain of the virtual, where it should be then apprehended by thought which, in

turn, is forced to create ideas. That is, transcendental memory is necessarily a *transitional* stage in

Deleuze's narrative of cognition: it does implement the passage of the problem into the virtual past

but the problem cannot be kept there for too long. Within the domain of the virtual, it must

necessarily be confronted by *thought*, which constitutes the final stage of the problem's differential

adventure across the faculties. Deleuze summarizes this journey in the following way:

> Thus sensibility, forced by the encounter to sense the *sentiendum*, forces memory in its turn to remember the *memorandum*, that which can only be recalled. Finally, the third characteristic of transcendental memory is that, in turn, it forces thought to grasp that which can only be thought, the *cogitandum* or *noeteon*, the Essence: not the intelligible, for this is still no more than the mode in which we think that which might be something other than thought, but the being of the intelligible as though this were both the final power of thought and the unthinkable. The violence of that which forces thought develops from the *sentiendum* to the *cogitandum* (DR 141).

As Deleuze argues, "There is indeed a serial connection between the faculties and an order in that

series" (DR 145). In fact, Deleuze's theory of the transcendental exercise of the faculties inscribed

into the Kantian threefold synthesis of cognition is consistently replayed in practically all of his

engagements with the arts, including his *Cinema* books. In *Proust and Sign*, for example, he applies

the same genetic model to the narrator's semiotic apprenticeship which similarly starts off in

apprehending sensuous signs and culminates in the production of ideas. As he puts it,

> The sensuous sign does us violence: it mobilizes the memory, it sets the soul in motion; but the soul in its turn excites thought, transmits to it the constraint of the sensibility, forces it to conceive essence, as the only thing that must be conceived. Thus the faculties enter into a transcendent exercise, in which each confronts and joins its own limit: the sensibility that apprehends the sign; the soul, the memory, that interprets it; the mind that is forced to conceive essence (PS 101).

The same sequential order of sensibility, memory and thought could be observed in Deleuze's account of three passive syntheses of time given in chapter 2 of *Difference and Repetition*. As Joe Hughes argues, "the doctrine of the faculties maps directly onto the philosophical account of the three passive syntheses"[37] and "we could describe each passive synthesis as the transcendental exercise of a particular faculty."[38] Given that a number of scholars agree that Deleuze's triple synthesis of time structurally organizes his taxonomy of cinematic images and signs, in what follows I will highlight the key moments of his so-called "dynamic genesis" which will later be relevant in my analysis of the underlying metaphysical structure of his *Cinema* books.

1.3. Deleuze's Three Syntheses of Time and the Transcendental Exercise of the Faculties

First Passive Synthesis: Contemplation

Deleuze's model of three passive syntheses describes the unconscious production of time that begins with the sensibility's immersion in unorganized matter and culminates in the emergence of thought in the virtual. With respect to each synthesis Deleuze elaborates the transcendental conditions for the present, the past, and the future. While following the successive geneses of temporal layers in Deleuze's system, for our purposes it is important to remember two things. First, the sub-representative unconscious syntheses of time run prior to the active representative syntheses of empirical memory and understanding of human consciousness into which they are incorporated. As we will see below, the former provide the underlying structure for the constitution of the time-image, while the latter serve as the metaphysical ground of the movement-image. Second, the passive syntheses are not purely formal; their transcendental operation is driven by the violence of

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[37] Joe Hughes, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: a Reader's Guide*, Continuum, 2009, 103.
[38] Ibid., 129.

the fragmented object of encounter, the pure difference of which is being transmitted across the faculties beyond the model of recognition.

The first synthesis consists in the mind's *contemplation* of an object and *contraction* of discontinuous instants given by sensibility into a living present. In this synthesis both the past and the future are the dimensions of the present itself: that is, the retention of preceding instants and the anticipation of succeeding ones belong to the same contraction of present instants. By defining this synthesis as originary, Deleuze goes as far as to claim that "[e]very organism, in its receptive and perceptual elements, but also in its viscera, is a sum of contractions, of retentions and expectations" (DR 73). In this regard, the entire function of a contemplative soul is to contract habits, an autonomous activity which must be "attributed to the heart, to the muscles, nerves and cells" (DR 74). In fact, "everything is contemplation, even rocks and woods, animals and men" (DR 75). Deleuze emphasizes that this contractile activity is not carried out by active consciousness but "occurs *in* the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and all reflection" (DR 71). Contrary to Kant who limits sensibility to the passive experience of sensations without synthesis, "thereby assuming sensations already formed" (DR 98), Deleuze argues that "[t]he passive self is not defined simply by receptivity… but by virtue of the contractile contemplation which constitutes the organism itself before it constitutes the sensations" (DR 78). "The possibility of receiving sensations or impressions *follows* from this [passive synthesis]" (DR 87, emphasis added). The mind's unconscious contraction of habits as repetitive patterns in the living present forms, therefore, "the foundation from which all other psychic phenomena derive" (DR 78): that is, "the active syntheses of memory and understanding are *superimposed* upon and *supported* by the passive synthesis of the imagination" (DR 71, emphases added) in a way that "[e]ach contraction… constitutes a sign which is interpreted or deployed in active syntheses" (DR 73).

Second Passive Synthesis: Memory

The passive synthesis of the present develops into two directions. On the one hand, it gives rise to the active synthesis of (psychological) memory that makes recognition, reflection and representation possible. On the other, it proceeds towards the deeper, passive synthesis of the past in general that opens up onto the domain of the virtual. According to the former, time is organized into the chronological continuity of successive moments where the past is constituted after the present passes, whereas in the latter the past is considered to be preserved in itself regardless of its relation to the present. For Deleuze, the past of the active synthesis of memory is but a former present as it serves as the dimension of the actual present characterized by sensory-motor utility and representation. The virtual past is, on the contrary, sub-representative and, in fact, cannot be remembered by the actual memory governed by the model of recognition; it is essentially forgotten yet can be accessed only by the transcendental exercise of memory.

From the point of view of the empirical exercise of memory, a pure or *a priori* past, which surges up in the oblivion itself, is no more than a speculative contradiction which can only be conceived of in terms of the three paradoxes of *contemporaneity*, *coexistence, pre-existence* and *the past's coexistence with itself* that Deleuze derives from Bergson's *Matter and Memory*. First, both present and past are constituted at the same time and are therefore contemporaneous. If the past were not contemporaneous with the present, each moment in the present would be unable to pass in favor of a new present. That is, in order to be represented in the active memory, the present must simultaneously differentiate itself from the past precisely because the contemporaneous presence of the latter conditions or grounds the passage of the former. Second, if the past is the condition under which the present passes and cannot be constituted after the present, the entirety of the past must coexist with each new present: "*all* of the past coexists with the new present... [because] each present present is only the entire past in its most contracted state" (DR 80, emphasis in the original).

Given that in the passive transcendental synthesis of memory as such, where the past conserves itself in itself beyond the limits of empirical remembering, both present and future are only the dimensions of the past, each new present is considered to be an actualization of different dimensions of the past. That is, the present repeats the past but each time differently. In this regard, Deleuze points out that the pure past that has never been present and survives in itself does not *exist* in the actual present but insists and consists in it: "It no longer exists, it does not exist, but it insists, it consists, it *is*. It insists with the former present, it consists with the new or present present" (DR 82). Third, given that the past is constituted simultaneously with the present with which it coexists in its entity, "the pure element of the past in general preexists the passing present" (ibid.). Since the pure past has never been present and cannot be represented in empirical memory, where only the former presents can be remembered, it thus serves as the *preexisting* ontological ground for the passage of time. The final paradox which argues that the "whole past coexists with itself" (DR 83) points to the famous Bergsonian metaphor of the cone, according to which the present is viewed as the most contracted state of the past (i.e. the tip of the cone) while other layers or circles of the past simultaneously coexist with each other with different degrees of contraction and relaxation within the overall totality of the past expanding to infinity. The vertical coexistence of all the levels of the whole past variously replayed in one continuous (horizontal) present Deleuze calls "destiny," an "impression" that the successive presents of one's spiritual life repeat "the same thing, the same story, but at different levels: here more or less relaxed, there more or less contracted" (DR 83). Deleuze's Bergsonian definition of destiny will be particularly relevant in our discussion of the plot structure in Tarkovsky's semi-autobiographical films, whose protagonists play out "the same past at different levels of a gigantic cone… Each chooses his pitch or his tone, perhaps even his lyrics, but the tune remains the same, and underneath all the lyrics the same tra-la-la, in all possible tones and all pitches" (DR 83-4).

The four paradoxes of the pure past may seem somewhat redundant from the point of view of empirical understanding, since all of them variously insist on one and the same thing, i.e. the imperative reality of the virtual past, but they do provide the basic principles of the autonomous operation of transcendental memory *underneath* empirical memory, which Deleuze restates almost verbatim in *Cinema 2*. And yet, Deleuze's transcendental deduction of the passive synthesis of the past may raise an obvious question about how the content of virtual memory can actually be experienced if it cannot be accessed through conscious remembering but only "*within* Forgetting, as though immemorial," "underneath representation" (DR 85, emphasis in original). As Deleuze himself asks, "how can we penetrate that in-itself without reducing it to the former present that it was, or to the present present in relation to which it is past?" (DR 84) In this regard, he refers to Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* where the hero's experience of reminiscence occasioned by involuntary or unconscious memory gives rise to the image of Combray "not as it was or as it could be, but in a splendour which was never lived," "in the form of a past which was never present: the in-itself of Combray" (DR 85). For Deleuze, the virtual image of "Combray" is of course a programmatic example elaborated more in detail in his *Proust and Signs*. Yet in *Difference and Repetition*, he refers to it mainly to emphasize the fundamental *eroticism* inherent in the transcendental exploration of the past. As he claims, "It is always Eros… who allows us to penetrate this pure past in itself" (ibid.). The erotic nature of the pure past as the reservoir of virtual objects of desire is systematically examined in Deleuze's psychoanalytic account of the second passive synthesis. We may lament about the lack of psychoanalysis in the *Cinema* books yet Deleuze's theory of time presented in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* is massively indedted to psychoanalytic findings of Freud, Lacan and Klein. Given that the developmental structure of three syntheses of time organizes most part of Deleuze's taxonomy of cinematic images, we should

therefore consider the major points of his psychoanalytic version of the transcendental exercise of the faculties.

Deleuze's Psychoanalytic Model of Passive Syntheses

Just as in his philosophical account of three passive syntheses Deleuze strives to liberate the faculties from their imprisonment in the common sense, in his rereading of the Freudian narrative of psychosexual formation he similarly attempts to disengage the processes of psychic organization from their subordination to the those organizing principles that he considers external to and socially imposed on psyche (namely, the pleasure principle, the reality principle and the death drive) and thus rehabilitate the primary function of the compulsion to repeat. Deleuze is attracted to Freud's theory of infantile sexuality because its first synthesis begins with the ego's integration or binding of excitations in the intensive field called the Id, which is analogous to the originary contracting synthesis of habit discussed above. Both syntheses, Deleuze argues, are driven by their internal passion for repetition rather than by the intentionality to reproduce a pleasure obtained as a result of binding.[39] Just as the first passive synthesis of habit (contraction) has the twofold progression into the active synthesis of memory and the passive synthesis of the pure past, the development of the binding synthesis similarly splits in the two simultaneous yet dissymmetrical directions. On the one hand, it becomes the foundation for the active synthesis of the reality principle that establishes the objectal relations between the ego and an object in reality and thus channels the binding synthesis towards the constitution of the active self. On the other, the ego's binding activity is extended into the contemplation of virtual objects which provides a second (virtual) ground for the pleasure principle. As Deleuze argues, "Both series are objectal: one series comprises real objects which

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[39] Whereas for Freud, according to Deleuze, the pleasure principle as the need to discharge excitations is the cause and goal of the process of binding, for Deleuze, on the contrary, the former is the effect of the latter. That is, only later does a pleasure acquire the status of a principle as well as "the allure of satisfaction in general" (DR 97) which subsequently becomes the stimulus for our achieving success under the supervision of the reality principle. See more on this in Henry Somers-Hall, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide*, Edinburgh University Press, 2012, 83-90.

serve as correlates of active synthesis; the other virtual objects which serve as correlates of an

extension of passive synthesis" (DR 100). Deleuze emphasizes that the two series are

complimentary and inseparable from each other since both of them, by overlapping with each other,

constitute the model for the circularity of desire, a model with "two intersecting asymmetrical

circles" (ibid.) which he compares to the figure 8. Furthermore, the psychoanalytical model of desire

strongly resonates with the Bergsonian notion of virtual memory:

> In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson proposed the schema of a world with two centres, one real and the other
> virtual, from which emanate on the one hand a series of 'perception-images', and on the other a series of
> 'memory-images', the two series collaborating in an endless circuit. The virtual object is not a former present,
> since the quality of the present and the modality of its passing here affect exclusively the series of the real as
> this is constituted by active synthesis. However, the pure past… does qualify the virtual object; that is, the past
> as contemporaneous with its own present, as pre-existing the passing present and as that which causes the
> present to pass. Virtual objects are shreds of pure past (DR 101).

In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze's appropriation of Bergon's circuit of "perception-image" and "memory-

image" will be reformulated as the crystal-image, in which present and past or actual and virtual

resonate to the point of their indiscernibility. In *Difference and Repetition*, Bergson's notion of the

virtual object is aligned with Melanie Klein's theory of partial objects as well as Lacan's *object a*

and the phallus: all of these terms help Deleuze to argue for the virtual ground of desire, a ground

which is perpetually displaced in the past and can only manifest itself under various disguises in the

living present. As he writes, "This is the link between Eros and Mnemosyne. Eros tears virtual

objects out of the pure past and gives them to us in order that they may be lived" (DR 102-3). In his

discussion of the crystal-images in European modern cinema, Deleuze, unfortunately, does not

elaborate on the logical complicity between eroticism and memory, which is evident in *Difference*

and Repetition, yet the films that he selects to exemplify this tendency, such as Resnais' *Hiroshima*

Mon Amour (1959), Fellini's *8½* (1963) and *Amarcord* (1973) and especially Tarkovsky's *Mirror*

(1974), compellingly illustrate the key role of sexual desire in the protagonist's excursions into the

past.

For Deleuze, the "amorous" (DR 103) exploration of the past is necessarily the transitional stage of the apprenticeship in the transcendental exercise of the faculties, the final destination of which is thought rather than memory. As he cautiously points out, "the synthesis of Eros and Mnemosyne still suffers from an ambiguity" since, by forming a circuit between virtual and actual objects, it could still be assimilated into representation governed by the active syntheses of memory and understanding and "the pure past [risks] assuming thereby the status of a former present, albeit mythical, and reconstituting the illusion [of an original] it was supposed to denounce" (DR 109). This warning has apparently remained unnoticed by Badiou, for whom Deleuze seems to argue "that truth is ultimately memory, or incorporation within Being of its own actualized fecundity: absolute past."[40] Rather than being a thinker of memory, as Badiou mistakenly suggests, Deleuze explicitly critiques the inevitable tendency of the pure past as the ground to seek its own determination and actualization in the present, that is, "to remain relative to what it grounds, to borrow the characteristics of what it grounds, and to be proved by these" (DR 88). It is a shortcoming of the pure past, he emphasizes, that, by establishing a codependent relationship between virtual (memory) and actual (perception), "it creates a circle: it introduces [circular] movement into the soul rather than time into thought" (ibid.).For Deleuze, the erotic time travel through the layers of virtual memory should necessarily open up a deeper field of problems and questions in the differential unconscious which, in turn, conditions the perpetual displacement of virtual objects into the more distant past and the disguised character of real objects in the present. That is, the contemplation of virtual objects in the pure past should trigger the problematization of the status of authenticity and truth attached to the real objects in the actual present. As he argues, virtual memory "must lead us towards a beyond" and because of this "the second synthesis of time points beyond itself in the direction of a third which denounces the illusion of the in-itself as still a correlate of representation"

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[40] Alain Badiou, *The Clamour of Being*, 64.

(ibid.). In other words, Deleuze's Bergsonism (as well as his temporary tolerance towards psychoanalysis) is only an intermediate phase towards his more profound commitment to Nietzsche, a transition which will equally manifest itself in the final chapters of his *Cinema 2*.

Third Synthesis: Thought

For Deleuze, thought is produced by time itself, that is, by the so-called "pure and empty form of time" introduced into the process of thinking. In philosophical terms, this temporalization of thought is exemplified by Kant's critique of Descartes' *atemporal* Cogito. Whereas Descartes' proposition "I think, therefore I am" is situated outside time, for Kant the determination of the existence of a thinking subject should proceed in time which, in turn, splits the subject into the active determining I ('I think') and the passive undetermined self ('I am') and thus becomes the formal relation through which the mind affects itself. Time is therefore the form of self-determination or self-affection which introduces the internal difference between thought and being. That is, the activity of thinking in "I think" is simultaneously "the affection of a passive self which experiences its own thought" (DR 86), which implies that *I is an other*. Unlike Kant who resurrects the active identity to fill up the fracture opened up by time, Deleuze insists on the non-synthesizable openness of this internal fracture as the starting point for thinking difference as such. As he also points out in *Logic of Sense*, "The beginning is truly in the void; it is suspended in the void" (LS 218). This void as the true beginning reappears under various names in all of his texts (e.g. "differenciator," "dark precursor," "aleatory point," "interstice," "irrational cut," "disjunctive synthesis," etc.) in order to bring all the divergent series in communication regardless of their content.

In most general terms, the empty form of time can be symbolically represented by "a unique and tremendous event" (DR 89) or encounter which cuts the subject's empirical temporality into "before" and "after" this event. Given that such an event or response to it is necessarily "too big"

for the self (e.g. 'too big for me' (ibid.)), the evental temporality (i.e. the empty form of time) persists on its own as an empty gap or caesura which disrupts the subject's capacity to reestablish the chronological continuity between "before" and "after" and thus "constitutes the fracture in the I" (ibid.). This fractured I is exemplified by the tragic experience of Oedipus and Hamlet whose passive endurance of the immensity of their act, "adequate to time as a whole" (ibid.), becomes the literary model for Deleuze's new "aborted Cogito" (DR 110) affected by the activity of its own thought, since it is "in an always fractured I" that the "genesis of thought" (DR 114) is possible. In this regard, Deleuze argues, Hamlet's expression "time out of joints" seems to be the most appropriate to capture the static operation of the third synthesis where time is finally liberated or "unhinged" from its subordination to movement and measure and is completely purified from its empirical (psychological and historical) content. That is, time now unfolds autonomously, with the subject being expelled, by turning the past and present into the dimensions of the future.

We may agree with James Williams who argues that "[t]he third synthesis of time is not based on human experience" and that "[i]t is rather a speculative claim about time based on the disruptive appearance of the new… in any process (animal, vegetable, mineral)."[41] Furthermore, Deleuze himself refers to embryology that discovers the analogous processes of the third synthesis "that only the embryo can sustain: an adult would be torn apart by them" (DR 118). Nevertheless, Deleuzean apprenticeship in the transcendent exercise of the faculties does initially presuppose a human subject as the ground for its own implementation but this ground is to be necessarily "superseded by a groundlessness, a universal ungrounding which turns upon itself" (DR 91). Even though the third synthesis of time takes place without a human agency, it effects a radical transformation of a human subject by dissolving it in the totality of time. The third synthesis of time, which "unites all the dimensions of time, past, present and future, and causes them to be played out

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[41] James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time*, 90.

in the pure form" (DR 115), is not, of course, carried out by the mind but it is the latter that turns upon itself by dramatizing its own *death* in order to give rise to the former. This is why Deleuze provides a detailed psychoanalytic account of "an experience of death which corresponds to this third synthesis" (DR 114).

As Deleuze argues, the transition from the second synthesis to the third occurs when the ego, spliced between the displacing virtual objects in the past on the one hand and disguising real objects in the present on the other, "assumes the displacement of the former and the disguise of the latter" (DR 111) and interiorizes the difference between the two lines. As a result, "the libido returns or flows back into the ego and the passive ego becomes entirely narcissistic" (DR 110). Similar to the Kantian formula of time as a form of self-affection that engenders thought, the narcissistic ego passively experiences "its own fatal affection" (DR 113) and thus "corresponds to the empty form of time without filling it" and this kind of time that is "empty and out of joint, with its rigorous formal and static order… is precisely the death instinct" (DR 110). At this point, "[t]he correlation between Eros and Mnemosyne is replaced by that between a narcissistic ego without memory, a great amnesiac, and a death instinct desexualised and without love" (ibid.). Deleuze rejects Freud's understanding of the death instinct as the return of "organic life back into the inanimate state"[42] and equates it instead with the notion of "desexualized Eros" as a "displaceable and neutral energy" that "proceeds from the narcissistic store of libido."[43] Freud describes this "displaceable… desexualized libido" as "*sublimated* energy" that continues to "retain the main purpose of Eros" while being invested in the intellectual processes. As he argues, "the activity of thought is… supplied from the sublimation of erotic motive sources."[44] Deleuze fully supports Freud's supposition that "the process of thought in general should be attached to that desexualised energy which is the correlative of the

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[42] Sigmund Freud, *The Freud Reader*, W. W. Norton & Company, 1995, 645.
[43] Ibid., 649.
[44] Ibid.

libido become narcissistic" (DR 113-114) yet he objects that such energy could solely be derived from either the successful resolution of the Oedipus complex, resulting in the formation of the narcissistic ego and the superego, and the subsequent promotion of sublimation or neurosis. Besides socially endorsed sublimation that channels libido into an acceptable activity, Deleuze maintains, thought is also resexualized through perversion, such as sadism and masochism where the ritual of desexualization and resexualization is orchestrated by a prior autonomous repetition dubbed as the death instinct.[45] In Deleuze's scenario, the *desexualization* of erotic memory is necessarily inseparable from the perverse reinvestment of libido "in a pure, cold, apathetic and frozen thought" (DR 115). That is, the genesis of thought, for Deleuze just as for Artaud, is literally *genital*: it is not acquired but produced; it proceeds from "the reflux of libido on to the narcissistic ego," which could also be caused by the influence of violence, and by simultaneous "extracting Thanatos from Eros and abstracting time from all content" (DR 114). Furthermore, Deleuze praises death as "the last form of the problematic, the source of problems and questions, the sign of their persistence over and above every response" (DR 112). By referring to Blanchot's notion of *impersonal* death as the form of radical "outside" which depersonalizes the self, Deleuze foregrounds the speculative model of death as the only possible form in which thought may genuinely unfold independently of the subject's rationality.

Deleuze's "story of time" ends with the celebratory account of Nietzsche's cosmological doctrine of eternal return which designates the domain of the virtual proper beyond empirical determinations. Deleuze needs the Nietzschean utopian temporality as the last brick in his multilayered edifice of time in order to affirm the unlimited communication of heterogeneous series following no rule except that of radical contingency: "excessive systems… link the different with the different, the multiple with the multiple, the fortuitous with the fortuitous" (DR 115). Needless

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[45] For the detailed account of the libidinal production of thought in sadism and masochism see Gilles Deleuze, Leopold Sacher-Masoch, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty & Venus in Furs*, New York, NY Zone Books 1991, 103-134.

to say, there is no place for the subject's agency here who would cause the disparate series to communicate. For both Nietzsche and Deleuze, the eternal return is the return and affirmation of the Different, which excludes the return of the Same. Nor can we say that the experience of the eternal return could be remotely human. If there is any reference to a "human being" at this point, it could be only an artist transformed into an unidentifiable difference in-itself (e.g. "the plebeian," "no one," "the man without name," "a great amnesiac," "the already-Overman," etc.) who would play the role of differenciator (or "dark precursor") of commingling differences. In literature (e.g. Raymond Roussell, Lewis Carroll, James Joyce), the role of dark precursor is played by quasi-homonyms, esoteric or portmanteau words "which rely upon no prior identity... but which induce a maximum of resemblance and identity into the system as a whole, as though this were the result of the process of differenciation of difference in itself" (DR 121). In music (e.g. Arnold Schoenberg, Pierre Boulez) the discordant accord of divergent elements is traced though "an emancipation of dissonance or unresolved accords" and a "polyphony of polyphonies" (F 93). In the last chapter of *Cinema 2*, this victorious return of difference alone is exemplified by the audio-visual *heautonomy*, i.e. a convergence of independent acoustic and visual images into a single yet dissonant unity. That is to say, the autonomous manifestation of difference is the destination point of Deleuze's rather teleological narrative of the transcendental genesis of the faculties. In the next section, we will see how the developmental stages of his temporal syntheses structurally organize the enormous taxonomy of cinematic images and signs in both *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image*. This will be our final recourse to the metaphysical underpinnings of Deleuze's cine-system before we trace the same dynamic in the history of Russian cinema

1.4. Deleuze's *Cinema 1* and *2* and the Transcendental Exercise of the Faculties

Deleuze's Triple Synthesis and the History of Cinema

In his *Cinema* books Deleuze does not refer to active and passive syntheses of cognition, he deploys Bergson's and Peirce's triadic structures instead; yet the framework of three syntheses elaborated above nevertheless remains a deeper metaphysical ground for his explicit theoretical commentaries. That is, in *Cinema 1* Bergson's perception-, affection- and action-images aligned with Peirce's categories of firstness (affection), secondness (action) and thirdness (reflection), to which Deleuze adds the category of zeroeness to designate perception, are directly modeled on Kant's *active* syntheses of apprehension, reproduction and understanding and thus characterize multiple aspects of the *dogmatic* cinematic image of thought. In *Cinema 2*, on the other hand, opsigns and sonsigns, Bergson's memory-images (updated as crystal-images) and noosigns (supported by the references to Artaud, Nietzsche, Spinoza and Blanchot) faithfully follow Deleuze's own framework of three *passive* syntheses of time.

As discussed above, Deleuze is often criticized for projecting the Bergsonian divide between movement and time onto the Second World War as a break between two ages of cinema. Yet it is not Bergson or Peirce *per se* whom Deleuze is inscribing into the "different levels of development" in film history but, rather, his theory of empirical and transcendental exercise of the faculties (which, in turn, incorporates a large part of Bergson's philosophy along with other theoretical resources) that comprises many more stages and transitions in the cinematic production of the virtual. That is, by looking at various cinematic tendencies, schools and auteurs, Deleuze traces how each of them is either struggling with or enjoying the inevitable imprisonment in the dogmatic image of thought, given that cinema is essentially *the* mass artform and thus necessarily dependent on a particular state ideology, such as American Dream, German Nationalism or Soviet Socialism. Even though the historical and ideological context of each film industry may vary, for Deleuze the cinematic deployment of either empirical or transcendental faculties is structurally universal. In its subjection to the dogmatic image of thought, a given cinematic tradition would follow the steps of

the empirical deployment of the faculties supervised by a given ideologically dominant common sense. In its attempt to break with imposed ideological clichés towards a new image of thought, each cinema or a filmmaker would conversely proceed along the "volcanic line" of the transcendental exercise of the faculties. In the former scenario, cinema would eventually degenerate into "state propaganda and manipulation, into a kind of fascism [bringing] together Hitler and Hollywood" (C2 164), or music videos and action blockbusters "tracing the circuits of… the deficient brain of an idiot" by emphasizing "haphazard cuts" and "violence and sexuality in what is represented."[46] In the latter, the screen would trace the processes of a "creative brain"[47] by creating ideas through the disjunctive synthesis of various film components.

Unfortunately, Deleuze does not dwell too long on the cultural and historical conditions of the emergence of a given movement- or time-image and often mixes up examples from different regions and chronologically incompatible periods in order to maintain the coherence of his philosophical argument, which is, to repeat, the cinema's steady progression toward the virtual. For instance, to illustrate the predominantly European and supposedly *post-war* crisis of the action-image, besides Italian Neorealist films, he also refers to the *pre-war* films of Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu (C2 13-16). Jean Epstein's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928) is mentioned as "[o]ne of the first great works" (C2 59) deploying the virtual movement of the world, while Jean Renoir's *The Rules of the Game* (1939) and Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* (1941) are discussed as paradigmatic time-images. Alain Resnais's early documentary *Van Gogh* (1947) is examined along with his much later films exemplifying the director's thought-images overcoming his earlier emphasis on memory. Furthermore, Deleuze seems to ultimately defy any historical chronology in his preoccupation with time-images by saying that "we must look in pre-war cinema, and even in

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[46] Gilles Deleuze, "The Brain Is the Screen: An Interview with Gilles Deleuze", trans. Marie Therese Guirgis, in *The Brain Is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, ed. Gregory Flaxman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 366-67.

[47] Ibid., 366.

silent cinema for the workings of a very pure time-image which has always been breaking through, holding back or encompassing the movement-image" (C2 xiii). And yet, Deleuze's downplaying the importance of traditional historiography in his quest for a pure time-image does not entirely invalidate the historical relevance of his metaphysical structures to the "epistemological" evolution of cinema. As he argues, "all images combine the same elements, the same signs, differently. But not just any combination's possible at just any moment: a particular element can only be developed given certain *conditions*, without which it will remain atrophied, or secondary" (N 49, emphasis added). In fact, Deleuze's references to unequivocally *historical* conditions of the emergence of the post-war time-image are quite specific and perceptive. Not only does he provide an exact timing for "the great crisis of the action-image" in European cinema ("around 1948, Italy; about 1958, France; about 1968, Germany" (C1 211)), he contextually specifies its causal dependence on a given ideological crisis "external to the cinema" (ibid.). For example, the cinema in France, he argues, was able to break with its classical tradition only after the demise of de Gaulle's "political ambition to belong fully to the circle of victors" at the end of the war; German cinema had to take time to recover after its long and total subjection to the state ideology; while Italy was the first to move beyond the movement-image, "before France and Germany," because it "could certainly not claim the rank of victor" and, at the same time, "had at its disposal a cinematographic institution which had escaped fascism relatively successfully" (ibid.).

It is certainly Deleuze's oversight that he does not consistently maintain his focus on the cultural and historical conditions for either empirical or transcendental combinations of images. It appears that the *Cinema*'s overall argument does not go further than a demonstration that such combinations exist in film history, regardless of their particular context. He does not deny their historically conditioned nature yet abstains from exploring it in detail in order to maintain the philosophical consistency of his metaphysical system. We may of course critique Deleuze for

overdoing philosophy at the expense of the historical dynamic of cinema or being a poor

metaphysician partially relying on the representational model of film references. But to complete his

film-philosophy project we should rather stick to his *entire* philosophical argument and a given film

history at once and extract the former from the latter. Such a rejoinder is only cursorily suggested in

the *Cinema* books but it should be actualized to the fullest in order to "save" Deleuze for our future

use. Yet before we trace the transcendental exercise of the faculties in the context of Russian

cinema, it seems necessary to highlight how the main themes of Deleuze's metaphysical narrative

discussed above manifest themselves in his *Cinema* books.

Passive and Active Syntheses in Cinema 1

Deleuze's first passive synthesis of the living present begins with the sensibility's immersion in

discontinuous matter and the mind's contemplation of it, which is very similar to how the

perception-image is described in *Cinema 1* in terms of the first chapter of Bergson's *Matter and

Memory*. The mind is initially submerged in the material acentred universe "where everything reacts

on everything else," "the plane of immanence or the plane of matter" (C1 61). This "world of

universal variation" (C1 59), which is at the foundation of subjectivity, could also be viewed, as Joe

Hughes suggested, as the equivalent of both the "molecular multiplicity of partial objects in positive

dispersion" in *Anti-Oedipus* and of the "'primary order' of schizophrenic and corporeal depths"[48] in

The Logic of Sense. Just as in the first passive synthesis the passive ego is identical to what it

contemplates, in *Cinema 1* Deleuze similarly describes consciousness as being "indistinguishable

from the thing, that is from the image of light" (C1 61) reflected in it. As he writes, "The image

reflected by a living image is precisely what will be called perception" (C1 62); "[t]he thing and the

perception of the thing are one and the same" (C1 63). By perceiving the matter, the mind "subtracts

from the thing whatever does not interest it" (ibid.) and thus constitutes a perception-image. It is

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[48] Joe Hughes, "Schizoanalysis and the Phenomenology of Cinema," 23.

only by means of subtraction or elimination of what is not related to our reactions to the perceived object that the perception of thing, i.e. perception-image, becomes properly human or subjective. As Deleuze makes clear in *Cinema 2*, "we perceive only what… it is in our interest to perceive, by virtue of our economic interests, ideological beliefs and psychological demands. We therefore normally perceive only clichés" (C2 20). But cinematic perception can achieve inhuman or "total, objective and diffuse perception" irrelevant to our possible reactions, i.e. "the first regime of the movement-image" (C1 64), which is the effect exemplified by Vertov's *gaseous* perception that restores intervals between actions and reactions to matter itself.

Given that "the brain is nothing but… an interval, a gap between an action and a reaction," (C1 63) "an empty place which prefigures the human subject in so far as he appropriates perception to himself" (C1 81), the perception-image is inseparable from the action-image since "perception is only one side of the gap, and action is the other side" (C 64). The empty center called brain "is only capable of acting - in the sense of organizing an unexpected response - because it perceives and has received the excitation on a privileged facet," which implies that "all perception is primarily sensory-motor" (ibid.). That is, by perceiving the world from the point of view of action, we grasp "the virtual action" that the perceived things have on us and simultaneously the "possible action" (C1 65) that we can have on them. In other words, in order to act we perceive only that which we can recognize and the model of recognition is, therefore, genetically inscribed in both the perception-image and the action-image. Yet the moment of recognition occurs "between a perception which is troubling in certain respects and a hesitant action" (ibid.). It takes place in the affection-image which is "a coincidence [or synthesis] of subject and object" (ibid.). As Deleuze specifies the genetic conditions of the sensory-motor link, action requires two things: first, "a sensory contact must be established with the objects adjacent to the situation" (i.e. perception); second, the object must, in this way, awaken an affective memory, reactualise an emotion" (C1 158)

(i.e. affection). Hughes is right to point out that the action-image is the third synthesis of perception (first synthesis) and memory (second synthesis).[49] Yet this synthesis is not passive, as he suggests, but active as it is governed by the model of recognition.

Even though Kant's three syntheses of apprehension, reproduction and understanding underpin the empirical deployment of the faculties in *Cinema 1*, refashioned as the perception-image, the affection-image and the action-image, respectively, it would be a mistake to consider Deleuze's exposition of the movement-image under a supervision of a given ideology exclusively within the limits of the Kantian model (as Pamart does in his *Deleuze and le cinema*). In fact, Deleuze is the least interested in the realist and ideological ambitions of such cinema populated by proactive characters and heroic actions. As he claims, "the cinematic image is always deterritorialised" (C1 96). Each time he opens a discussion about a certain component of the movement-image, he immediately starts to systematically destabilize and counter-actualize it by regressively tracing it to its ultimate genetic element. For example, right after presenting the three basic constituents of the movement-image, he turns to Beckett's cinematic experiments striving toward "the world before man" and "the luminous plane of immanence" by means of "the extinction of action-images, perception-images and affection-images" (C1 68). In this regard, why does Deleuze discusses the pre-war schools of montage precisely in this succession: the organic montage of the American school (Griffith), the dialectic montage of the Soviet school (Eisenstein, Dovzhenko, Pudovkin), the quantitative montage of the French school (Epstein, L'Herbier, Grémillon) and the intensive montage of the German expressionist school (Lang, Stroheim, Murnau)? This is because he proceeds from the molar or individual (i.e. empirical) to the molecular or pre-individual (i.e. transcendental): he begins with the parallel composition of shots that deals with the fully individuated states of affairs in Griffith's cinema, then proceeds towards Eisenstein's

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[49] Ibid., 24.

dialectical montage of privileged instants, that are still individuated yet provoke a "pathetic jump"

toward a new individuation, and concludes with the mechanical and intensive kinds of montage that

correspond to the mathematical and dynamic sublime respectively. Similarly, in his discussion of the

perception-image, he begins with objective and subjective action-oriented perception but then, by

counter-actualizing it, turns to Pasolini's "free indirect" perception in poetic cinema and concludes

with Vertov's non-human, gaseous or molecular perception that "unites the man of tomorrow with

the world before man" (C1 82). Furthermore, the analysis of the affection-image represented by the

close-up begins with the discussion of the traits of faceicity that constitute various cinematic faces

(e.g. intensive, reflexive, expressionist) yet towards the end of this chapter facial close-ups undergo

fragmentation and effacement, exemplified by Bergman's films where faces are extinguished at "the

extreme limit of the affection-image" (C1 100), and turn into non-individuated affects scattered in

disconnected any-spaces-whatever of Bresson and Antonioni. This is probably why Ranciere was

surprised to see Deleuze's discussion of Bresson in both *Cinema* volumes. In *The Movement-Image*,

film references towards the end of each chapter exemplify the radical deterritorialization of a given

image, in which the involved faculties are pushed to the limit of their capacities. In *The Time-Image*,

some of these references serve to exemplify the steps of cinematic ascendance towards the virtual

and the production of thought and ideas. That is to say, the two volumes are not separated by two

different philosophies, such as that of nature and spirit, respectively, since Deleuze ostensibly

deploys the transcendental exercise of the faculties already within the empirical paradigm of *The

Movement-Image*.

Given that Deleuze starts practicing his transcendental empiricism much earlier than in *The

Time-Image*, his discussion of the action-image seems to be particularly interesting, since with each

variety of this image the nature of action becomes increasingly weaker, looser and more abstract

until the sensory-motor link is eventually severed towards the final pages of the first volume, after

which the faculties embark on the properly transcendental path of their exercise beyond their sensory-motor extension. Deleuze divides the action-image into two forms: the large form which generally proceeds from a conflictual situation posed before the hero through the intermediary action taken to fix it to the new improved situation (SAS'); and the small form in which the conflictul situation has to be deduced from actions themselves (ASA'). It is important for Deleuze's argument to discuss the small form of the action-image, exemplified by the low budget experimental action films and the burlesque, after its large form inscribed in Westerns, realist dramas and historical epics because the reduced control over situation and the consequent comedy in the former already subverts and problematizes the grandeur and heroic prowess of the latter within one and the same structure of the action-image. The problematization of active heroic agency is most evident in Deleuze's discussion of Herzog's action cinema, which exhausts both large and small forms of the action image by pushing the character's activity to an utter absurdity. This ambiguous form of the action-image, which both celebrates the sublime acting spirit and emphasizes its utter futility at the same time, will help us explain the constitutive contradictions of the Soviet action films in the late 1950s which similarly glorify the excessive heroism of revolutionary action yet implicitly problematize its overall purpose.

Passive and Active Syntheses in Cinema 2

Cinema 2 is primarily concerned with the transcendental exercise of the faculties in modern cinema where time "goes beyond the purely empirical succession of time - past-present-future" (C2 xii) and thus becomes "'transcendental' in the sense that Kant gives this word: time is out of joint and presents itself in the pure state" (C2 285). Yet it would be erroneous to think that the taxonomy of time-images begins with its very first pages. The time-image proper is presented only later in the analysis of the crystal-image that exemplifies the transcendental operation of memory. In the first three chapters, besides theoretical commentaries, Deleuze continues his discussion of the multistage

demise of the action-image he opens in the final chapter of *Cinema 1*, where the collapse of the

sensory-motor schema is characterized by five features: "*the dispersive situation, the deliberately*

weak links, the voyage form, the consciousness of clichés, the condemnation of the plot" (C1 210).

That is, the movement in most post-war films, represented by Italian Neorealism, French New Wave

and American independent cinema, no longer serves the pragmatic purpose of the action-image but

becomes abnormal and false by promoting the erratic wandering of essentially weak characters lost

and confused in disconnected milieus. Such a radical destabilization of the sensory-motor linkage is,

for Deleuze, the effect of the introduction of time into movement thanks to which time no longer

"depends on movement; it is aberrant movement that depends on time" (C2 55). Nevertheless, at this

point time is only negatively presented; it manifests itself only by negating movement, i.e. through

the persistent disruption of the spatial coordinates of the characters' itineraries. But the negation of

action-oriented movement is the necessary preliminary stage for the further unfolding of time in its

entirety and purity. This stage is marked by the transcendental exercise of sensibility or

contemplation, where the character, outstripped of his/her motor capacities, is no longer an agent of

action but a passive seer or visionary confronted with "something intolerable and unbearable" (C2

18). In other words, in the early chapters of *Cinema 2*, describing the proliferation of intolerable

situations absorbing   the characters, Deleuze thematizes the first stage of his transcendental

empiricism program, which is that of an encounter whose violence triggers the transcendental

exercise of all faculties leading towards the production of ideas. For Deleuze, as we discussed

above, "on the path which leads to that which is to be thought, all begins with sensibility" (DR 144).

In post-war cinema, the optical and sound situation in the violent encounter is, according to

Deleuze, no longer captured by the perception-image constructed by the model of recognition but by

"a new breed of signs, *opsigns* and *sonsigns*" (C2 6, emphases in original), which serve to designate

something unrecognizable, imperceptible and literal to which the characters, incapable of reacting,

reconnect their repressed memories instead. Deleuze's favorite illustration of this radical break is Ingrid Bergman's hallucinatory revelation in Rossellini's *Europe 51*: she cannot recognize the factory as a factory but sees it as a prison. The heroine's perception is thus not pragmatically extended to action but is rather connected to her traumatic memory which in turn immobilizes her. To explain the perception's inability to transcend recollection and eventually get connected to action, Deleuze refers to Bergson's schema of attentive recognition from the second chapter of *Memory and Matter*. According to Bergson, perception of the actual object in the present is always doubled by its reflection in memory image. Memory always assists perception; we recognize a thing only when its perceptual imprint coincides with its virtual counterpart in our memory. The deeper and wider the layers of memory, the more reality we perceive. The expansion of memory is therefore reflected in attaining deeper perception of reality. In the normal perception and recognition of objects, the specular memory-double never blurs with the actual object, it is always distinct in relation to it, yet in the failure of recognition, as Bergson shows in an essay titled "The Memory of the Present and False Recognition", the virtual image is superimposed on the actual object and becomes indiscernible from it as it happens in the experiences of déjà-vu or Rossellini's *Europa 51*.

Yet purely optical and sound situations, which divert the characters from action towards their inner worlds, do not constitute a time-image *per se*, they only designate the failure of the active synthesis of recognition. As Deleuze emphasizes, it is not enough "to disturb the sensory-motor connections," which is only the initial stage of the transcendental exercise of the faculties: one must "combine the optical-sound image with the enormous forces that are not those of a simply intellectual consciousness, nor of the social one, but of a profound, vital intuition" (C2 22). Furthermore, Deleuze is quite skeptical about dreams, flashbacks, recollections, and hallucinations in dramas or surrealist cinema, which are still too psychological for him. Even when the "optical and sound image… cut off from its motor extension… [enter] into relation with explicit recollection-

images or dream-images" (C2 59), the latter can still be actualized in consciousness. As he argues, "there is at a deeper level an insufficiency in the recollection-image in relation to the past" (C2 53) as it can be easily summoned by the perception-image. This is why Deleuze reconnects the optical-sound image not to personal recollections of the character but to a depersonalizing movement of the world where "it is no longer the character who reacts to the optical-sound situation, it is a movement of world which supplements the faltering movement of the character" (C2 59). That is, by tearing a subjectivity away "from a personal motivity to a supra-personal element" (C2 61), such genres as musical comedy, burlesque or Jacques Tati's films make "the movement of world [respond] directly to the call of opsigns and sonsigns" (C2 62). And yet, a movement of world is "definitely return to movement (hence its insufficiency again)" (C2 59). Therefore, the intolerable optical situations in the present must necessarily be combined with the second passive synthesis of time that would completely submerge the actual reality into the deeper levels of the past. It is only from this point that we may speak about a direct time-image.

Chapters 4 and 5 could be considered the most Bergsonian ones in the entire volume. In the glossary, Deleuze defines the crystal image as the uniting of an actual image with a virtual image to the point where they cannot be distinguished. The structure of the crystal-image characterized by the indiscernibility of the virtual past and the actual present originally comes from Bergson's schema of attentive recognition from the 2nd chapter of *Memory and Matter*. As we discussed above, in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze utilizes the Bergsonian actual-virtual pair to elaborate the operation of the second passive synthesis of the past. Furthermore, *The Time-Image*'s fifth chapter almost verbatim restates Bergson's paradoxes of time already known from *Difference and Repetition*: such as 1) the past's *coexistence* with the present that it has been; 2) the past's *preservation* in itself as non-chronological past in general; 3) and time's simultaneous self-dividing into past and present (C2 99). By following Bergson, Deleuze argues:

> What constitutes the crystal-image is the most fundamental operation of time: since the past is constituted not after the present that it was but at the same time, time has to split itself in two at each moment as present and past, which differ from each other in nature, or, what amounts to the same thing, it has to split the present in two heterogeneous directions, one of which is launched towards the future while the other falls into the past. Time consists of this split, and it is this, it is time, that we see in the crystal (C2 81).

To exemplify this fundamental operation of time, Deleuze turns to a number of directors, such as Ophüls, Renoir, Fellini, Zanussi, Visconti, and others. Yet what is most interesting in his taxonomy of the crystal-images or hyalogisns is that it is no by no means arbitrary, it is still organized according to the principle of progressive counter-actualization directed towards deeper and deeper domains of the virtual. As Deleuze points out, on the one hand, in the crystal image the circuits between the present and the past "refer back to a small internal circuit between a present and its own past, between an actual image and its virtual image; on the other hand, they refer to *deeper* and *deeper* circuits which are themselves virtual, which each time mobilize the whole of the past" (C2 80, emphases added). This is why he first discusses Ophüls's "perfect, completed" (C2 83) crystals, Renoir's "cracked crystal" (C2 85), then Fellini's incomplete crystals "always in the process of formation, expansion" (C2 89) and, lastly, Visconti's "crystal in the process of decomposition" (C2 94) under "the weight of an archaic past" (C2 97). Precisely because for Deleuze the second synthesis of the past is only a transitional stage followed by the third synthesis of the future and the crystal-image must eventually be "decomposed" in order to move forward, he discusses Visconti as the last for the possibility of salvation is in "escaping from a stifling past" (C2 96).

Nevertheless, among all practitioners of the crystal-image it is Fellini who seems to be Deleuze's favorite and for whom "there is no cult of former presents in his work" (C2 91). As Deleuze writes, "what Fellini says is Bergsonian: We are constructed in memory; we are simultaneously childhood, adolescence, old age and maturity" (C2 96). What makes Fellini Bergsonian is precisely the coexistence of *all* sheets of the past with a present moment in his films which directly illustrates the Bergsonian schema of the inverted cone of time discussed above where the base of the cone encompass all past in general, while the tip of the cone stands for the present as

the most contracted part of the past. According to this schema, time in its entirety is defined in terms of the past alone: either expanded past at the base or contracted past at the tip of the cone. Each and every moment in the present is therefore under the enormous pressure of the past which extends to infinity. And yet, if Bergson locates his subject at the tip of the cone on the plane of the actual present and sensory-motor action to which all the pre-existent past is subordinated, a Deleuzian "subject without identity', on the contrary, travels through all the coexistent sheets of the past. And the first conception of such a travel he finds in Welles' *Citizen Kane*, where it is Kane's death that seems to be the first condition for the a-synchronous coexistence of all the regions of his life.

As we discussed in the previous section, the second passive synthesis of time, on which the crystal-image is based, does not tell the entire story Deleuze has to say about cinema's power to directly present time. Precisely because the crystal-image is limited to the Bergsonian ontology of the past and does not include other dimensions of time, it is to be necessarily broken apart and turned into a *non-time* of the third passive synthesis of time: that is, memory is to be overcome by the future, while Eros, which glues the virtual images of the past to the actual objects in the present, to be desexualized and transformed into the death drive. This is why since the fifth chapter of *The Time-Image* Deleuze's reference to Bergson has disappeared, whereas Artaud, Blanchot and Nietzsche begin to constitute a new frame of reference in his discussion of cinema's relation to thought.

Deleuze's temporality of the new image of thought is based on the radical and paradoxical temporality of the Nietzschean "eternal return" as well as Blanchot's notion of the "absence of time." For Deleuze, the time of thought (or "an unthought in thought," "an irrational proper to thought, a point of outside beyond the outside world" (C2 181)) is but timeless or contentless, it is the "pure and empty form of time" where past, present, and future can no longer be distinguished. It is the time that is outside human subjectivity and is therefore the time of death, because death is the

ultimate outside which, nonetheless, should be affirmed and lived through, even though it renders us impersonal. For Deleuze, just as for Nietzsche and Blanchot (along with Heidegger, to a certain extent), death, far from being the empirical annihilation of the subject, represents that groundless ground, or condition, on which one's life should be based.

And yet, even though death as the thought of the outside or radical negativity lends itself quite smoothly to Deleuze's philosophical conceptualization, with regard to the cinematic medium its representation raises a number of reasonable questions. What would the cinematic image of thought look like if, according to Artaud, such thought is but a "dissociative force" which would introduce a 'figure of nothingness', a 'hole in appearances'" "un-linking" (C2 167) images? How would the non-temporal temporality of thought, or the "pure and empty form of death,"[50] be presented in film if it is presupposed only as the caesura of time? Who would the thinker of such thought be if it implies no agency? What would the body and the brain be like after being completely detached from the empirical reality?

Despite the utter improbability of Deleuze's essentially anti-aesthetic conditions for the new image of thought - or of "the unthought, that is life," (C2 189) - that cancel out the very nature of cinematic representation, he does propose a new poetics of the experimental cinema which is anti-representational, anti-mimetic, anti-cinematic, and anti-cinephilic. The typical image of such cinema would be the *cut* itself that no longer connects images but rather absorbs them and appears in its own right as "the black screen and under-exposed image, the intense blackness" or "the white screen and overexposed image, the milky image, or snowy image whose dancing seeds are to take shape" (C2 200). Deleuze's prime example for the cut-turned-image (or the image-turned-cut) symbolizing "the identity of image and concept" (C2 210), "a topological cerebral space" (C2 211) would be Tony Conrad's *The Flicker* (1965) where "the black or white screen stands for the outside of all the

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[50] Ray Brassier, *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 153.

images" (C2 215). Deleuze goes as far as to proclaim, along with Lettrism, a new kind of *cerebral* cinema: *without camera*, *without screen*, and *without film stock*. As he writes, "everything can be used as a screen, either the body of the protagonist or the body of the spectators, everything can replace the film stock, in a virtual film which now only goes on in the head, behind the pupils. A disturbed brain-death or a new brain which would be at once the screen, the film stock and the camera, each time the membrane of the outside and inside?" (C2 215)

In narrative cinema, Deleuze praises Resnais's *L'amour à mort* (1984) as "one of the most ambitious films in the history of cinema" (C2 208) for presenting a character coming back to life after the clinical death yet dying definitively in the end. For Deleuze, *L'amour à mort*, where each cut lasts for about ten seconds, foregrounds a "Lazarean" hero who "returns from death, from the land of the dead; [who] has passed through death and is born from death, whose sensory-motor disturbances he retains" (C2 208). Resnais's *Van Gogh* (1948) is similarly praised as the celebration of impersonal life between the two deaths as it strongly resonates with Blanchot's theory of double death discussed above:

> [I]t shows that, between the apparent death from inside, the attack of madness, and the definitive death from outside as suicide, the sheets of internal life and the layers of external world plunge, extend and intersect with increasing speed up to the final black screen. But, between the two, what flashes of lightning there will have been; these were life itself. From one pole to the other a creation will be constructed, which is true creation only because it will be carried out between the two deaths… (C2 209)

Deleuze's "pre-phenomenological" image of thought that foregrounds the invisible as "the pre-figuration of the concept"[51] is therefore that generative void, from which all images spring up; it is the genetic condition of cinematic representation as such. It doesn't represent the world but rather projects the cerebral process of constituting it out of nothingness, given that modern consciousness is, for Deleuze, fundamentally alienated from the world. Similarly, it doesn't represent the body but rather resurrects it from death and reconstitutes it anew, "before discourses" (C2 172) and "before

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[51] Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, "Image or Time? The Thought of the Outside in *The Time-Image* (Deleuze and Blanchot)" in *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze's Film Philosophy*, ed. David Norman Rodowick, U of Minnesota Press, 2010, 15-31, 27.

action" (C2 203), in all its primordial non-specificity. For Deleuze, the primary objective of cinema is precisely "the genesis of an 'unknown body' which we have in back of our heads, like the unthought in thought" (C2 201), a body which would be capable of restoring the broken sensory-motor unity with the world. The force of the (experimental) cinema invented by Deleuze is thus essentially redemptive, as it opens up for the viewer an impersonal dimension of life and promises to overcome the modern state of alienation.

Deleuze's cinematic ascendance towards the pure virtual might seem to culminate in the affirmation of nothingness in film. Yet, as the last chapter of *Cinema 2* clearly demonstrates, the "pure and empty screen" as the cinematic equivalent of the third disjunctive synthesis of time is only a precondition for the affirmation or, rather, actualization of pure difference based on nothing but itself. In his discussion of multiple film components, Deleuze promotes "a new Analytic of the image" (C2 245) in which all the heterogeneous dimensions, such as visual, audial, speech-act, reading, music, color, setting, etc., would freely communicate with each other beyond their totalization into a whole under control of a certain aesthetic paradigm or ideology. By referring to films by Robbe-Grillet, Straub and Duras, he argues that the visual and the sound should become "two heautonomous images, an auditory image and an optical image, continually separated, dissociated, or unhooked by irrational cuts between them" (C2 252) and thus constitute an "autonomy of the visual and sound components for one and the same audio-visual image" (C2 257). In this respect, Deleuze places his ideal cinema born out of the audiovisual "heautonomy" (a term he borrows from Kant's *Critique of Judgment* to designate the autonomy of each film component based on its own nature rather than externally imposed) in diametric opposition to Eisenstein's ideal of audiovisual totality most vividly represented in his *Alexander Nevsky* (1938). Each component of the film image should autonomously manifest its own difference and thus fully actualize the transcendental exercise of the faculties where the visual is audible and legible and the audible is

visible, that is, where all faculties are "moving towards a limit which no longer belongs to them" (C2 248); yet "it is the limit of each which connects [them] to the other" (C2 261). Such heterogeneity or "asynchrony" (C2 250) of cinematic orders is, for Deleuze, essentially pedagogical "because we have to read the visual as well as hear the speech-act in a new way" (C2 247) and the "new regime of the image is constructed on this pedagogical base" (C2 248).

This analytic is undoubtedly derived from the Kantian model of the sublime which proposes the discordant accord of the faculties beyond the legislative primacy of understanding. And it also resonates with the Nietzschean doctrine of the eternal return that enacts a disjunctive synthesis of all heterogeneous series. With his celebratory affirmation of the audiovisual disjunction as an imperative criterion for cinematic thought, Deleuze finally reaches the destination point of his philosophical narrative laid out in *Difference and Repetition*. In the following chapters I will demonstrate how this dynamic manifests itself in the context of Russian cinema.

Chapter 2: The Crisis of the Soviet Action-Image

2.1. Introduction

Early Russian Cinema represented by such avant-garde filmmakers as Dziga Vertov, Sergei

Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin and Alexander Dovzhenko is frequently invoked in Deleuze's

Cinema 1 to exemplify the key components of the movement-image, such as the molecular or

gaseous perception, the dialectical montage, the action-oriented narrative and its complicity with a

dominant ideological regime. Yet in his second *Cinema* volume references to Russian cinema

almost disappear and predominantly European and American modern films serve to illustrate the

emergence of the time-image. Does it mean that there is no time-image in Russian film? Deleuze

does mention Tarkovsky's theory of the "pressure of time" in the shot (C2 42-3) as well as his

crystal images in *Solaris*, *Mirror* and *Stalker* (C2 75). Yet in Deleuze's narrative Tarkovsky's time-

images are smoothly integrated into the innovative developments of Western modern cinema (e.g.

Herzog, Resnais, Welles, etc.) independently of the historical context of the Soviet film industry.

Deleuze's omission of post-war Russian cinema in his *Cinema 2* is hardly an oversight, for this

national cinematic tradition governed by the repressive aesthetic of socialist realism, "which sought

to convince viewers of the virtues of the existing political order,"[52] is commonly categorized as a

"totalitarian cinema" along with other national cinema of the totalitarian state, such as" Fascist

Germany and Italy [and] Chinese cinema between 1949 and the mid-1980s."[53] The art cinema of

Mikhail Kalatozov, Andrei Tarkovsky, Sergei Paradzhanov, Larisa Shepit'ko and others could only

be considered as "peripheral" to the core totalitarian film production and is thus "conditional upon

the liberalism ... of national policies at the time,"[54] such as Khrushchev's (partial) denunciation of

Stalin's crimes and the cult of personality in 1956 as well as the Soviet Union's imperial ambition to

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[52] Stephen Crofts, "Reconceptualizing National Cinema/s" in Film and Nationalism, ed. Alan Williams, Rutgers
University Press, 2002, 25-52, 37.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

win awards at the international film festivals. Yet all the liberal tendencies were highly inconclusive and contradictory throughout the entire history of Soviet cinema fully subordinated to severe regulations of the state censorship until Michael Gorbachev's wholescale "restructuring" or *perestroika* of the Soviet political and economic system in the late 1980s. For Deleuze, the so-called "Soviet" time-image might therefore seem as a misnomer since the time-image is by definition opposed to any dominant ideology, whether it's Socialist, Nationalist or Capitalist. That is, the time-image characterized by the production of the new could flourish only in a purely non-dogmatic and essentially non-totalitarian context, i.e. in the context of political and artistic freedom. For example, whereas in Italian Neorealist films the birth of the time-image predicated on the character's passive encounter with "something intolerable and unbearable" (C2 18) is, according to Deleuze, documented as early as in the late 1940s (namely, in Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero* (1948)), in Soviet cinema such encounter that triggers the transcendental exercise of sensibility beyond the limits of everyday perception is fully represented only in Elem Klimov's war drama *Come and See* (1985), which is about a boy passively observing the horrors of the Nazi genocide in Belorussia, that is, at the year when Gorbachev came to power as well as Deleuze's *Cinéma II: L'image-temps* was already published.

The implicit dependence of the time-image on the political freedom enjoyed mostly by liberal democracies may therefore present a considerable challenge for a researcher intending to write about Soviet cinema in terms of Deleuze's philosophical aesthetics. Given that in *Cinema 2* it is necessarily *modern* cinema that made the time-image possible, beginning with the early 1930s, after the massacre of the montage school, the evolution of Soviet cinema was prescribed according to the guidelines of the socialist realist model "that was deeply anti-modern" and "anti-modernist,"[55] a hegemonic model which continued to dominate as the state aesthetic until the late 1980s.

[55] Mikhail Iampolski, "Russia: The Cinema of Anti-modernity and Backward Progress," in *Theorising National Cinema*, ed. by Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen, British Film Institute, 2006, 72-88, 82.

Furthermore, there is an undeniable anti-modern tendency even in Tarkovsky's films, as for Zizek, for example, who criticizes him for "cheap religious obscurantism,"[56] even though his work is "the clearest example of what Deleuze called the time-image replacing the movement-image."[57]

Nevertheless, the challenge that the *Cinema* books pose to an analysis of national cinemas of the totalitarian state could be at the same time a possibility for rethinking the traditional historiography of Soviet cinema beyond the chronological paradigm of the nation's political history. Since Soviet film industry was fully run and controlled by the state, in most historiographies of Russian film the evolution of cinematic style has been periodized according to the succession of the political leadership styles of the Communist rulers.[58] For example, the avant-garde film of 1920s is commonly associated with Russia's early post-revolutionary period characterized by the relative ideological freedom and optimism of Lenin's New Economic Politics, the films of socialist realism from the early 1930 to 1953 with Stalinism, the so-called Thaw cinema (or New Soviet Wave) with Khrushchev's liberal politics, psychological dramas of the 1970s and early 1980s with Brezhnev's conservative politics of "stagnation" and mild re-Stalinization, and Russian noir or *chernukha* films with Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost. In such periodization, the institutional and aesthetic forms of Soviet cinema seem, therefore, to mirror each other. It is commonplace to speak about totalitarian cinemas in terms of mass persuasion or legitimization of the political regime of a given state, yet for Deleuze the cinematic image is governed by its own internal logic. That is, it is always unstoppably striving away from and against the dogmatic image of thought towards its own deterritorialization and thus prepares its own way to thought. Even though the state censorship

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[56] Slavoj Žižek, "The Thing from Inner Space: On Tarkovsky," *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 4.3. (1999), 221-231, 228.

[57] Slavoj Žižek, "Dialectical Clarity versus the Misty Conceit of Paradox" in *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?* Ed. Slavoj Žižek, John Milbank, Creston Davis, MIT Press, 2011, 234-307, 243.

[58] See, for example, Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and the Soviet Film*, Princeton University Press, 1983; Neya Zorkaya, *The Illustrated History of the Soviet Cinema*, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1989; Marcel Martin, *Le cinéma soviétique: de Khrouchtchev à Gorbatchev, 1955-1992*, L'Age d'Homme, 1993; Peter Kenez, *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin*, I.B.Tauris, 2001; David C. Gillespie, *Russian Cinema*, Longman, 2003; Birgit Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2009.

vigilantly suppresses the visual unfolding of critical thought by keeping it in the rigid ideological straitjacket of the movement image, for Deleuze film images persistently dismantle the humanistic shackles of their pragmatic predestination by forming new unknown assemblages as if they were particles of matter obeying their own laws of interaction.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, in *Cinema 2* all images and signs are distributed along their genetic path towards the production of ideas. According to their progressive movement towards the virtual (or counter-actualization), each Deleuzian film image/concept on this ascending scale is one step away from the dogmatic image of thought as well as one step closer towards a new image of thought. This progression begins with the character's violent encounter with something intolerable that cannot be recognized as the perception-image, to which he or she would respond with action, but manifests itself *literally* as the imperceptible or insensible "thing in itself" (C2 20) represented by the pure optical-sound image that disrupts the sensory-motor link and transforms the agent of action into a seer. Such seers or visionaries, paralyzed and incapable of reacting to a shocking encounter, turn to their memories and thus form a recollection-image. Yet for Deleuze recollections are still too human and psychological. By means of flashbacks, the past is pulled back and reintegrated into the present and the subject's sensory-motor capacity restored within the determined milieu of the movement-image. To push the cinematic image away from the temporality of the present and spatially actualized movement, Deleuze reconnects affects and memories to dreams and hallucinations and thus lets the world itself take "responsibility for the movement that the subject can no longer or cannot make" (C2 59). But still, even though such movement is "virtual" and "depersonalizing" (ibid.), it nevertheless "becomes actual at the price of an expansion of the totality of space and of a stretching of time" (ibid.). Given that for Deleuze it is the virtual expansion of the totality of *time* rather than space that conditions the emergence of thought, he elaborates an image which is predicated on the indiscernibility of the present and the past. In such

"crystal" images, he argues, the character's memories are no longer assimilated into the present but form a circuit with it, "where the real and the imaginary, the actual and the virtual, chase after each other, exchange their roles and become indiscernible" (C2 127). By further detaching the virtual from its actualizations in consciousness, Deleuze's time-image expands into increasingly deeper layers or sheets of the past and thus makes all the dimensions of past and present coexist with each other in non-contradictory or "incompossible" manner. Whereas in the crystal-image the real (or present) becomes interchangeable with the imaginary (or past), what follows from "the simultaneity of incompossible presents" and "the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts" (C2 131) is that it is no longer possible to apply the criterion of truth to cinematic narration. The notion of truth dissolves in the totality of time, the "truthful man dies" (C2 131) or transforms into a forger, liar or traitor, and the narration itself becomes necessarily falsifying. The crisis of truth in the story resolved by the "power of the false," which expresses the diversity of all temporal dimensions within one universe, is the victory of the time-image over the dogmatic image of thought that relies exclusively on the present. Yet such victory is still insufficient for Deleuze, for his goal is the production of thought and ideas rather than the expression of multiple coexistent temporalities. In this regard, he shifts his emphasis from the relation or association between the images expressing diverse temporalities (i.e. conjunctive synthesis) to the cut or interstice between them (i.e. disjunctive synthesis). By prioritizing the cut between images over the image itself and celebrating its disjunctive power to compose unpredictable assemblages Deleuze triumphantly arrives at the final destination of his developmental narrative inscribed into the history of world cinema. His notion of the cut stands for the pure difference in itself and thus serves as the foundation of the thought-image as it introduces the differential relations between all components of the film image: not just in the visual image or in the sound image but also "between the sound image and the visual image" (C2 181). The "difference between what is seen and what is heard" (C2 180), that is the audiovisual disjunction

itself, becomes, therefore, the genetic condition for cinematic thinking which ultimately replaces the hegemony of the dogmatic image of thought.

How could the *story* of Deleuze's *Cinema 2* be related to the *history* of post-war Russian cinema? It wouldn't be too hard, of course, to single out and illustrate certain Deleuzean film concepts by a number of Soviet films "peripheral" to the core totalitarian production. Yet could such metaphysical scenario be reenacted on Russian soil in its full entirety and systematic coherence? What Deleuze proposes in his narrative is, essentially, a path for the liberation of any cinema from dogmatic clichés, a path which he traces in all kinds of art.. There is an immanent consistency in the Deleuzean successive progression from *sensibility* through *memory* to *thought*, a progression which never changes its order in any of his writings, whether it is presented in psychoanalytical, Kantian, Marxist or physical vocabularies. Given this, if Deleuze refers to Tarkovsky in the first half of *Cinema 2* to exemplify the transcendental exercise of *memory*, there should be then a preceding stage in Russian cinema which would stand for the transcendental exercise of *sensibility* as well. Similarly, if we trust Deleuze's evolutionary method of counter-actualization, Tarkovsky's crystal images should necessarily be followed by the Soviet or, rather, post-Soviet image of *thought*. Viewed from this perspective, Soviet films realigned along their gradual ascendance towards the virtual or a "line of flight" would thus constitute an *alternative* history of Russian cinema, which would be that of aesthetic resistance to and liberation from the state monopoly and its total ideologization of art. Furthermore, given that the historical study of film relies primarily on empirically verifiable findings rather than abstract metaphysical speculations, the phenomenon of the Soviet time-image equally presents an opportunity for Deleuzean film-philosophy to test its historical validity in such inhospitable cultural context as Soviet film industry predicated on the suppression of difference.

This study, therefore, provides a rereading and realignment of Russia's predominantly post-war cinema along the successive stages of the genesis of thought presented in Deleuze's *Cinema 2*. I will begin with the discussion of the specificity of the movement-image in Soviet cinema and then closely examine the crisis of the Soviet action-image which *did* take place in the late 1950-1960s. Although it didn't quite have a chance to develop into a fully-fledged time-image beyond the limits of the movement-image thanks to the brutal interruption by the state censorship in the late 1960s, it has resulted in a number of hybrid images which creatively combine the elements of both movement- and time-images. Tarkovsky, to whom is dedicated my third chapter, is a rare exception among Soviet filmmakers who has succeeded in producing a time-image considered to be one of the most flawless in world cinema. Tarkovsky was well aware about his exceptional status in the Soviet film industry and he consciously cultivated and exploited his self-image of a suffering and persecuted artist. As Solomon Volkov comments, "Tarkovsky was… adept at creating his own legend. When he began a diary in 1970, he called it Martyrology, that is, a list of sufferings and persecutions."[59] For Volkov, Tarkovsky's "sufferings" seem somewhat exaggerated since no one in the West, he argues, would have financed his highly artistic films. Nevertheless, the fact that over twenty years of his work in Russia Tarkovsky had managed to make only five features before he immigrated in 1982 in order to complete his last two does testify to the extreme hostility of the Soviet cultural and political environment towards the time-image. I will conclude my study with the detailed analysis of Alexander Sokurov's cinema which represents the (post-) Soviet version of Deleuzean thought-image.

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[59] Solomon Volkov, *The Magical Chorus: A History of Russian Culture from Tolstoy to Solzhenitsyn*, Random House LLC, 2009, 236.

2.2. Socialist Realism and the Soviet Movement-Image

From the Avant-garde Montage to Socialist Realist Narrative

Before we proceed toward a "beyond" of the Soviet movement-image, it is necessary first to outline the basic tenets of its ideological and aesthetic set-up derived from the doctrine of socialist realism. The rise of socialist realism in the early 1930 is commonly tied with the decline of the "Golden Age" of Russian cinema, namely its avant-garde period in 1920s: the former is seen as a negative reaction to the latter. Whereas the representatives of the Soviet montage school focused on the formal aspects of film language as an independent art form, distinct from theater and literature and devoid of psychological content, the advocates of socialist realism, on the contrary, emphasized the priority of content over form and thus equated film language with literary narration. From the point of view of socialist realism, the avant-garde formalist films seemed far too experimental, anti-naturalistic and elitist. Although the ideological basis of the montage school as Marxist dialectics was acceptable for the Communist officials, the actual realization of the dialectical method in film editing, which resulted in the explosive juxtapositions of conflicting images, rhythms, tones, associations, and meanings, was disqualified as overly complicated and hardly intelligible for the mass audience, which strongly undermined the primary service of cinema as a propaganda weapon. Given that in the late 1920s only foreign "bourgeois" comedies and thrillers gained popularity in Soviet Russia, there was an urgent need for commercially successful propaganda films. As the first Soviet Commissar of Education Anatoly Lunacharsky argued in his 1928 speech addressed to Soviet film workers, the Socialist "film production must stimulate the public appetite," because "boring agitation is a counter-agitation." Therefore, "the picture [must be] both artistic and ideologically consistent and [contain] romantic experiences and experiences of an intimate and psychological

character."[60] In Soviet cinema of the 1930s the emphasis was thus shifted from the revolutionary

form, which was "unintelligible to the millions,"[61] to the revolutionary content or scripts directly

supervised by the state censorship. Just as market-based New Economic Politics was replaced by the

central planning in 1928, in 1930 all the autonomous film studios and distribution networks were

centralized into the new bureaucratic entity *Soyuzkino* with Boris Shumyatsky as its head, who was

neither an actor nor a director but an old Bolshevik, a committed Party activist and, most

importantly, the chief proponent of the doctrine of socialist realism.

For Shumyatsky, the formalist trend in the avant-garde film was "objectively hostile to

Soviet art."[62] As he writes in his book, "the overvaluation of montage represents the primacy of

form over content, the isolation of aesthetics from politics."[63] Whereas in the films of Eisenstein or

Vertov the idea was created out of the collision of various images, for Shumyatsky it is the plot that

must be "the basic condition for the expression of ideas, of their direction, as the condition for their

mass character, i.e. of the audience's interest in them."[64] "That is why," he argues, "we are obliged

to require our masters to produce works that have strong plots and are organised around a story-

line."[65] Shumyatsky's attack on montage was therefore paralleled with his launching "the battle for

high-quality scripts"[66] as well as "the battle for new genres," such as drama, comedy and even fairy

tale, genres "infused with optimism… mobilizing emotions… cheerfulness, joie-de-vivre and

laughter."[67] Among the films that he proposed as the models to follow were Iutkevich and Elmer's

The Counterplan (1932), an industrial drama celebrating factory workers, Barnet's *The Outskirts*

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[60] Anatoly Lunacharsky, "Anatoly Lunacharsky: Speech to Film Workers," in *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents,* 1896-1939, eds. Richard Taylor, Ian Christie, Routledge, 1994, 195-198, 197.

[61] Richard Taylor, "Ideology as Mass Entertainment: Boris Shumyatsky and Soviet Cinema in the 1930s," in *Inside the Film Factory: New Approaches to Russian and Soviet Cinema*, eds. Ian Christie, Professor Richard Taylor, Richard Taylor, Routledge, 1991, 193-217, 207.

[62] Ibid., 201.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 203.

[65] Ibid., 204.

[66] Ibid., 203.

[67] Ibid., 208.

(1933), a war film developing the theme of defense, and, of course, the Vasilyev brothers' *Chapaev* (1934), the first Soviet blockbuster on the Civil war hero. All these features shared a similar linear action-driven plot portraying the protagonist's evolution from the state of individualist spontaneity to that of revolutionary commitment and responsibility, that is, the *Bildungsroman* narrative which Katerina Clark terms as the "master plot" of socialist realism.[68] Judging by these films, we may see that Shumyatsky's emphasis on entertainment as one of the main criteria for the new Stalinist cinema is inseparable from its ideological message for the audience. As he defines it in one of his reports, "By the entertainment value of film we mean the considerable emotional effect it exerts and the simple artistry that rapidly and easily communicates its ideological content and its plot to the mass audience."[69] As Turovskaya points out, those films in which "entertainment value... had been divorced from ideological content and become an aim in itself" were criticized for "sabotage" and taken out of circulation (e.g. Yuri Zhelyabuzhsky's *Prosperity* (1933) and Lev Kuleshov's *Gorizont* (1933)).[70]

The doctrine of socialist realism originally derives from literary debates at the time. It was first defined –and officially endorsed in all spheres of art - by Stalin's representative Andrei Zhdanov at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. As the basic method of Soviet literature, socialist realism consists in

> knowing life so as to be able to depict it truthfully in works of art, not to depict it… as "objective reality," but to depict reality in its revolutionary development. In addition to this, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic portrayal should be combined with the ideological remolding and education of the toiling people in the spirit of socialism.[71]

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[68] Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, Indiana University Press, 2000, 255-261.

[69] Quoted from Maya Turovskaya, "The 1930s and 1940s: Cinema in Context" in *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*, eds. Derek Spring, Richard Taylor, Routledge, 2013, 34-54, 45.

[70] Ibid., 44.

[71] Andrei Zhdanov, "Speech to the Soviet Writers' Congress(1934)" in *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934: the Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism in the Soviet Union*, eds. Maksim Gorky, H. G. Scott, Lawrence and Wishart, 1977, 15-26, 20-21.

Socialist realism is, therefore, not interested in depicting an "objective reality." It represents it in its "revolutionary development" towards its ideal in socialism or, rather, communism. In other words, it is "the realism of the dream" or "utopian naturalism."[72] Among other characteristics pertaining to this method critics usually refer to "faithfulness to typical characters," "revolutionary romanticism" and adherence to "Party spirit" and "national spirit." Socialist realism partially relies on the achievements of the traditional realism of the ninetieth-century literature ideologically framed in the context of its own utopian teleology. Yet the classical Russian literature, famous for its deep reflexive psychologism and populated by the so-called "superfluous men" (e.g. Onegin, Pechorin, Rudin, Oblomov, etc.) torn by spiritual longings and melancholically withdrawn from social activity, could hardly provide the Communist officials with the exemplary protagonists in their "revolutionary development." Just as Maxim Gorky's *Mother* (1906), a novel portraying the ideological growth of a mother following the revolutionary cause of her son, was canonized as the first work of socialist realism, Pudovkin's adaptation of it was similarly heralded as the prototypical socialist realist film. As one of his biographers remarked, "The Soviet feature film usually begins its genealogy precisely with *Mother*."[73] Unlike Eisenstein's early "plotless" cinema focused on the oppressed multitudes rather than individual psychological conversions and relying mainly on the formal aspects of cinematic expression, such as the dialectical arrangement of contrasting shots and metaphoric associations, Pudovkin's *Mother* (1926), along with *The End of St. Petersburg* (1927) and *Storm Over Asia* (1928) comprising a "revolutionary trilogy," foregrounds the actor at the center of the film and thus subordinates the formalist achievements of montage composition to the representation of the character's ideological evolution through the setting and a series of actions. As Deleuze comments, "Pudovkin is clearly mainly interested in the progression of consciousness, in

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[72] Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialist Realism" in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature,* eds. Evgeny Dobrenko, Marina Balina Cambridge University Press, 2011, 97-115, 108.

[73] Quoted from Evgeny Dobrenko, *Stalinist Cinema and the Production of History: Museum of the Revolution*, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, 176.

the qualitative leaps of a dawn of consciousness… Nature is there, in its splendour and theatricality -

the Neva carrying along its ice-floes, the Mongolian plains - but as the linear thrust which subtends

the moments of dawning consciousness; that of the mother, the peasant, or the Mongol" (C1 38).

As Turovskaya observes, "the advent and adaptation of sound" made the shift "from the

avant-garde of the 'roaring twenties' toward a stabilizing form of consciousness" "particularly

inevitable and pronounced in cinema."[74] As one of the first sound films, the Vasilyev brothers'

Chapaev (1934), in this regard, is widely considered to have provided the model for the socialist

realist action hero who is relatable and down to earth and firmly committed to the revolutionary

cause. The historical Vasily Chapaev was especially suitable for this role. As a man of peasant

background and rebellious character, he is portrayed to be instinctively attuned to the Communist

idea and on the right track of becoming a disciplined Bolshevik under the guidance of the Party's

representative Furmanov. A similar kind of a "positive hero" was offered by Kozintsev and

Trauberg's *The Maxim Trilogy* (1935-39)) that follows the political transformation of a young

careless lad into a stern commissar and thus provides a "perfect Socialist Realist narrative."[75] As the

founders of the avant-garde group FEKS in the 1920s (the Factory of the Eccentric Actor),

Kozintsev and Trauberg had never paid attention to the linearity of plot and the nuances of

individual psychology in their earlier experimental films (e.g. *Overcoat* (1926), *New Babylon*

(1929)) by emphasizing circus-like physical expressivity, artificial *mise-en-scène*, blurry images and

swift camera movements. Yet in their search for an ideal Soviet protagonist for the trilogy, both

directors carefully studied the memoirs of old revolutionaries just as the lead actor Boris Chirkov

met with the actual Bolsheviks who had lived and worked through 1910-1918 period in Saint

Petersburg. As a result of their synthesis of the FEKS theatrical grotesquery and historical and

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[74] Quoted from David Gillespie, *Early Soviet Cinema: Innovation, Ideology and Propaganda*, Wallflower Press, 2000, 96, emphasis added.
[75] Birgit Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema*, 97.

psychological realism, the directors molded a cult hero whose "jolly, hardy, resilient, stubborn, hopeful"[76] character was no typical but highly original.

From Socialist Realist **Bildungsroman** *to Historical Monumentalism*

Yet the emphasis on the protagonist's ideological maturation under the tutelage of a more experienced Bolshevik pertains mostly to the early period of Stalinist cinema thematically arranged around Russia's pre-revolutionary and Civic war history. By the late 1930s, the issues of class struggle and the hero's acquisition of revolutionary consciousness seemed no longer topical for the Soviet empire triumphantly growing through industrialization and militarization and isolating all politically suspect citizens in the gulag camps. Beginning with Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), the *bildungsroman* narrative was superseded by the historical epic drama which foregrounded the monolithic hero defending Russia against foreign invaders (e.g. Germans, Poles, Turks, French, etc.). In such films as Petrov's *Peter the Great* (1937-38) and *Kutuzov* (1943), Pudovkin and Doller's *Minin and Pozharsky* (1939) and *Suvorov* (1941), Savchenko's *Bogdan Khmelnitskiy* (1941), Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* (1944-47), Pudovkin's *Admiral Nakhimov* (1947) and Romm's *Admiral Ushakov* (1953), the values of nationalism and heroic patriotism are glorified in the context of Russia's historical past where the authoritarian commander-leader mobilizes the people's masses to fight for the motherland. Paradoxically enough, such historical biopics are neither historical nor biographical *per se*. As the highest achievement of cinematic propaganda, they project the *current* issues of Soviet geopolitics onto the history of Russia's previous wars just as the figure of epic hero is no more than an ideological function referring to Stalin himself. Neither historically accurate nor psychologically complex, such narratives "became

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[76] Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and the Soviet Film*, 321.

the sole forum for the visualisation of the geopolitical fantasies and phobias of Stalinism."[77] As

Evgeny Dobrenko elaborates,

> The history of the Soviet biographical film is the story of the non-meeting of film with biography. In Eisenstein's film, Alexander Nevsky is not so much an individual as a pure function of geopolitical myth, personified in the semi-fairytale prince of the thirteenth century. In *Minin and Pozharsky* and *Bogdan Khmelnitsky*, the characters are also functions of historical myth, but they are depersonalised functions. They are more like moving monuments, 'speaking statues'.[78]

> The historical figure, behind which the virtual mythological hero of Alexander Nevsky shone out, turned out to be a 'walking and talking monument'… *Alexander Nevsky* is a conscious anti-*Chapaev*; if Chapaev is characterised by energy, humour, spontaneity, irascibility, passion, dynamism, then Eisenstein's prince is severe, static, reserved, distanced from those surrounding him, monumental.[79]

The character's eventual freezing into a de-psychologized rhetorical function of the regime and

becoming a "walking and talking monument" could be perceived as the logical climax of the

development of socialist realism in Soviet film. Dobrenko goes as far as to argue for the *literal*

monumentality of the Stalinist one-dimensional action heroes whose roles were modeled after the

actual monuments erected in Soviet cities. Furthermore, actors playing "monuments" on screen were

themselves later monumentalized in real life. For example, the Order of Alexander Nevsky, a

military award established in 1942, used the profile of Nikolai Cherkasov, the lead actor from

Eisenstein's film, since "no contemporary portrait of the epic leader existed."[80] The same could be

said about Stolper's war drama *A Story of a Real Man* (1948) based on Boris Polevoi's pseudo-

biography of the fighter pilot Aleksey Maresyev who lost both of his legs in combat against the

Germans in 1942 yet managed to return to flying by using his prosthetic devices. By dramatizing the

protagonist's enormous willpower and determination to master his handicapped condition, the film

celebrates his wholehearted commitment to serve the state to the very end and emphatically

reiterates his self-encouragement as a refrain that he is a *Soviet* airman. For such an inhuman

heroism and fortitude, Maresyev was quickly canonized as the "real man" of socialist realism not

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[77] Evgeny Dobrenko, *Stalinist Cinema and the Production of History*, 66.
[78] Ibid., 66.
[79] Ibid., 78.
[80] Ibid., 69.

only in literature and film, but also in Sergei Prokofiev's opera. The monument to the hero was eventually erected in his town in Kamyshin in 2007.

Socialist Realist Action-Image: Large and Small Forms

How can socialist realist cinema be described in Deleuzian terms? Deleuze discusses the notion of realism as the dominant mode of expression of the action-image. He admits that there are various kinds of realism and that "it does *not* exclude fiction or even the dream. It can include the fantastic, the extraordinary, the heroic and above all melodrama" (C1 141). Yet the structure of any realist action-image is always the same. As he writes, "What constitutes realism is simply this: milieux and modes of behaviour, milieux which actualise and modes of behaviour which embody. The action-image is the relation between the two and all the varieties of this relation" (ibid.). By "milieu" Deleuze designates a setting or a situation in which the character's actions unfold. "Modes of behavior" refer to the character's reaction or capacity to react to a given situation. A realist film is therefore defined by various circuits between situations and actions, where situations produce new actions just as actions new situations. If a milieu presents a character with a challenging situation which s/he should overcome and set up a new situation, then we deal with "the large form" of the action-image. In this form (S-A-S'), the character's advancement toward a new modified situation usually lies though an action or a "duel of forces," which could be a "duel with the milieu, with the others, with itself" (C1 142). As Deleuze points out, "the path from the milieu to the final duel is a long one… because the hero is not immediately ripe for action" (C1 154). In order for the character's action to take place, "the situation must permeate the character deeply and continuously" and "the character who is thus permeated must burst into action" (C1 155). The deeper the character is absorbed into the milieu, the more explosive his/her subsequent acting-out becomes. To accomplish the required action the hero often relies on "the necessary support of a community" or "people," as it is the case with the historical film.

The "small form" of the action-image (A-S-A') reverses the relation between situation and action: it consists in a series of fragmented actions and gaps in the narrative, where a situation is not given for itself but must be deduced from actions. Whereas the purpose of "the large form" is to engender an action adequate to the milieu, in "the small form," on contrary, actions produce situations "which are logically very distant" (C1 167) or "opposable" (C1 166). In the former the hero's rise to the demands of the global situation is driven by a grand illusion of reality (e.g. American dream), while in the latter most heroes are "losers" who "have not a single illusion left" (C1 168) since they no longer control the course of events and thus "represent disinterested adventure, from which no advantage is to be gained except the pure satisfaction of remaining alive" (ibid.).

Deleuze ostensibly favors "the small form" over the large one of the action-image since in the former the sensory-motor link is looser and the protagonist is less subordinated to the imperatives of the milieu, which creates "the possibility of a 'creative interpretation of reality'" (C1 164), as it is evident in the detective film that begins with mysterious actions and then traces the clues to decipher the situation from them. In "the large form," on the contrary, the action is predicated on the character's becoming one with the milieu and his/her representing the entire community in the battle with "evil." Deleuze exemplifies the ideological foundation of "the large form" by Elia Kazan's films "in which the American Dream and the action-image grow tougher together" (C1 157). It is equally present in the historical genre of American cinema which "constantly shoots and reshoots a single fundamental film, which is the birth of a nation-civilisation" (C1 147). In this regard, Deleuze argues, such American films have "in common with the Soviet cinema the belief in a finality of universal history; here the blossoming of the American nation, there the advent of the proletariat" (ibid.).

Although Deleuze does contrast Eisenstein's *dialectical* engagement with the "monumental history film" (C1 149) in *Old and New* (1929) with Griffith's *parallel* or analogical representation of independent historical periods in *Intolerance* (1916), we may still argue that both Hollywood and later Stalinist historical films promote the same "monumental" conception of history within "the large form" of the action-image, a conception which Deleuze borrows from Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations*. According to Nietzsche, monumental history is that of the great human achievements in the past, a chain that "unites mankind across millennia like a range of human mountain peaks."[81] This type of history is never concerned with "absolute veracity" but deals instead in "approximations and generalities, in making what is dissimilar look similar;" it diminishes "the differences of motives and instigations so as to exhibit the *effectus* monumentally, that is to say as something exemplary and worthy of imitation, at the expense of the *causae*."[82] As discussed above, all "monumental" and semi-mythological heroes of Stalinist historical cinema serve to legitimize the continuity between Russia's imperial past and the current dictatorial politics of the Soviet Union. To use another Deleuzian concept, such cinema can be described as "majoritarian," as it addresses or interpellates the people of the nation as the subject of historical progress.

How is "the small form" of the action-image manifest itself in socialist realist cinema? Given that such form, according to Deleuze, "gives rise to a comedy" (C1 160) exemplified by Chaplin's films, we may look for its presence in Ivan Pyriev's so-called *kolkhoz* musical comedies usually characterized by their "conflictlessness." Yet their "conflictless" plots should not be confused with the ultimate lack of antagonistic tension as they still preserve it in a melodramatic form. As the exemplary achievements of the late Stalinist art celebrating the hermetic stillness of the Communist utopia, such comedies reduce the conflict between "macrocosmic forces such as class conflict and

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[81] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, 68.
[82] Ibid., 70.

war" to "microcosmic personal rivalries expressed in differing personal labor contributions,"[83]which is essentially "the competition between good and better."[84] In *The Cossacks of the Kuban* (1949), for example, such rivalry is represented by the labor contest between the two collective farms, *Red Partisan* and *The Testament of Ilyich*, both chairpersons of which, Gordey and Galina, get married in the end. The Stalinist *kolkhoz* musical, therefore, still deploys "the large form" of the action-image yet subjects it to the comedy genre.

It appears that "the small form" of the action-image could fully manifest itself only in the early period of socialist realist cinema following the hero's ideological growth discussed above. In the early films by Pudovkin, Barnet, Trauberg and Kozintsev, the *bildungsroman* narrative allows their heroes to take a critical distance toward their social environment (i.e. tsarist, pre-revolutionary Russia) and thus enjoy a considerable independence from the milieu, which makes them distrust and question the actions executed upon them as well as search for understanding various situations they get into. At the end of their odyssey of political awakening, all the characters of such films uniformly end up being firmly committed to the revolutionary cause. For example, in Pudovkin's *Mother* the heroine dies carrying a red flag, which is a "sign for her now revolutionary consciousness."[85] In *Storm over Asia*, the Mongol herdsman becomes the leader of local people rising against colonial oppressors. In Barnet's *Outskirts*, all the characters celebrate the storming of the Winter Palace by happily walking in a march. In the end of *The Youth of Maxim* (1935), the protagonist joins a Bolshevik underground group. Yet before they finally adopt a unified form of consciousness at the teleologically predetermined stage of their journeys, they randomly travel across multiple fragmented spaces (e.g. factory, prison, ghetto barracks, city streets, war trenches,

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[83] Richard Taylor, "But Eastward, Look, the Land is Brighter": Toward a Topography of Utopia in the Stalinist Musical" in *The Landscape of Stalinism: the Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, eds. by Evgeny Dobrenko, Eric Naiman, 201-211.
[84] J. Hoberman, *The Red Atlantis: Communist Culture in the Absence of Communism*, Temple University Press, 2000, 160.
[85] Karla Oeler, *A Grammar of Murder: Violent Scenes and Film Form*, University of Chicago Press, 2009, 89.

etc.), to which they persistently contest their belonging. Deleuze defines such discontinuous spaces

of "the small form" as a "skeleton-space" or "vector-space" composed "with missing intermediaries,

heterogeneous elements which jump from one to the other, or which interconnect directly" (C1 168).

Such spaces are no longer the totalizing milieus of "the large form" that fully subordinate the

character's activity to some grandiose goal, but neither are they completely dispersed and

dehumanized "any-spaces-whatever" of the time-image. The fragments of "the small form" space

with "temporal distances" (ibid.) are still assembled together into a unified whole by a "broken" or

zigzag line ("a line of the universe, across the holes" (ibid.)) which, in the Soviet case, forms the

predictable path of the character's evolution of consciousness. As Deleuze comments on Pudovkin's

early films,

> however great the milieu presented, St Petersburg or the Mongolian plains, whatever the grandeur of the
> revolutionary action to be achieved, we move from a scene where modes of behaviour disclose an aspect of the
> situation, to another scene, each one marking a determined moment of consciousness, and connecting up with
> the others to form the progression of a consciousness which becomes equal to the whole [*ensemble*] of the
> disclosed situation…
>
> [W]hat all his films show us are the moments and discontinuous leaps of a dawn of consciousness, in so far as
> they assume a continuous linear development and a progression in time, but also react upon them. This is a
> small form - ASA' - with indices and vectors, a skeleton, but full of dialectics: the broken line has ceased to be
> unpredictable, and becomes the political and revolutionary 'line' (C1 179-180).

It should, therefore, be understandable why "the small form" of the early socialist realist action-

image became redundant and obsolete by the late 1930s and was eventually replaced by its "large

form," "a constraint imposed by Stalin" (C1 179). The fully functioning Stalinist machinery of terror

and repression no longer needed characters in their "revolutionary development," it demanded a

soldier, i.e. an epic hero to be derived from Russia's "glorious" past or folklore. The rising

hegemony of "the large form" is already evident in most *bildungsroman* narratives of the late 1930s

and early 1940s. For example, in *The Vyborg Side* (1939), the final part of *Maxim Trilogy*, the

protagonist is already a fully formed Communist appointed to defend the national bank against

counter-revolutionary saboteurs. In Kalatozov's *Valery Chkalov* (1941), only the first half of the

film is dedicated to the pilot's political evolution, while its second is fully focused on his service in

delivering Stalin's orders. Even in Donskoi's *How the Steel Was Tempered* (1942), an adaptation of Nikolai Ostrovsky's *bildungsroman* classic, Korchagin's adventures are overshadowed by the deliberately extended representation of the German occupation of the Ukraine in 1918, which takes up only a few pages in the novel. In all these genealogically *bildungsroman* films, "the large form" of the hero's confrontation with the milieu already prevails over "the small form" implying the hero's relative independence from it.

The transition of Soviet cinema from the avant-garde experimental montage, which brings together heterogeneous fragments with no protagonist at all (as in Vertov) or, at least, with the "mass protagonist" involved (as in Eisenstein), through the socialist realist *bildungsroman* narratives focused on the individual psychology to the Stalinist monumental classicism that foregrounds an epic hero as a depersonalized function of the regime is analogous to Deleuze's account of the integration of the first passive synthesis of the present, based on the mind's unconscious contraction of independent instants into habitual patterns, into the active syntheses of memory and understanding governed by the model of recognition. In both centripetal processes, the movement of consciousness proceeds from chaos and the radical immersion into discontinuous matter to homogeneity and stability. Just as "the large form" of the action-image serves the demands of a given ideology, the active syntheses of consciousness, which assimilate difference into identity and representation, provide the foundation for the dogmatic image of thought. The socialist realist action-image represents, therefore, the Soviet image of thought that reached its apex in late Stalinism (1945-1953) when the total film production dropped to about ten features per year,[86] a period of decline which Russian film historians usually describe as the "film famine."

Eisenstein's* Ivan the Terrible *and the Crisis of the Soviet Action-Image

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[86] Steven P. Hill, "A Quantitative View of Soviet Cinema," *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 11.2. (1972), 18-25.

How could the socialist realist movement-image be dislodged from its hegemonic status and eventually turned toward deeper dimensions of time produced by the passive syntheses of the unconscious? For Deleuze, the crisis of the action-image is triggered by the post-war ideological crisis, that is, by the crisis of the dogmatic image of thought. In the context of Soviet society, such crisis is commonly associated with Nikita Khrushchev's so-called "secret speech" at the Communist Party's Twentieth Congress in 1956 where he denounced Stalin for repressions. Yet purely cinematic attempts to deterritorialize the Stalinist monumentalism of the action-image were already taken in Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*, Part II (1946), which was shelved until 1958. As a historical biopic commissioned directly by Stalin, it was supposed to praise Ivan's consolidation of state power and his correct reign of terror and thereby legitimize the necessity of the same tendencies in the Soviet regime. Whereas the first part of the film fully met the expectations of the Communist censors by portraying the tsar as a progressive reformer and a conqueror of the Kazan Khanate, its second part significantly humanizes and deheroizes the protagonist by subversively exceeding the genre limits mandated by the State authority. As John Haynes comments, "the figure of Ivan makes a radical departure from earlier positive heroes of socialist realism: rather than ignoring the tension in his psyche, both he, and the film itself, tackle it head on;" "for the first time in Stalinist cinema, we are presented with a genuinely self-reflexive male hero."[87] The subversive effect of Ivan's self-doubt and hesitation in his purges of internal enemies by means of the *oprichniki*, grotesquely represented as a band of diabolical assassins in their nightly drinking feast compared by Lavrentiy Beria to a "witches' sabbath,"[88] was mainly in Eisenstein's smuggling the focus on the character's individual personality into the epic genre usually populated by "talking monuments," i.e. into the genre in which psychological nuances were least expected. As Dobrenko aptly points out,

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[87] John Haynes, *New Soviet Man: Gender and Masculinity in Stalinist Soviet Cinema*, Manchester University Press, 2003, 173.

[88] David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War*, Oxford University Press, 2003, 122.

"Eisenstein blew up from within the supergenre of Soviet cinema."[89] Instead of justifying Ivan's

autocracy, the film persistently exposes its internal contradictions, one of which is the growing

isolation of the tsar from his people as the result of his absolute power. Paradoxically enough, in

Ivan the Terrible the role of the people wholeheartedly devoted to their ruler is ironically displaced

to those who systematically exterminate Russian people, i.e. the *oprichniki*, the secret police guard

that protected Ivan. Furthermore, the Ivan's solitude and alienation, dramatized in his "internal

monologues," is emphasized through a series of personal losses in his battle for the power: first he

loses his mother, then his wife and two best friends, Prince Andrei Kurbsky and Fyodor Kolychev.

In the end, Ivan is forced to orchestrate the assassination of his own cousin Vladimir (who dies in

the film yet survived in reality). Needless to say, in 1946 the Party bureaucrats did not dare to relate

Eisenstein's "tragedy of power"[90] to the Soviet present.

In his brief discussion of *Ivan*, Deleuze mistakenly underestimates the political input of

Eisenstein's revision of the Soviet tradition of historical monumentalism. For Deleuze, Eisenstein's

film is no more than an example of the aberrant "large form" of the action-image in which the gap

between the milieu and the hero is continuously expanded throughout the length of the film

"because the hero is not immediately ripe for action; like Hamlet, the action to be undertaken is too

great for him" (C1 154). This gap, however, exists only to be bridged in the final duel in which the

hero's "grandeur and… power must be actualised" (ibid.). "Even in Eisenstein," Deleuze continues,

> what Soviet critics did not appreciate was the Hamletian character of *Ivan the Terrible*: the two great moments
> of doubt through which he passes, like two caesuras of the film; and also his aristocratic nature which means
> that the people cannot serve as the fundamental group for him, but only as a makeshift group which he uses as a
> tool. In general the hero must pass through moments of impotence, internal or external.

For Deleuze, Ivan's impotence and self-reflexive indecisiveness are necessarily temporary as they

are indeed overcome by his final duel with the *boyars* in which Vladimir gets killed. That is, his

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[89] Evgeny Dobrenko, *Stalinist Cinema and the Production of History*, 54.
[90] Evgeny Dobrenko, *Stalinist Cinema and the Production of History*, 50.

sensory-motor link with the milieu is loosened only to be strengthened ever more tightly in the end.

Yet Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* should be conceived as a trilogy, in which Part One won a Stalin

Prize, Part Two was banned and Part Three left unfinished. Judging by the director's notes and

sketches, Eisenstein scholars suggest the representation of movement in each part was designed as a

"biomechanical" *regression* of mobility from the stage of heroic activity through that of suspension

to that of uncoordinated motions and utter immobility. As Eisenstein outlines a "motor

malfunction" which gradually overtakes Ivan as the film moves from the first part to the last:

> In the first episode, Ivan's movements and changes of mood are remarkably *brisk*… In the second one they become *syncopic*… All the mobility and elan… of the first episode is reduced here to the movement of the eyes… During the 'Last Judgment' [the scene of his confession before a huge fresco] Ivan moves as an unstrung marionette – a parody of his own self of the first episode… *After* the 'Last Judgment': Ivan the *Stony*.[91]

In Part Three, Ivan's willful annihilation of the world gains its momentum leaving him ultimately

alone with himself and his devastated country devoid of all life. In Eisenstein's drawing entitled

"Alone?" for the final scene depicting Ivan walking toward the sea with the battle smoke raising

behind him, "he is the only thing left of the Great Russian State"[92] because "the people are all dead

or hiding,"[93] which represents "the climax of his self-destruction and the deepest point of his

loneliness."[94] That is to say, in the last part of the trilogy, the hero's internal link with the milieu is

broken because the entire milieu is obliterated, which in turn immobilizes Ivan himself. The

potential crisis of the Soviet action-image could therefore be traced back to 1946, when the rupture

of the sensory-motor whole was envisioned yet brutally suppressed by the Soviet censors, which

caused Eisenstein a heart attack of which he died in 1948.

Decoupling Socialism from Realism

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[91] Yuri Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible*, British Film Institute, 2002, 26-7.
[92] Joan Neuberger, *Ivan the Terrible: The Film Companion*, I.B.Tauris, 2003, 65.
[93] Ibid., 69.
[94] Yuri Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible*, 28.

As an artificial and fragile conjunction of realism and illusion imposed by the state, the method of socialist realism was doomed to exhaust itself sooner or later. According to Brandon Taylor, the socialist realist synthesis of a mimetic representation of reality with the Communist utopia constitutes "not only the kernel of the method's success but the virus that caused its later degeneration and sorry decline."[95] For Andrei Sinyavsky, for example, "the very term "socialist realism" contains an insoluble contradiction" since socialist utopian art cannot be expressed by means of such outdated mode of representation as mimetic realism, just as "a really faithful representation of life cannot be achieved in a language based on teleological concepts."[96] To create a genuine socialist art, he argues, one would need to abandon realism altogether. In its present state socialist realism is no more than a "half-art, which is none too socialist and is not realist at all."[97]

A similar description of the paradoxical nature of socialist realism is provided by Evgeny Dobrenko:

> 'Socialist Realism' is an oxymoron. Socialism is a goal, an aspiration, a hope. Romanticism would much more answer the needs of socialism, in a way that realism simply could not. Life can be depicted either 'truthfully' (then this would be realism) or 'in its revolutionary development' (i.e. not entirely truthfully, romantically). But reconciling these two things is not a simple task.
>
> This is why Socialist Realism aspires not so much to romanticism or to realism but rather to melodrama…[98]

Besides melodrama, socialist realism was also compared to "eighteenth century classicism,"[99] "medieval hagiography,"[100] "cheap novels and Hollywood films."[101] As a contradictory compound, such aesthetic could hardly function on its own without institutional enforcement, such as the state censorship and ideological monopoly. As Dobrenko points out, the "weakening of these institutions led to the breakdown of the Socialist Realist aesthetic itself. This is why the marginalization of

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[95] Brandon Taylor, "Socialist Realism: "To depict reality in its revolutionary development" in *A Concise Companion to Realism*, ed. Matthew Beaumont, John Wiley & Sons, 2010, 160-171, 161.

[96] Abram Tertz, *The Trial Begins; And, On Socialist Realism*, University of California Press, 1982, 215.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialist Realism," 108-109.

[99] Abram Tertz, *The Trial Begins; And, On Socialist Realism*, 196-199.

[100] Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 47.

[101] Peter Kenez, Cinema and Soviet Society, 1917-1953, CUP Archive, 1992, 158.

Socialist Realism began with the death of Stalin and the beginning of Khrushchev's Thaw."[102] Yet

what's most interesting here is that, given the ambiguity and inconclusiveness of Khrushchev's

liberal reforms, socialist realism was not entirely forgotten overnight at that time. Rather, it got split

into two halves that originally composed it: that is, romantic revolutionary art represented by hyper-

dramatic films ecstatically celebrating early Leninist ideals on the one hand and traditional

psychological realism with its emphasis on the quotidian aspects of life on the other. For many

scholars the dismantling of socialist realist aesthetic in the late 1950-1960s did not go any further

than a purely emotional affair. As Boris Groys observes, after Stalin's death socialist realism "began

to yield to a traditional realism whose most typical and influential representative in the thaw years

was Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn."[103] Furthermore, when the socialist ideological monopoly was

ultimately destroyed in the late 1980s and the hybrid model of socialist realism definitively lost its

socialist half, realist imagery reached its climax in its excessively graphic representation of misery,

violence, physicality, hedonism, obscenity and stupidity, a trend which critics termed as the "black

wave" or *chernukha* in film and literature. In terms of Deleuzean taxonomy, the late and post-Soviet

hyper-naturalist portrayal of reality could be best described as the "impulse-image", an image which

expresses "degenerate" affects or instincts and "embryonic" actions of the characters who lose "all

differentiation between the human and the animal" in the context of originary or apocalyptic worlds,

the temporality of which is "inseparable from an entropy, a degradation" (C1 126). For Deleuze,

naturalist cinema has come very close to a time-image. Yet naturalism couldn't quite reach time as

pure form because of "its obligation to keep time subordinate to naturalistic co-ordinates, to make it

dependent on impulse. Consequently, naturalism could only grasp the negative effects of time;

attrition, degradation, wastage, destruction, loss, or simply oblivion" (C1 127). Given that the neo-

naturalist trend was a logical exit strategy for the late Soviet cinema from its long marriage with

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[102] Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialist Realism," 107.

[103] Boris Groïs, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*, Verso Books, 2011, 76.

socialist dogmatism, many Soviet thought-images at the time are influenced by this Russian noir aesthetics of dirt and decay. The figure of corpse, the graphic representation of dying, and the corporeal reduction of characters to animals seem to be persistent attributes in almost all films by Alexander Sokurov, Kira Muratova, Aleksei German and Yevgeny Yufit of this period. Yet what distinguishes them from the majority of similarly dark naturalist impulse-images is their emphasis on the audiovisual disjunction as well as the creation of new body attitudes, which characterizes the thought-image.

The hegemony of socialist realism in Soviet film for almost fifty years defines, therefore, the nature of cinematic attempts to move beyond the Soviet movement-image. Whereas in the late 1950s-1960s such attempts were taken into the direction of either pure revolutionary excess or traditional psychological realism, in the late 1980s the cinema's "line of flight" was through the excessive naturalism. I will now discuss these tendencies more in detail.

2.2. The Soviet Sublime Action-Image

The Agony of the Dream and the Rise of the Action-Image

In his discussion of Kazan's post-war films (e.g. *On the Waterfront* (1954), *East of Eden* (1955), *America, America* (1963)), Deleuze discovers a curious dialectics in the relation between the American dream and reality: the more the American dream is challenged and contradicted by reality (e.g. corruption, crime, poverty, betrayal, etc.), the more powerful and intense it becomes. As he writes,

> The American Dream is affirmed more and more to be a dream, nothing other than a dream, contradicted by the facts; but it draws from this a sudden burst of increased power… And it is precisely after the war - at the very moment when the American Dream is collapsing, and when the action-image is entering a definitive crisis… that the dream finds its most fertile form, and action its most violent, most detonating, schema. This is the final agony of the action cinema, even if films of this type go on being made for a long time yet (C1 157-8).

After Khrushchev denounced the cult of Stalin's personality at the Communist Party's Twentieth Congress in 1956, the Communist dream was similarly on the verge of collapsing under the pressure

of Stalin's (partially) exposed crimes as well as the great flock of amnestied prisoners returning home from the gulag camps. Yet in his repudiation of and moving away from Stalin's terror, Khrushchev reemphasized his loyalty to the fundamental tenets of Communism, betrayed by Stalinism, and pledged to return the country to the early ideals of Leninism by praising the heroism of old revolutionaries. The ambiguity of the Thaw "de-Stalinization" campaign consisted, therefore, in viewing the thirty-year period of totalitarianism, which took lives of over ten millions of people, as an unfortunate digression from the Soviet radiant path toward Communism. The idealization of Leninism as a counterweight to the condemnation of Stalinism was, nevertheless, a rather fragile ideological compromise promoted to save the shattered regime from decisive defeat, as it seemed utterly unconvincing to the socialist allies in Eastern Europe, such as Poland and Hungary, where Khrushchev's liberal policies stirred political uprisings in 1956 brutally suppressed by Soviet troops. In the Soviet Union of the late 1950-1960s, however, this ambiguous compromise was sufficient to serve as a powerful stimulus for the intellectual and cultural renaissance known as the Thaw epoch characterized by the rapid expansion in film production. Although still supervised by the state censorship apparatus, the Thaw cinematic image was no longer in total service of ideological propaganda and was, therefore, rather quick to express the inherent contradictions of the Communist dream and its criminal underside. Just as Kazan's post-war films push the action-image to the limit in order to salvage the American dream, the Thaw action-image similarly finds "its most violent, most detonating, schema" in order to defer the agony of the Communist utopia.

The post-war Soviet action-image celebrating the excessive revolutionary heroism of pre-Stalinist times could be best described by Deleuze's concept of the sublime action-image, which he attributes to Herzog's action cinema that exhausts both large and small forms of the action image by pushing the character's activity to an utter absurdity. In Herzog's SAS' form, the hero is presented as a conqueror of the useless, i.e. "a man who is larger than life" confronted with "a milieu which is

itself larger than life, and dreams up an action as great as the milieu" (C1 184). Given in such form, the empirical value of this action-image is strongly undermined because

> the action, in effect, is not required by the situation, it is a crazy enterprise, born in the head of a visionary, which seems to be the only one capable of rivalling the milieu in its entirety. Or rather, the action divides in two: there is the sublime action, always beyond, but which itself engenders another action, a heroic action which confronts the milieu on its own account, penetrating the impenetrable, breaching the unbreachable. There is thus both a hallucinatory dimension, where the acting spirit raises itself to boundlessness in nature and a hypnotic dimension where the spirit runs up against the limits which Nature opposes to it (ibid.).

In Herzog's films, such as *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972) or *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), the heroic action is no longer executed according to empirical laws of activity; it is rather hyperbolically magnified to its sublime or transcendental exercise and thus abstracts itself into "pure Idea" (ibid.). This ambiguous form of the action-image, which simultaneously celebrates the sublime acting spirit and emphasizes its utter futility, will help us explain the constitutive contradictions of the Soviet action films in the late 1950s which similarly romanticize the excessive heroism of revolutionary action yet implicitly problematize its overall purpose.

Korchagin & Co: Revolutionary Sublime Action

The Thaw tradition of the sublime action-image arguably begins with Alov and Naumov's *Pavel Korchagin* (1957), an adaptation of Nikolai Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered*. Unlike Donskoi's earlier adaptation that organizes the narrative in a linear fashion, *Pavel Korchagin* starts off with the end of the novel, where the already blind and paralyzed protagonist receives the news that the only manuscript of his novel has been lost in the mail and is thinking whether he should rewrite it over again. What follows is the hero's entire life presented in a series of flashbacks. As Lev Anninskii observes, "the life itself is structured in the film as a preparation and justification of such finale."[104] By the end of his mnemonic journey, the film shows the hero's hand blindly scribing the titled words of Ostrovsky's novel in the dark, which symbolizes the victory of the revolutionary spirit over his bedridden condition. The film's circular self-reflexive narrative composition,

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[104] Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesyatniki i my: kinematograf, stavshy i ne stavshy istpriei*. Kinotsentr, 1991, 14.

therefore, invites the viewer to reassess together with the protagonist the value and meaning of his

life from the point of view of his present disability. Although at the closing scene the healthy

Korchagin (or rather the actor who plays him) cheerfully declares to the viewer not to believe that he

surrendered and died, the overall message that the film conveys is far from the obligatory optimism

of conventional socialist realism. While some critics praised the film for its return to the pure form

of socialist realism of pre-Stalinist times ("*dorappovskie vremena*"),[105] others were appalled by the

darkness of the representation of hardships and sufferings that the hero must go through by

protesting that it "was not like that" in the early years of Soviet Russia.[106]

Whereas Donskoi's adaptation fully omits the fact of Korchagin's illness, Alov and Naumov,

on the contrary, focus on those episodes in which the hero has lost his health and thus problematize

his fanaticism and ascetic sacrifice. Most of Korchagin's flashbacks are centered on his building of a

narrow railroad somewhere in the Ukrainian countryside, a construction project commissioned by

the Party during the late autumn. The film deliberately emphasizes how this project amounts to an

inhuman and nearly impossible mission since no working conditions have been provided for the

young Komsomol enthusiasts forced to live in shabby barracks and die of typhus, hunger and cold.

For Korchagin, however, this railroad, which will be abandoned after it fulfills its service of the

firewood supply to the city, emblematizes the Revolution itself and it is there that his physical health

has been fully undermined. Furthermore, the directors reintroduce this construction site as the

setting for the hero's attempted suicide towards the end of the film. While returning home after his

trip to the doctor from whom he learns that complete paralysis and blindness await him within a

year, he decides to get off the train at a random station and shoot himself. In Ostrovskii's novel,

Korchagin thinks about committing suicide in Crimea, on the Black Sea shore. In the film, the train

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[105] Pogodin, N. "Eto i est' pravda" in Aleksandr Alov, Vladimir Naumov: stat'i, svidetel'stva, vyskazyvania, Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1989, pp. 38-43, 38.
[106] Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesyatniki i my,* 15.

station, where he would end his life, turns out to be the same Ukrainian town Boiarka, where he used to build his "revolutionary" railroad a while ago. For Korchagin, the encounter with the landmark of the past, which is largely responsible for his illness, triggers his spiritual rebirth and encourages him to stay alive to the very end in his service to the Revolution. For the viewer, however, such a convergence of the hero's suicidal mission in the past and his suicidal attempt in the present only further problematizes the validity of his Christ-like sacrifice.

For Anninskii, "Alov and Naumov not just recreated the world of revolutionary romanticism in its purified and crystallized version; they turned this world of heroic act into an argument in the debate."[107] That is to say, by pushing the heroic action beyond the limit of its empirical exercise, they abstracted it into "pure idea." The same idea of the destruction of a personal life sacrificed on the altar of a new state is foregrounded in their next film *Wind* (1958), where young revolutionaries perish one by one on their long journey to the first Komsomol Congress in Moscow, yet their tragic death is shown as accidental and essentially antiheroic. The conventional image of heroism is most strongly subverted by the figure of the prostitute Mary who joins the trip to Moscow not because she shares the revolutionary cause with the voyagers but because she is personally attracted to one of them, Fyodor. After both of them are arrested by the White Army police, she exposes herself as the chief delegate to the Komsomol Congress and thus rescues Fyodor so he would continue his important journey. Mary is executed yet her sacrifice has neither ideological nor romantic reason, since she knows that Fyodor doesn't love her. Her death, as Neya Zorkaya argues, "cannot give us an idea of either the collapse of the old world or the birth of a new proud person out of the

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[107] Ibid.

revolutionary turmoil."[108] That is, her entrance into the Revolution is as accidental as is her exit from it.

By the late 1950s the sublime action-image, initiated by Alov and Naumov, had become almost the official cinematic discourse, by which the Communist utopia could legitimize itself and through which more critically oriented directors would smuggle their reservations about the nature of revolutionary heroism. In Raizman's *Communist* (1958), for example, the hero of titanic power struggles against the hostile mass of peasants in a remote Russian village to which he is appointed by the young Soviet government to work on one of the electrification projects. Yet during the White Army attack on the village, he is the only one who perishes. His heroism is undermined by the fact that as the civil war veteran he is often dressed in a military uniform yet he never uses a gun in any of his confrontations with the local counter-revolutionaries. The film was commissioned for the fortieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and its release was even delayed because of the close supervision of the state censors. Despite the enormous ideological investment in the film, the protagonist turned out to be more complicated than expected. As Josephine Woll observes,

> Vasili Gubanov is *not* the hero these critics so desperately wanted him to be. He is not a revival of the heroes of the 1920s, nor a new incarnation of the revolutionary communist ideal. He superficially resembles the heroes of the 1920s or 1930s… and his heroism is set within the civil war context, but its nature and performance are redolent of post-Twentieth Congress values. He never holds a weapon, even amid a barrage of shots… He does give up his life for his cause, but his self-sacrifice is motivated by… "thaw altruism" rather than by revolutionary zeal.[109]

The Soviet Russia was born in the bloodbath of civil war, in which violence, brutality and aggression should be the prime characteristics to be attributed to the early communists, as they were in Rogozhkin's post-Soviet drama *Chekist* (1992), in which the sublime action-image is degenerated into the impulse-image of dark naturalism. In the Thaw romanticization of this period, however, the

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[108] Zorkaya, Neya. "O yasnosti tseli" in *Aleksandr Alov, Vladimir Naumov: stat'i, svidetel'stva, vyskazyvania*, Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1989, 47-50, 50.

[109] Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, I.B. Tauris, 2000, 86.

revolutionary hero could only be a martyr ready to sacrifice his/her life for the common cause even though s/he "wants to live and be happy."[110]

The theme of revolutionary martyrdom continued to dominate in the early 1960s as well. Remaining structurally the same, the plot of romantic self-sacrifice was only modified in terms of gender and ethnicity.   In Samsonov's *Optimistic Tragedy* (1963), a fragile female commissar, representing "the image of an impregnable fair maiden as a symbolic embodiment of the Revolution,"[111] is sent by the Party to the Marine squad led by anarchists in order to form a Red Army battalion from the marines to take part in the civil war. Although she triumphs in taming the anarchic power of the all-male crew, managing to escape their attempts to either kill or violate her, she still tragically perishes in combat. In Konchalovsky's *The First Teacher* (1965), the ascetic and over-committed revolutionary Diuishen, appointed by the Party to educate illiterate countrymen in a Kyrgyz village, is eager to enlighten them about the Marxist values yet his romantic fanaticism results in nothing more than an avalanche of disasters. The film's final sequence is particularly representative of the utter futility of his enterprise. After his school was burnt down as an act of revenge on his endeavors, he starts chopping down the village's single poplar tree in order to rebuild the school. Even though it is the only tree in the village which would not help him anyhow, he still obsessively keeps on chopping it even after the film's credits start running. This sequence perfectly exemplifies what Deleuze says about a sublime action as "a crazy enterprise" which is "not required by the situation" and is "born in the head of a visionary" (C1 184). The romantic action of the teacher does reaffirm the shining power of Communist ideals for a moment yet the emphatic futility of such action undermines their relevance to the actual milieu.

Revolutionary Sublime Action in Peacetime

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[110] Ibid.

[111] Elena Monastireva-Ansdell, "Redressing the Commissar: Thaw Cinema Revises Soviet Structuring Myths," *Russian Review*, Vol. 65. 2. (2006), pp. 230-249, 238.

The resistance Diuishen encounters from the inhabitants stubbornly sticking to their tribal traditions is structurally analogous to the resistance of any other milieu associated with the old pre-revolutionary world, whether it is a Russian village with ignorant peasants or a ship with anarchic sailors. It restages the old mythological conflict between order and chaos (as well as culture and nature or center and periphery), in which the romantic hero-demiurge is responsible for bringing light to the darkness even at the expense of his/her life. In this regard, the Thaw vogue for the revolutionary "death drive" was extended to and replicated in the contemporary civic context, in which self-sacrifice was not required at all. In Romm's *Nine Days in One Year* (1962), for example, the atomic physicist Gusev is obsessed with his research on nuclear energy. As the result of his ultimate dedication to science, he gets accidentally irradiated yet refuses to abandon his work until his death by exposing himself to even more radiation. Despite the film's foregrounding an intellectual as a new type of Soviet hero, it did scare a number of critics with its overbearing pessimism regarding the enlightening power of scientific progress predicated on personal self-destruction.[112] As Alexander Prokhorov points out,

> That progress… is questionable in the film, portrayed as sickening obsession that slowly kills the protagonist. The invisible deadly power of nuclear radiation incarnates the perilous force of progress as the master-narrative of modernity.[113]

The film's plot consists of a number of isolated episodes or novellas that discretely portray Gusev's personal and professional life from the accident of his irradiation to his lying in the hospital and are bound together into a coherent narrative by the hero's unifying perspective as a scientist on the service of scientific progress. As Deleuze comments, "Romm's *Nine Days of One Year* proceeds by clearly distinguished days, each of which has its indices, and the whole of which is a progression in time" (C1 179). In this regard, Romm is a "disciple of Pudovkin" (ibid.), since both of them integrate the small form of the action-image, associated with random occurrences in the individual

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[112] See Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, 127-33.

[113] Alexander Prokhorov, "The Unknown New Wave: Soviet Cinema of the Sixties" in *Springtime for Soviet Cinema: Re/Viewing the 1960s.* Ed. by Alexander Prokhorov, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Russian Film Symposium, 2001, 7-28, 10.

life, into its large form in the context of a greater ideological narrative, whether it is Communism or scientific progress. What Deleuze does not elaborate, however, is that in *Nine Days* both forms of the action-image are in a "dialectical struggle"[114] with each other: the discrete personal narrative is integrated into, or sacrifices itself for, the totality of the grand narrative of the film, yet its integration, or sacrifice, ultimately undermines the sublime coherence and teleology of the latter.

After the premier of *Nine Days of One Year*, Yevgeni Urbansky, the lead actor of Raizman's *Communist*, remarked that "the time of the intelligent, delicate and ironical hero is coming. The time of my straightforward, non-compromising and down to earth mastodons is coming to an end."[115] Urbansky could be right in his prediction for the emergence of a new intellectual hero who would replace the working class protagonist in the Soviet cinema of 1960-1970s.[116] Yet the mutation of the positive hero in terms of gender, ethnicity or class did not affect the overall structure of the Thaw action-image but only further reinforced its ideological foundation. In Ordynsky's *The Big Ore* (1964), Urbansky plays an overly ambitious truck driver who comes to work in a mine which is desperately digging for an iron ore hidden under the layers of clay and rocks. Eager to beat the records of labor productivity, the driver strives to transport much more gravel than required despite heavy rainfall and his worn-out vehicle. Eventually he does get killed after his truck slips into the canyon under the pressure of massive load. Yet the mine's final discovery of "the big ore," as the film sadly suggests in the end, is the result of his excessive efforts. Mysteriously enough, Urbansky himself perishes in a car accident by volunteering to perform a stunt on his own during filming.

The intentional hyperdramatization of action for its own sake found its most radical expression in Kalatozov's *Letter Never Sent* (1959) that follows four geologists in search for

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[114] Ibid., 11.

[115] Kirill Baryshnikov, "Lubov' kommunista," *Ogoniok* No 52, 1998: http://www.ogoniok.com/archive/1998/4577/42-40-45/

[116] In Mashchenko's *How the Steel Was Tempered* (1973), the third adaptation of Ostrovsky's novel, the figure of Pavel Korchagin is indeed presented as a "delicate" intellectual.

diamonds in Central Siberia. Once they find them, they dream out loud about how many schools and kindergartens the government can make out of them. The heroes, however, never make it home since throughout the film all of them tragically perish in fire and ice, leaving behind only the unsent letter about this expedition and the map for diamonds. The final sequence depicts the delirious vision of one of the characters seeing the future "Diamond City" built thanks to the diamonds they found. Yet the vision is soon replaced by the vast panorama of the majestic Siberian scenery with the frozen hero lying in the snow. In the film, the landscape plays a role on its own by expanding to an inhuman and indifferent totality that absorbs characters one by one. Its autonomy from humanity, visually represented by Urusevskii's panoramic and angle shots, effectively undermines the assumed superiority of the Soviet man over nature characteristic of Stalinist cinema (e.g. Stolper's *Story of a Real Man* (1948)). The Stalinist director Pyriev was one of the most critical opponents of the film by claiming that it did not show us a "man" but only a "furious elemental nature."[117] Furthermore, censors were so appalled to see so much death and suffering in the film that they forced the director to revise the script and leave at least one survivor. And yet, as Prokhorov rightly observes, "this imposed closure hardly changes the general atmosphere of the picture."[118] What was most scandalous about *Letter* is that it was shot in the actual natural environment, in severe Siberian conditions, although a similar setting could be found "fifty kilometers from Moscow."[119]The romantic yet unnecessary sacrifice for the service of the state was thus intentionally reenacted by the film's crew themselves. Some of the actors were even hospitalized after the film shooting: Vasili Livanov, for example, broke his voice and Innokenti Smoktunovsky got brain concussion.

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[117] Baskakov, Vladimir. ""Serebryanyi vek" sovetskogo kino" in *Kinematograf ottepeli: Dokumenty i svidetelsva ochevidtsev*. Ed. by V. I. Fomin, Moskva: Materik, 1998, pp. 178-188, 183.

[118] Alexander Prokhorov, "The Unknown New Wave: Soviet Cinema of the Sixties," 12.

[119] V. I. Fomin, *Kinematograf ottepeli: Dokumenty i svidetelsva ochevidtsev*, Moskva: Materik, 1998, 125.

The sublime action-image of the Thaw cinema seemingly remains within the confines of the socialist realist aesthetic. And the characters' ardent devotion to the early Communist ideals that such films persistently promote could be viewed as a "counterweight to the shocking revelations about the Stalinist system"[120] in the late 1950s, as it is most evident in Kalatozov's tendentious celebration of the Castro Revolution in *I am Cuba* (1964), despite its acrobatic cinematography. Yet by following the dictum of the Communist ideology to fully sacrifice personal happiness for the collective well-being to the letter, such image pushes the characters' identification with the ideological machine to an utter absurdity and thus ultimately deterritorializes the heroic rhetoric of the movement-image. As Zizek comments,

> an ideological identification exerts a true hold on us precisely when we maintain an awareness that we are not fully identical to it, that there is a rich human person beneath it… For that reason, an ideological edifice can be undermined by a too-literal identification, which is why its successful functioning requires a minimal distance from its explicit rules.[121]

> [Therefore,] overidentifying with the explicit power discourse - … simply taking the power discourse at its (public) word, acting as if it really means what it explicitly says (and promises) - can be the most effective way of disturbing its smooth functioning.[122]

The sublime revolutionary hero overidentifying with the power discourse to the extent of his or her personal destruction is, therefore, a logical extension of the Stalinist search for the "new Soviet man" fully devoid of psychological complexity and, instead, overcommitted to the collective purpose of building socialism. As John Haynes puts this in a Lacanian way, for socialist realism "the positive hero was in no way to be seen as a split subject," it "refuses to work with anything exploring or celebrating the split between subjectivity and objectivity."[123] The subject of socialist realism is rather a subject stuck in the imaginary "mirror stage" being completely identified with the image of its own wholeness. As Leonid Trauberg proclaimed at the 1935 All-Union Creative

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[120] Peter Rollberg, *Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Cinema*. Scarecrow Press, 2008, 43.

[121] Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, Verso, 1997, 21-22.

[122] Slavoj Žižek, "Class Struggle or Postmodernism? Yes, please!" in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. Ed. by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Žižek, Verso, 2000, pp. 90-136. 220.

[123] Haynes, John. *New Soviet Man: Gender and Masculinity in Stalinist Soviet Cinema*, 45.

Conference of Workers in Soviet Cinema, "in these five years we got away from the accursed legacy of fractured consciousness."[124]

For Deleuze, the "fractured self" is the foundation of the time-image as it internalizes the split of time into "before" and "after." Furthermore, it is only through this facture filled with the pure and empty form of time that a genuine thought can be born. The sublime action-image of the Thaw period does nevertheless articulate the urgent need for this fracture within a cinematic subjectivity by hyperdramatizing the tragic consequences of the radical or *unfractured* revolutionary consciousness. Such image, therefore, could be viewed as the origin of the crisis of the Soviet action-image, which reflected the "unsteadiness" (C1 206) of the Communist dream in all its aspects.

From Romantic Action to Romantic Inaction

What has happened to the sublime action-image after the Thaw revolutionary optimism finally exhausted its vital power and got replaced by the intelligentsia's pessimism of Brezhnev's era of stagnation? Indeed, should there be any need for the excessive romantic pathos when post-Stalinist reforms were discontinued and the Communist dream itself was no longer in danger? Interestingly enough, in 1970s the failure of the Thaw rhetoric of romantic *action* gave way to a similarly subversive tradition of romantic *inaction*. A great number of late Soviet films (e.g. Konchalovsky's *Uncle Vanya* (1970), Melnikov's *September Vacation* (1979), Daneliya's *Autumn Marathon* (1979), Balayan's *Flights in Dreams and in Reality* (1983)) foregrounded a deliberately weak and passive protagonist whose genealogy refers to the Russian version of the romantic or Byronic ennui of the "superfluous man" aka Onegin, Pechorin, Rudin, Beltov and Oblomov. The Soviet "superfluous man" of the seventies was no longer a hero but an educated loser, i.e. a bored intellectual lost in his mid-life crisis and self-indulgent enfeeblement and incessantly abstaining from work and social and

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[124] Ibid., 156.

family duties. With no venues to realize their talents in Brezhnev's milieu, the Soviet Onegins and Pechorins found their legitimate refuge in "the small form" of the action-image that let them drift from one absurd situation to another and dispassionately engage in idleness, adultery, betrayal, public embarrassment and alcoholism. Such shift from the romantic heroization (or hyperactivity) to equally romantic deheroization of action (or hyperpassivity) in the Soviet cinema of stagnation strongly resonates with Herzog's subversion of active heroic agency by the opposite extreme of its radical "enfeeblement" in his other films (e.g. *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974), *Nosferatu* (1979), *Woyzeck* (1979)), where the heroes are replaced by idiots and weaklings and whose activity is similarly reduced to the minimum. In both cases, the failure of the visionary's sublime plan in "the large form" found further extension in "the small form" where "his whole reality was enfeebled" (C1 185).

The enfeeblement of the Soviet action-image proceeded mainly through a series of screen adaptations of Russian classic literature, which proved to be the safest mode of representation in the stagnation cultural climate. Film adaptation has always been a popular genre in Soviet cinema yet in mid-seventies the cinematic translation of the literary classic became particularly subversive. Its critical potential is most evident if we compare the adaptations of Pushkin's story *The Shot* from *The Tales of Belkin* and Lermontov's novella *Princess Mary* from *A Hero of Our Time* in the Thaw and stagnation periods. Both literary texts center on the disillusioned and mysterious Byronic hero who withdraws from all social activities and thus inadvertently provides a critical commentary on Nikolai I's reactionary reign: in the former the protagonist Silvio dedicates his entire life to plotting revenge for a slight he received in youth, in the latter Pechorin is engaged in plotting psychological games with people to whom he is utterly indifferent. Both narratives deconstruct the romantic notion of honor and dramatize the desperate lack of purpose for the Russian intellectuals of the nineteenth century squandering their lives in idleness and useless actions. Whereas Naum Trakhtenberg's *The*

Shot (1966) faithfully follows the plot development in Pushkin's original by closely reproducing the characters' flashbacks as well as the lively dynamic of their confrontations, Petr Fomenko's theatrical staging *The Tales of Belkin: The Shot* (1981), on the contrary, emphasizes the static gaps of silence and immobile passivity between the characters' encounters and focuses more on their facial expressions rather than actions, rendered by unnaturally long close-ups. According to Deleuze, the close-up stands for the affection-image: "*The affection-image is the close-up, and the close-up is the face*" (C1 87). Furthermore, the face in the affection-image, as the interval between the perception-image and the action-image, "is abstracted from the spatio-temporal co-ordinates which would relate it to a state of things" (C1 97); it sacrifices the global mobility of the body for the sake of affect and thus expresses the state of suspension between received action and executed reaction. A film consisting of predominantly facial close-ups, such as Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), would thus unavoidably occasion the crisis of the action-image, since affects in such film are expressed as separate entities, independently of their connection to sensory-motor situations. Fomenko's repeated use of the close-up, portraying the unshaved, exhausted and somber face of the protagonist (played by Leonid Filatov) as well as the unemotional and detached face of the narrator (played by Alexei Eibozhenko), similarly abstracts affects from their dependence on either characters or situations. While watching Fomenko's theatrical production, one simply forgets that Pushkin's story is about a duel and a plotted revenge, since the incredibly dense ambience of black melancholia and alienation permeates the entire screen and emphasizes the futility of any action whatsoever. Anatoly Efros' *Pages from Pechorin's Journal* (1975) similarly differs from its cinematic predecessor *Princess Mary* (Issidor Annensky, 1955): whereas the latter is more interested in the narrative intrigue unfolding in the setting of the typically romantic mountain landscape and accompanied by the sentimental soundtrack consisting of romances set on Lermontov's lyrics (e.g. "Sail"), the former deromanticizes Pechorin's superfluousness and dramatizes instead its tragic

consequences by reducing actions and decorations to a bare minimum and having the despondent protagonist play the role of Lermontov as well. In other words, in the films of mid-seventies the romantic ennui of the Russian superfluous man is stripped from its dependence on the dramatic action and milieu and taken in its own right as an autonomous affect which manifests itself as a powerful expression of the morbid sensibility of the late Soviet intelligentsia.

Characteristically enough, it was Konchalovsky who launched this post-Thaw tradition of noble boredom and passivity in the Soviet film. Whereas the figure of young overcommitted revolutionary in his debut feature strictly followed the conventions of the Thaw sublime action-image, which was already in the pre-stagnation stage of demise in mid-sixties, his *The Nest of Gentry* (1969) and *Uncle Vanya* (1970) offered a completely different protagonist: a mid-aged melancholic aristocrat isolated from any civic activity in the Russian hinterland and brooding over the lost years of his unfulfilled life.[125] What is most interesting about Konchalovsky's transition from one romantic extreme to another is that it is mediated by his *The Story of Asya Klyachina Who Loved but Did Not Marry*, made in l967 yet shelved until 1987. Shot in the naturalistic style of *cinema verité* with only two professional actors involved, it thoroughly demythologizes the life and labor of simple collective farm workers by portraying their everyday activity on the fields. As Anna Lawton comments, *The Story of Asya Klyachina*

> records the hardships of work during the harvest days, under scorching sun, with sweating farmers covered with dust and dirt, shouting at each other in the realistic language of workplace. This was a deliberate blow on the director's part against one of the most cherished myths of Socialist Realism, the country idyll. In the 1930s 1940s images of… rural beauties in embroidered blouses and smart fellows in shiny boots and dancing to folkish accordion tunes were intended to afford the people a glimpse of the promised land. Mythmaking was used to pacify desires and to foster dreams. But even before Konchalovsky made this film, the dream was long gone, exposed by Khrushchev's "secret speech" at the XX party Congress.[126]

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[125] After his return from emigration in the US, Konchalovsky once again turned to Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* by directing it on stage: yet this time, in 2009, the protagonist's boredom is no longer poeticized but is harshly ridiculed and satirically criticized. That is to say, in contemporary Russia the aristocrat's noble sloth has become out of sync with the newly adopted capitalist ideology of work.

[126] Anna Lawton, *Kinoglasnost: Soviet Cinema in Our Time*. CUP Archive, 1992, 120-121.

That is to say, because of its innate tendency to push the utopian impulse to the very limit where it eventually dissolves, the excessive revolutionary romanticism triggered by Khrushchev's de-Stalinization was destined to extend itself to harsh naturalism in order to represent reality "as is." Konchalovsky's endeavor, in this regard, aimed at redeeming the ordinary life of farmers from the Stalinist glamor of kolkhoz musicals by discovering there the unadorned poetry of simple work beyond ideological mythologization. It should not, therefore, be surprising that after this film was scandalously banned, he decided to focus on the theme of the inability and impossibility to work at all, a theme which was already consistently developed in Russian literature throughout the entire nineteenth century.

In the seventies the late Soviet abstinence from work became almost like a political stance which could be compared to the French Situationists' resistance to any labor as such, proclaimed in Guy Debord's famous 1953 slogan "Ne travaillez jamais!" Although safely packaged in the genre conventions of melodrama and screen adaptation, a great number of films of this period centered on the sympathetic, if not celebratory, representation of the hero as an idle non-achiever whose social failure was, nevertheless, rendered as self-chosen and therefore justifiable. For example, in Mikhalkov's *An Unfinished Piece for Player Piano* (1977) Sophia almost faints when she learns that her former lover Platonov is not a minister, as expected, but a university drop-out and a current schoolteacher in a remote village. Yet it is Platonov, according to Mikhalkov, who is granted the most rational voice of judgment among all the characters in the film. In his *Oblomov* (1979), the lazy protagonist is no longer a parasite benefiting from the institution of serfdom but a lovable dreamer whose sentimental idealism is nostalgically poeticized as a viable alternative to Stolz's pragmatic materialism. In Kheifits' *A Bad Good Man* (1973), the adaptation of Chekhov's *Duel*, Laevsky's boredom and lyrical sensibility are similarly juxtaposed with the cynical Darwinism of the naturalist von Koren. In Melnikov's *September Vacation* and Balayan's *Flights in Dreams and*

in Reality, mischievous yet adorable protagonists always try to find hilarious and absurd excuses to sneak out from their workplace. In Daneliya's *Autumn Marathon*, the talented translator Buzykin is suffering from his impotence to become a writer; even his translations are rejected for ideological reasons. In Mikaelyan's *Love by Request* (1982), a parody on the socialist realist production drama in which a more sophisticated communist assists a younger character in her/his ideological and professional evolution, the former sportsman Bragin, working now as a mechanic, is couched by his would-be girlfriend to approach his work at the factory lathe with more enthusiasm and pleasure yet with no success.

In all these films, the cause of the hero's melancholia and inability to realize the creative potential is never fully disclosed or explained but only indirectly suggested through a chaotic series of absurd and tragicomic circumstances which loosely comprise the film's overall narrative. The elusive nature of the protagonist's social abnormality in such features makes them very similar to mystery movies structured according to the small form of the action-image (ASA') where "one moves from blind actions, as indices, to obscure situations which vary entirely or which fluctuate completely" (C1 164). Just as in the detective genre, educated viewers were summoned to decode through the romantically framed enigma of the protagonist's malaise, imperceptible to the censors, a symptom of a larger pathological condition of the late Soviet system, which could neither be changed nor challenged at that time. Once the social system got changed in the late eighties, the Soviet melancholic similarly vanished from the screen or literally dies, as it occurs in Ryazanov's *Forgotten Melody for a Flute* (1987). The post-Soviet resurrection of the Soviet-like charming loser in Veledinsky's *The Geographer Drank His Globe Away* (2013) could be another riddle for viewers and critics to decode: some of them, following the novel's author, identified the despondent

protagonist as a "saint"[127] and others as "the gloomiest symptom of the post-Soviet intelligentsia's

defeat."[128] Yet given Veledinsky's excessive melodramatization (if not victimization) of his hero's

self-indulgent enfeeblement and passivity with little reference to social factors for such a condition,

we may conclude that the critical potential of the socialist romantic legacy is yet to be fulfilled.

2.3. Soviet *Bal(l)ade*

Aberrant Movements of Soviet Flâneurs

The sublime action-image was not the only form of subversion of the Soviet movement-image in the

Thaw cinema; it run parallel with another dominant image where the excessive valor of the

revolutionary subject was deconstructed through a thorough and systematic deheroization as well as

"the sensory-motor action or situation [was] replaced by the stroll, the voyage and the continual

return journey" (C1 208). By the end of *Cinema 1*, Deleuze argues that at the moment when the

"most 'healthy' illusions fall," the "first things to be compromised everywhere are the linkages of

situation-action, action-reaction, excitation-response, in short, the sensory-motor links which

produced the action-image" (C1 206). The loosening of the sensory-motor link in the action-image

results in the irruption of aberrant movement freed from the spatio-temporal co-ordinates. In this

regard, Deleuze discusses films of Italian Neorealism, the French new wave and post-war American

cinema outside Hollywood that foreground characters' aimless movements and strolling through the

city. He categorizes such films as "trip/ballad" films (*films de bal(l)ade*) in which the wandering

movement itself becomes the form of narration. In the voyage form, characters are no longer

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[127] Dmitrii Bykov, "Proiti porog," *Moskovskie novosti*, 1 November 2013:
http://www.mn.ru/oped/20131101/361232510.html

[128] Mark Lipovetsky, Tatiana Mikhailova, "Aleksandr Veledinskii: *The Geographer Drank His Globe Away* (*Geograf globus propil*, 2013)" *KinoKultura*, Issue 43 (2014).

responding to situations they are confronted with but become instead the passive observers of various spaces they traverse.

Surprisingly enough, Deleuze never mentions any Soviet film to exemplify this trend, which was indeed extremely popular in the Thaw cinema at the time. Suffice it to mention such films in which the trip/ballad narrative form is already inscribed in their titles: such as *Ballad of a Soldier* (1959), *Man Follows the Sun* (1963) and *Walking the Streets of Moscow* (1964). These films testify to the emergence of the so-called "poetic cinema" in the Russian new wave. And yet, Deleuze's omission of Soviet examples could be justified by the fact that such films, emphasizing the natural and unabashed sincerity of the characters' emotions, were still produced in the mode of traditional psychological realism, a mode of expression celebrated in Vladimir Pomerantsev's early Thaw article "On Sincerity in Literature" (1953). Deleuze is, however, not interested in the characters' psychology. In *Cinema 2*, the aberrant movement of the voyage films is immediately linked to the emergence of the *pure optical and sound image*, a new image which is occasioned by the character's encounter with something intolerable and unrecognizable and is exemplified by Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero* (1948) and *Europa '51* (1952). In such films the traumatic optical image can't be assimilated into consciousness as the perception-image but persists on its own as something literal and imperceptible. For Deleuze, the only proper reaction to it would be a paralysis, which at the same time designates the transcendental exercise of sensibility. Such "transcendental" experiences were still unavailable for the Soviet *flâneur* of the time as they were naturally overwhelmed with freedom and jubilation granted by Khrushchev's liberal politics. In other words, Russian cinema of the late 1950s appears to be behind the developments of Western cinema outlined by Deleuze. Even though their emphasis on emotional simplicity was truly innovative in the context of early post-Stalinism, for most Western film critics it seemed more like an anachronistic "anomaly." As Woll comments,

> At Cannes [in 1960], *Ballad* presented an attractive anomaly when set alongside Antonioni and Buñuel's surrealism, and Fellini's scandal provoking *La Dolce Vita*. The British critics called it a 'calming note in a discordant symphony'; *Le Monde* acknowledged that 'from time to time it's nice to see normal and healthy people on screen'.[129]

It is only towards the end of the Thaw period, that is, in the mid-1960s, that we can witness the emergence of the pure optical and sound images in Soviet films, such as Khutsiyev's *July Rain* (1966), Shpalikov's *Long Happy Life* (1966) and, of course, Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (1966), considered to be the last film of the Thaw era. In this section, I will discuss how the "trip/ballad" form manifests itself first in the Thaw war film and then in the early "poetic cinema."

Wanderings in a War Movie

Chukhrai's *Ballade of a Soldier* is justifiably praised for having introduced a new kind of Soviet subjectivity characterized by authentic sincerity and disarming naiveté and sharply opposed to the cold austerity of Stalinist superheroes. The film narrates about a nineteen-year-old soldier Alyosha who becomes a war hero purely by accident: while running from the enemy tanks as they chase him through the battlefield, he fires at them in fear and desperation and, to his own surprise, hit them. For his bravery, which he attempts to disclaim out of modesty, he is granted a medal which he trades for a six-day leave to visit his mother at home. What *Ballade* then offers to the viewer is Alyoasha's "continual return journey" to his home in a Russian village with multiple digressions, delays and interruptions which eventually leave him only a minute to kiss and embrace his mother before rushing back to the Front, where he is killed, as we learn from the off-screen narrator. The film's time frame and progressive teleology strictly set at the beginning are thus continuously dismantled by the protagonist's "aberrant" movements through multiple urban and rural spaces devastated by war. As Deleuze would put it, Chukhrai's journey narrative becomes a ballade of *balade* (trip or wandering) which displaces the linearity of movement by discontinuous deviations from the goal caused the slackening of the sensory-motor link between the hero and the milieu.

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[129]   Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, 97.

In *Ballade*, Alyosha's short leave from the war temporality expands into his falling out of the empirical temporality as such regulated by timetables, schedules and deadlines. His progressive trip to home is broken down into a series of digressions, during which he sacrifices his precious time for helping others on various utterly insignificant occasions. At the train station he volunteers to help a one-legged soldier carry a suitcase and because of this he misses the train. He misses another train when he attempts to fetch water to his accidental travelling companion Shura. Although he gets a lift to the next station from an old woman truck driver, he is still too late. The train has already departed yet Shura is awaiting him and they gradually fall in love with each other. Before the trip he has promised to his war fellow Pavlov to deliver a present to his wife in another town *en route*. Yet Pavlov's wife is having an affair and he delivers the present to Pavlov's invalid father instead. For Turovskaya, the protagonist's "road to his native village becomes his road to himself."[130] For Widdis, his journey similarly "acts as a path to self-knowledge or consciousness... [presented as] a series of trials and encounters... through which he grows in self-awareness."[131] For Woll, Alyosha's chance encounters constitute his "heroism" as "a mosaic consisting of many separate details."[132]

From Deleuzean perspective, however, the hero's return journey would be neither spiritually enlightening nor heroic even in ordinary sense. His personality hardly evolves throughout the narrative since there are no signs of the hero's internal progression in his physical digressions; just as his ordinary "heroism" seems to refer more to the viewer's impression rather than to his character quality. Chukhrai's *ba(l)ade* is essentially about the hero's failure of time management: he loses his time as well as his control over events in the present because he is always *affectively* open to the world and others in general. That is, the hero is as open to his mother as he is to others. In his trip to help her fix the roof, he keeps helping the strangers instead by getting affectively involved in their

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[130] Quoted from Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, 97.

[131] Emma Widdis, "'One Foot in the Air?' Landscape in the Soviet and Russian Road Movie," in *Cinema and Landscape*, eds. Graeme Harper, Jonathan R. Rayner, Intellect Books, 2010, 73-89, 80.

[132] Josephine Woll, *Real images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*, 98.

affairs. His affection is multiplied and disseminated and so is his action, or the sensory-motor link between situation and response. For Deleuze, affection serves as the interval between perception and action. That is, the affection-image is what enables the character's reaction to what s/he perceives. With the "break-up of the sensory-motor schema" after the war, according to Deleuze, the narration similarly gets fragmented because of "the rise of situations to which one can no longer react" (C2 272). In *Ballade*, on the contrary, the narrative is fragmented because the hero is affectively responsive to *all* situations occurring to him. In a strictly Deleuzean sense, there is no crisis of the action-image in Chukhrai's *Ballade*, yet there is definitely the affective openness to "intolerable" situations (rather than the Stalinist denial of them) which would later trigger that crisis.

Whereas in *Ballade* the character's sensory-motor whole is splintered and dispersed into multiple contingent actions, in Bondarchuk's *Fate of Man* (1959) it is nevertheless unified by the hero's spiritual evolution as the result of his traumatic encounters during the war. The narrative totality and continuity (or "fate") of Sokolov's numerous hardships and wanderings that constitute the film's plot (e.g. the loss of his family, his captivity, escape, etc.) are provided by the fact that the protagonist himself plays the role of narrator presenting the story of his life in a series of flashbacks to his fellow military driver. Even though he is irreparably damaged by the war, he is celebrated as a survivor who has managed to put together the scattered pieces of his life and identity and become a responsible father for his adopted son, playing around while he recounts his story. Sokolov is undoubtedly no longer a Soviet hero but he is proudly a Russian man. Whereas in *A Tale of a Real Man*, the hero overcomes his ordeals because he is a *Soviet* pilot, in *Fate* he finds his will power in the fact he is a *Russian* soldier. In the concentration camp, for example, Sokolov has a drinking duel with the Nazi officer: despite his hunger, he refuses to eat the offered bread with vodka by claiming that a Russian soldier never eats after drinking (he does nevertheless break off a demonstratively tiny crumb after his third glass). As Graham Roberts observes, "the kind of masculinity which

Sokolov represents can be read as a sign of the Soviet Union's new-found confidence under Khrushchev."[133] Enjoying huge commercial success at the time, Bondarchuk's film, therefore, resolves the crisis of the Soviet action-image by removing it from the Stalinist context and refashioning it in terms of the hero's Russian patriotism and dedication to family values.

Receding from the ideological constraints of socialist realism, the Thaw action-image gravitated toward the conventional psychological realism. Efros' *Two in the Steppe* (1962) similarly deheroizes the protagonist who fails to deliver the commander's order because of his panic attack in the battlefield. The army tribunal sentences him to death for cowardice, yet the sudden intrusion of German troops interrupts his execution, which leaves the hero together with his committed escort alone in the steppe disconnected from their battalion. Efros' faint-hearted soldier, nevertheless, manages to reclaim his heroism, or sensory-motor whole, towards the end of the film: while randomly wandering through the vast spaces of the Russian steppe and joining scattered military units in occasional combats, he never attempts to escape from his escort; even after the other gets killed, he returns to the commander and demands to repeat execution. The spiritually reformed soldier is acquitted and the action-image, therefore, restored. That is to say, the deheroization of military action in the Thaw cinema, influenced by the public acknowledgment of the enormity of war casualties concealed by Stalin's government, hardly undermines the overall coherence of the action-image, in which the sensory-motor link is only temporarily suspended. In this regard, Stolper's *The Living and the Dead* (1964), a long overdue "artistic explanation of what happened in the summer and fall of 1941,"[134] entirely focuses on the chaos and confusion of the first months of the war during which the Soviet Army was encircled and paralyzed. The film is often praised for its honest representation of the immensity of the disaster at that time: crowds of scared refugees and disoriented soldiers from disrupted battalions intermingle with each other, running into different

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[133] Quoted from John Haynes, *New Soviet Man: Gender and Masculinity in Stalinist Soviet Cinema*, 176.

[134] Denise Youngblood, *Russian War Films: On the Cinema Front, 1914-2005*, University Press of Kansas, 2006, 137.

directions, falling dead here and there under constant bombardment and sudden attacks of German

tanks; soldiers losing their weapons and documents and committing suicide in despair. *The Living*,

nevertheless, concludes with a Soviet massive counter-offensive just as the wounded protagonist,

the officer Sintsov, who has lost his documents and is awaiting a trial, is reinstated in his title.

The Thaw combat film, although richly permeated with disoriented movements and

temporary sensory-motor ruptures, remained the last refuge for the Soviet action-image, in which

the hero's enfeebled capacity to react to situations, no matter how "unbearable" they were, was

carefully amended and readjusted according to current ideological demands. Even in Alov and

Naumov's *Peace to Him Who Enters* (1961), an anti-war road movie about a group of people

driving to a hospital through devastated German landscapes at the end of the war, the components of

the action-image are intentionally slackened only to emphasize the peaceful character of Soviet

soldiers occupying Berlin in 1945, in which the film effectively succeeds by making its heroes get

lost on their way several times and be as harmless and weak as possible. For example, one of the

characters responsible for this dangerous trip is an inexperienced and fearful young lieutenant who

has never been in combat, while his companions are a wounded soldier unable to speak after

concussion and a pregnant German woman. The only sophisticated person in this team is the driver

himself who, however, is conveniently removed by the German sniper's shot at the beginning of

their adventure.

Wanderings in Poetic Cinema

The crisis of the action-image was most strongly implemented in the "poetic cinema" where the

protagonist was not a soldier but an artist, a teenager or a child. Many critics have noticed that the

Thaw cinema was virtually obsessed with the figure of child as a protagonist. As Prokhorov

observes, in order to fight the epic monumentalism of Stalinist cinema in favor of "individuality,

domesticity, and emotional self-expression," the Thaw filmmakers "literally reduced the hero in size and made him much younger and more spontaneous."[135] "If there were such term as "pedomania," writes Anninskii, "it would perfectly define that conscious or unconscious tendency which appeared in our cinema of the early sixties, i.e. an attention to a little future person put at the center as our moral judge."[136] For Deleuze, in this regard, the figure of child as a seer becomes particularly important in effecting that crisis which, in turn, triggers the emergence of a new sound and optical image disconnected from action. As he writes,

> in the adult world, the child is affected by a certain motor helplessness, but one which makes him all the more capable of seeing and hearing. Similarly, if everyday banality is so important, it is because, being subject to sensory-motor schemata which are automatic and preestablished, it is all the more liable… suddenly to free itself from the laws of this schema and reveal itself in a visual and sound nakedness… There is… a necessary passage from the crisis of image-action to the pure optical-sound image. Sometimes it is an evolution from one aspect to the other: beginning with trip/ballad films [*films de bal(l)ade*] with the sensory-motor connections slackened, and then reaching purely optical and sound situations. Sometimes the two coexist in the same film like two levels, the first of which serves merely as a melodic line for the second (C2 3-4).

The "visual and sound nakedness" of everyday banality perceived by the child is the main theme of Mikhail Kalik's *Man Follows the Sun* (1962), whose innovative genre, according to one commentator, resembles a "lyrical ballad as it inscribes the novelistic principle of narration into its overall "poetic" composition."[137] Kalik's film is widely considered as the Russian version of Albert Lamorisse's short *The Red Balloon* (1956). Both features focus on the imaginary friendship between the child and the object in the context of urban space: Sandu befriends the sun just as Pascal the red balloon. Yet Kalik's film significantly departs from its French predecessor in two important moments. First, in Lamorisse's "fairy tale" the boy's "affair of the imagination" is possible due to "the zoomorphism of the balloon" merging with "the anthropomorphism of the animals,"[138] an affair which is easily transcribed into Winnicott's model of the child's imaginary relationship with the

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[135] Alexander Prokhorov, "The Adolescent and the Child in the Cinema of the Thaw," Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema, 2007, Vol. 1.2. 115-129, 115.

[136] Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesyatniki i my*, 88-89.

[137] Natalia Balandina, "Poeticheskoe prostranstvo Mikhaila Kalika," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski,* vol. 57, 2002: http://www.kinozapiski.ru/ru/print/sendvalues/482/

[138] André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* Volume 1, University of California Press, 2005, 45.

transitional object and which solicits essentially allegorical interpretations. As Catherine Liu points out, "Lamorisse's narrative… is intensely allegorical and pivots on the anthropomorphization of the balloon, which appears first as a mischievous and loyal companion and then as martyred victim of a resentful mob when it falls victim to the persecution of group of ragamuffin bullies. Lamorisse's balloon can be interpreted as a martyr to class resentment; its rebirth a Christ-like resurrection."[139] Second, Lamorisse's "imaginary documentary,"[140] despite its visual splendor, does not represent the Parisian space in its "visual and sound nakedness" but diegetically frames it as a contrasting background for the balloon's singularity: the city is deliberately colored in grey and dark tones to make the balloon look vividly and exceptionally red or crimson. In *Man Follows the Sun*, Sandu's imaginary friend is the opposite of the zoomorphic/anthropomorphic "balloon that can follow its master like a little dog."[141] As the film's title pointedly suggests, it is Sandu, or rather "a man," who follows the sun. Such a reversal of the boy's relationship with the imaginary companion effectively transcends the projected anthropomorphism of the sun by radically opening the protagonist's perception toward the brightness and vastness of the world. In contrast to Lamorisse's gloomy ambience, therefore, Kalik's sunlit city spaces emphatically manifest their full exuberant autonomy.

Man Follows the Sun narrates about one day of the life of a five-year-old boy who has heard from his fellows at the playground that if one follows the sun in its trek, one can cover the entire earth and get back to the same spot of departure but from the other side. Excited about this idea, the boy decides to prove it in practice and sets off on a journey by rolling his hoop around the city and looking at things through bits of tinted glass. During his urban odyssey, he encounters a great number of amusing, absolutely disconnected strangers whose sketchy portraits and stories constitute the film's fragmented narrative: for example, a lottery ticket vendor; a scientist from the Sun

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[139] Catherine Liu, "The Flight of the Red balloon (2007) and D.W. Winnicot", in Pyschoanalytic Pscyhology. Vol 28(3), 2011, 446-456, 446-447.
[140] André Bazin 46 *What is Cinema?*, 46.
[141] Ibid., 45.

Research Institute; a boy with a magnifying glass; a girl rushing to a date with a bunch of multi-colored balloons; happy fathers at a maternity hospital; a motorcycle racer who performs dangerous stunts yet turns out to be a timid aged man rather than a daredevil; a young woman working as a gardener taking care of sunflowers in her flower bed and her boss, a park attendant, who cuts a sunflower down by insisting on replacing them with roses; a shoeshine man with a passion for soccer who has lost his legs in the war; a funeral procession and taxi drivers respectfully waiting for it to pass; a truck driver worried about his sister dating a suspicious stranger; golden fish in the fountain; gymnasts working out in a huge stadium while the sun is setting down. By the end of the day, Sandu falls asleep next to a stone lion on the street. In his dream, most characters he has met during the day reappear in their surreal metamorphoses: the park attendant cuts a sunflower and turns into a mannequin, while the now gigantic sunflower replaces the dead body in a funeral procession which the boy and the gardener follow in somber silence. Then comes the shoeshine man who now has his legs again standing against the huge disc of the sun in the background. He guides the boy along a wide beautiful street at the end of which they would meet the sun. Next the boy sits near the truck driver who gave him a lift but then he drives the truck himself giving a lift to one of the happy fathers with a child he met at the maternity hospital. At the end of his dream he sees himself at the place of the lottery-ticket vendor but instead of lottery-tickets he gives out pieces of tinted glass to other children. They look at the world through the glass, which makes the world appear splintered into multicolored fragments. He wakes up in the arms of a man who introduces himself as a military musician. Together they now go to meet the sunrise.

The film's narrative could not be more naïve and banal. Yet the naïve banality of the everyday is precisely what the film is striving for since its goal is to present the world through the eyes of the child. The entire film consists of a series of discontinuous pure optical and sound situations, which the protagonist passively observes and moves on without responding to them. As

one Soviet critic remarked, "the director renders the narrative of his film as rhythmic yet passionless. The possibilities of passions emerge and the viewer does entertain them. But passions themselves are absent."[142]Unlike Lamorisse's *The Red Balloon*, the film does not contain any conflict, such as that between individual and collective or brightness and darkness. The motifs around which the narrative is loosely organized are quite minimal and archetypal: such as birth (maternity hospital) and death (funeral precession) or good (the gardener) and evil (the park attendant). The boy's wandering is fundamentally anti-teleological: by following the sun he intends to arrive at the same place from which he sets off. Furthermore, not only does the boy abstain from reacting to numerous situations he encounters, he lets them enter his memory, from which they reemerge as dream-images. As Deleuze characterizes the same process, "between the reality of the setting and that of the action, it is no longer a motor extension which is established, but rather a dreamlike connection through the intermediary of the liberated sense organs" (C2 4). That is, the film reenacts the passage of the cinematic image from the actual to the virtual and it is the perception of the five-year-old boy that makes this passage possible. It is at this point, according to Deleuze, when the actual environment loses its utilitarian and diegetic functions and gets disconnected from the character's actions and passions, that "objects and settings [*milieux*] take on an autonomous, material reality which gives them an importance in themselves" (C2 4). Such an autonomous "deactivated" milieu born by pure optical situations is, for Deleuze, "any-space-whatever,"   i.e. a singular "space of virtual conjunction" (C1 109) opposed to the "qualified space-time of the old realism" (C1 208). Removed from their ideological determination and infused with impersonal non-actualized affects, the film's fragmented spaces (e.g. streets, alleys, parks, roads, stadium, etc.) understandably met a negative reaction from the Communist censors. As one of them protested, "a man follows the sun, but what does he see? He sees total nonsense, not Soviet

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[142] Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesyatniki i my*, 90.

achievements."[143] By its de-socialized and dehumanized nature, any-space-whatever is therefore one of the most powerful cinematic means of subversion of the ideological status quo. Deleuze exemplifies such spaces by Bresson's disconnected milieus and, most importantly, Antonioni's empty alienated landscapes. In Soviet post-war cinema, however, such spaces began appearing only towards the end of the Thaw era, such as in Shpalikov's *Long Happy Life* (1966) or Khutsiev's *July Rain* (1966), where the camera seems to fall out of the diegetic course of events for a moment and forget about the viewer and characters by staring at unrelated areas and strangers involved in their own activities.

Whereas in *Fate of Man* a series of disconnected situations and milieus is organized into a new narrative totality through the *aged* soldier's revision of his Soviet identity in terms of Russian patriotism and family values and in *Ballad of a Soldier* such situations are fully reciprocated and actualized thanks to the *young* hero's affective openness to them, in *Man Follows the Sun* the *child* protagonist no longer totalizes his chance encounters into a sensory-motor and narrative whole but lets them stand on their own, in their literal and material autonomy, and thus unconsciously convert them into dream-images. The transformation, or counter-actualization, of the actual situation into a virtual entity is therefore predicated on the subject's bracketing or reduction of his/her clichéd predisposition toward the external world (i.e. Husserlian *epoché*), a phenomenological procedure most easily available to the child consciousness. The artist's perception is similarly characterized by the suspension of mental clichés as well as the propensity to recreate the world in its original materiality. Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* fully embraces the artistic perspective on reality by foregrounding the figure of the fifteenth century monk and icon painter as a distant and mostly silent observer of random historical events in pre-modern Russia. Before *Andrei Rublev*, Tarkovsky already deployed the child seer as a protagonist in his *The Steamroller and the Violin* (1961) and

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[143] Lev Frukhtman, "'Ya rodilsya svobodnym chelovekom…' (zametki o tvorchestve kinorezhissiora Mikhaila Kalika)," *Dom uchionykh i spetsialistov Rekhovota*, January 2012: http://www.rehes.org/lst7/lst7_k.html

Ivan's Childhood (1962), although not in the voyage narrative form. In *Rublev*, Tarkovsky's seer is a pilgrim wandering through various devastated landscapes and witnessing directly or indirectly the nation's violent past. As Turovskaya points out, Rublev's "role in the action is passive rather than active: that of an observer, mediating upon what happens…"[144] The film intentionally deviates from historical and biographical genre conventions by effectively defying chronological accuracy in both historical and personal facts. Even though each episode of the film begins with a historical date, this chronological marker is nothing more than a self-conscious rhetorical devise to produce the Barthesian "reality effect."[145] As the director explains, the film's "novellas are not connected by a traditional chronological line, but by the poetic logic for the need for Rublyov to paint his celebrated 'Trinity'" (ST 34-5). That is to say, for Tarkovsky, Rublev's "Trinity" was the result of what he had seen during his life. This is why after the film's numerous "too naturalistic" and "physiological"[146] scenes of shocking violence and misery, the painter's icons are shown only in the epilogue, the only part of the film in color. Tarkovsky's film is, therefore, not a reconstruction of Rublev's life or work; it is rather a reconstruction of his vision, which is of course the vision of the director himself. In this regard, *Andrei Rublev* is more autobiographical than a biopic.

2.4. From Recollection to Dreams: the Soviet Time-Image Precursors

Recollection and the Birth of Temporal Subjectivity

In the fourth chapter of *Cinema 2*, Deleuze discusses the transition of cinematic image from pure optical (and sound) situations to the initial layers of the virtual constituted by memory, dream and the depersonalized movement of the world. Cut off from the motor extension, since the character "no longer knows how or is no longer able to react to the situation" (C2 45), the optical image

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[144] Maya Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, Faber & Faber, 1989, 37.

[145] Roland Barthes, "Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language*, University of California Press, 1989, 141-149.

[146] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, Indiana University Press, 1994, 85.

"enters into relation with a 'recollection-image' that it calls up" (C2 46). This passage follows the same steps of the evolution of the first passive synthesis of the present into the second passive synthesis of the past discussed in the previous chapter and it symbolizes the emergence of a new kind of subjectivity rooted in the past rather than the present. Whereas in the movement-image the active subject is born from the gap (i.e. affection-image) between a received action (i.e. perception-image) and an executed reaction (i.e. action-image), "with recollection-images," writes Deleuze, "a whole new sense of subjectivity appears" (C2 47). As he elaborates, with the rupture of the sensory-motor link,

> the recollection-image comes to fill the gap and really does fulfill it, in such a way that it leads us back individually to perception, instead of extending this into generic movement. Subjectivity, then, takes on a new sense, which is no longer motor or material, but temporal and spiritual… (ibid.)

At the most surface level of the subjectivity's transition towards the virtual, the relation between the optical image and the recollection-image is cinematically captured by the flashback, a "conventional, extrinsic device" designating "a closed circuit which goes from the present to the past, then leads us back to the [renewed] present born through flashbacks" (C2 48). As a link between the present and the past, the flashback is nevertheless subordinated to the utilitarian demands of the present and thus indicates "a causality which is psychological" and "analogous to a sensory-motor determinism" (ibid.). Its purpose is not to draw the subject away into the domain of the virtual but, on the contrary, to integrate it back into the actual and allow "the sensory-motor flux to take up its temporarily interrupted course again" (C2 54). That is, by expanding and improving the subject's vision and understanding of the present, the flashback is invoked to incorporate the deeper layers of the past into the present and thus confirm "the progression of a linear narration" (C2 48). In Carné's films, for example, flashbacks are imposed and justified by the narrative necessity of destiny that organizes events of the past and the present into a comprehensible continuity. As Deleuze writes, "it is destiny which goes beyond determinism and causality; it is destiny that sketches out a super-linearity; it is destiny that both justifies flashback and provides recollection-

images with a mark of the past" (ibid.). In *Pavel Korchagin* and *Fate of Man* discussed above, the narrative similarly proceeds via flashbacks that are integrated into the temporality of the present. And it is thanks to the flashbacks that the characters return to action: Korchagin starts rewriting his novel and Sokolov embraces his life as "fate" and becomes a good father for his adopted son. As Birgit Beumers points out, Thaw cinema "began to use the flashback to explain action and indulge in the psychological realism of the Moscow Art Theatre, where a basic event triggers the action of the character in the present."[147] For Deleuze, however, destiny is a much larger notion; rather than being at the service of the present, it "can affirm a pure power of time which overflows all memory, an already-past which exceeds all recollections" (ibid.). Such destiny, which is rooted in the immemorial past rather than subjected to the linear present, will be later exemplified by Tarkovsky's films in which characters are destined to follow virtual paths of other lives from previous generations.

Flashbacks, therefore, do not indicate the birth of a new subjectivity, they reactivate an old one. The recollection-image provided by the flashback, similarly, does not refer to an *a priori* past in general but represents the past (or the virtual) in terms of the present (or the actual). As Deleuze explains,

> the recollection-image is not virtual, it actualizes a virtuality on its own account. This is why the recollection-image does not deliver the past to us, but only represents the former present that the past 'was'. The recollection-image is an image which is actualized or in process of being made actual, which does not form with the actual, present image a circuit of indiscernibility (C2 54).

According to Deleuze's ideal scenario, the recollection-image should invoke increasingly deeper and more distant recollections that are beyond attentive recognition and tend toward a "pure recollection" which stands for a virtuality in Bergson's *Matter and Memory*. This is why he connects pure optical images to the *unconscious* manifestations of memory, such as déjà vu effects, dream-images and fantasies. And yet, despite its conservative and "psychologistic" nature at the

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[147] Birgit Beumers, *A History of Russian Cinema*, 128.

initial (flashback) stage, the recollection-image does trigger a new process within subjectivity by centralizing the mediation of memory in one's relation to the milieu. Given that it fills up the gap in which the affection-image used to be in the movement-image, it is safe to suggest that the emergence of a new subjectivity begins with the affection which resists being extended into action and continues to linger in the mind by summoning up mnemonic associations. The cinema of memory should thus be unavoidably sentimental and melodramatic (i.e. affectionate) at the early stage of the recollection-image, as it was in Soviet Thaw films and is in contemporary Hollywoodesque melodramas, such as Richard Curtis' *About Time* (2013).

The Cranes Are Flying*: From Perception to Recollection and Back*

The early Thaw cinema is commonly characterized by a thorough revision of the traumatic war experience which was ultimately suppressed by the Stalinist myth of the Soviet victory over Fascism, glorified in such propaganda films as Pyrev's *Six o'Clock in the Evening after the War* (1944), shot *before* the war ended, Savchenko's *The Third Blow* (1948), Aleksandrov and Utkin's *Encounter at the Elbe* (1949) and Chiaureli's *The Fall of Berlin* (1950). After Stalin's death, the heroic triumphalism was almost immediately replaced by the overwhelming mourning for millions of deaths in the war just as the images of handicapped veterans (e.g. blind, legless, scarred, concussed, traumatized, etc.) inundated the Thaw screens.

Kalatozov's *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957) is the earliest and probably best representation of the war trauma that inaugurated the perspective of memory in Soviet film. Anninskii even asserted that the film initiated the Thaw era as such: "Everything started with the *Cranes*."[148] Indeed, everything in this film manifested the freedom and innovation of the period. As a homefront war melodrama, the film centers on a powerless, emotionally fragile and morally fallen heroine Veronika who has betrayed her fiancé Boris perished in the war (by marrying her stepbrother who raped her)

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[148] Lev Anninskii, *Shestidesyatniki i my*, 8.

yet ardently guards and cherishes her memory of him, through which she finds her spiritual redemption. The character's affective path to memory is thus opened through love, betrayal, guilt and mourning. Visually, the film is famous for Urusevsky's dazzling cinematography rapidly interchanging panoramic, crane, low-angle, and close-up shots. The *Cranes*'s expressive aesthetics is usually explained by the fact that its cameraman was the student of the avant-garde photographer Aleksandr Rodchenko. Thanks to *Cranes*, the world discovered that the Soviets could grieve too, which helped the film earn the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival. As Izvolova rightly observes, despite the "unsurpassable abyss"[149] by which the film radically separates itself from the rigid codes of the previous decades, its visual language is rooted in the Soviet cinema of the 1920s; what is truly innovative in the film is its new kind of the heroine's subjectivity characterized by insecurity, immaturity and incompleteness. Izvolova even compares her with a "little child carrying the heavy burden of adult passions."[150]

Cranes begins and ends with the image of cranes. At the beginning, it is the perception-image. Boris and Veronika happily wander the empty streets of Moscow and after he draws her attention to the flock of cranes overhead, she recites a poem and kisses him gently. This is the last day of peace in Russia. During the opening credits, the Kremlin clock emblematically shows four in the morning, the time of German invasion of USSR. At the end of the film, it is already the recollection-image. At the train station crowded with joyful soldiers returning from the war, Veronika is finally persuaded about the death of her lover. The film concludes with her seeing the same flock of cranes flying in the sky. Both images form a symmetrical circuit of perception and memory, with the event of Boris's death right in the middle of the film. The film's message is that the heroine finds her redemption by remaining faithful to her lover even after her betrayal and his death: ultimately, it is memory that redeems her.

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[149] I. Izvolova, "Drugoe prostranstvo" in *Kinematograf ottepeli*, Moskva: Materik, 1996, 77-91, 80.
[150] Ibid., 81.

At the time of its release, the film was criticized mainly for its poor dramaturgy: "the heroine's psychologically unmotivated betrayal seemed as unexpected as her subsequent repentance in unusual circumstances."[151] The succession of events in the film indeed makes little sense from the point of view of "the progression of a linear narration" (C2 48) and manifestly demands a "completely new reading."[152] As Woll observes, the film's composition "is shaped like an hourglass, with Boris's death the center or fulcrum of the film, its second half an inverted reflection of the first."[153] That is, the visual symmetry between perception and recollection inscribed in the image of cranes organizes the film's narrative as a whole. The hourglass structure of the film is most evident at its center where both present and past are superimposed on and mixed with each other within a single frame: shot by the sniper bullet, Boris is slowly falling *down* and seeing himself running *up* the spinning staircase of Veronika's house. That is, the perception-image of the clouded sky with elongated birches seen by dying Boris (shot at *low* angle) is *spinning*, like a propeller, together with the recollection-image of his raising up toward her apartment (shot at *high* angle), from which they come out dressed up for the wedding. The visual dialectic of rise and fall is further inscribed in the scene of Veronika's attempted suicide later in the film. Ready to jump off the railroad bridge onto a coming train, she is suddenly interrupted by the sound of the truck's squeaking brakes trying to avoid a child crossing the road. She rushes toward the boy and saves him, whose name turns out to be Boris as well. The figure of Boris "junior" symbolically rejuvenates Veronika's life as she temporarily adopts the boy until his mother is found. Finally, the concluding crane shot of the train station with soldiers *returning* from the war is parallel to the analogous sequence with soldiers *departing* to the war at the beginning. In both sequences, Veronika is trying to get through the jam-packed crowd of various people in order to find Boris. Whereas in the scene of the soldiers'

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[151] Vitaly Troyanovsky, "Letyat zhuravli. Tret' veka spustya," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski,* no 17, 1993, 49-56, 50.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Josephine Woll, *Cranes are Flying: The Film Companion*, I.B.Tauris, 2003, 47.

departure she finally finds Boris yet is separated from him by the iron fence, in that of the soldiers' return she is united with him virtually via the image of cranes flying over Moscow.

The *Cranes*'s narrative chronologically following the heroine's journey through falls to subsequent rises could certainly be viewed in a linear successive fashion. Yet as the emergent time-image, the film most powerfully succeeds in sewing together the events of past and present into dual or mutual images in which perception (or actual) and recollection (or virtual) interchange with each other. According to Deleuze, when the reciprocity between past and present reaches its maximum, i.e. the mirror-like effect of their indiscernibility within a single shot, then such mutual image becomes the crystal-image in which real and imaginary are no longer distinguishable. In *Cranes*, however, we can still discern perception from recollection (the former is in the first half, the latter in the second), so the film does not quite fully immerse itself in the virtual domain of memory described by the operation of the crystal-image (which, as we will see, is the prime characteristic of Tarkovsky's later work). Nevertheless, the film's hourglass composition does signal the emergence of a new spiritual subjectivity born out of time rather than through spatial and ideological determination and thus provided the direction toward the future development of the time-image.

Wings*: From Memory to Postmemory*

The theme of memory continued to dominate in the sixties as well. Yet the heroes of the Soviet sixties are fundamentally different from that of the fifties. As Troianovsky points out, "The first thing you notice when you look at the screen heroes of the 1960 is their youth."[154] Whereas the latter were directly affected by the war and Stalinism, the former were separated from this tragic past by the generation gap. As a result, in the sixties films the historical representation of war significantly lessened, while the particulars of everyday existence and contemporaneity seemed to be a more

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[154] Quoted from Lilya Kaganovsky, "Postmemory, Countermemory: Soviet Cinema of the 1960sThe Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World Anne E. Gorsuch, Diane P. Koenker, Indiana University Press, May 1, 2013, 235-251, 239.

engaging subject for predominantly young directors. The memory of national trauma, nevertheless, did not evaporate from the screens but only changed its nature: rather than being a recollection of actual events, it became more like an artifact imaginatively manufactured by a young person. To define such artificial form of remembering divided by the generational split, Lilya Kaganovsky borrows Marianne Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" that "characterizes experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated."[155] For Kaganovsky, one of the most exemplary Thaw films that demonstrates the operation of "postmemory" is Khutsiev's *Lenin's Guard* (1965), the cult film celebrating the *jeunesse* of the sixties. In a dream the twenty-three-year-old protagonist Sergei meets his father as a younger man because he was killed during the war when he was twenty one. Sergei wants from him an advice on "how to live" yet the father cannot answer him because of his younger age. The protagonist, therefore, remembers what he has never experienced directly. The figure of the father is present in the film only as a photograph on the wall. Besides the mother's silent mourning and the father's letters from the front, this photograph is the only connection Sergei can make with his father as well as the memory of the war trauma. As Hirsch suggests, "Photographs in their enduring "umbilical" connection to life are precisely the medium for first- and second-generation remembrance, memory and postmemory. They are the leftovers… [that] affirm the past's existence and… signal its unbridgeable distance."[156]

Hirsch's distinction between memory and postmemory, used by Kaganovsky to differentiate Soviet sixties cinema from its early Thaw period, strongly resonates with Deleuze's juxtaposition of empirical or habitual memory with transcendental one. That is, both postmemory and transcendental memories no longer refer to the direct (first-hand) recollection of real events that are cinematically

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[155] Ibid., 236.
[156] Ibid., 247-8.

represented as recollection-images; they remember what never happened in actuality and are thus presented as dream- and crystal-images. Just as the former requires a material object , such as a photograph or a letter, as an "umbilical connection" to the distant past, the latter is equally triggered by a sensuous sign, such as the Proustean madeleine that resurrects the virtual image of Combray "which was never present: the in-itself of Combray" (DR 85). And yet, the similarity between these two kinds of memory is limited, since both of them have fundamentally opposite trajectories of development. Hirsch's postmemory, although "mediated through an imaginative investment and creation,"[157] is still striving towards the original object of remembrance. It deploys imagination only as a compensatory mechanism in order to recreate the first-hand memory. Deleuze, on the contrary, deploys imagination for its own sake by pushing the operation of memory away from its empirical attachments and towards its transcendental limit. In other words, Hirsch's postmemory *recreates* the object of the original memory by using imagination, while Deleuze's transcendental memory imaginatively *creates* something absolutely new by using the object of the original memory. The former moves towards the actual, the latter towards the virtual. The theme of memory in Soviet sixties could thus be interpreted in two divergent ways: as an attempt to deal with the trauma of the tragic past or an attempt to construct a new kind of subjectivity through time. The first scenario would imply the revision of an old identity and its subsequent reintegration into the symbolic order, the second a creation of a new one, which presupposes the subject's further sliding into the deeper layers of the virtual, outside the symbolic order. Shepitko's *Wings* (1966) exemplifies this dilemma of interpretation.

Wings centers on a female protagonist who belongs to the previous generation of Stalinist communists displaced from their hegemonic position by the liberal pro-Western youngsters of the Thaw era. Nadezhda is a former fighter pilot, a decorated war hero, who is now the schoolmistress

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[157] Ibid., 236.

of a local polytechnic college in a provincial town. As a quintessential Stalinist figure, she is portrayed as a rigid bureaucrat firmly sticking to the ideals of military discipline and high morality. Despite her active role in social life, she is disrespected and even hated by her students, sexually avoided by men and seems embarrassing to her adopted daughter. Her anachronism in the new, post-Stalinist milieu is symbolically rendered by the fact that she dates the museum curator Pasha, who displays the photograph of her younger self in his exhibition of war heroes. Unfit for contemporary life yet acknowledged as a museum relic, she retreats into her inner world recollecting her earlier years in the war and day dreaming of flying.

Despite the past's strong hold on the heroine, the temporality of the present nevertheless dominates the film's seemingly realist narrative dispassionately following her pathetic failures to succeed in the new social order. Nadezhda's flashbacks are rare and sudden; their unmotivated appearance does not change the course of events in the present. Given as disembodied point-of-view shots and accompanied by melancholic soundtrack, they provide various aerial views of the earth and clouds in the sky from the height of the flying airplane. While lying on the beach with the children of her friend, she similarly observes a toy airplane freely gliding through air, also presented from her direct point of view and accompanied by the same refrain. It is only towards the end of the film that the two flashback sequences narratively explain the traumatic nature of her immersion in the past. During the war she was in love with her fellow pilot Mitya who got killed in aerial combat. In the first flashback Nadezhda and Mitya have an affectionate conversation, the intimacy of which sharply contrasts the cold rigidity of her social interactions in the 1960s present. The second provides fragmentary and fleeting glimpses of Mitya's burning plane hit in the battle and Nadezhda in her plane desperately following Mitya to the ground. The realist representation of Nadezhda's war-time past is often interrupted by the camera turning the images of her memory into still frames momentarily frozen like snapshots on the screen, as if they were remembered as photographs.

The contrasting visual representation of Nadezhda's present and past - that is, the linear sequence of events shot from the objective point of view and the fragmentary collage of images freezing into still frames and shot from the subjective point of view, - demonstrates how the latter traumatically resists being integrated into the former. The heroine's flashbacks do not return her to actions in the present. Their disruptive counter-actualized nature, on the contrary, weakens her sensory-motor connection with the peacetime milieu and diverts her perception back to the images of sky and planes dancing in the air. In the final sequence, she takes a walk out to the airfield, which she visits sometimes, climbs into the cockpit of a stationary airplane and settles into the pilot's seat. A group of young cadets notice Nadezhda inside the plane and decide to give her a mock ride by pushing it manually across the field toward the aircraft hangar. While approaching the hangar's entrance, her excitement and laughter alternate with fear, sadness and tears. She starts up the engine, turns the plane around and takes off to the air.

Nadezhda's final departure as the traumatic reenactment of her wartime memory in the present could be viewed as her suicide since she never returns from her flight and the film ends with repeating the aerial views of the sky, similarly presented as disembodied point-of-view shots. For Kaganovsky, this scene symbolizes "the final liberation of the subject from the dominant order which both produces and constrains her"[158] just as the last views from the airplane are "a dizzying look at the world from a non-subject position liberated from gravity," "a disembodied, free-floating camera-eye released from its phantasmatic supports."[159] To extend Kaganovsky's suggestion, we may argue that the film's final disembodied suspension in the air is the time-image which enacts a seamless and indiscernible reciprocity between perception and recollection and eschews the subjectivity constructed by sensory-motor constraints. Yet Kaganovsky is inclined to read

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[158] Lilya Kaganovsky, "Ways of Seeing: On Kira Muratova's Brief Encounters and Larisa Shepit' ko's Wings," The Russian Review, Vol. 7.3. 2012, 482-499, 496.
[159] Ibid., 497.

Nadezhda's final flight as an act of suicide, i.e. as "Antigone's "NO!" - the rejection of subjectivity itself" since "there is no subject without order, no subjectivity without constraint"[160] The time-image, however, does produce a new despatialized kind of subjectivity beyond symbolic order. If the disembodied view of the sky in the last sequence no longer refers to the physically present gaze of the protagonist, metaphysically it does belong to the director herself and thus indicates the emergence of a different subjectivity born out of memory and time, that is, through the second passive synthesis of the past. For Shepit'ko, who was twenty eight years old at the time of the film's release, the anachronistic character of Nadezhda failing to reestablish the broken chain of time serves as a gateway to the direct presentation of time beyond the limits of the character's psychology. As she comments in her interview, "I could no longer become one (*slit'sia*) with the heroine, but worked instead from a kind of intuitive genetic memory of the lives of my parents during the war."[161] For Kaganovsky, Shepit'ko's "intuitive genetic memory" is analogous to Hirsch's postmemory that recreates the traumatic experience of her parents via imagination. Yet from Deleuzean perspective, such "genetic memory" suggests its closer affinity with the transcendental exercise of memory which overcomes its material anchorage in the consciousness of any individual character and delves into the deeper layers of the past as such in order to create an alternative temporal subjectivity independent of spatial constraints.

Ivan's Childhood*: From Dreams to Transcendental Memory*

Whereas in Kalatozov's *The Cranes Are Flying* the present and the past interact with each other along the linear narrative of the heroine's spiritual evolution and in Shepit'ko's *Wings* the latter traumatically disrupts the chronological stability of the former, in Tarkovsky's *Ivan's Childhood* (1962) the two temporalities, divided by an unsurpassable abyss, enter into a deadly conflict with

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[160] Ibid., 496.
[161] Ibid., 491.

each other. As Johnson and Petrie point out, *Ivan's Childhood*, albeit a "war" movie, radically

departs "from the revisionist war films of the "Thaw" period" due to "Tarkovsky's visual and aural

presentation, his use of stylized, often expressionistic camerawork and sound to present the

character's interior reality – primarily through dreams – but also to create a highly subjective

exterior world as well."[162] Johnson and Petrie's assessment of the novelty of Tarkovsky's cinematic

language seems, nevertheless, a bit exaggerated. Rather than viewing *Ivan's Childhood* in the light

of the director's later oeuvre, as these commentators implicitly seem to do, the film makes much

more sense as a fairly standard production of the Thaw era and post-war European cinema in

general. For example, highly expressionistic cinematography had already been present in *The*

Cranes Are Flying and other films shot by Urusevsky's virtuoso camera; the figure of the child

protagonist had evolved into what Anninskii calls "pedomania;" the emphasis on the character's

interior reality is what characterizes *all* Thaw films; the "hallucinatory quality" of the landscape,

which, according to Johnson and Petrie, "is closer to that of the Zone in *Stalker* than a conventional

war movie,"[163]. is but conventional precisely because of the proliferation of such dilapidated eerie

landscapes or ruins (i.e. "any-spaces-whatever") in post-war European films, beginning with

Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero*. Furthermore, Ivan's ultimate dedication to his revenge is

unmistakably indebted to the romantic pathos of the Thaw sublime action-image populated by

hyperactive revolutionary heroes overcommitted to their cause. Even Tarkovsky's use of dreams

does not seem too innovative at the time of the film's release. It is not by accident that Sartre in his

famous review of *Ivan's Childhood* is forced to address Tarkovsky's so-called "traditionalism,"

"outmoded expressionism and symbolism," criticized by Western critics, before his defense of the

existential merits of the "Soviet *400 Blows*."[164]As he writes by mocking the authoritative tone of

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[162] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 69.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Jean Paul Sartre, "Letter on the Critique of Ivan's Childhood" in *Tarkovsky*, ed. Nathan Dunne, Black Dog Publishing, 2008, 34-46, 44.

such critics: "They reproach him for Ivan's dreams: "Dreams! *We*, in the West, stopped using dreams long ago! Tarkovsky's slow on the uptake – those were alright between the wars!"[165]

What makes *Ivan's Childhood* truly untraditional is that it has managed to absorb all the thematic and stylistic tendencies in Soviet and European cinema popular at that time and organically unify them into a highly original work. Moreover, the film's originality is further reinforced precisely by the fact that it proved to be the first installment into Tarkovsky's larger edifice called "metaphysical cinema." In the 1960s, many Soviet filmmakers utilized expressionism, oneirism, individualism, childhood, etc.; yet in the post-Thaw period, the cinematic traits of the sixties rather quickly exhausted their creative potential and regressively mutated into more or less conventional motifs of the psychological drama of the stagnation period. Tarkovsky, however, was one of the few Russian directors, originated in the Thaw era, who succeeded in fully developing such trends to their logical perfection and crystallization at the philosophical level in his later work.

On the Deleuzean scale of cinematic progressive counter-actualization, *Ivan's Childhood* represents yet another stage of the memory's receding into the deeper domain of the virtual, since the protagonist cannot remember his past consciously. The film was commissioned to Tarkovsky after another Soviet director Eduard Abalov was unable to complete the project. Originally, the film titled as *Ivan* was envisioned as a straightforward adaptation of Vladimir Bogomolov's novella about a twelve-year-old boy who takes vengeance for the murder of his family in the World War II by serving a scout in the army despite his young age. Tarkovsky's *Ivan's Childhood* radically transforms the script of the standard socialist realist war film by adding the oneiric dimension to the protagonist's character. Not only do the memories of his pre-war pastoral childhood explain the rationality of his courage in the present, they are framed as dreams, that is, repressed in the unconscious and can only manifest themselves when the hero is physically inactive (either asleep or

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[165] Ibid., 36.

dead). By introducing the lengthy dream sequences as an independent narrative in the film,

Tarkovsky thus presents a necessarily *fractured* consciousness, which was long neglected in Soviet

cinema preferring one-dimensional heroes. Yet the fracture in the hero's mind (between self and

other, present and past, actual and virtual) is not rendered directly in the film; it is rather implied

through the irreconcilable antagonism of the two aspects of his split personality: Ivan the Nazi killer

and Ivan the happy child.

No reader of *Ivan's Childhood* has failed to observe that the divided nature of the

protagonist's psyche structures the visual poetics of the film in its entirety. In her chapter titled "A

World Cleft in Two," Turovskaya analyzes the ontological duality inscribed in the film in terms of

Victor Shklovsky's article "Poetry and Prose in the Cinema" and suggests that the elements of form

and style in Ivan's dream world prevail over those of plot and meaning in his real one.[166] Kovacs

and Szilagi argue that Tarkovsky's creation of an alternative reality through dreams proves to be the

main organizing principle of the film narrative in his later works.[167] As Johnson and Petri point out,

> From the very beginning Tarkovsky establishes powerful visual and aural contrasts between the worlds of
> dream and reality which constitute the film's dramatic center. While his shadowless dream world is bright,
> clean, full of sounds and images of the living beauty of nature, Ivan's "real" world is dirty, dark, deeply
> shadowed, distorted, with the mostly silent landscapes burnt and dead.[168]

Throughout the four dream sequences interspersed into Ivan's heroic life in the present (the first

opens the film, the second occurs after he returns from his mission, the third before he sets off to his

last mission, the forth concludes the film after Ivan's death), the atmosphere of sunlit serenity and

Edenic harmony permeates the screen. The very first shot shows Ivan looking through the spider's

web, he then listens to a cuckoo and encounters a butterfly. While chasing the flying insect, he is

raised above the leafy birches. After the levitation scene, which signals the viewer that this is a

dream, he sees his mother carrying a bucket of water that he happily drinks. The dream is

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[166] Maia Turovskaia, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*.

[167] András Bálint Kovács, Ákos Szilágyi, *Les mondes d'Andreï Tarkovski*, Age d'Homme, 1987.

[168] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 71.

interrupted by the sudden sound of machinegun fire. He wakes up in the dark and narrow room of an abandoned windmill where he has been hiding before he could safely cross the frontline in order to deliver to his commander the acquired information about the dislocation of German troops. In his return trip everything is starkly contrasted to what he previously experienced in the dream: cold weather in late autumn, a barren landscape with disabled army vehicles, dark water in the swamp which he has to pass through, tall dead trees ominously surrounding Ivan's tiny figure, his austerity and determination. The opposition between dream and reality is never resolved in the film but only continues to grow in details. In his other dreams he splashes clean transparent water in the well, has a lift with his sister on a lorry full of apples, gets soaked under the rain, plays hide-and-seek with other children, runs on the beach enjoying the sun. While awake, he spends most of his time in the dark and enclosed bunker conversing with his army fellows and eagerly waiting for his next reconnaissance mission, always filled with hate against the enemy. When his commander decides to send Ivan to a military school away from the war, he runs away and comes across a ruined house in a devastated village. His stay is interrupted by its mentally deranged inhabitant with a rooster grieving for his killed wife, an episodic character whose tragedy resonates with Ivan's.

Given Ivan's fundamental split into two opposed characters resisting any reconciliation, a split well captured even on the film posters colliding images of both his happy childhood and wartime service, the viewer's identification with the protagonist is similarly defocalized and polarized. Indeed, how shall we resolve the autonomy of each "Ivan" into one whole personality? This conundrum spawned a number of responses. Sartre, for example, argues that Ivan's "hallucinations" are created by the "massacres." Just like for the young victims of the Algerian War, he maintains, for Tarkovsky's "monstrous child" "gravitating toward suicide, there is no difference between day and night… Actions and hallucinations are in a close correspondence."[169] Sartre's

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[169] Jean Paul Sartre, "Letter on the Critique of Ivan's Childhood," 38.

emphasis on Ivan's inability to differentiate between dream and war reality may seem somewhat surprising since obviously there is such difference for the viewer. But this is because, he would object, we "continue to see Ivan from the outside,"[170] that is, it is for us living in peace that dream and reality are different. For Ivan "created by that war," "these dreams inevitably evolve into nightmares."[171] Despite his convincing tone, Sartre seems to reduce the problem of Ivan's subjective duality to the objective result of history's violence by forcing us to look at Ivan's case as an example of "what history does with men."[172] The problem of the protagonist's subjectivity, nevertheless, persists since mutually exclusive dream and reality never overlap with one another throughout the film, no matter how we look at it.

Johnson and Petrie, in their turn, similarly seem to simplify this problem by suggesting that the *real-life* Ivan should be "the film's "center of consciousness," whose psychological state effectively controls and intermingles the "real" and the "dream" worlds."[173] The film, however, ends with another dream sequence when Ivan is no longer alive, that is, right after lieutenant Gal'tsev learns about his death in the camp. In this regard, Robert Efird argues that the dreaming subject of Ivan's final dream could be Gal'tsev himself, since the narration has shifted to him in the end and "everything we see and hear is dependant on his mediation within the text."[174] To prove his point, Efird meticulously traces the visual and spiritual affinity between the two characters diegetically established by a number of symbols and motifs throughout the film.

In the context of Tarkovsky's later works, *Ivan's Childhood*'s puzzling inversion of dream and reality in the end proves to be strategic. The film opens with a dream as if it were real because the viewer does not know yet about the real-life Ivan. In the end, on the contrary, we already know

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[170] Ibid., 39.

[171] Ibid., 42.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 71.

[174] Robert Efird, "Dreams, mirrors and subjective filtration in Ivan's Childhood," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, Vol. 3. 3, 2009, 289-308, 303.

that the dreamer is dead yet this does not prevent the dream from being real. *Solaris* (1972) similarly

ends with Kris's imaginary return to home, while the actual Kris is probably dead. In *Mirror* (1974),

after the protagonist dies, we see him as a *little* child walking together with his already *old* mother.

Nostaghia (1982) ends with the dream sequence in which Gorchakov, who died a moment before,

sits near his Russian house surrounded by the Italian landscape. Tarkovsky's foregrounding the

dream experience without the dreaming subject as a compositional pattern in most of his films

suggests that we are dealing here with the transcendental rather than empirical dreaming. As Zizek

rightly puts it regarding the final sequence in *Nostaghia*,

> What we have here is a phenomenon, a scene, a dream experience, which can no longer be subjectivized - that is, a kind of nonsubjectivizable phenomenon, a dream which is no longer the dream of anyone, a dream which can emerge only after its subject ceases to be.[175]

Tarkovsky's desubjectivized dreaming is, of course, the virtual memory which operates within time

in general rather than inside individual consciousness. As his first feature, *Ivan's Childhood*'s not

only systematically liberates the protagonist's memory from the control of his daytime

consciousness by merging it with dreams, in the end it gets rid of the agency of dreamer altogether

in order to push the faculty of dreaming to its inhuman transcendental exercise. In the next chapter,

we will trace in detail how Tarkovsky's transcendental exercise of memory manifests itself in his

later films.

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[175] Slavoj Žižek, "The Thing from Inner Space" in *Sexuation*, ed. Renata Salecl, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2000, 216 – 259, 235.

Chapter Three: Tarkovsky's Bergsonism

3.1. Tarkovsky's Oneiric Realism and Imprinted Time

Tarkovsky's Anti-Intellectualism

Tarkovsky's cinema is widely acknowledged as one of the most technically achieved representations of dream imagery in film. The elements of his visual dream language that have become a constitutive part of cinematic vocabulary in general are easily recognizable: extremely lengthy tracking shots, decelerated motion, dedramatized action, eerie atmosphere, hallucinatory ambiguity, dissolution of spatial and temporal continuity, scenes of characters' levitation, illogical combinations of objects, uncanny non-diegetic film sound, extensive use of natural elements (water, fire, air, earth) that are often combined together within a single shot. In fact, the tactile image in Tarkovsky exceeds the limits of representation by becoming the direct, non-mimetic expression of natural and phantasmatic world where a human being is stripped off from all the coordinates of everyday consciousness and rendered passively drifting through various dreamscapes. It is one of his highest achievements that in his later films all these oneiric cinematic effects are no longer coded as dreams *per se* but rather saturate the entire film with a dreamlike aura. In *Stalker*, for example, there is no single traditionally coded dream that could be distinctly separated from daytime reality. In a scene titled as "The Stalker's Dream" in the DVD chapter selection we see the travelers preparing to rest yet do not enter their dreams while they are sleeping. What we see instead is the slow camera movement following the flow of water with piles of garbage underneath. In his diary, Tarkovsky refers to this four-minute sequence as a dream. Yet it is not quite a dream since no cut or dissolve marks the transition from external reality to the character's inner world and what we see is the same Zone, only from a close-up perspective. While dwelling on the Zone's debris, we are still outside the hero's consciousness. This sequence could be a dream only if we admit that the entire

Zone as well as the heroes' journey through it is but a dream. The same goes with his another film *Nostalghia*, where the protagonist's dream visions of his past in Russia are often merged with his present time in Italy via long tracking shots which establish seamless continuity between temporally and spatially distinct realities.

Given the constitutive inseparability of dream and reality in Tarkovsky's later work that emphasizes the pre-reflective dimension of his vision, it is rather difficult to apply any interpretive approach to his films. As Vlada Petric observes, "Tarkovsky's films transcend the Freudian significations of dream images in that they do not so much function as latent symbols as they contribute to a subliminal experience of a dream world. Instead of reading his films from ideological or psychoanalytical point of view, it seems more justified to examine the author's dream imagery rendered through cinematic devices."[176] Robert Bird similarly points out the pre-theoretical nature of Tarkovsky's work which makes any neat interpretation of his films virtually impossible. In his discussion of Tarkovsky's enigmatic image of the Zone, for example, he demonstratively refuses to define its meaning and concludes that it "is where one goes to see one's innermost desires. It is, in short, the cinema."[177] Thus, to avoid the intentional fallacy, most commentators of Tarkovsky approach his films from the perspective of neutral phenomenological description by carefully abstaining from any systematic explanation and only registering the viewer's sensorial response as well as the distortion of everyday perception. As Natasha Synessios observes, in Tarkovsky's films "the mesmerizing camera movements, together with the unusual events taking place within the frame, confound all attempts to interpret the image. The emphasis is on directly experiencing it and allowing it affect a deeper layer of our consciousness."[178] For Ian Christie, the hyperrealism of Tarkovsky's dreams expresses the director's desire to encourage the viewer "to attend *first* the

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[176] Vlada Petric, "Tarkovsky's Dream Imagery." *Film Quarterly*, 43. 2. (1989-1990): 28-34, 30.

[177] Robert Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema*, Reaktion Books, 2008, 69.

[178] Natasha Synessios, *Mirror: The Film Companion*, I.B.Tauris, 2001, 50-51.

rhythm and framing of the images, to experience the film on an aesthetic-intuitive level, *before* considering it intellectually."[179] According to Angela Dalle Vacche, Tarkovsky's images of natural elements are not intended as meaningful symbols but, on the contrary, as "primal images, so natural and therefore inexhaustible in their signifying power that they are capable of reorienting our imagination away from a rational, technocratic world view toward something infinite and unspeakable."[180]

How would Tarkovsky's own "theoretical" writings on cinema help us understand his representation of dream and reality? Most of his statements do support the commentators' emphasis of the pre-reflective dimension of his films:

> Understanding in a scientific sense means agreement on a cerebral, logical level; it is an intellectual act akin to the process of proving a theorem.
>
> Understanding an artistic image means an aesthetic acceptance of the beautiful, on an emotional or even supra-emotional level… For the empirical process of intellectual cognition cannot explain how an artistic image comes into being—unique, indivisible, created and existing on some plane other than that of the intellect (ST 40).
>
> Art does not think logically, or formulate a logic of behaviour; it expresses its own postulate of faith (ST 41).
>
> The artist cannot, and has no right to, lower himself to some abstract, standardised level for the sake of a misconstrued notion of greater accessibility and understanding (ST 166).
>
> The artist cannot make a specific aim of being understandable—it would be quite as absurd as its opposite: trying to be incomprehensible (ST 167).
>
> I had the greatest difficulty in explaining to people that there is no hidden, coded meaning in the film, nothing beyond the desire to tell the truth. Often my assurances provoked incredulity and even disappointment. Some people evidently wanted more: they needed arcane symbols, secret meanings. They were not accustomed to the poetics of the cinema image (ST 133).

As we can see, Tarkovsky's committed resistance to and depreciation of intellectual or logical thinking could hardly help the audience *understand* the meaning of his works since intellectual cognition as such is not what he expects from them. For Tarkovsky, rational understanding is fundamentally a *profane* relation to art; the power of art, as he repeatedly claims, necessarily exceeds the viewer's cognitive capacities to grasp its transcendent and spiritual meaning. As he

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[179] Ian Christie, "Introduction: Tarkovsky and His Time." In Maya Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, London: Faber and Faber, 1989, ix-xxvi, xviii.
[180] Angela Dalle Vacche, *Cinema and Painting: How Art Is Used in Film*, University of Texas Press, 1996, 137.

refers to the Russian symbolist Vyacheslav Ivanov, artistic images "cannot be stated or explained, and, confronted by their secret meaning in its totality, we are powerless." Their meaning is "inexhaustible and unlimited" because they are "formed by organic process, like a crystal" (ST 47). It might appear that Tarkovsky's rejection of the primary role of intellect in both creation and reception of the film image points to a supposedly higher, irrational and mystical communion with it, a path which was indeed taken in much Russian-language studies on Tarkovsky characterized by heavily impressionistic and hagiographic reading of his work. Nikolay Boldyrev's writings, in this regard, seem very exemplary here: instead of expected analytical commentary of Tarkovsky's films, the critic purposefully takes an emphatically mystical, almost apophatic stance on the issue by offering an ecstatic prayer-meditation inspired by his film images.[181] A more modern and critically oriented viewer would naturally be turned off by such an unabashed affirmation of anti-intellectualism. As Johnson and Petrie skeptically observe: "Tarkovsky's free and unembarrassed use of such terms as 'genius', 'transcendence', 'spiritual vision', 'beauty' etc. may seem to place him as an inheritor of a Romantic tradition that is widely regarded in the West as being outmoded and discredited."[182] And yet, a closer reading of Tarkovsky's ostensibly old-fashioned rebuttals against intellect would suggest that what the director vehemently resists is not a thought or meaning *per se* but a thinking governed by preconceptions, stereotypes, clichés and conventions, that is, by such cerebral processes of consciousness which Deleuze characterizes as the *active* syntheses of memory and understanding supervised by the model of recognition or common sense and structured around the pre-given categories of opposition, similitude, analogy and identity. Tarkovsky does appeal to the power of the artistic genius to transcend the imposed constraints of the everyday consciousness, but this should be read as his own "romantic," albeit anachronistic, way to deterritorialize the dogmatic image of thought. As he writes,

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[181] See Nikolai Boldyrev, *Stalker, ili trudy i dni Andreia Tarkooskogo*, Cheliabinsk, Russia: Izd-vo Ural Ltd, 2002; Nikolai Boldyrev, *Zhertvoprinoshenie Andreia Tarkovskogo*, Moskva: Vagrius, 2004.

[182] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 31-32.

> The birth and development of thought are subject to laws of their own, and sometimes demand forms of expression which are quite different from the patterns of logical speculation (ST 20).
>
> A vast number of clichés and commonplaces… found a resting-place in the cinema (ST 26).
>
> A mass of preconceptions exists in and around the profession… those hackneyed ways of thinking, clichés, that grow up around traditions and gradually take them over. And you can achieve nothing in art unless you are free from received ideas (ST 59).
>
> A convention dictated by necessity has turned into a preconception, a cliché (ST 70).
>
> There are too many temptations on every side: stereotypes, preconceptions, commonplaces, artistic ideas other than one's own (ST 80).

It is precisely because of his rejection of the pre-established forms of perception and rationalization imposed on the film image that Tarkovsky strongly criticizes Eisenstein's intellectual montage based on Hegelian dialectics. As he writes,

> The idea of 'montage cinema'—that editing brings together two concepts and thus engenders a new, third one—… seems to me to be incompatible with the nature of cinema. Art can never have the interplay of concepts as its ultimate goal (ST 114).
>
> I reject the principles of 'montage cinema' because they do not allow the film to continue beyond the edges of the screen: they do not allow the audience to bring personal experience to bear on what is in front of them on film. 'Montage cinema' presents the audience with puzzles and riddles, makes them decipher symbols, wonder at allegories, appealing all the time to their intellectual experience (ST 118).

In his critique of Eisenstein who "makes thought into a despot" by using "the frame to codify intellectual formulae" (ST 183), Tarkovsky goes as far as to claim that *Ivan the Terrible* "almost ceases… to be a cinematic work" because it is "so close to the theatre" and "consists of a series of hieroglyphics… There is not a single detail that is not permeated with the author's intent" (ST 67). It is for the same reason that Tarkovsky is starkly opposed to Pasolini's "poetic cinema." "'Poetic cinema' as a rule," he writes, "gives birth to symbols, allegories and other such figures—that is, to things that have nothing to do with the imagery natural to cinema" (ST 66). In it, "everything is deliberately made incomprehensible and the director has to think up explanations for what he has done" (ST 223).

Tarkovsky's critique of the intellectual and allegorical composition of film images, i.e. a composition which directly reflects the director's authorial intention, may still seem somewhat puzzling to his viewers since most images in his films are indeed saturated by plenty of

"hieroglyphic" details and innovative compositional strategies that persistently provoke our hermeneutic zeal to decipher them. In this regard, Dmitrii Salynsky's book-length study *Tarkovsky's Cine-hermeneutics* focuses precisely on this aspect of the director's oeuvre, i.e. the hidden layers of meaning (e.g. psychological, cultural, mythological, religious) inscribed in the architectonics of his films.[183] In fact, many scholars have noticed Tarkovsky's "customary self-contradiction"[184] or discrepancy between his theoretical statements and film practice.[185] Nevertheless, the director's notorious "self-contradiction" appears to be due to the insufficiency of his theoretical vocabulary, derived mainly from the Soviet film aesthetics still dominated by the socialist realism doctrine, rather than from his intention to confuse the viewer. By insisting on the "uniqueness" (ST 111) and "singularity" (ST 141) of the film image, free from "vulgar symbolism" (ST 216) and "inexhaustible and unlimited in its meaning" (ST 47), Tarkovsky strives to disengage his cinematic vision from any prior ideological or intellectual investment and dedicate it to the expression of the raw facticity of "life itself… in its simplest manifestations" (ST 106). It is in his commitment to realism and, sometimes, naturalism as the aesthetic basis of the film image that his methodological views prove to be most consistent. Although Tarkovsky's use of the term "realism" is rare and obscure (e.g. "Realism is a striving for the truth, and truth is always beautiful" (ST 113); "Bach's D-minor choral prelude is realistic, because it expresses a vision of the truth" (ST 154)), judging by his formulations of the film image, in which the realist representation of an object is to be refracted through the psychological processes of the character's individual consciousness (e.g. memories, dreams and hallucinations), we may safely suggest that his cinematic method could be categorized as "oneiric realism."

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[183] Dmitrii Salynskii, *Kinogermenevtika Tarkovskogo*, Moscow, Kvadriga, 2009.

[184] Helena Goscilo, "Fraught Filiation: Andrei Tarkovsky's Transformations of Personal Trauma" in *Cinepaternity: Fathers and Sons in Soviet and Post-Soviet Film*, eds. Helena Goscilo, Yana Hashamova, Indiana University Press, 2010, 247-282, 274.

[185] See, for example, Sergei Filippov, "Teoriya i praktika Andreia Tarkovskogo," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, vol. 56, 2002, 41-74; "Robert Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema*; Shusei Nishi, *Tarkovsky and His Time: Hidden Truth of Life*, Alt-arts LLC, 2012, Maia Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*.

Tarkovsky on Film Image

The cornerstone of Tarkovsky's "film theory" can be considered his notion of the film image which

in turn determines his understanding of other aspects of film: cinematic time, *mise-en-scène*, editing,

script, acting, soundtrack, etc. Here are a number of his formulations of the film image:

> The image is independent and elusive, dependent upon our consciousness and on the real world it seeks to embody (ST 106).
>
> In cinema it is all the more the case that observation is the first principle of the image… But by no means every film shot can aspire to being an image of the world… 'Naturalistically recorded facts are in themselves utterly inadequate to the creation of cinematic image. The image in cinema is based on the ability to present as an observation one's own perception of an object (ST 107).
>
> To be faithful to life, intrinsically truthful, a work has for me to be at once an exact factual account and a true communication of feelings (ST 23).

As we can see, for Tarkovsky the film image must meet two conditions: it must be adequate to both

real life as well as psychological state. That is, the film image is born when these two conditions

become one: when the objectivity of camera merges with the subjectivity of filmmaker (or

character). In a sense, Tarkovsky's film image stands between the world and the subject and equally

reflects the two; it serves as the medium of both inner and outer worlds. In this regard, Tarkovsky

does not believe in the pure objectivity of documentary cinema which strives for the unbiased

depiction of reality. Such a demonstrative naturalism for him is but an artificial stylization of life

(e.g. *cinéma vérité*). As he writes,

> Every artist is… limited in his perception, in his understanding of the inner connections of the world about him. It's therefore meaningless to talk about naturalism in cinema as if phenomena could be recorded wholesale by the camera, irrespective of any artistic principles, so to speak in their 'natural state'. This sort of naturalism cannot exist (ST 185).

Neither does he accept an experimental visionary film with its exclusive focus on the unrestrained

spontaneity of the inner world which ultimately neglects the physical laws of empirical reality.

Tarkovsky's hysterical reaction against Stan Brakhage's objectless abstract work at the 1983

Telluride Film Festival is quite exemplary here. As Brakhage paraphrases, Tarkovsky's furious

assessment had no single word of appreciation for his experimental shorts: "this is too scientific to

be Art," "this-is-too-rapid-it-hurts-the-eyes," "this is sheer self-indulgence," "the color is shit," "what is this paint? Why do you do this?"[186] For the same reason does he disagree with German Romanticists who, according to Tarkovsky, almost ideologically oppose subjectivity to reality. As he comments in an interview,

> Romantics are people who have always tried to imagine life different than it was. The most terrible thing for them is routine, the daily habit, the relationship to life as something fixed. Romantics are not fighters. When they perish, it's the result of chimeras they themselves created. For me romanticism as a way of looking at the world is very dangerous, where personal talent is regarded as something of capital importance.[187]

In his screenplay *Hoffmanniana* (1975), Tarkovsky attempted to demonstrate the danger of the romanticists' "chimeras." Written right after he completed his *Mirror*, *Hoffmanniana* similarly elaborates the theme of the indiscernibility of imagination and reality by using the motifs of mirror, doppelgänger and dream. Yet, unlike in *Mirror*, this indiscernibility acquires a more sinister and pathological character. For Tarkovsky, the primacy of the subjective world over the external one is "sickness,"[188] his project is precisely to harmoniously unite them, that is, to overcome the dualism between the subject and the object, which is more utopian.

Tarkovsky's pursuit for the "complete and unconditional factual truth" (ST 78) is therefore inseparable from his treatment of it as a reflection of "the interior world of the individual imagination" (ST 71). Given that "the [film] image can only be realised in factual, natural forms of visible and audible life," memories, fantasies, dreams and hallucinations should necessarily be "made up of exactly these same observed, natural forms of life" (ibid.). The ideal synthesis of outer and inner worlds (i.e. perception and imagination) is exemplified for Tarkovsky by Japanese haiku poetry whose images "mean nothing beyond themselves" (ST 106). Whereas for Eisenstein the tripartite structure of haiku, which juxtaposes and unifies different elements within a single poetic form and "creates something different in kind from any of them" (ST 66), represents the central

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[186] Stan Brakhage, Jennifer Dorn, "Brakhage Meets Tarkovsky," *Chicago Review*, Vol. 47.4. 2001, 42-47, 43.

[187] John Gianvito, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2006, 184-185.

[188] Ibid., 176.

aspect of his theory of montage (in which shots should be combined according to the dialectical logic of conflict and synthesis), for Tarkovsky haiku underscores the facts of "pure observation" (ibid.) that "make us feel [the author's] mood" (ST 112). That is to say, Eisenstein sees in haiku the linear narrative logic of sequential juxtapositions, Tarkovsky the union between mind and nature via "a precise observation of life" (ST 106). As he demonstrates this union in the process of reading haiku, "The reader of haikku has to be absorbed into it as into nature, to plunge in, lose himself in its depth, as in the cosmos where there is no bottom and no top" (ibid.). The same effect of the viewer's absorption into the reality of the film image the director seeks in his representation of dreams and memories by ultimately rejecting conventional "old-fashioned filmic tricks" (ST 30), such as shooting "at high speed," "through a misty veil," "mysterious blurring," bringing in "musical effects" (ST 71), etc. For Tarkovsky, "the actual, material facts of the dream… which were refracted in that layer of the consciousness which kept vigil through the night" (ST 72) constitute the only possible basis for his oneiric phenomenology. The hyperrealism of dreams in our actual lives should therefore be replicated on screen in its pristine originality without any unnecessary distortion involved. As he claims, "the most interesting or frightening dreams are the ones where you remember everything down to the minutest detail" (ibid.).

Tarkovsky on Time

For Tarkovsky, cinematic time, "*captured in its factual forms and manifestations*" (ST 63, emphasis in original), is precisely what glues together the objective and subjective dimensions of the film image. It preserves the "concrete life and emotional content of the object filmed" (ST 69-70). It is important to emphasize that it is from time rather than space that Tarkovsky derives the factual material for his films: time for him is the original source of the living facts to be observed. That is, to observe life cinematically is to follow its flow in time:

> For the cinema image is essentially the observation of a phenomenon passing through time (ST 67).

> The cinema image… is basically observation of life's facts within time, organised according to the pattern of life itself, and observing its time laws… 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 (ST 68).

Given that time is the primary substance from which the film image is molded, the filmmaker becomes the sculptor of time, who, "from a 'lump of time' made up of an enormous, solid cluster of living facts, cuts off and discards whatever he does not need, leaving only what is to be an element of the finished film, what will prove to be integral to the cinematic image" (ST 63-4). In Tarkovsky's aesthetics, editing serves as the main function of such sculpting in time: that is, by cutting time in pieces, assembling them into various temporal sequences and discarding those which do not fit the image, the director "brings together shots which are already filled with time, and organises the unified, living structure inherent in the film; and the time that pulsates through the blood vessels of the film, making it alive, is of varying rhythmic pressure" (ST 114). As a result of editing, the chain of shots filled with various "time-pressures" constitutes the film's overall temporal rhythm. Rhythm, in this regard, is not a quantitative category; it is rather defined by a certain psychological intensity invested in a given shot. As he writes, "The distinctive time running through the shots makes the rhythm … rhythm is not determined by the length of the edited pieces, but by the pressure of the time that runs them" (ST 117). That is, each and every shot is supposed to be charged with a distinctly unique time-pressure which materializes the psychological singularity of a moment. This time-pressure or time-thrust inhaled into a shot becomes the basic unit of film. The entire film succeeds only when these rhythmically divergent temporal units constitute an organic whole that channels the flow of time. Tarkovsky doesn't explain how to measure a particular time-pressure within a shot. Since the purpose of the time-thrust is to create the intensity of a moment and not its meaning, the calculating methods of editing aimed at the creation of concepts are of no use here. For Tarkovsky, the sense of time which regulates the temporal rhythm of an entire film is purely intuitive; it is a gift similar to the absolute pitch of a musician or the poet's sense of a right word in a poem. As he writes, "Feeling the rhythmicality of a shot is rather like feeling a truthful

word in literature. An inexact word in writing, like an inexact rhythm in film, destroys the veracity

of the work" (ST 120). For Tarkovsky, each director has his or her own unique sense of temporal

rhythm: no director feels time in a similar way; the time-pressure inflated in a shot is rather a prime

factor for their difference. "It is above all," he argues, "through sense of time, through rhythm, that

the director reveals his individuality" (ibid.). In this regard, it is quite erroneous to align

Tarkovsky's long take with that of Theo Angelopoulos; the former, in his diary, ultimately dismisses

the latter for his unreasonably long sequence shot which feels like a pointless stretching of a rubber

band.[189]

Tarkovsky Studies

Tarkovsky's rather idiosyncratic "film theory," which favors mysticism and emphasizes the

subjective rhythm of duration infused in the objective observation of reality, posits a number of

obstacles and traps for an academic discipline of film studies which has been born mostly from

literary studies rather than directly from cinematic practice.

First of all, it seems rather reductive to take Tarkovsky's declarative anti-intellectualism and

his prioritization of pure perception over signification for granted and thus deny him the consciously

systematic and analytical approach to art. Sergei Filipov goes as far as to claim that Tarkovsky's

cinema exemplifies the cognitive activities of the right hemisphere of the brain because of his

explicit preference for intuition over logic, observation over meaning, holistic reasoning over linear

one, image over dialogue, indivisible duration over chronological discreteness, stylistic plenitude

over plot development, etc.[190] Filippov's right-hemisphere approach certainly sheds some light on

the director's work as a whole, yet it ultimately neglects the internal logic by which his film

components are connected, a logic which is unequivocally rational and systematic. Salynskii's

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[189] Andrei Tarkovsky. *Martirolog: dnevniki 1970-1986*, Istituto internazionale Andrej Tarkovskij, 2008, 439.
[190] Sergei Filippov, "Teoriya i praktika Andreia Tarkovskogo."

study, in this regard, goes to the opposite extreme by viewing Tarkovsky's oeuvre from the perspective of mediaeval scholastic hermeneutics in the light of which the director reappears as a strangely systematic artist and rigorous schematist allowing no contingency in engineering his film images.[191] However rich and helpful Salynskii's study, his rationalistic approach is nonetheless highly arbitrary and speculative. Whereas such Russian semioticians as Yuri Lotman and Boris Gasparov first meticulously trace particular motifs in a text and only later organize them into general structures, Salynskii considers only those motifs that are already inscribed in his quasi-Augustinian paradigm that views the director's entire career as a coherent spiritual path toward the Absolute and spiritual transcendence climaxed in Tarkovsky's last film *Sacrifice*. In such a projective reading, plenty of motifs associated with "lower" (profane or empirical) hermeneutic layers are thus necessarily left out or underdeveloped.

Perepelkin's attempt to systematize Tarkovsky's aesthetics in terms of literary studies similarly results in downgrading the raw materiality of things expressed in his images.[192] By defining the director's method as the "poetics of allegory," he views Tarkovsky's imagery as the cinematic elevation of everything empirical and mundane onto metaphysical heights. While the allegorical approach does help us see how Tarkovsky's camera pervasively "spiritualizes" matter, in his zeal of arbitrary decoding the researcher too often overblows the director's demiurgic motifs into what Zizek terms as "cheap religious obscurantism" by compulsively converting each and every image under consideration into a purveyor of some hidden epiphany with frequent references to "God," "Creator" and "divine truth."

It is equally counter-intuitive to approach Tarkovsky's images from the perspective of narratology that subordinates the visual data to the narrative form. David Bordwell's approach to the

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[191] Dmitrii Salynskii, *Kinogermenevtika Tarkovskogo*.

[192] Mikhail Perepelkin, M. A. *Slovo v mire Andreĭa Tarkovskogo: Poėtika inoskazaniĭa.* Samara: Samarskiĭ un-t, 2010.

European art film as style-centered "parametric" cinema, which shifts the function of narration from the film's plot to its "decorative" stylistic subtleties, would only partially account for Tarkovsky's imagery by persistently stumbling against the overall "incoherence" and "incomprehensibility" of his narrational dynamics. Thomas Redwood's neo-formalist study of the narrative aspects of Tarkovsky's cinematic style does emphasize the narrative autonomy of diverse stylistic devices in his films (e.g. color coding, distorted sounds, motific correlations between characters, objects, and natural elements, framing and staging strategies, etc.), yet the researcher's spectator-oriented model based on *average* comprehension skills unavoidably reduces the director's cinematic and philosophical insights to a set of "incomprehensible" deviations from common sense.[193]

Furthermore, Bazin's ontology of cinematic fact as well as Kracauer's genetic reduction of cinematic image to photographic one would hardly account for the psychological origin of Tarkovsky's empiricism. Bazin does celebrate the use of the long take which brings "an added measure of realism on the screen"[194] and confirms "our sense of natural reality."[195] But for Tarkovsky, the use of the long take serves more the intensity of inner, subjective reality. Thus, for example, in Tarkovsky's late films, the average length of shots significantly increases (from 25 to 70 seconds), while the "sense of natural reality" dramatically decreases. Yet the longer the sequence shot, the more we believe in the virtual dimension of illuminated things.

Nor would we benefit much from dogmatically aligning Tarkovsky with Eastern Orthodoxy and Dostoevsky's humanism[196] or the existentialist tradition of Russian philosophy.[197] As Tarkovsky claims in an interview, "I don't agree with all [Berdyaev's] opinions. He approaches problems as if he's above them, as if he's resolved them. I don't believe people like that, like Steiner,

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[193] Thomas Redwood, *Andrei Tarkovsky's Poetics of Cinema*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

[194] André Bazin, What is Cinema?, Volume 2, University of California Press, 2005, 27

[195] Ibid., 110.

[196] Salvestroni Simonetta, "The Science-Fiction Films of Andrei Tarkovsky," *Science-Fiction Studies*, vol. 14, 1987, 294-306.

[197] Igor Evlampiev, *Khudozhestvennaia filosofiia Andreia Tarkovskogo*, Aleteia, 2001.

or Berdyaev."[198] Furthermore, in his diary he writes that he is an agnostic,[199] the knowledge of either God or the Universe is but an individualist illusion which can be psychologically explained. As is known, Tarkovsky planned to shoot a biographical film on Dostoevsky. Yet again, as we learn from his diary notes, Dostoevsky for Tarkovsky is a very troubled man who does not believe in God. He desperately tries to do so only because it is impossible to relate to the world otherwise, on a logical ground; for Dostoevsky, according to Tarkovsky, the world perceived rationally is absurd. It is for this doubt and hesitation that Tarkovsky embraces Dostoevsky, and it is for the clarity of ethical system that he rejects Berdyaev. It has become a commonplace in Tarkovsky studies that Dostoevsky's Prince Myshkin, a crazy knight of faith, is a prototype for his late protagonists (e.g. Stalker, Domenico); that is, unable to adapt *The Idiot*, he molded his heroes under the influence of Myshkin's personality. Tarkovsky didn't shoot *The Idiot*, yet he directed the production of *Hamlet* on stage, where the main hero is emphatically hesitant and inactive because he doesn't know how to relate to the world since the "time is out of joint." For Tarkovsky, Hamlet perishes precisely as the victim of disconnected time, as "self-sacrifice"[200] to "set it right". It is therefore possible to argue that Tarkovsky's heroes owe more Shakespeare rather than Dostoevsky since all of them are stricken by the clash of multiple temporalities and are in search for a synthesis of disjointed time.

Tarkovsky and Bergson

Tarkovsky's protagonists are always suspended between their memories of the past and present reality, unable to completely join either side. Nether fully in the past, nor fully in the present but rather half here/half there, they keep dwelling in a strange kind of temporality that fuses recollection-images with the perception of current reality. We may even say that their temporal as well as spatial suspension is dictated by the dual structure of Tarkovsky's film image itself

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[198] John Gianvito, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, 186.
[199] Andrei Tarkovsky. *Martirolog: dnevniki 1970-1986*, 366.
[200] Andrei Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time: The Diaries, 1970-1986*, Verso, 1993, 378.

consisting of the objective observation of empirical reality refracted through the character's

individual consciousness. That is, his characters perceive the world only through their memories, yet

what they compulsively remember can no longer be attainable in the present. Tarkovsky's dual

commitment to pure observation and subjective imagination or "feeling" as the fundamental

constituents of the film image is strikingly parallel to Bergson's notion of consciousness coextensive

with matter and time via perception- and memory-images. Just as Tarkovsky refuses to attach any

meaning to the image of wind, fire or water (ST 212), that is, to represent the *idea* of the object

filmed, so Bergson removes any intellectual or psychological mediation between consciousness and

the object by claiming that "all consciousness *is* something" (C1 56, emphasis in original). For

Bergson, image is identical to matter which consciousness can perceive without threatening its

objectivity. Bergsonian consciousness completely immersed in the material universe is "pure" or

inhuman perception, i.e. the lowest form of consciousness merging with matter ("where subject and

object coincide"),[201] which is only theoretically posited as the consciousness' limit of objectivity yet

can never be achieved in reality since our perception is always intermeshed with memories. For

Bergson, human perception is necessarily limited. As he writes, ""Pure," that is to say,

instantaneous, perception is, in fact, only an ideal, an extreme. Every perception… prolongs the past

into the present, and thereby partakes of memory."[202] Tarkovsky similarly considers the

documentary cinema's striving for pure objectivity (or "pure perception" devoid of subjectivity) as

an impossible ideal since "things that exist 'in themselves' only come to have existence 'for us' in

the course of our own experience" (ST 185). Furthermore, just as for Tarkovsky memories and

dreams can only be represented in tangible forms of present perception, because of which he

thoroughly discredits the abstract experimental cinema that aims to represent consciousness in its

objectless purity, so for Bergson virtual "memory can only become actual by means of the

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[201] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Zone Books, 1990, 221
[202] Ibid., 244.

perception which attracts it. Powerless, it borrows life and strength from the present sensation in which it is materialized."[203] For both Bergson and Tarkovsky, "it would be a chimerical enterprise to try to free ourselves from the fundamental conditions of external perception."[204] Without perception, "the memory-image itself, if it remained pure memory, would be ineffectual."[205] That is, the latter would agree with the former that "we shall never reach the past unless we frankly place ourselves within it. Essentially virtual, it cannot be known as something past unless we follow and adopt the movement by which it expands into a present image."[206]

Tarkovsky's film theory, of course, does not have the Bergsonian ontology of the virtual or pure memory, according to which the impersonal past is preserved in itself beyond the limits of our consciousness and actualizes itself in it via (personal) memory-images. He may seem to favor the psychological notion of time when he argues that "[t]ime is a state: the flame in which there lives the salamander of the human soul" (ST 57); "it is a subjective, spiritual category. The time we have lived settles in our soul as an experience placed within time" (ST 58). His subjective approach to memory is best exemplified by his most autobiographical film *Mirror*, where the protagonist's mother is played by the director's actual mother, the voice of the actor playing his father is dubbed by the actual voice of his father, his second wife plays a doctor's wife, his stepdaughter one of the characters of his memories. The country house of his childhood is an exact replica of the original rebuilt for the set on the foundation of the old house, the childhood landscape (the buckwheat field) is resurrected directly from his memories, many film shots directly follow Tarkovsky's family photographs, *Mirror*'s dream sequences are his own dreams recorded in his diary. Furthermore, in the end the protagonist lying on the deathbed is played by Tarkovsky himself, he is also seen in the mirror reflection in the earring episode. In each and every film, Tarkovsky recounts one and the

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[203] Ibid., 127.
[204] Ibid., 187.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid., 135.

same story of his nostalgia for the lost harmony of his childhood. Yet this should not imply that time, according to Tarkovsky, is confined within our consciousness and ceases to exist beyond its limits. In fact, time may leave consciousness if one dedicates oneself to a purely materialistic existence just as it "can vanish without trace in our material world" (ST 58). As he writes, "falling out of time, [a person] is unable to seize his own link with the outside world—in other words he is doomed to madness" (ST 57-8). "The human conscience is dependent upon time for its existence" (ST 58). That is, Tarkovsky's personal feeling and valorization of time and memory, which "merge into each other" as if they were "the two sides of a medal" (ST 57), should be understood as the result of his radical openness to time in general, which is most evident in his films demonstrating the eventual dissolution of the character's subjectivity within time. He does perceive the world in terms of multiple durations by observing phenomena "passing through time" (ST 67) and "printing on celluloid" (ST 63) their diverse rhythmicality, yet his highly personal and subjective sense of duration opens up to a larger, impersonal or ontological dimension of time, of which we can judge by his images conflating multiple temporalities beyond individual consciousness according to the metaphysical logic of the second passive synthesis of time. In a similar vein, Tarkovsky's praising cinema for its ability to capture the actuality of time "in its factual forms" as well as to preserve it "in metal boxes for a long period of time" (ST 62) may seem like a gesture toward a spatialization and domestication of time rather than its direct presentation, of which Deleuze speaks in *Cinema 2*. But for Tarkovsky, "the fact that the [film] image can only be realised in factual, natural forms of visible and audible life" is "[o]ne of the most important limitations of cinema" (ST 71). The totality of time can certainly not be captured in the finite film image but what we see in the frame, he writes, "is not limited to its visual depiction, but is a pointer to something stretching out beyond the frame and to infinity" (ST 117). Given that for Tarkovsky "the image stretches out into infinity, and leads to the absolute (ST 104), so should time factually "imprinted in the frame" (ST 117). His

commitment to realism, therefore, should not be seen as an obstacle to a direct presentation of time precisely because his vision of the raw materiality of things is thoroughly temporalized, that is, it is always refracted through memory. In this regard, Tarkovsky is more Bergsonian than Deleuzean. Whereas for Deleuze the transcendental exercise of memory should necessarily lead to the faculty of thought, for both Tarkovsky and Bergson memory seems to signify the final and ultimate spiritual activity. Just as Tarkovsky claims that "[m]emory is a spiritual concept!" (57), Bergson similarly argues that "pure memory is a spiritual manifestation" (MM 240) and "it is really into spirit that we penetrate by means of memory."[207]

Tarkovsky's implicit "Bergsonism" most fully manifests itself in the systematic construction of mutual images merging perceptions of the present and recollections of the past within a single shot. Such images are best described by Bergson's schema of attentive recognition provided in Chapter Three of his *Matter and Memory*. According to Bergson, the perception of the actual object in the present is always doubled by its reflection in the memory-image. The operation of recognition works as an electric circuit: perception sends a signal from the external object to memory and then from memory back to the perceived object. In the normal perception and recognition of objects, the specular memory-double is always distinct from the actual object. Yet in the failure of recognition, according to Bergson, the virtual image is superimposed on the actual object and becomes indiscernible from it as it happens in the experiences of déjà-vu. In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze defines such Bergsonian "coalescence" between memory and perception as the crystal-image in which

> perception and recollection, the real and the imaginary, the physical and the mental, or rather their images, continually [follow] each other, running behind each other and referring back to each other around a point of indiscernibility. But this point of indiscernibility is precisely constituted by the smallest circle, that is, the coalescence of the actual image and the virtual image, the image with two sides, actual and virtual at the same time (C2 69).
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> The actual image and its virtual image thus constitute the smallest internal circuit, ultimately a peak or point, but a physical point which has distinct elements (a bit like the epicurean atom). Distinct, but indiscernible, such

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[207] Ibid., 180.

> are the actual and the virtual which are in continual exchange. When the virtual image becomes actual, it is then visible and limpid, as in the mirror or the solidity of finished crystal (C2 70).

> Thus the image has to be present and past, still present and already past, at once and at the same time. If it was not already past at the same time as present, the present would never pass on. The past does not follow the present that it is no longer, it coexists with the present it was. The present is the actual image, and its contemporaneous past is the virtual image, the image in a mirror (C9 79).

The process of the continual and indiscernible exchange between the actual present and the virtual past is evident in most Tarkovsky's images. As Deleuze himself observes, Tarkovsky, like Herzog, attempted to "set out the greatest crystal-images in the history of the cinema" (C2 73). An attempt which "continued from one film to the next, but always closed again" (ibid.). For example, *Mirror* is "a turning crystal, with two sides if we relate it to the invisible adult character (his mother, his wife), with four sides if we relate it to two visible couples (his mother and the child he was, his wife and the child he has). And the crystal turns on itself, like a homing device that searches an opaque environment…" (ibid.)

Deleuze does not dwell too long on Tarkovsky's oeuvre. In fact, most of his observations owe to Serge Daney's celebratory reviews of his films. Yet what he says about Tarkovsky truly captures the Bergsonian essence of the director's cinematic method. As he writes, in Tarkovsky's "crystal-image there is this mutual search - blind and halting - of matter and spirit" (ibid.).

The subject's ontological dependence on his/her memory of the past is further explained by Bergson's second schema of the inverted cone discussed in the first chapter. As discussed in the first chapter, according to this schema, the tip of the cone at the bottom stands for the present, while its base at the top for the past. For Bergson, past and present are nothing but extensions of each other. The present is the most contracted part of the past, whereas the past is the most expanded part of the present. The inverted cone shows that the subject located in the present, here and now, is always under the pressure of the past which extends into infinity. To live actively, the subject must subordinate and assimilate all the memory of the past in relation to a particular moment in the

present. Dreamers, however, are withdrawn from the present (i.e. from the tip of the cone) and prefer to dwell on the upper levels of the cone. The Bergsonian dreamer is essentially a time traveler jumping from one memory layer onto another to the point of losing him/herself in the infinity of time. In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze deploys Bergson's cone of memory to explain the "architecture of time" (C2 104) in modern cinema in which "[t]he coexistence of sheets of virtual past and the simultaneity of peaks of deactualized present, are the two direct signs of time itself" (C2 105). According to this model, "to evoke recollection is to jump into a region of past where one assumes that it is lying in a virtual state, all the sheets or regions coexisting in relation to the contracted actual present from which the evocation proceeds" (C2 109).

The temporal structure of Tarkovsky's images, which indiscernibly unite perception and recollection as well as present the character's "jumping" to various sheets of past, could thus be explained according to these two Bergsonian schemas described above. Yet Tarkovsky's Bergsonism is not limited to his fusion of multiple temporalities alone. It expands into a larger synthesis of *all* divergent dimensions manifested in film, such as image and painting, image and word, image and sound, image and music, etc. The convergence of independent series that results in their simultaneity or resonance despite their difference is, according to Deleuze, the work of the second passive synthesis in general, which he also names as the "conjunctive synthesis" and "resonance." In the next section, I will demonstrate how Deleuze's second passive synthesis underlies Tarkovsky's poetics in its entirety, which we may call the "poetics of resonance."

3.2. Deleuze's Second Passive Synthesis and Tarkovsky's Poetics of Resonance

Second Synthesis as Intermediary Stage in **Logic of Sense** *and* **Cinema 2**

As we discussed in the first chapter, Deleuze's cinematic Bergsonism in his elaboration of the crystal image and coexistence of present and past is dictated by the logic of the second passive

synthesis of time, in which the mind corresponds the contemplation of actual objects in the present to the contemplation of their virtual images in the past. In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze rereads the psychoanalytic narrative of the constitution of infantile sexuality (derived from Freud's theory of infantile sexuality, Lacan's "Mirror Stage" and his concept of the "phallus" and the Kleinian notion of "reparation") in order to inscribe the same triple structure of the dynamic genesis, which is the genesis of the virtual, into the child's "linguistic apprenticeship" or evolution from noise through voice to word and sense (or from physical depth through sexual surface to metaphysical surface, respectively). Without going too much in detail, we may say that Deleuze's second synthesis is responsible for the constitution of the "intermediary" oedipal surface of sexuality coordinated by the virtual image of the phallus. At the initial stage of the dynamic genesis, the child's ego is immersed in the depths of pure senseless materiality where "bits whirl about and explode" (LS 187-8), "bodies burst and cause other bodies to burst in a universal cesspool" (LS 187) just as the child's body itself is nothing but "an organism without parts, a body without organs" (LS 188). To escape from the aggressive chaos of unrestrained corporeality, as Deleuze's narrative proceeds, the child's ego strives to organize its fragmented and "noisy" bodily experiences into the genital surface by identifying with the "good object" (e.g. the mother's breast) signified by the "familial hum" or Voice from above. With reference to Lacan's account of the infant's assuming the imaginary totality of its body at the mirror stage, Deleuze emphasizes the formative (and, to use Klein's term, "reparative") role of the phallus as an image (i.e. the imagined object of the mother's desire) projected over the genital zone and binding other partial zones. For Deleuze, the phallus is "an instrument of the surface," (LS 201) "an agent of convergence and coordination" (LS 227) that "ties together all the erogenous zones, thus ensuring their connection or "interfacing" (*doublure*), and bringing all the partial surfaces together into one and the same surface on the body of the child" (LS 201). In his physics of surfaces, Deleuze is not so much interested in the "familial romance" of the

Oedipus complex but rather in the image of harmonious totality that the child projects at the physical surface by means of the phallic coordination and integration of its zones. "It is true," Deleuze writes, "that [Oedipus] assumes the father's place and takes the mother as the object of his incestuous desire. But the incestuous relationship… does not imply here violence: neither eventration nor usurpation, but rather a surface relation" (LS 204). For Deleuze, Oedipus is a "peace-maker" who wishes to restore the mother and bring back the father. The incestuous desire of Oedipus is a "good intention" and "the most innocent activity" aimed "to form a kingdom of surfaces and of the earth to fit his size" (LS 205). And yet, according to the "castration complex" as the next chapter in the psychoanalytic narrative, instead of restoring the mother, "the child has in fact castrated and evantrated her" and "by wishing to bring back the father, the child has betrayed and killed him" (LS 206). Oedipal "good intentions" to project the imaginary semblance on the physical surface are necessarily punished in the child's discovery of the mother's lack of the phallus, which can no longer be the agent of the coordination of the erogenous zones. The child's loss of the phallus, however, engenders a new *disjunctive* synthesis of heterogeneous series that gives rise to the phantasm and thus marks the child's transition to the symbolic or metaphysical surface.

Once again, it is not our purpose to dwell on the details of Deleuze's idiosyncratic rereading of the psychogenesis of infantile sexuality, already examined in a secondary literature.[208] What is important for us is that the principle of the ego's synthesizing activity at the oedipal stage, based on the convergence of parental and pre-genital images around the central image of the phallus, shares its structure with the Bergsonian coexistence of sheets of past and peaks of present as well as the crystal image uniting perception and recollection. Just as the oedipal stage of sexuality "gives rise to a synthesis of *coexistence* and *coordination* and constitutes a *conjunction* of subsumed series" (LS

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[208] See Keith W. Faulkner, *Deleuze and the Three Syntheses of Time*, Peter Lang, 2006; Joe Hughes, *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2011; Sean Bowden, *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's* Logic of Sense, Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

225), "one of them infantile and the other post-pubescent, between which a sort of resonance is produced" (LS 226), so in the Bergsonian time-image present and past coexist and resonate. Both processes are based on the principle of resonance of divergent series. And yet, both oedipal and Bergsonian resonances evolve into a new kind of resonance that foregrounds difference as the key coordinator of divergent series. That is, the oedipal or phallic resonance of heterogeneous series based on the *resemblance* projected on them is replaced by the post-oedipal or phantasmatic resonance that takes their *disjunction* as the basis of their convergence. In the post-oedipal stage, characterized by the loss of the phallus, the phantasm, therefore, becomes a new agent of the coordination of heterogeneous series that continues the oedipal or phallic tendency of reparation and restoration of the imaginary totality. As Deleuze writes, in the phantasm "[r]esemblance subsists, but it is produced as the external effect of the simulacrum, in as much as it is built upon divergent series and makes them resonate" (LS 262). In a similar vein, the crystal image, besides merging past and present to the point of their indiscernibility, also "has to split the present in two heterogeneous directions" (C2 81) towards the future and the past. This temporal split, rather than temporal indiscernibility, gives rise to the "fundamentally falsifying" (C2 131) narration that "deliberately [breaks] with the form of the true to replace it by the powers of life" (C2 135) by colliding together incompatible versions of reality. As Deleuze writes in *Cinema 2*, "The formation of the crystal, the force of time and the power of the false are strictly complementary, and constantly imply each other as the new co-ordinates of the image" (C2 132).

The passage from the oedipal conjunction to the post-oedipal disjunction in the phantasm in *Logic of Sense* seems, therefore, analogous to that from the Bergsonian temporal resonances to the Nietzschean "power of the false" in *Cinema 2*. Deleuze is, unfortunately, silent on the psychoanalytic underpinnings of the time-image's progression toward the virtual. Yet the structure

of both progressions as well as the use of vocabulary for them is strikingly parallel. For example, in

Logic of Sense Deleuze writes about the phantasm in terms of the Nietzschean "power of the false":

> Simulation is the phantasm itself, that is, the effect of the functioning of the simulacrum as machinery-a Dionysian machine. It involves the false as power, *Pseudos*, in the sense in which Nietzsche speaks of the highest power of the false" (LS 263).

> the eternal return is, in fact, the Same and the Similar, but only insofar as they are simulated, produced by the simulation, through the functioning of the simulacrum (will to power)… It is under the power of the false pretender causing that which *is* to happen again and again (LS 265).

With regard to the time-image of modern cinema, Deleuze argues that

> The truthful man dies, every model of truth collapses, in favour of the new narration… it is Nietzsche, who, under the name of 'will to power', substitutes the power of the false for the form of the true, and resolves the crisis of truth, wanting to settle it once and for all… in favour of the false and its artistic, creative power (C2 131).
> The story no longer refers to an ideal of the true which constitutes its veracity, but becomes a 'pseudo-story'… a story which simulates or rather a simulation of the story (C2 149).

Deleuze's transition from the oedipal (or Bergsonian) resonance to the post-oedipal (or Nietzschean)

phantasmatic simulation in both psychoanalytic and cinematic contexts is important for us in order

to adequately account for Tarkovsky's career path, whose Bergsonism of the middle period (*Solaris*

(1972) and *Mirror* (1975)) tends to evolve into the Nietzschean "post-oedipal" direction in his late

films. As I will demonstrate in the next section, despite his late interest in Nietzsche, Tarkovsky,

however, was never quite able to overcome his attachment to the Bergsonian form of memory based

on the second passive synthesis of time, which resulted in his quasi-religious or messianic

affirmation of the "power of the false" gravitating toward the past rather than the future. But before

we move on to Tarkovsky's "crystalline" parables, it is necessary to focus more in detail on his

Bergsonian poetics of resonance.

Tarkovsky's compulsive use of "visual rhyming"[209] has often been noticed by critics. Mirror-

doubles, doppelgangers, narrative loops, etc. proliferate and resonate in his films. In fact, most

research on Tarkovsky has dealt precisely with this aspect of his aesthetics, that is, how one image

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[209] Mark Le Fanu, *The cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, BFI, 1987, 216.

in his film visually resonates with another, how characters intermingle and become indiscernible, how the film frame merges with the close-up of a certain painting, how different spaces become topologically continuous, how sound and music harmoniously communicate with the visual order, etc. In what follows I will organize such findings on Tarkovsky's films into a coherent aesthetic system which could be called as "poetics of resonance" or "machine of resonance,"[210] a poetics which rather steadily follows the dynamic of Deleuze's second passive synthesis of time.

Resonance in Time

Tarkovsky's temporal resonance could be best described by Deleuze's concepts of the crystal images and coexisting sheets of past. In *Solaris*, the astronaut Kris is sent to explore a strange planet-ocean Solaris that materializes human fantasies and memories. Each member of the spaceship crew has his own materialized fantasy to deal with. In Kris's case, he encounters an exact replica of his dead wife, Hari, who committed suicide because Kris had left her. Tormented by guilt and longing for redemption, Kris reignites the love for his deceased wife by repeating the marital scenario of the past with Hari's double in the present. Yet the more the new Hari merges with the original one, the more their relationship repeats the past. After the replicated Hari comes to understanding that she would never become that Hari whom Kris used to know in the past, she commits suicide, which ironically completes her progressive merging with the original. *Solaris*'s narrative is, however, not limited to Kris's romance with the uncanny clone, as it is in Soderberhg's remake *Solaris* (2002). The phantasmatic materialization of Hari triggers Kris' regressive slide into deeper and ever more expanding layers of memory via the replication of doubles: in Kris's dream sequence, Hari merges with his mother, while he interacts with her as if he were a little child; while watching his home video brought to the spaceship, Kris sees and relives himself as a child and

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[210] In *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze utilizes the term the "machine of resonance" in his analysis of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* according to the three kinds of machines (i.e. syntheses). As he writes, "The entire Search sets three kinds of machines to work in the production of the Book: *machines of partial objects (impulses), machines of resonance (Eros), machines of forced movement (Thanatos)*" (PS 160, emphases in original).

adolescent. Toward the end, Kris is no longer an astronaut on a mission but a powerless child seeking love and forgiveness from his parents, as we see this in the final sequence that shows him falling on his knees before his father in the Solaris-generated fantasy.

In *Mirror*, the synthesis of divergent temporalities is even more intensified since the synthesizing agent, the narrator himself, is literally invisible and completely withdrawn from the present and each main character in the film has his or her "crystal" double: the narrator's mother is identically replicated by his wife, the narrator in the past by his son in the present. The narrative itself consists of fragmented dreams and memories, while the scenes in the present resonate with those in the past (e.g. the narrator's memory of the burning barn under the rain is immediately followed by his son Ignat in the present lightning fire in the courtyard). Despite its explicit autobiographical background, *Mirror* nevertheless desubjectivizes dreams and flashbacks by intentionally obscuring their dreaming/remembering subject. By mixing personal memories with images from the documentary footage (e.g. the Soviet Army crossing Lake Sivash in 1943, the balloon flight, the May Day parade in 1939, the atomic bomb exploding over Hiroshima, the Spanish Civil War, Chinese carrying portraits of Mao), Tarkovsky transcends the limits of individual memory towards the memory of the world. In the final sequence, which definitively removes the boundary between past and present, the young mother and father are lying in the grass near the dacha of the past and the father asks her, probably after making love: "Would you rather have a boy or a girl?" The camera then leaves the lovers and cuts to the mother as an old woman walking across the buckwheat field followed by the narrator as a small boy with his sister. As they leave the frame, the young mother is seen standing in the middle of the field looking at her future self.

Stalker radically departs from *Mirror*'s temporal collage by foregrounding the action's continuity exclusively in the present. As a post-apocalyptic environment, the Zone seems to stand

outside the preceding specular reciprocity of multiple temporalities. Temporal and spatial complexity here is reduced to the classicist unity of time, place and action. According to Tarkovsky's minimalistic conception, everything should have happened in one place within a single tracking shot. The ultimate goal was to achieve the absolute degree of cinematic realism on the premise that the Zone, the location where the heroes set out on a journey, is "not a territory"[211] but "a product of the Stalker's imagination"[212] The virtual status of the Zone, therefore, effectively de-actualizes its temporality of the present by unhinging it from the subordination to the conventional "sensory-motor relationship between world and man" characteristic for the movement-image. It's only in form and technical realization that Stalker is different from *Mirror* and *Solaris*, but in its philosophical conception it is consistent with Tarkovsky's overall endeavor to cinematically reconstruct pre-historic non-chronological temporality. But if in his earlier films the synthesis of multiple temporalities is accomplished via pervasive mirroring between past and present as well as the meticulous reconstruction of the childhood landscape directly from dreams, memories and family photographs, in *Stalker* Tarkovsky attempts to get the same effect via reproducing a landscape whose historical specificity has been utterly erased by a nuclear catastrophe. In their original conception, the *pre-historic* landscape of childhood home and the *post-historic* zone of nuclear desolation are identical: both redeem the primordial maternal, or natal, aspect of the world associated with home. In a sense, the Zone is yet another reincarnation of Tarkovsky's home, where one reconnects with the world beyond spatial and temporal coordinates, which is why Stalker's first words in the Zone upon arrival are: "we are at home."

Nostalghia pushes the temporal resonance to the highest extreme by exploring the character's state of suspension between the virtual past in Russia and the actual state of exile in Italy. The protagonist Gorchakov can neither return home nor stay in Italy; he can neither engage

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[211] Quoted from Robert Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema*, 69.
[212] John Gianvito, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, 61.

sexually with the beautiful Italian interpreter nor get back to his Russian wife; he speaks Russian to the Italian girl who doesn't understand a word yet forbids his interpreter to speak Russian to him. As a poet and musicologist, he has come to Italy to do research on the Ukrainian eighteenth-century serf composer Pavel Sosnovsky (historically based on the composer Maximilian Beryozovsky (1745-77)) who was sent by his landowner to study in Italy. Stricken by the nostalgia for his homeland, he was unable to enjoy his temporary freedom in Italy just as he was unable to get back to serfdom at home. The composer nevertheless decided to return home, where, shortly afterwards, he killed himself. As Tarkovsky comments, "the composer's story is put into the film deliberately as a kind of paraphrase of Gorchakov's own situation, of the state in which we see him… crushed by the recollections of his past" (ST 203). Unable to complete the commissioned opera libretto on the basis of his research material, Gorchakov instead repeats Sosnovsky's destiny and thus introduces a resonance between his own life and the past beyond his personal recollections. As Tarkovsky emphasizes, his hero "failed to return to Russia not of his own volition, but by a dictate of fate" (ST 220). For Deleuze, such fate or destiny, "which [transcends] spatial locations and temporal successions" and establishes between them "systems of replay, resonance and echoes" (DR 83), affirms "a pure power of time which overflows all memory, an already-past which exceeds all recollections" (C2 48). Tarkovsky's decision to conflate Gorchakov's destiny with that of Sosnovsky/Beryozovsky as well as the "entire history of Russian emigration" known for the Russians' "tragic incapacity to be assimilated, the clumsy ineptitude of their efforts to adopt an alien life-style" (ST 202), is utterly Bergsonian. He makes the whole past of Russian emigration *virtually coexist* with Gorchakov's present just as he makes his hero choose a certain level of that past (i.e. a level from the Bergsonian cone of memory) as the manifestation of his own destiny in the present. Tarkovsky's protagonist is, therefore, an agent of synthesizing the actual present and a "[pure] past which was never present" (DR 83). In fact, Sosnovsky's past is a pure fiction; it was never present

as a historical actuality. Upon his return to Russia, the historical figure Maximilian Beryozovsky, as Sosnovsky's prototype, was appointed a staff member of the imperial theatres and Kapellmeister of the Royal court capella, which was a high ranking position for any musician, not only for a serf. Whether he committed suicide as a result of depression for not being appreciated in Saint Petersburg is still a mystery for his biographers.

In his final film *Sacrifice*, Tarkovsky went even further in his experimentation with time by trying to cinematically realize his conviction that time is reversible, a thesis that he repeatedly states in his diary.[213] If in his earlier films, the plot development is either fragmented or arrested in stasis, here it folds back upon itself. The plot is simple: the World War III that breaks out in the evening has miraculously vanished next morning as if it never happened. The protagonist Alexander is told by the local postman that there is a witch in town: one only needs to spend a night with her in bed and then make a wish, and the wish will come true. Alexander makes love to her and his wish or prayer is to end the war on a condition that he would burn his house and remain silent for the rest of his life. Despite the banality of such a fantastic plot, its logic is consistent with Tarkovsky's philosophy throughout his entire career: in order to keep the purity of home intact, one voluntarily exiles himself. One even destroys the actually existing home for the sake of its virtual counterpart yet to come to realization in future. The film ends with what it opens: the scene of watering the barren tree. Whereas in the beginning both Alexander and his mute son water the tree together, in the end the son does so alone. Furthermore, whereas in the former scene Alexander keeps talking to his silent son without a pause, even though he expresses an utter contempt for the futility and meaninglessness of words ("Words, words, words," he exclaims), in the latter the mute "Little Man" suddenly utters his only line in the film ("In the beginning was the Word. Why is that, Papa?") as if the father's silence restored his son's power of speech. The pair of Alexander and "Little Man" is

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[213] Andrei Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time: The Diaries, 1970-1986*, 122.

that of the actual and the virtual, respectively. Therefore, the reversibility of time, which the film promotes at the expense of the protagonist's sacrifice, is the reversibility of the actual (i.e. Alexander or the previous evening of a nuclear disaster) and the virtual (i.e. his son or the next morning of peace) in their "continual exchange" in the crystal image. As Deleuze writes, "When the virtual image becomes actual, it is then visible and limpid… But the actual image becomes virtual in its turn… invisible, opaque and shadowy… The actual-virtual couple thus immediately extends into the opaque-limpid, the expression of their exchange" (C2 70). That is to say, despite Tarkovsky's interest in Nietzsche's doctrine of the eternal return, - a doctrine which would, according to Deleuze, imply the return of a pure difference as such (i.e. the difference between the actual and the virtual rather than the actualization of the virtual or the virtualization of the actual), - the reversible temporality of *Sacrifice* still proceeds according to the Bergsonian logic of the crystal-image: the actual Alexander sacrifices himself by becoming "invisible, opaque and shadowy" so that the virtual "Little Man" would become actual, "visible and limpid."

Resonance in Space

Tarkovskian spatiality, manifested in both natural and built environment, is characterized by the blurred boundary between the inside and the outside as well as the topological continuity of distinct surfaces. Given that in the time-image, according to Deleuze, movement is subjected to the expression of time, Tarkovsky's space is temporalized and thus acquires hallucinatory properties of topological fluidity via seamless tracking shots connecting landscapes of the present and dreamscapes of the past. Deleuze defines Tarkovsky's spaces as "crystallized" (C2 129). The "crystalized" space, he writes, is the result of "crystalline narration" which "[fractures] the complementarity of a lived hodological space and a represented Euclidean space. Having lost its sensory-motor connections, concrete space ceases to be organized according to tensions and resolutions of tension, according to goals, obstacles, means, or even detours" (C2 128-9). The nature

of crystallized spaces, Deleuze argues, "cannot be explained in a simply spatial way. They imply non-localizable relations. These are direct presentations of time" (C2 129). Not only do movements become "abnormal" and "false" because of the subordination of sensory-motor connections to the primacy of a direct time-image, "all the possible movements emerge from it" (C2 130). Tarkovskian movements, in this regard, literally transcend their spatial determination either through utter immobility or levitation.

The spatial continuity of dream and reality is already demonstrated in the second dream sequence of *Ivan's Childhood*, where the travelling shot begins with a close-up on the stove in the room, where Ivan is sleeping, then moves slowly across the floor and ends on Ivan's hand, water dripping on it from somewhere above. The next shots show the banker as a wooden well, from the top of which, already in a dream, Ivan and his mother are looking down. As Deleuze points out, in the crystallized spaces "montage tends to disappear in favour of the sequence shot" (C2 129-30), which is precisely the case with Tarkovsky's sequence shot that plays the role of mediation between separate spatial orders, not only the orders of dream and reality but also those of the inside and the outside. In *Mirror*, for example, in the flashback scene where the mother announces to her children that the barn is burning, the camera does not immediately follow them leaving to watch the fire outside, it travels across the corridor instead, away from the entrance to the room, by observing a glass part of an oil lamp falling from the table on the floor, and then, tracking aside, focuses on the mirror reflecting the door out of which the children are watching the fire. Through the mirror and the long take, the outside fire is thus placed inside the room.

Even when Tarkovsky does not use such techniques to mediate the external and internal aspects of the built environment, their topological continuity is often represented almost as a given in the scenes of raining inside the house, such as, for example, in *Solaris*'s final episode, in *Mirror*'s "washing" dream, and, of course, in *Stalker*'s final "Zone" scene showing the characters sitting on

the flooded floor under the interior rain in front of the Room of Desires. Strangely enough, Tarkovsky's ideal apartment literally incorporates the elements of the natural environment into itself. Just as there is no temporal boundary between past and present for Tarkovsky, there is equally no spatial separation between the internal and the external. In *Nostalghia*, for example, when Gorchakov visits Domenico's dilapidated house, what we see in it through the slowly moving close-up is the artificial landscape with trees, hills and a river spread out over the floor, the miniature model of the Zone's swampy landscape inside the apartment, the diegetic significance of which is never clarified in the film.

The resonance of real and oneiric spaces reaches its maximum in *Nostalghia*, where extremely long takes following the melancholic gaze of the hero smoothly merge together Italian gothic landscape with the misty Russian one as if both were present within one shot. Tarkovsky's representation of Gorchakov's dream of his home in a hotel room, which entirely dispenses with montage, could be the best example of this technique. In this scene, Gorchakov sleeping on the bed and his dream-image of the sunlit Russian landscape under the rain are rendered within a single, uninterrupted shot, where the former in the dark is shown on the left side of the screen and the latter in the light on the right. Furthermore, the Alsatian dog, as the creature from Gorchakov's memories, suddenly appears from the bathroom and settles down beside his bed by crossing the boundary between dream and reality. As Johnson and Petrie comment on this image, "What we are witnessing is not wholly a dream, neither is it everyday reality: it hesitates on the border between the two."[214] The same fusion of the two landscapes, which Deleuze would characterize as "incompossible," i.e. possible to exist separately yet impossible to coexist together, is statically represented in *Nostalghia*'s final emblematic shot where the Russian country house is inserted inside the interior of the Italian cathedral. Tarkovsky concedes that this sequence is "a constructed image which smacks

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[214] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 167.

of literariness," it "has an element of metaphor" or "model of the hero's state" (ST 213). Yet the artificial constructedness of this image is fully justified by Tarkovsky's search for that kind of montage which would assemble spaces according to the character's unconscious logic and time in general. As he says about *Nostalghia* in an interview, "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. ... To show things which are not necessarily linked logically. It is the movement of thoughts which makes them join together inwardly."[215] We may say that this "subjective logic" of dream and memory is that of the second passive synthesis of time.

Another emblematic tracking shot, which metaphorically captures the entire message of the film, is given the *Sacrifice*'s scene where Alexander, after learning about a nuclear war, looks at his house and its toy model, made by "Little Man" as a present for the father's birthday, at the same time. In the *Sacrifice*'s film posters the miniature model of the house is placed together with its actual prototype in the background within a single frame (the same shot is used as a book cover of Robert Bird's *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema*). The film, however, does not have such a scene; the image is taken from Michal Leszczylowski's documentary on how *Sacrifice* was made. What we actually see in the film is something different: the two identical houses never appear within one frame but rather linked together though a tracking shot which first captures the actual house and then slowly moves down to its miniature model. But during this slow transition from the actual house to its virtual model, in this in-between space, the two houses form a hybrid composite image of one house both actual and virtual at the same time, where at the top of the frame we see only the bottom of the actual house whose roof is reflected in the puddle, whereas at the bottom of the frame we see the top of its miniature model. Thus, the bottom of the real house and the roof of its virtual counterpart essentially complement each other and form a hybrid image of home belonging to the

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[215] Ibid., 165.

two divergent temporalities. The symbolic significance of this crystal-image, in which the father's actual house and the son's virtual model are in "continual exchange," will become clear in the film's final sequence shot, where Alexander burns down the actual house as a sacrifice for his son.

Stalker similarly deploys the travelling shot as a merger of dream and reality, the most representative example of which is "The Stalker's Dream" mentioned above. Salynskii suggests that Tarkovsky's films (just like Eisenstein's) follow the law of the golden ratio according to which the most important message of the director is placed right in the middle of his film. Given that Stalker's dream sequence is shown in the middle of *Stalker*, where the camera slowly follows the flow of water under which we see abandoned objects of civilization turned into garbage and, at the same time, hear Stalker's wife reading the Bible passage about the End of Time, emphasizes the importance of stasis over movement, the absence of time over historicity, and passivity over action. Tarkovsky's representation of movement within the Zone is, therefore, more temporal than spatial. That is, the very laws of movement are inverted, since the characters' journey appears to be more static and regressive than dynamic and progressive. As Tarkovsky himself explained the visual nature of the Zone to his composer Eduard Artmev (so that the latter would find the analogous expression in the score), the idea was to "present an image of space frozen in a dynamic equilibrium."[216] Given this radical reconfiguration of movement according to the Zone's post-apocalyptic /post-spatial coordinates where motion turns into stillness, space into time, and action into inaction, desire also changes its character: it loses its object and becomes immanent within itself. The fact that no one enters the Room of Desires is fully consistent with the Zone's logic of immanence. In the Zone's inhuman context, desire loses its human "objectal" orientation: one no longer desires what one lacks; one simply does not know what to desire. The Zone is therefore not a place but rather a mode of existence which Spinozistically redefines not only our relations of

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[216] Maya Turovskaya, *7½, ili filmy Andreia Tarkovskovo*, Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1991, 94.

movement/rest and speed/slowness but also our relation to desire which becomes complete or immanent within itself.

Intersubjective Resonance

In Tarkovsky's resonant universe, the boundaries between subjectivities are equally unstable and porous. The equation "1 + 1 = 1" painted on the wall of Domenico's house in *Nostalghia* could be the formula of Tarkovsky's intersubjectivity. In his late films, the protagonist's ego is always caught up in a crystalline circuit of reflections and inversions of his or her earlier selves as well as the subjectivities of other characters. For Deleuze, in the time-image the subject's present self inevitably merges with itself in the past because of the present's vertical coexistence with virtual sheets of past (according to Bergson's cone of memory). But since the past extends to infinity and resonates with the pasts of others as well as the past of the world in general, so does the virtual object, which, due to its perpetual displacement, could provide only a temporary support for the subject's identification. Towards the end of *Solaris*, Kris's becomes contemporaneous with himself as a child, an adolescent and a husband. Given that the film's narrative centers on the protagonist's redemption through, we should ask: whom exactly does he love? What is the original object of his desire? The actual Hari, Hari's double produced by Solaris or his mother with whom Hari merges in Kris's hallucinatory dream? He could perhaps love his father whom he, mirroring Rembrandt's *Return of the Prodigal Son*, embraces in his imaginary return to the Earth, in which we see neither his wife nor his mother. Helena Goscilo, in this regard, convincingly argues that the figure of the father that "represents origins, Home, responsibility, and, ultimately, forgiveness of a son"[217] is indeed the object-cause of the protagonist's desire. As she writes, "Though achieved only "virtually," the filial cathexis marks the attainment of a long desired yet repressed reconciliation with the father. Tarkovsky's desire is paramount at film's end: his father's shattering abandonment is not only displaced onto the son but

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[217] Helena Goscilo, "Fraught Filiation: Andrei Tarkovsky's Transformations of Personal Trauma," 259.

is also rectified through the penitent return and silent but apparently loving reunion."[218] And yet, the Earth itself could be the virtual object for his longing since the film ends with a panoramic shot of his homeland on the island floating in Solaris's ocean. It appears that the object of Kris's desire is deliberately displaced though other characters and objects that, in turn, establish resonant series between themselves, such as Hari-1 and Hari-2, Hari-1/Hari-2 and Kris's mother, Hari-1/Hari-2/Kris's mother and his home, the home and his father, his father/the home and the Earth. All these series interchange and resonate with each other and testify to the endless displacement of Kris's virtual object of desire into the infinity of the past. Unlike the active synthesis, which directs the subject's desire toward identical totalizable objects in empirical reality, the passive synthesis points to the contemplation of partial or virtual objects which remain non-totalizable and enigmatically non-identifiable in the subject's unconscious. For Deleuze, just like for Lacan, the unconscious is essentially intersubjective as it is characterized by the two coexisting and resonating series of both actual objects, successively passing in the adult's life, and timeless virtual objects buried in the past yet attracting the subject's desire from the present "in the real series in which [they] endlessly [circulate]" (DR 106). As he writes,

> The parental characters are not the ultimate terms of individual subjecthood but the middle terms of an intersubjectivity, forms of communication and disguise from one series to another for different subjects, to the extent that these forms are determined by the displacement of the virtual object. Behind the masks, therefore, are further masks, and even the most hidden is still a hiding place, and so on to infinity (ibid.).

In *Mirror*, the identity of the adult narrator is intentionally obscured by his actual invisibility in the present and can be only partially established through its relation to the various periods of his past as well as the pasts of other characters. The object of his desire is similarly shifting from his wife through the young mother (played by the same actress) to the other characters from his past and the old mother. In the narrator's dream about his mother washing herself in a slow motion, her face is fully covered with her wet long hair in an uncanny defamiliarizing (or defacializing) way. But when

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[218] Ibid., 262.

we can finally see and recognize the face of his young mother, she slowly comes to the mirror which reflects the face of his old mother.

The dream motif of looking in the mirror and seeing the reflection of somebody other than oneself is repeated in *Nostalghia*, when Gorchakov sees Domenico in it. Just like in *Mirror*, the "central aspect of the film is the concept of doubling,"[219] such as Sosnovsky/ Gorachakov, Gorchakov/Domenico, Eugenia/Gorchakov's wife. The intersubjective continuity between the two characters is established not only through the dreams (as we see this in another Gorchakov's dream uniting his wife Maria with Eugenia, embracing each other, which symbolizes his love of both Italy and Russia), it subordinates the entire plot development, in which Domenico's madness is juxtaposed to Gorchakov's homesickness (just the Stalker's faith is contrasted to the Writer's skepticism through a number of visual mirror-like inversions of their postures in *Stalker*). According to the film's montage, both heroes die simultaneously but in an emphatically contrasting manner. Whereas the former's self-immolation in Rome is accompanied by his energetic proclamations against civilization as well as Beethoven's triumphant and affirmative "Ode to Joy," the latter's nine-minute crossing of the drained St. Catherine's Pool with the lighted candle, during which we closely observe the hero's spiritual metamorphosis from doubt and skepticism to faith and determination, proceeds in complete silence. As Gorchakov completes his messianic passage across the pool and collapses out of heart attack, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" again begins very softly on the soundtrack. In such juxtaposition, Domenico burns himself externally, i.e. through his body, while Gorchakov internally, i.e. through his heart. Furthermore, the movements of Domenico's act of self-immolation are mimicked by another local madman on the square, which brings out the theme of madness more resonant.

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[219] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 163.

Nostalghia's intersubjective resonance extends beyond the frame of the film since the characters of Sosnovsky, Gorchakov and even Domenico are the projections of Tarkovsky's himself. As he writes,

> I myself went through something similar when I had been away from home for some time: my encounter with another world and another culture and the beginnings of an attachment to them had set up an irritation, barely perceptible but incurable—rather like unrequited love, like a symptom of the hopelessness of trying to grasp what is boundless, or unite what cannot be joined… (ST 202-203)
>
> How could I have imagined as I was making *Nostalgia* 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… (ST 202)

In fact, all protagonists of Andrei Tarkovsky's films serve as the alter ego of his own subjectivity; it is not by accident that most of his heroes have the name which starts with the letter 'A': Andrei in *Andrei Rublyov*, Alexei in *Mirror*, Andrei in *Nostalghia*, Alexander in *Sacrifice*, and St. Anthony in his last film project *The Temptation of St. Anthony*.

Audiovisual Resonance

Tarkovsky's innovative approach to the audiovisual expression as the indispensable component of the film image is a well-known fact in a secondary literature. His highly calculated use of natural and artificial sounds as well as quotations from classical music constitutes a complex and independent soundscape that, along with his imagery, similarly conveys his larger philosophical views. In her book-length study on Tarkovsky's sound, Natalia Kononenko outlines three successive stages of his film sound evolution (diegetic, experimental and mythological), moving from the initial state of discreteness and polarity to that of continuity and pantheistic universality.[220] Whereas in Tarkovsky's early films, marked by collaboration with the composer Viacheslav Ovchinnikov, music and natural sounds are narratively opposed (e.g. dreams vs. war), in his 1970s films both smoothly interpenetrate and reproduce each other thanks to Eduard Artemev's electronic "hypersound" which was capable of creating a great variety of timbres and textures. Each film of

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[220] Natalia Kononenko, *Andrei Tarkovskii: Tarkovskii: Zvuchashchii mir fil'ma*, Moskva: Progress-Traditsia, 2011.

Tarkovsky's middle period represents a unique acoustic universe. In *Solaris*, a symphony of earth sounds counteracts with the ocean's thinking in eerie tones, while a Bach Chorale Prelude accompanies the protagonist's spiritual ascent. In *Mirror*, a collage of classical music quotations is in "sonic agreement"[221] with the world of natural sounds as well as the melody of poetic intonation. In *Stalker*, where the heroes' spiritual journey parallels our descent into the depth of sound itself, "beyond the limits of physical sensation,"[222] the acoustic antithesis between welcoming sounds of nature and industrial noises of civilization is compensated by the Zone's synthesis of various sounds as well as that of eastern and western musical cultures. The heroes' transition from the ordinary world to that of the Zone, - which, through the close-ups of their heads, is shown statically rather dynamically, that is, in time rather than in space, - is already marked by a radical transmutation of the sound. While the heroes are having a ride on a motorized draisine, the clanking sound of its wheels on the tracks is electronically refracted through Artemev's synthesizer and merged with an eerie ambient score.

The *Stalker*'s musical refrain is the monotonous theme performed on a tar combined with the flute's variations on it. As Artemev comments on the genesis of this refrain, during their work on *Stalker* Tarkovsky

> needed some combination of the Orient and the West recollecting along with that the saying by Kipling about incompatibility of the Orient and the West. They can only co-exist but will never be able to understand each other. Andrei desired this thought be ringing in *The Stalker* distinctly but he could arrive at nothing good enough. Then he offered me to try performing European music on the Oriental instruments or, vice versa, orchestrating an Oriental melody for European instruments and to see what would that result in. This idea seemed to be curious and I brought a wonderful melody to Andrei, named "Pulcherrima Rosa" by an anonymous author of XIV century - medieval motet dedicated to Virgin Mary. Having heard this theme, Andrei immediately decided to take it but warned that in such original form it was just inconceivable in the film. It ought to be given in an Oriental colouring, in an Oriental statement. That condition of his he reckoned to be obligatory and indisputable.[223]

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[221] Ibid., 67.

[222] Ibid., 76.

[223] Tatyana Egorova, "Edward Artemiev: He Has Been and Will Always Remain a Creator…" *Electroshock Records* (originally published in *Muzikalnaya zhizn*, Vol. 17, 1988): http://www.electroshock.ru/eng/edward/interview/egorova/

As a result of their patient search for the synthesis of the Orient and the West in the score, the collaborators agreed on having the refrain performed on a Persian tar and a European flute with the background Indian tone refracted through a synthesizer. As Artemev explains,

> I created an aural-acoustic space on the synthesizer which was spectrally close to the timbre of the Indian instrument tampur. And this aural space immediately unified what seemed impossible: acoustic instruments of East and West (the tar and the flute) and the stylistically countering thematic material.[224]

The integration of multi-ethnic elements becomes one of the central themes in Tarkovsky's later features characterized by his tendency to minimalism. In *Nostalghia*, the previous abundant polyphony of noises is reduced to a key sound mixture, or "acoustic grain," of tinkle and splash, which resonates with overlapping scores of Verdi's *Requiem* and Russian folklore lament. In *Sacrifice*, the apocalyptic fusion of (glass) tinkle and (jet) drone becomes the dominant background for the redemptive syncretism of Bach's *Erbarme dich* (liturgy), Swedish herding calls or *kulning* (animalistic wailing), and Japanese flute tune (Zen meditation) brought together in the auteur's cosmogonic ritual.

Kononenko's framework of the audio-visual analysis stems from Salynskii's study of Tarkovsky's "cine-hermeneutics" (namely psychological, intertextual and sacred layers of film interpretation) and Arkadev's work on temporal modalities (i.e. amorphous, qualitative and atomous) in the history of European music.[225] As a result of such an interdisciplinary marriage, the correlation between sound and image in Tarkovsky's films is examined according to three hermeneutic levels: introspective (or psychological), cultural (or intertextual) and epiphanic (or metaphysical). *Psychological* states of Tarkovsky's characters (dreams, hallucinations) are accompanied by physiological sounds of heartbeat or breathing often merged with white noise (wind, rain, rustles, squeaks, etc.) and various folk songs (e.g. Russian wedding lament in

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[224] Quoted from Maya Turovskaya, *7½, ili filmy Andreia Tarkovskovo*, 94.
[225] Mikhail Arkadyev, *Vremennye struktury novoevropeiskoi muzyki: opyt fenomenologicheskogo issledovaniya*, Moskva: ITs-Garant, 1992.

Gorchakov's dream or *kulning* in Alexander's vision of apocalypse). The *cultural* layer of

Tarkovsky's score is represented by his use of musical quotations, in which he ostensibly prefers the

music of the Baroque Era to that of Romanticism due to the melancholic humility of the former and

the heroic prowess of the latter. The ideological conflict between musical styles is paralleled by the

clash of genuine spirituality and individualism narratively thematized in films. For example, Bach's

meditative passages synchronically correspond to the camera's static contemplation, as it is evident

in the levitation scene or the close-up of the river flow in *Solaris*, the "buckwheat field" scenes in

Mirror and the close-up of da Vinci's *Adoration of the Magi* in *Sacrifice*. The passages from

romantic music are, on the contrary, intentionally deformed and their affirmative optimism is

contrasted by the harshness of the of the visual image, as we can see this in the scenes of immobile

Monkey's telekinetic staring in *Stalker* or Dominico's suicide in *Nostalghia*, both accompanied by

the distorted strains of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." The *epiphanic* audiovisual dimension is

represented by the characters' revelatory flashes of existential truth (visually rendered through

diegetic ruptures, characters' blackouts, montage cuts to either white or black screen, etc.) paralleled

by the sound's disintegration into some audial mass of elementary particles.

However rich and erudite Kononenko's detailed exposition of Tarkovsky's "sounding

world," her framing of the evolution of the director's sound, culminating in the stark acoustic

minimalism of his late period, according to Salynskii's 'meta-film' narrative model, which

prescribes the emphasis on spiritual transcendence to his last films, ostensibly neglects the fact that

in immigration the director could not find an equal substitute for his long term collaborator

Artemev. In such circumstances, he was forced to abandon the composer's service altogether. The

coincidence of Tarkovsky minimalistic soundtrack and his quasi-religious emphasis on salvation and

sacrifice in late films, which Turovskaya compares to sermon,[226] is, therefore, circumstantial rather

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[226] Maya Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, 117.

than aesthetically designed. What this coincidence points to, however, is the fact that even in his immigrant period, without the composer's assistance, Tarkovsky continued to pursue the same synthesis of divergent sounds and musical traditions into one acoustic universe and it is this synthesis that is promoted and dramatized as the path of redemption in the world approaching apocalypse. That is, the redemptive tonality of the soundtrack based on such acoustic syncretism was already present in his 1970s films. In 1980s, it became only more accentuated and intensified thanks to the director's turn to the theme of salvation. In other words, Tarkovsky's evolution of sound could be reduced to two periods only. Whereas in 1960s he diegetically opposed different sounds and musical styles, in 1970s and 1980s he strived to merge them into a single acoustic whole. In this regard, Tarkovsky's quasi-religious apocalyptic musings should not be emphasized too much. According to his films, what spiritually redeems us is not our turn to God or Christianity *per se*; religion only brings out the urgency of salvation and belief in the reality of transcendence but doesn't exactly show us how to technically achieve this experience. Tarkovsky's path of salvation lies precisely through the grand synthesis of times, spaces, cultural traditions and artistic mediums.

The utopian dimension or impulse of this synthesis could be exemplified more in detail by the symphony of earth sounds accompanying the close-up of Pieter Brueghel's *The Hunters in the Snow* in *Solaris* and Bach's soundtrack in the close-up of da Vinci's *Adoration of the Magi* in *Sacrifice*. Both examples, divided by the fourteen years of the director's career, share the same intricate synchronicity between different artistic mediums: film image-painting-soundtrack.

In Tarkovsky's films Breughel's *The Hunters in the Snow* functions as a pictorial refrain, or crystal image, symbolizing the serenity of the childhood landscape. In *Solaris*, it appears before Kris's departure, in the father's house, and during his dream, with the mother standing against it. Furthermore, the winter landscape in his home video is strikingly Brueghel-like. The Brueghel-like scenery once again reappears in the middle of *Mirror*, which serves like a gravity center for the

protagonist's childhood memories. Yet whereas in *Mirror* and Kris's home video, it is the actual

natural landscape that is modeled after Brueghel's *The Hunters in the Snow*, in *Solaris*'s library

scene it is the other way around, it is the latter that is made to look like the former. The library

episode starts with Hari looking at Breughel's landscape, whose gaze the camera slowly follows and

then meditates on the painting for some three minutes, by fragmenting its scenery piece by piece

with a series of close-ups, pans and dissolves. Each close-up of the detail selected in the painting is

matched by the off-screen sound. When Hari looks at people skating, the sound of human voices

appears. When she looks at a flying bird, we hear bird sounds. The image of hunters corresponds

with the dogs' barking, the appearance of the church with the church bell's sound. The sequence

ends with a similar image from the videotape where the young Kris, dressed in red, stands in the

snow. This cut from the virtual image becoming real or natural, i.e. animated by natural sounds, to

the actual one becoming virtual, i.e. having the same Brueghel-like appearance, is yet another

example of Tarkovsky's crystal-image. The Brueghel episode is immediately followed by the scene

of levitation, reminiscent of March Chagall's flying lovers, accompanied by the Bach Prelude,

which is interrupted by the sound of breaking thermos, a sign of Hari's attempt to suicide. What's

important for us in this sequence is the complex synchronicity between all aesthetic components

involved. The Bach soundtrack only emphasizes the blissful harmony or resonance between art and

nature, life and death, past and present, a resonance which literally transcends spatial determination

through levitation.

The symbolic significance of *Sacrifice*'s opening with the close-up of da Vinci's *Adoration

of the Magi* has been noticed by a number of scholars. Salynskii and Giralt rightly argue that

Sacrifice in its entirety could be viewed as the adaptation of the dramatic composition of the

painting, including its imagery, characters and themes. The painting depicts the Virgin Mari holding

the infant Jesus in the foreground, surrounded by the Magi (in addition to other bystanders) kneeling

in adoration or acknowledgment of the world's salvation in the image of a little child. One of the old Magi is offering the gift to the child who is accepting it by stretching his hand to it. It is on this kneeling and offering figure that the close-up centers for the first two minutes of the film's opening credits. And it is this Leonardo's character that becomes the virtual object for Alexander's self-identification in his intersubjective resonance. The image is accompanied by the *Erbarme Dich* from Bach's *Saint Matthew's Passion*, in which the singer expresses Peter's plea for God's mercy, a plea which will later resonate with Alexander's prayer to God to stop the war. As Girald aptly observes, "Bach's accompanying music, together with the Magi's posture of offering oneself together with the gift, forms a cinematic *synthesis* that *blends* aesthetically with the supplicating tone of Bach's lyrics."[227] After Alexander learns about the nuclear war, in the fiftieth minute of the film, he comes closer to the reproduction of this painting hanging in the room of his son. The glass door (or frame), through which the picture is contemplated, reflects Alexander's face. That is, the (virtual) image of the old Magi and the (actual) image of Alexander are superimposed upon each other and interchange within a single frame, which is, again, a typical technique of Tarkovsky's crystalline poetics. In contrast to the promising peace and festivity of the painting's foreground, its background depicts the chaos of the pagan apocalyptic world with buildings in ruins and horsemen fighting. In Tarkovsky's adaptation, the painting's background is projected in the film as the nuclear disaster. In fact, Alexander's first post-apocalyptic hallucination opens with almost the same staircase we see in the background of the painting. After the opening credits, the camera moves upward to show the palm tree in the center of Leonardo's paining, which is immediately followed by the sequence where Alexander and his son plant the barren tree. As we know, the film's finale is a mirror-like inversion of the beginning as it shows Alexander's son watering this tree. The painting's tree covered with foliage is therefore contrasted to the film's barren tree which will, nevertheless, come to life as it did

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[227] Gabriel F. Giralt, "Andrei Tarkovsky's Adaptation of Motifs Embedded in Leonardo da Vinci's *The Adoration of the Magi*," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, vol.14.2. (2005), 71-83, 74 (emphases added).

in Alexander's story recounted to his son about the monk who kept watering the parched tree and never doubted "his belief in the miraculous power of his own faith in God" (ST 229). As Tarkovsky commented, "the watering of the barren tree… is a symbol of faith" and the "first and last scenes [of *Sacrifice*] are the high points between which events unfold with growing intensity" (SC 223). Tarkovsky may sound a bit too doctrinal in his promoting the urgency of faith in his last film, yet what matters here is that the aesthetic effect achieved by the cinematic synthesis of various mediums of art arguably exceeds his ideological bias.

Resonance between Image and Word

Our analysis of Tarkovsky's poetics of resonance would be incomplete if we neglect one of his most complex and esoteric resonances: between film image and poetic text. Tarkovsky's insertion of poems into the cinematic texture does not function as a linguistic commentary of the image: i.e. a word does not directly serve as a signifier of the visual material. The correspondence between the two semiotic regimes takes place in the context of the entire film and depends largely on the characters' inner worlds that, at the same time, reflect the autobiographical aspects of their prototypes. Tarkovsky, in this regard, seems to be deliberately obscure about his use of poems in *Mirror*. On the one hand, he says that "the poems are not illustrations,"[228] which is true and helpful. On the other, he seems to mislead us by saying that these poems were included in the film because they were written at same time in which episodes are set and the characters simply recollect them. He refers, in this regard, to the heroine recalling the poem "First Meetings." This episode takes place in 1937, while the poem was written in 1962. Yet Tarkovsky says that he included it because it was written in 1937, this is why the mother's character remembers it. Furthermore, the poem "First Meetings" was dedicated by Arsenii Tarkovsky not to his wife but to his earlier love Maria Faltz

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[228] Andrei Tarkovsky. *Andrei Tarkovsky: nachalo – i puti: vospominaniya, interv'yu, lektsii, stat'i*. Moskva: VGIK, 1994, 100.

who died in 1932; it could also be associated with the poet's third wife, Tatyana Ozerskaya-

Tarkovskaya, as Alexandra Smith suggested.[229] That is to say, beside the question how the poems

correlate with the film, we should also ask why the director wants to mislead us about the possible

reasons for such correlation. In his attempt to attach the feeling of love manifested in his father's

poems to his mother, Tarkovsky seems to express his oedipal "good intention" to unite his divorced

parents regardless the fact that the poet's love is addressed to another woman. In Tarkovsky's

machine of resonance, all things are intended to establish inner and deeper connections with each

other. And yet, the relation between poetic text and visual image in *Mirror*, for example, persists to

be a stumbling block for many commentators, who either digress into excessively allegorical

interpretations of it or silently bypass it by taking its supposed impenetrability as a given. We have

to admit that the director's image-word resonance is the most fragile and unstable one since the

semblance between *the said* and *the seen* is beyond his utopian fusion. It is precisely the

irreconcilable *difference* between the two that this attempted resonance *unintentionally* foregrounds.

And it is the incommensurability or dissonance of the father's word or voice and the mother's

image, running parallel yet failing to match up completely, that, in turn, resonates with the dramatic

separation of his parents, which, according to the nature of the poems included, Tarkovsky appears

to take too close to heart. In what follows, I will attempt to find a coherent logic of the relation

between *Mirror*'s poems and parallel imagery, a logic which seems to be inseparable from the

familial psychodynamic in the director's life.

The first poem in *Mirror* follows the scene of the mother's brief encounter with the doctor

who has accidentally taken a wrong path. As the narrator explains, the path from the train station led

past their house, "if a man turned towards the house, then it was father. If he didn't, it wasn't father,

and it meant that he was never coming back." Maria is shown sitting on the fence waiting for the

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[229] Alexandra Smith, "Andrei Tarkovsky as Reader of Arsenii Tarkovsky's Poetry in the Film *Mirror*," Russian Studies in Literature, vol. 40.3. (2004), 46-63, 54.

father, a scene which is heavily charged with the feeling of loneliness, longing, and hope. The passerby in the field indeed turns towards their house and thus provokes her anticipation of the husband's return. The mother's meeting with the doctor is therefore a "mismeeting" or "misencounter" since it was not him that she was expecting. After the flirtatious conversation, which failed to seduce the mother, the doctor leaves with no success and the mother, disappointed, walks toward the house, while the camera follows her gaze over her children and various domestic objects and then returns to focus on her sad lonely figure. It is on this visual sequence, i.e. at the point of the mother's "mismeeting" which intensified her feeling of solitude and desertednesss, that the father's poem *First Meetings* is superimposed. The poem, which, as we know, is *not* addressed to the mother, narrates about the blissful experience of love that elevates the lyrical hero (the father) to metaphysical heights through such ecstatic states as "epiphany," "grace" and "blessing." The poet's muse, who leads him into her "domain, / From that side of the mirror's glass" and "transfigured the daily human vocabulary," is portrayed as a goddess on a throne holding a crystal sphere on her palm with rivers and mountains in it. The poem ends with the ominous statement about the fate that keeps chasing their love "Like a madman with a razor in his hand." The only part of the poem that directly "rhymes" with the film's visual sequence is this: "In the world everything was transfigured, even / Simple things – the basin, the jug." That is, the father's ecstatic dithyramb for his object of love that "transfigured" the ordinary world for him through the other side of the mirror is paralleled by the camera's spiritual dwelling on random objects, similarly "transfigured" into aesthetic artifacts, as well as the director's representation of his memories via mirror-images. Yet in the end of the voice-over recitation, the poet's sublime experience is contrasted by the close-up of the weeping mother. The dissonance between the father's exaltation and the mother's sadness problematizes the relation between what we see and what we hear.

In most commentaries, Tarkovsky's use of his father's poems is viewed as a parallel illustration of the visual order. As Natasha Synessios observes, for example, "The camera registers elements of the world found in the poem: the tsarina-mother and her realm, the lilac, the pitcher and basin, the water."[230] Synessios, therefore, misreads the poet's tsarina or goddess as the mother. Although she does mention that "Maria is weeping"[231] by the end of the sequence, she does not elaborate further on this. P. Adams Sitney is only partially right by saying that "the mother is not so much longing for her husband, who is away at war, as mourning for the loss of his passionate love for her."[232] The war broke out in 1941, while the episode, to repeat, is set in 1937, at the time when, according to his biographers, Arsenii Tarkovsky definitively left his family. Johnson and Petrie even more strongly argue for the illustrative function of this poem in *Mirror*. As they write,

> Not only will the poetic images provide thematic threads throughout the film, but at times they will be literally visualized. As the camera tracks past the mother to the open window to show the garden, a table, rain falling, the voice explains: "everything in the world was transfigured, even simple things like a basin, a pitcher, when between us stood, like a guard, layered and solid water." Just as love transforms the everyday reality in the poem, so in this film memory bathes the basins, pitchers, vases, tables, the hard, "solid" rain (all frequent images in the film) in the warm, enticingly mysterious glow of another world on "the other side of the mirror," the world of childhood. The camera tilts up the trees as if following the poem's invisible lovers who are joined by all of nature in their celebration. But the love does not last, and the camera cuts to a close-up of the mother, gently wiping tears from her cheeks as the poem ends, perhaps with a comment on the violent historical setting of those past memories, "when destiny tracked us, like a madman with a razor in his hands."[233]

Johnson and Petrie's "illustrative" reading of the poem unites the transformative power of the poet's love with that of the director's memory yet subordinates the mother's image to the logic of the poetic narrative by reinterpreting her sadness as a "comment" on the poem's lines. To reiterate, the mother is *not* the muse (and heroine) of the poem, she has been abandoned by the poet for another woman who would "transfigure" his world. Her previous "misencounter" with the stranger, first mistaken for her returning husband, should prevent us from identifying her with the heroine of "First Meetings." Ultimately, the mother's mournful "mismeeting" is starkly contrasted to the father's

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[230] Natasha Synessios, *Mirror: The Film Companion*, 109.

[231] Ibid.

[232] P. Adams Sitney, "Andrey Tarkovsky, Russian Experience, and the Poetry of Cinema," *New England Review*, Vol. 34. 3-4, 2014, 208-241, 214.

[233] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 117-118.

amorous "meetings." The mother is *shown grieving* for the loss of love, while the father is *heard celebrating* its erotic happiness. That is, the resonance between the two is derived from their incompatibility. Her silent "weeping" and expressive loneliness testify to the tragic disconnection between the spouses, which introduces the disruptive force of dissonance into the father-son resonance, i.e. the transfiguration of the world via love and memory.

The second poem "From Morning on I Waited Yesterday," which occurs during the printing house flashback and was written in 1941, similarly develops the theme of fatal disconnection between the spouses. The short, two-stanza poem contrasts the lyrical hero's erotic expectation of his lover's arrival yesterday morning, when the weather was beautiful "like a holiday" and she did not come, with the "dismal" today, when it was raining and she did come late, and concludes with the expression of his disappointment and helplessness to repair the missed rendezvous: "words cannot soothe, nor handkerchief wipe away." The second poem drastically contrasts with the preceding one: whereas "First Meetings" celebrates the lovers' mutual happiness, the following one laments its absence and implicitly blames the poet's partner for this. The drenching rain under which Maria rushes toward the printing house does resonate with the poem's rain as the symbol of the "dismal" today. Yet the entire scene about her fear of misspelling Stalin's name during editing is hardly relevant to the poem. What does become relevant here is her friend Liza's sudden unmotivated attack on Maria towards the end of the episode, in which she accuses the latter for being a bad wife and a bad mother: "If something doesn't suit you, you pretend it doesn't exist. I'm amazed at your ex-husband's patience. He should have bolted ages ago. You created the whole situation! … You can say he escaped in the nick of time before you managed to make him just like you. I swear you'll make your children miserable." Sitney rightly suggests that Liza's vicious critique of Maria is in fact the latter's "repressed self-accusation." Furthermore, "the mother's self-

accusation may be taken to be the son's indictment of her as well."[234] This suggestion is indeed supported by the following episode in which the narrator blames his wife (played by the same actress) for their break-up and for not taking enough care of their teenaged son. The narrator's critique of his wife in the present thus resonates with his childhood trauma in the past. As Tarkovsky comments in an interview,

> Women can only destroy everything. No, no, I'm joking. We can understand their role in this way… The storyteller perceives his wife as the continuation of his mother, because wives resemble mothers, and errors repeat themselves - a strange reflection. Repetition is a law, experience does not get transmitted, everyone has to live it.[235]

By merging his wife with his mother, the narrator-director transfers his accusation on the latter as well. Furthermore, this accusation resonates with Liza's and the one in the poem. The mother in the film is therefore under the triple attack from her husband, her friend, and her son, whose accusations mirror each other through different temporalities and artistic mediums.

The last poem "Eurydice" (1961) seems to present a considerable difficulty for the viewer to comment on its role within the film's context since, as Johnson and Petrie point out, "Tarkovsky makes no effort to match his father's extremely unusual imagery and elliptical, difficult syntax"[236] in "the most hermetic poem in the film."[237] The poem consists of five stanzas which dialectically develop the theme of spiritual transcendence. The first two stanzas lament about the soul captured inside the body and unable to discern distinctly the richness of the world. What it can hear from its "living prison-cell" is the distorted "rattle" of forests and fields and the "hum" of seas. And yet, as the third stanza proceeds, the soul without the body makes no sense either, one is sentenced to dwell in this "prison" without which no action is possible and "nothing gets done." The fourth stanza, nonetheless, expresses the poet's dream or desire of another soul in a different body that would burn like spirit in liquid fire, "without shadow," by running across from timidity to hope, and encircle the

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[234] P. Adams Sitney, "Andrey Tarkovsky, Russian Experience, and the Poetry of Cinema." 217.
[235] John Gianvito, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, 40.
[236] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 259.
[237] Natasha Synessios, *Mirror: The Film Companion*, 107.

earth, leaving lilacs on the table to remember it. The new soul thus represents the sense of spiritual

transcendence in which it would overcome the inability of the old soul to embrace the world in its

entirety. Such soul, however, is but a dream and the last stanza appears to suggest the compromise

to the inescapable body-soul antagonism:

Run, my child, don't lament
Over poor Eurydice;
Drive your copper hoop
With a stick round the world,
While in answer to each step—
Even though you don't hear it—
Both happy and dry
The earth sounds in your ears.

Even though the poem is titled "Eurydice," her name is introduced only toward the end. In fact, the

poem does not reproduce the Orpheus myth in its entirety but only deploys Hades' stipulation to

Orpheus of not looking back at Eurydice while trying to retrieve her from the underworld as well as

the "idea of a soul imprisoned in a body it cannot live without."[238] The injunction of not looking

back at Eurydice is, however, transformed here into forgetting her entirely and moving on toward

the earth without her: "don't lament / Over poor Eurydice." To put it simply, the mythological "not

to look back" is rewritten here into the poetic "move on." The poem seems to be structured

according to the problem-solution pattern. The problem is introduced in the earlier stanzas: the

seemingly irresolvable conflict between body and soul that precludes the latter from fully embracing

the world because of its imprisonment in corporeality which, nonetheless, cannot be discarded

either. The (partial) solution, surprisingly, lies in Eurydice herself, the figure buried in the

underworld or the past. As Synessios comments, "The poem's last verse urges the child not to

lament Eurydice, now beyond reach, but to keep moving through the world as long as the earth

responds even with the slightest sound to his every step. It returns us to the realm of childhood

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[238] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 259.

where everything is still in the future and there is abundant hope…"[239] The poet should, therefore,

become like a child and, by abandoning the memory of his beloved, look forward toward the future

and enjoy happy sounds of the earth even though he can barely hear them. Most commentators

identify Orpheus as the father and Eurydice as the mother. As Synessios maintains,

> Maria has been abandoned by her Orpheus, also a poet; frozen in time, she waits for him to return for her. He does not return, however; instead, a stranger engages her attention for a while. But his spirit is with her through his poetry, which tells of the love that once was – a love that took flesh through their two children – and which still fills her heart. Tarkovsky told his friend Tonino Guerra that he remembered well how his mother waited for his father to return from the city and that he wanted to include this episode [with the doctor] in *Mirror*.[240]

How does the recital of "Eurydice" interact with the film imagery? The poem begins after the

earring episode, in which the materialistic doctor's wife (played by Tarkovsky's second wife) gently

forces Maria to kill a rooster, accompanies Maria and Alexei walking along a riverbank, after

running away from the doctor's wife refusing to take the food and money for the earrings, and

continues over a cut to sepia and bushes blowing in the wind, which marks the beginning of the final

dream sequence depicting the child Alexei entering the house. The poem ends with the camera

panning away from the somnambulistic Alexei inside the house and then staring into the mirror in

the depths of the room, which now reflects the boy with the jug of milk. The fact that the correlation

between poetic text and visual sequences here is quite loose and beyond any illustration prompted

some scholars to indulge in rather speculative and abstract interpretations of this example. Nariman

Skakov, for instance, reads this piece as the director's philosophical musing on the notion of

death,[241] while Perepelkin quite forcefully, if not bizarrely, presents it as an allegory of birth-

giving.[242]

Nevertheless, the connections between the verbal and visual layers in this sequence do exist.

For Johnson and Petrie, for example, the central poem's theme of the body-soul conflict creates "an

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[239] Natasha Synessios, *Mirror: The Film Companion*, 107.

[240] Natasha Synessios, *Mirror: The Film Companion*, 93.

[241] Nariman Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky: Labyrinths of Space and Time*, I.B.Tauris, 2012, 130.

[242] Mikhail Perepelkin, M. A. *Slovo v mire Andreĭa Tarkovskogo: Poėtika inoskazaniĭa*.

ironic parallel to the scene we have just witnessed, in which the mother fails to feed her child's hungry body."[243] The motif of dreaming about a new soul in a different body also resonates with the black and white dream sequence, which follows immediately after the mother's killing a rooster: there the sleeping mother levitates above the brass bed. Yet the key visual imagery, which fully justifies the place of the poem in the entire film, is provided by Alexei's final childhood dream that begins with the grass and bushes blowing in the wind and a kerosene lamp falling from the table in a slow motion. The beginning of this dream is absolutely identical to an earlier dream sequence right before the earring episode. Whereas the earlier childhood dream is accompanied by the narrator's commentary about how he keeps having a recurrent dream in which he as the child circles around his old house yet cannot enter it, the later dream, after the earring episode, is already paralleled with the father's recitation and the child there *does* enter the house. The resonance between both dreams, one interpreted by the son and the other by the father, is the clue to the poem's symbolic and philosophical role in the film. In the narrator's recurrent dream, the boy attempts to open the door of the house yet fails to do so. After he retreats without succeeding, the door nevertheless opens and we see the mother inside the house collecting potato from the floor. In the father's version of the same dream, the door is freely opening by itself before the boy, holding the jug half his size, and he enters the empty house where we no longer see the mother. While the boy steps into the house and walks inside, we hear his father saying: "Run, my child, don't lament / Over poor Eurydice." As a visual parallel to this line, the child's gait across the room does seem rather firm and swift as we see the milk spilling over the jug he is carrying. After the poem ends with the words "even though you don't hear… the earth sounds in your ears," the wind suddenly blows into the house and we hear the prolonged "dry" hum or murmur of various natural sounds. The juxtaposition of these two dream sequences suggests that Eurydice-the mother is, in fact, the hindrance for the child's opening of his

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[243] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 129.

soul to the world and hearing its "happy" sounds. The father's *word*, therefore, encourages the son to overcome his oedipal attachment to the mother's *image* and move on, or "run," without any lament over her. As Goscilo rightly points out, "Though the mother in *Zerkalo* frames the film visually… the voices of the father (Arsenii Tarkovsky) and son (Tarkovsky via Smoktunovskii) ultimately control the narrative in an authoritative blend of poetry and prose that unites the two, in this instance through their complementary creativity and their behavioral sameness."[244]

The "authoritative blend" of the father's poetry and the son's prosaic imagery is best exemplified by the visual enactment of the third poem "Life, Life" accompanied by the documentary footage of the Soviet Army's crossing of Lake Sivash, which Tarkovsky regarded as "the centre, the very essence, heart, nerve" (ST 130) of *Mirror*. We will not dwell on this "most remarkable combination of Arseni Tarkovsky's poetry and Andrei Tarkovsky's cinematic techniques"[245] that has become a commonplace in any generic introduction to the director's films because of its semantically transparent symbolism. We will only touch upon the question why the Lake Sivash episode as well as the father's third poem that verbalizes it becomes the center of the film placed almost in the middle of the film's screening time (minus the prologue and opening credits). Indeed, there are three other no less eloquent poems paralleled by no less beautiful imagery. Characteristically enough, this sequence is the only one the director is outspoken about regarding its relation to the poetic imagery. Given that almost all soldiers crossing the lake perished, including the cameraman of the footage, this episode, for Tarkovsky, represents the "image of heroic sacrifice and the price of that sacrifice; the image of a historical turning point brought about at incalculable cost" (ST 130). In this regard, he praises his father's poetry that ideally expresses such images: "The images spoke of immortality, and Arseniy Tarkovksy's poems were the consummation of the episode because they gave voice to its ultimate meaning" (ibid.).

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[244] Helena Goscilo, "Fraught Filiation: Andrei Tarkovsky's Transformations of Personal Trauma," 265.
[245] Nariman Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky: Labyrinths of Space and Time*, 122.

According to the film's psychodynamic traced above, the Lake Sivash / "Life, Life" episode should indeed be the center of the film, but not because of the heroic sacrifice of unknown soldiers. Rather, its centered position is motivated primarily by the fact that the father's third poem is the only one here accompanied by the *motherless* visual sequence. It is precisely because of the visual absence of the mother in this sequence that the resonant dynamic of the word-image interaction runs much smoother and metaphysically more coherent and straightforward. As examined above, all three other poems in the film serve for the narrator to sever his fatal attachment to his mother and to identify with the father who is unfortunately absent. This is why he identifies with his poetry which is, at the same time, turned against the mother by suppressing and negating her. Through the first poem, Tarkovsky joins the father's mood in his amorous bliss with another woman despite the mother's mournful figure. Through the second, together with his father he accuses the mother for the failure of marriage and parenting. Through the fourth, just like the father, he wants to forget her and move on. The third poem, symbolically placed almost in the center of the film, should therefore get rid of the mother altogether. In this regard, the father's demiurgic tonality in "Life, Life," asserting the transcendence of death ("All are immortal. Everything is immortal"), past ("I will summon any of the centuries"), future ("The coming time is being enacted now"), space ("Going south, we held dust over the steppe") and fate ("I fastened my fate to the saddle") helps the director equally transcend his oedipal attachment to his mother and the personal memory associated with her. Whereas the narrator (or Tarkovsky) is lost in time among mirror doubles and déjà vu repetitions, the father's poetic logos totalizes time and subordinates it to space ("I measured time with a surveying chain, / And passed through it, as if through the Urals."). The father is indeed the enlightening figure for the narrator, as we read this in his poem: "if I raise my arm up just a little /All five of the rays will remain with you."

The poem concludes with the scenery of the Brueghel-like landscape (familiar from *Solaris*'s childhood setting), which marks the transition from the historical *impersonal* memory to the *personal* one. The minor character Asafiev, climbing to the top of the hill along with the poem's narrative ("And now, in the coming times, like a boy, I raise myself up halfway in the stirrups"), could be seen as the alter ego of Tarkovsky himself climbing to reach his father elevated on the lofty pedestal. After a series of documentary images, we are back to the Breughel landscape and see a small bird landing on Asafiev's hat and he grabs it. In Tarkovsky's films, the bird is a symbol of the upper world. Any appearance of the bird or its part, like a feather, symbolically marks the presence of spiritual transcendence. In *Mirror*'s levitation scene, for example, a bird flies up next to weightless Maria. The bird's white feather slowly falls down near Gorchakov in the beginning of *Nostalghia*. Most Tarkovsky's protagonists have a white streak in hair resembling the white feather: Kris, Stalker and Gorchakov. Furthermore, in the end of *Mirror* the narrator lying on the deathbed (at this point played by Tarkovsky himself) also grabs a small bird and lets it fly. The fact that both Tarkovskky-narrator and Asafiev have the symbolically charged bird in their hands and the latter is present during the final lines of the poem implies that the "Life, Life" sequence is at the center of the film because it enacts the "ultimate" union or resonance between the father and the son beyond the mother's inconvenient presence. As Goscilo comments on this in a Freudian manner: "while the father's voluntary departure—and not death at the son's hands—unquestionably bred a sense of desolation and chronic "longing" for him, and the son's efforts to become "like him" are amply documented, Tarkovsky desired to possess not the mother but the unavailable father."[246]

To sum up, the resonance between poetic text and accompanying visual imagery implies, therefore, the son's siding with the father, that is, with the Symbolic rather than the Imaginary. Nevertheless, this resonance is but one among many others in the film. If we focus exclusively on

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[246] Helena Goscilo, "Fraught Filiation: Andrei Tarkovsky's Transformations of Personal Trauma," 268.

the film's visual intersubjective resonance merging the mother with the wife as well as Leonardo's portrait of *A Young Woman with a Juniper Twig* (used "to introduce a timeless element… and at the same time to juxtapose the portrait with the heroine, to emphasise… the same capacity at once to enchant and to repel" (ST 108)), then we would argue for the son's aligning with the mother, i.e. the specular reciprocity of the Imaginary rather than the transpersonal historicity of the Symbolic. In other words, *Mirror*'s resonances *compete* with each other, which is precisely what makes it open to divergent interpretations.

Tarkovsky's aesthetics of resonance could certainly be expanded into further, more detailed directions. Although he openly propagates the film image "innocent of symbolism" (ST 73), most of his images are cryptic indeed: besides being viewed, they have to be read and deciphered as well. In other words, Tarkovsky's images in practice (rather than in theory) become signs or letters just as the process of *viewing* is transformed into that of *reading* and decoding. The *viewer* similarly becomes the *reader* of his visual signs or *lectosigns*. According to Deleuze, the various signs of the time-image or "chronosigns are inseparable from lectosigns, which force us to read so many symptoms in the image, that is, to treat the optical and sound image like something that is also readable. Not only the optical and the sound, but the present and the past, and the here and the elsewhere, constitute internal elements and relations which must be deciphered, and can be understood only in a progression analogous to that of a reading" (C2 24). Tarkovsky's "lectosigns," in this regard, abundantly proliferate and resonate with each other throughout his film fabric: domestic objects, reproductions of paintings, musical refrains, books, coins, pieces of garment, candles or the bird motif mentioned above. The persistent appearance of natural elements in his films should also be viewed or read as his transformation of matter into lectosigns, the meaning of which is derived or deciphered through their resonance with themselves and other signs. Even though he pretends to be surprised by the questions about the hidden symbolism of " the repeated

images of wind, fire, water" (ST 212), his deployment of natural elements similarly follows the synthetic logic of his poetics of resonance, especially in his dream sequences that often include fire and water within a single frame. Neither fire nor water means anything in isolation. But in resonance with each other, they express one or another aspect of the director's essentially pantheistic and synergetic cinema.

3.3. Tarkovsky's Crystalline Narration and Messianic Power of the False

Crystalline and Falsifying Narrations

Given that in Tarkovsky's resonant universe images are constructed according to their dialogic reciprocity with other aesthetic components involved rather than a linear plot development, how do we account for his films as *stories* or *narratives*? As noted above, the formalist approach would categorize Tarkovsky's cinema as non-narrative *per excellence* and prescribe the narrative function of the film to its stylistic devices instead that would regulate the process of storytelling. Such approach would helpfully describe Tarkovsky's films as stylistically driven narratives yet would downgrade their philosophical inputs, which are essentially beyond habitual cognition. It would also be tempting to interpret Tarkovsky's continuous preoccupation with parental images from a psychoanalytic perspective, since his *Solaris* and especially *Mirror* do look like a "family affair"[247] focused on the oedipal nature of the protagonist's conflictual relationships with his parents and others. In *Mirror*, for example, the narrator's suspended position between the mother and the father would particularly welcome a Lacanian reading which would transcribe such suspension as that between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, respectively. In such reading, *Mirror*'s story would be viewed as a psychoanalytic bildungsroman where the narrator develops from initially investing his mother with the imaginary phallus to his subsequent attribution of the symbolic function of it to the father. Yet the oedipal dynamic holds only for the middle period of Tarkovsky's work, in his later

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[247] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 115.

films it seems to crumble, since no transition from the Imaginary to the Symbolic has been accomplished, while the narration itself already incorporates predominantly post-oedipal motifs. To account for the evolution of Tarkovsky's narrative dynamic, we may turn to Salynskii's mythological model that unifies all the director's films into a single artistic whole characterized by the hero's progressive journey to the other world that cathartically culminates in his offering a sacrifice as a path of salvation. According to Salynskii's framework, the director's films are hierarchically organized into successive stages of the hero's spiritual ascendance: in 1960s films, the journey motif is only narratively thematized and is mainly represented in Andrei Rublev's acceptance of his higher vocation; in 1970s, the hero discovers the otherworldly transcendental powers; in 1980s, the sacrifice is made. Although such model does illuminate the internal dynamic of Tarkovsky's evolution, its excessively prescriptive teleological drive, which takes *Sacrifice* as the prime criterion for mythological hierarchization, overly dogmatizes the director's quasi-religious aspirations of the late period at the expense of his other aesthetic and philosophical motifs. In fact, most Russian-language studies on Tarkovsky suffer from this apparently incurable tendency to ecstatically hypostasize the filmmaker as a saint, a Christ-like figure who showed the path for Russia's spiritual redemption.

In what follows, I will propose a Deleuzean reading of the auteur's mode of narration that would, hopefully, account for most advantages and shortcomings of previous theoretical approaches mentioned above. From Deleuzean perspective, the storytelling function in Tarkovky's films is to be derived from his engineering of resonant series: the internal circuit between the actual and the virtual as the bone structure of his crystal image inevitably subordinates the course of narration in his films. As Deleuze explains, in the crystalline regime "the real and the imaginary, the actual and the virtual, chase after each other, exchange their roles and become indiscernible" (C2 127). As a result of this "coalescence of an actual image and its virtual image, the indiscernibility of two

distinct images" (ibid.), the narration itself becomes similarly crystalline. The classical or organic

narration of the movement image "consists of the development of sensory-motor schemata as a

result of which the characters react to situations or act in such a way as to disclose the situation. This

is a truthful narration in the sense that it claims to be true, even in fiction" (ibid.). In contrast,

"crystalline narration" undermines the notion of truth since characters no longer respond to sensory-

motor situations but are instead absorbed into pure optical and sound situations which, cut off from

action, continually reciprocate with their virtual counterparts. That is, the crisis of action, for

Deleuze, is necessarily followed by the crisis of truth: "crystalline narration will extend crystalline

descriptions, their repetitions and variations" (C2 129), to which the criteria of empirical veracity

and "value-judgment" (C2 132) are no longer applicable. In the film composed of crystal images,

the storytelling function will, therefore, consist not in the progressive development of plot but in the

continuous circulation and exchange of the actual and virtual dimensions of the narrative.

Furthermore, Deleuze seems to make a slight distinction between "crystalline narration" and

"falsifying narration," where the latter resolves the crisis of truth, triggered by the real-imaginary

confusion, by the straightforward affirmation of the power of the false. As he writes,

> It is a power of the false which replaces and supersedes the form of the true, because it poses the simultaneity
> of incompossible presents, or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts. Crystalline description was already
> reaching the indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary, but the falsifying narration which corresponds to it
> goes a step further and poses inexplicable differences to the present and alternatives which are undecidable
> between true and false to the past (C2 131).

The falsifying narration is therefore a step further in the cinematic progression toward the virtual;

besides the crystalline indiscernibility of the actual and the virtual, it foregrounds a liar or forger as a

new kind of hero who "makes the direct time-image visible" (C2 132). As noted above, Tarkovsky's

middle and late periods could similarly be distinguished as crystalline and falsifying modes of

narration, respectively. Whereas *Solaris* and *Mirror* emphasize the indiscernibility of the real (or

present) and the imaginary (or past), while retaining their clear distinction at the same time, *Stalker*,

Nostalghia and *Sacrifice* rather aggressively promote the imaginary as real and insist on its

redemptive power. What is particularly interesting about Tarkovsky's version of the Nietzschean "power of the false" is that it acquires a considerably dogmatic or sermon-like form, which seems so irritating for many Western critics. As I will argue below, the quasi-religious dogmatism of the director's "power of the false" only confirms the Deleuzean logic of cinema's ascendance toward thought, where the "power of the false" is but an intermediary stage of such progression. In the conclusion of this section, I will look at other filmmakers who have taken up Tarkovsky's legacy in this direction.

Crystalline Narration in Solaris *and* Mirror

Tarkovsky's *Solaris* is an adaptation of Stanislaw Lem's sci-fi novel of the same title in which the psychologist Kris Kelvin, who recently arrived at the space station, studies the cognitive abilities of the planet Solaris. One of the mysterious powers of the thinking planet is to magically materialize men's inner fears, memories, and desires in the form of ghosts or visitors who would then inhabit the spaceship as if they were real human beings. One of such visitors is Kris's dead wife Hari, with whom the protagonist establishes a continuous romance while working at the station. When Hari's double realizes that she is not a real human being, she commits suicide. In the end, Kris is left longing for her yet aware that she will never reappear.

Lem's novel takes place exclusively on the space station and is filled with extensive quasi-scientific speculations on the nature of Solaristics, scientific research of the planet. For Lem, the love story is essentially a pretext for exploring the philosophical and psychological problems humans might have outside the earth. Tarkovsky, in contrast, is attracted primarily to the moral issues of the novel and especially to the idea that Kris is given a second chance to remedy his mistakes in the past. Whereas for Tarkovsky the primary focus is Kris's moral redemption, for Lem it is the limitations of human thinking in contact with something alien and unknown. Because of this

in the screen adaptation Kris spends about forty minutes on earth before he takes off to the space station. When Hari is gone in the end, he returns to the imaginary earth produced by the wish-fulfilling plasma of Solaris. Kris's imaginary return to his imaginary home is Tarkovsky's version of Kris's so-called redemption: that is, the virtual home displaces the actual one just as real Kris becomes a fantasy of himself projected on the island in Solaris's ocean. The difference between Lem's novel and Tarkovsky's adaptation is that between organic and crystalline narrations, respectively. The former develops linearly and strives to find the truth about alien forms of life outside humanity. The latter folds back upon itself and prioritizes the specular indiscernibility between its beginning and end, real Hari and her double, Hari and mother, real landscape and that in Breughel's painting, real hero and imaginary one. Because of the enormous length of Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, its plot may seem to develop linearly. Yet its comprehensibility becomes fully coherent only after all the reciprocal connections between actual and virtual components are assembled into a crystalline whole.

Unlike *Solaris*, *Mirror* dispenses with the linear plot development altogether. Given that its narrative is entirely composed of crystalline interchanges between fundamentally different semiotic levels (time, space, intersubjectivity, music, painting, documentary chronicle, poetry, natural elements), its flexible coherence is essentially open and untotalizable; it depends on which kinds of resonance we will take as dominant in our interpretation of the film's story. Salynskii, for example, approaches the whole of *Mirror* as a dream. As he writes, "the overarching *fabula* that organizes the construction of the film in its entirety is simple: a man sees a dream. Within the empirical chronotope of the film only this occurs. All the rest we see in the film takes place in the imaginary world of the dream."[248] That is to say, the critic reduces the narrative complexity of the film to its intersubjective resonance by foregrounding the narrator's oneiric agency as the source of narration.

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[248] Dmitrii Salynskii, *Kinogermenevtika Tarkovskogo*, 154.

For Redwood, on the other hand, *Mirror* represents a perceptible yet narratively unintelligible mosaic of disparate episodes that are nevertheless stitched together via various aural and visual stylistic devices, or motific correlations, such as recurrent natural sounds and images of domestic objects, the doubling of characters, their staring at the camera, close-ups of hands, and motifs of wind blowing and flight. By organizing these motific props into a unified compositional whole, Redwood argues that *Mirror*'s pan-historical and global narrative is structured according to a cyclic seasonal development, rather than the Freudian dream logic of displacement and condensation, because of its narration being essentially dispersed through multiple loci. Although Redwood's construction of *Mirror*'s narrative coherence is undoubtedly more elaborate than Salynskii's, it still suffers from his totalizing drive, characteristic of the spectator-oriented model based on average comprehension skills, which strongly neutralizes the presence of other motifs narratively manifested in the film, such as poetry, music and painting. To reiterate, *Mirror*'s narrative whole is untotalizable because its whole is time itself and time cannot be narratively totalized. In fact, *Mirror* is a time bomb. By converging different series into various resonances, it simultaneously emphasizes their internal incommensurability. If we delve into that cleavage between different resonances as well as the difference within a particular resonance, the difference would explode and smash the entire resonant edifice into pieces. By pursuing one particular resonance as a principal mode of the film's narrative organization, we would inevitably encounter another resonance offering an alternative, of not contradictory, narrative. For example, if we follow exclusively the film's resonance between poetry and accompanying visual sequences, as examined above, we should conclude that the film's central narrative is about the son's aligning with the father, i.e. his transition away from the Imaginary toward the Symbolic. In this case, the center of the film will be in the Lake Sivash/"Life, Life" episode. On the other hand, if we dwell instead on the intersubjective resonance paralleled by Bach's soundtrack, then *Mirror*'s general narrative would gravitate towards the motif

of the son's aligning with the mother, i.e. away from the Symbolic toward the Imaginary, and the center of the film would be in the final sequence where the old mother is together with the young children with the young mother in the background. In other words, the crystalline indiscernibility of the actual and the virtual inscribed in *Mirror* as a principle of its narrative organization appears to be the only possible compromise for its overall narrative comprehensibility.

Yet again, it is quite tempting to read *Mirror* along the lines of the oedipal scenario. But given that in the film the son wants both the father and the mother (i.e. to bring back the father and to make peace with the mother), the classical oedipal affair is played out a bit differently here, that is, at its pre-castration phase: it is enacted as a familial resonance where both parents peacefully reunite. In other words, it strives to reach a utopian spatiotemporal totality reconciling all the differences. For Deleuze, as noted above, the Oedipus complex is based on the convergence of the divergent series that emphasizes their semblance. As he writes,

> In the unconscious, everyone is the offspring of divorced parents, dreaming of restoring the mother and bringing about the return of the father, pulling him back from his retreat: it seems to us that this is the basis of what Freud called the "familial romance" and its linkage with the Oedipus complex. Never has the child, in his narcissistic confidence, had better intentions, never again will he feel as good (LS 204).

> He believed that he had warded off the monsters of the depth and allied himself with the powers from on high. And in his endeavor, the restoration of the mother and the summoning of the father are the targets: this is the true Oedipus complex (LS 205).

Isn't it exactly what Tarkovsky is doing in *Mirror* by trying to restore the mother's wounded and mournful body and bring back the father from his heights through his poetic word? As examined above, in *Mirror* Tarkovsky indeed strives to become like the father, i.e. to identify with his disembodied voice and compete with his lyrical hero in the poetic "transfiguration" of the world and thus become the imaginary phallus for the mother. We will not pursue this analogy any further; this model seems plausible for us to partially organize *Mirror*'s eclectic narrative because it is subjected to the same dynamic of the second passive synthesis of time. What is more interesting, however, is that for Deleuze the memory synthesis is inseparable from sexual desire, it is governed by Eros: "the

second synthesis of time… [unites] Eros and Mnemosyne (Eros as the seeker after memories, Mnemosyne as the treasure of the pure past)" (DR 274). "It is always Eros… who allows us to penetrate this pure past in itself" (DR 85). That is, it is the desire in the present that turns the subject toward the contemplation of virtual (or partial) objects in the past and "designates the specific state of internal resonance" (DR 118) between the present and the past. The erotic nature of the narrator's exploration of the past is undeniable. The mother's half-naked beautiful body is shown three times in the film (which is quite unusual for the Soviet screen of the 1970s): in the washing dream, the shower sequence and the levitation scene. *Solaris* similarly emphasizes the beauty of the female body in the scene of Hari's spasms after her suicide attempt. Yet in *Mirror* the eroticism of memory is even more intensified. As Jean-Christophe Ferrari rather passionately observes in his *Le Miroir de Andreï Tarkovski: Le drame d'Eros*,

> In *Mirror*, the eroticism constitutes the sacred vertigo of time. What is erotic is a surrender to non-chronological time and its mystery. What is erotic… is the dispossession of all control over the course of time; it is the inscription in the spiral of time drilled by the activity of memory (73).

Falsifying Narration in Stalker, Nostalghia *and* Sacrifice

The oedipal/erotic bliss of resonance is but momentary. According to Deleuze's version of psychogenesis, the image of a harmonious totality projected at the physical surface is dissipated on the metaphysical surface of sense once the child enters the castration phase in its passage to the structural-symbolic realm of language. At this stage, as psychoanalytic narrative proceeds, the child is forced to understand that it cannot be the phallus for the mother. As a result of the father's prohibition (i.e. castration), Sean Bowden explains, "the child represses… his or her original sexual aims and objects (bearing on the parental objects-images) and… reinvests these sexual ideas with the desexualized or 'potential energy' belonging to the metaphysical surface (the entire symbolic dimension of language and culture). The sublimation and symbolization through which this

reinvestment occurs is the very process of the phantasm."[249] That is to say, the child's entry into the

symbolic does not eliminate the oedipal impulse entirely but lets it manifest itself in fantasy instead.

Deleuze's argument is that the phantasmatic transformation of sexuality signifies the child's

transition from the physical to the metaphysical. Projected on the metaphysical surface, the original

sexual drives are thus counter-actualized or sublimated: "everything - sexuality, orality, anality -

receives a new form on the new surface" (LS 219); "to die and to kill, to castrate and to be castrated,

to restore and to bring about, to wound and to withdraw… become pure events on the metaphysical

surface… The phantasm recovers everything on this new plane of the pure event" (LS 221). What

Deleuze repeatedly emphasizes in his interpretation of the phantasm is that the creation of fantasy is

the child's epistemological achievement. As "the process of the constitution of the incorporeal" (LS

220), Deleuzean phantasm, whose formula is "from the sexual pair to thought via castration" (LS

218), is the prefiguration of the *thinking* process. As he writes, this "desexualized energy constitutes

the second screen, the cerebral or metaphysical surface on which the phantasm is going to develop,

begin anew with a beginning which now accompanies it at each step" (LS 218). As the result of the

sexuality's sublimated reintegration into thought, the phantasm introduces a new kind of synthesis,

that of *disjunction*, that makes the divergent series, - such as pregenital and sexual or sexual and

metaphysical, - resonate on the basis of their *difference*. It is precisely this third disjunctive synthesis

that will later become the principal generator of the thought-image in *Cinema 2*. Yet whereas in the

thought-image the disjunctive synthesis manifests itself directly though the cut or void between

images or images and sounds, in the falsifying narration it operates through the phantasmatic

transformation of reality (i.e. the synthesis of reality and phantasy) by merging together

incompatible temporalities and spaces.

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[249] Sean Bowden, *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's* Logic of Sense, 236.

We should not of course directly project Deleuze's allegorical reading of psychoanalysis on Tarkovsky's career. What is important for us is that Deleuze's concept of the "power of the false" is analogous to the phantasm, since both of them convert physical matter into psychic ideational reality. Because of such parallelism between *Cinema 2* and *Logic of Sense*, it is possible to suggest that the falsifying narration equally acquires "post-oedipal" characteristics of the phantasm. Similarly, just as the phantasm is described as the precursor of thought, according to Deleuze's scheme of the dynamic genesis in *Logic of Sense*, so the chapter on the "power of the false" precedes that on thought in *Cinema 2*. By following this logic, we may suggest that Tarkovsky's falsifying narration in late films is "superior" to the crystalline narration of *Solaris* and *Mirror*, since the latter further advances the process of *counter-actualization* by foregrounding the phantasmatic dimension of reality.

The stylistic characteristics of late Tarkovsky are well known: the excessively long take, the linear plot development, the classic Aristotelian unities of time, place and action, the enhanced, almost photographic naturalism. At the same time, the duration of the long take radically defamiliarizes time, time itself is either reversed or turned to timelessness, miracles become the main subject of the narrative, space becomes fluid and literally animated, while dramatic development is reduced to the minimum with action becoming rarefied and irrational and materiality turning into a haptic and spiritually redeeming surface. That is to say, Tarkovsky's falsifying narration consists in representing the fantastic *content* in the realist *form*. Whereas in the earlier crystalline narration the real and the imaginary were indiscernible yet distinct, in his later films the imaginary passes as irresistibly real. Given the director's idiosyncratic understanding of "realism" as "a striving for the truth" (ST 113), the very notion of truth is therefore projected on what is fundamentally false. Hence, Tarkovsky's power of the false.

Beginning with *Stalker*, the oedipal libidinal dynamic similarly undergoes a radical

transformation. The previously central image of the mother now maintains its invisible presence

only in the character's fantasy as the forever lost object of desire. This is most evident in *Stalker*

where the protagonist treats the Zone as the mother. In fact, one critic did identify it as "the post-

Oedipal wasteland."[250] Furthermore, *Nostalghia* is dedicated to Tarkovsky's mother and in *Sacrifice*

the first word Alexander pronounces after he wakes up next morning after the nuclear holocaust is

"Mama," although neither feature deploys the mother's character. That is, the mother or, rather, *the*

maternal continues to underlie the libidinal economy of his later films but only through its loss and

unattainability that trigger its phantasmatic metamorphoses. This strongly affects his cinematic

representation of sexuality since the previous eroticism of the crystalline narration seems to either

vanish or be neutralized and downgraded. For example, because of his memory of the maternal

figure of the Russian wife left behind, Gorchakov rejects Eugenia, who, half-naked, fails to seduce

him. In *Sacrifice*, the sexual act between Alexander and Maria is more spiritual rather than erotic.

Because of his obsession with the Zone, Stalker is similarly cold with his wife, despite her hysterical

plea for love.

Given Stalker's dramatic alienation from his wife as well as the powerful nostalgic ambience

with which the Zone is permeated, it's possible to suggest that the relation between Stalker and the

Zone is that between son and mother. In fact, the Zone, to which neither spatial nor temporal

coordinates can be applied, does act as if it were a living yet inhuman creature: it moves, dreams,

punishes, and speaks. This analogy is strongly suggested by the image of Stalker sleeping in the

fetus position inside the watery part of the Zone, right after he recites Lao Tzu about the virtue of

staying a child: weak, powerless, passive, inactive, yet gentle and flexible. Furthermore, if Stalker is

in fact a child lying like an embryo in the Zone's watery womb, then the meteorite that created the

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[250] Christina Stojanova, "Stranger Than Paradise: Immigration and Impaired Masculinities" in *Making It Like a Man: Canadian Masculinities in Practice*, ed. Christine Ramsay, Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 2011, 101-133, 122.

Zone would be the act of insemination. The suggested autochthonic origin of Stalker from the Zone

partly explains the mutant nature of the Stalker's daughter, who genetically inherits a strange

relation with the earth: she cannot walk yet possesses telekinetic abilities that defy gravity.

The mode of existence in Tarkovsky's Zone is strikingly parallel to Michel Tournier's novel

Friday analyzed by Deleuze in his *Logic of Sense*. In Tournier's rewriting of Defoe's novel,

Robinson is no longer a colonial master projecting an economic order on the surface of the island

but is rather passively submerged in its impenetrable beauty. For Deleuze, in the deserted "island

without others," passively enduring Robinson is more real than actively imposing one of Defoe's

original. Given that it is Others who condition and control our perception of the world via

established time-space coordinates through which we simultaneously constitute ourselves as

subjects in opposition to objects, without others we no longer know how to perceive the world since

the absence of others implies the dissolution of the subject-object dialectics. Without others, our

perception is depersonalized and opens up toward the nonhuman world of nomadic singularities.

And this is precisely what happens to Tournier's Robinson who, in the absence of others, discovers

a new world populated by impersonal and pre-individual singularities. Not only does he see the

world differently, his desire is unhinged and dispersed throughout the surface of the island. In the

world without others, his desire loses its object and becomes first mineral, then vegetable and finally

solar. Without others, he discovers a new space, a new temporality and a new relation with the other,

another other, otherwise other, a priori Other. Quite literally, he becomes the lover of the earth. In

his fantastic regression, Robinson "reaches back to the Earth-Mother - the primordial Mother" (LS

314).

Just as Tournier's deserted island, Tarkovsky's Zone is similarly the world without others

with which or with whom Stalker maintains a libidinal relationship. The transformative effect of the

Zone on its visitors is their depersonalization as well as the "desobjectification" of their desire which is no longer related to an external object but finds its telos within itself. If we follow this interpretation to the limit, we'd have to admit that Stalker is but a pervert since "all perversion is an "Other-cide" and an "altrucide" (LS 320). Just like Tournier's Robinson, Stalker escapes the symbolic world of others in order to incestuously immerse himself in the material/maternal surface of the Zone.

Many critics have attempted to explain the Zone in a number of various ways: as the metaphor for the Gulag,[251] Lotman's "realm of unpredictable,"[252] the Lacanian impossible-real Thing,[253] Agamben's "state of exception,"[254] "a tabula rasa, a kind of empty screen onto which the men's, and our, hopes and fears can be projected,"[255] Ignasi de Solà-Morales' "terrain vague,"[256] Deleuzean "any-space-whatever,"[257] the cinematic screen itself [258] or even as the prophesy for the Chernobyl catastrophe. But precisely because of its psychic or phantasmatic nature, the Zone perfectly exemplifies Deleuze's notion of the power of the false: represented realistically with the emphasis on the physical impact of its tactile facticity, the Zone simultaneously undermines any criterion of empirical veracity. In this regard, Tarkovsky's own definition of the Zone is quite helpful. As he claims,

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[251] Serge Daney, *Ciné journal: 1983-1986*, Cahiers du cinéma, 1998, 180; Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System,* Indiana University Press, 1995, 91.

[252] Mikhail Epstein, Aleksandr Genis, *Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture*, Berghahn Books, 1999,

[253] Slavoj Žižek, "The Thing from Inner Space: On Tarkovsky."

[254] Aida A. Hozic, "Forbidden Places, Tempting Spaces, and the Politics of Desire: On Stalker and Beyond" in *To Seek Out New Worlds: Exploring Links Between Science Fiction and World Politics*, ed. Jutta Weldes, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 123-143, 131.

[255] Adrian J. Ivakhiv, *Ecologies of the Moving Image: Cinema, Affect, Nature*, Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 2013, 16.

[256] Stanka Radovic, "On the Threshold: *Terrain Vague* as Living Space in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*" in *Terrain Vague: Interstices at the Edge of the Pale*, eds. Patrick Barron, Manuela Mariani, Routledge, 2013, 114-130.

[257] David Foster, "Where flowers bloom but have no scent: the cinematic space of the Zone in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*," *Studies in Russian & Soviet Cinema*, Vol. 4. 3. 2010, 307-320.

[258] Robert Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema*, 69.

> I am often asked what does this zone stand for. There is only one possible answer: the zone doesn't exist. Stalker himself invented his zone. He created it, so that he was able to bring there some very unhappy persons and impose then the idea of hope. The room of desires is equally Stalker's creation, yet another provocation in the face of the material world. This provocation, formed in Stalker's mind, corresponds to an act of faith. [259]

> The Zone doesn't symbolize anything, any more than anything else in my films: the zone is a zone, it's life (ST 200).

> [The Zone is] a product of the Stalker's imagination. We thought about it this way: he was the one who created that place, to bring people and show them around, to convince them of the reality of his creation. We even planned to have a variation of the ending in which we would tell the viewer that the Stalker had invented the whole thing, and that he was desperate because people didn't believe in it.[260]

Following Tarkovsky's "only one possible answer," we may conclude that Stalker, besides being a pervert, is "a forger, the power of the false of Dionysus himself" (C2 152). Instead of dogmatically framing the protagonist as a Christ-figure, according to multiple religious allegorical interpretations, it would be more consistent to view him as an artist, a "creator of truth, because truth is not to be achieved, formed, or reproduced; it has to be created" (C2 146). In fact, Redwood does look at Stalker mainly as a storyteller who, by "transforming the world into discourse," "constructs a narrative experience for his clients who need it."[261]

What distinguishes Tarkovsky's "forgers" from ordinary liars, however, is their passionate belief in the power of the false. The director's emphasis on the belief of his protagonists is often viewed in terms of his alleged devotion to Christianity. Yet by its very nature, the falsifying narration, which ultimately transcends the cognitive conventions of comprehensibility, should necessarily appeal to belief rather than of knowledge and rational understanding. Tarkovsky resolutely defied knowledge. As he claimed, "Ignorance is noble, knowledge vulgar."[262] According to Deleuze, in modern cinema, because of the crisis of knowledge, belief becomes the only possible relation to the world. As he writes, when

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[259] Quoted from Slavoj Žižek, "The Thing from Inner Space," 239.

[260] John Gianvito, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, 61.

[261] Thomas Redwood, *Andrei Tarkovsky's Poetics of Cinema,* 155.

[262] M. A. Tarkovskaya, *O Tarkovskom: vospominaniya v dvukh knigakh*, Moskva: Dedalus, 2002, 252.

> [t]he link between the man and the world is broken… this link must become an object of belief: it is the impossible which can only be restored within a faith. Only belief in the world can reconnect man to what he sees and hears. The cinema must film, not the world, but belief in this world, our only link" (C2 171-72).

Deleuze's may similarly sound as an advocate of religious belief. Yet belief in God would imply for him a yearning for spiritual transcendence and belief in the other world. Deleuze, on the contrary, argues that it is in this world that the belief is needed. With the sensory-motor collapse which severs the subject from the milieu, seeing the optical images of the world (as well as hearing its sounds), rather than acting upon them, turns out to be the last link that connects one with the external reality. It is because of the fragility of that connection with the world that the necessity of belief in *this* world becomes most urgent. Belief, for Deleuze, is an alternative mode of knowing which is contingent and individual; it is summoned to replace knowledge that, instead, relies on totality and common sense. Whereas knowledge imposes limits on our ability to act, belief, on the contrary, liberates us from such limits and induces the transcendental exercise of the faculties.

Tarkovsky's relation with faith is rather complex and could be the subject of a separate study. Suffice it to note that he was more interested in the notion of faith in general rather than in a particular confession of faith. Besides Orthodox Christianity, in his films we may find references to Catholicism, Zen Buddhism and paganism. It's possible to suggest that he was searching for a syncretic notion of faith that would integrate all world religions. It is quite characteristic that Stalker does not profess a *religious* belief *per se* but a belief in his own phantasm, i.e. a pure structure of belief which he believes to be the basis for spirituality. As Tarkovsky comments, Stalker is "a prophet who believes that humanity will perish for lack of a spiritual life."[263] Given that in his late films the prophet figure is always doubled by a skeptical non-believer (Stalker-Writer, Domenico-Gorchakov, Otto-Alexander), Tarkovsky emphasizes that belief is difficult and comes at a price which is self-sacrifice. It is possible to suggest that in his late period the director's main focus

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[263] John Gianvito, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, 59.

becomes the person's conversion into a belief, a progression which he meticulously traces throughout his last films. In *Stalker*, Writer (played by Anatoly Solonitsyn) fails to believe in the Zone, even though he does take the passage through the "Meatgrinder," a dark tunnel in the Zone, which spiritually awakens him. In *Nostalghia*, Gorchakov (whose role was intended for Solonitsyn who died in 1982), after doubts and hesitations, is eventually convinced by Domenico to undertake a similar passage with the candle across the pool, which would supposedly save the world. Gorchakov's "passage to belief" is about three times longer than Writer's and the viewer, thanks to the long take, is similarly forced to believe in its messianic power. Gorchakov's price for his conversion into belief is death. In *Sacrifice*, Alexander (whose role was initially written for Alexander Kaidanovsky who previously played Stalker) no longer doubts his belief in the miracle; he is *destined* to save the world since from the very start the film narrative identifies him as the Magi offering gifts to the Christ Child. In Tarkovsky's last film, therefore, belief as an alternative to knowledge (and modern materialism) reaches its ultimate expression beyond any rational understanding.

For Pamart, *Sacrifice* perfectly exemplifies the transcendent exercise of belief indistinguishable from madness, something which Deleuze would favor since the film forces the viewer to believe in what is impossible to believe.[264] Yet by pushing the faculty of belief to the limit, the film only appears to comply with Deleuze's transcendental empiricism. On closer inspection, it runs against what the philosopher wants from cinema, namely thought based on pure difference. First of all, *Sacrifice*'s belief is not in *this* world, it is a belief in the miracle to change it. In other words, what Alexander believes in is that his personal sacrifice can redeem the world. He believes in his own power of the false, or fantasy, by attaching to it a messianic vocation. In *Sacrifice*, *this* world is in fact on the verge of global destruction. It is approaching the apocalypse

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[264] Jean-Michel Pamart, *Deleuze et le cinéma: l'armature philosophique des livres sur le cinema*, 187.

and it is only faith that can save it. Tarkovsky's views on *this* world are clearly stated in his speech on the apocalypse at St James's Church in London in 1984: "We live in the mistaken world… We do not develop harmoniously, our spiritual development has become so backward that we are already the victims of an avalanche of technological growth."[265] What is most interesting for our purposes in Tarkovsky's commentary on the Apocalypse of John given in this speech is his rather obscure reference to Carlos Castaneda's *The Lessons of Don Juan*, in which the hero narrates the stories of the Mexican sorcerer about how to change the world. Tarkovsky praises Castaneda for making all this up, such as the sorcerer, his methods, the apprenticeship, etc. For him, the fiction or illusion that the writer created is but a miracle of art but the fact that all this was invented by one person makes this miracle even greater. Tarkovsky does not develop this reference any further yet the very context within which Castaneda's miracle of illusion, or "power of the false," is invoked (i.e. the context of the apocalypse) resonates with *Sacrifice*'s main plot. That is to say, in his last film Tarkovsky/Alexander appears to be utterly confident that his "power of the false" is so powerful that it can truly fix a nuclear catastrophe. In this regard, Alexander's belief is fundamentally different from Stalker's. Whereas the latter's phantasm resonates with the tactile materiality of the physical world in the present, here and now, the former's simply dismisses it. With Stalker, we enjoy the play of difference in the phantasmatic resonance between matter and metaphysical surface. With Alexander, we are caught up in a stifling dogmatism of sameness: the miracle of sacrifice is precisely that the next morning is *no different* from the previous one; that is, *Sacrifice*'s enactment of "eternal return" is that of the return of the same, not the different.

As documented in his diary, during his extensive preparation for *Sacrifice* Tarkovsky got interested in Nietzsche's idea of "eternal return."[266] (Martirolog 514). He was even searching for the confirmation of this theme in other thinkers, such as Seneca's letters, for example. In a diary note on

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[265] Andrei Tarkovsky, "Slovo ob Apokalipsise," *Iskusstvo kino*, no 2, 1989, 96-100, 96.
[266] Andrei Tarkovsky. *Martirolog: dnevniki 1970-1986,* 514.

September 3, 1981, he includes the following quote by Seneca: "Nothing that vanishes from our sight is destroyed - it is all hidden in nature, whence it came and where it reappears. There is an interval, but no destruction. And death, which we repudiate in terror, interrupts life, but does not put an end to it. The day will come when we appear again in the world…" Tarkovsky's comment on the quote is this: "Again 'the eternal return!'"[267] Furthermore, the director "was not happy with the title [for this film] and considered changing it to 'The Eternal Return.'"[268]In a diary note on November 24, 1983, he writes: "Something got clear. "The Eternal Return." The title?"[269] Tarkovsky didn't change the title but he did ventriloquize his understanding of Nietzsche's idea through Otto's mouth, Alexander's spiritual guide:

> 'So you are familiar with Nietzsche?' Mr Alexander asks… 'No, not personally,' comes the postman's prompt response… 'Well, something in the nature of that daft "eternal returns" comes to mind. I mean, we live, suffer, expect something, we hope, we lose hope, experience pain and death; we die at last, and are then born again, but we just cannot remember what has already been, and everything starts all over again; not literally the same, perhaps it is different in manner, but all the same it is just as hopeless and uncertain why it is so. No, it is exactly, literally the next performance, so to speak… I would have done it exactly the same, if I had any say in it! ...' … 'Do you believe in this dwarf yourself? In this stupid return?!" [Mr Alexander asks] 'Sometimes I believe, you know… and since I believe, that means that's how it will be. "To each according to his belief",' Otto admits, half apologetically.[270]

The narrative function of Otto's reference to Nietzsche's "eternal return" is that of foreshadowing what will later happen to Alexander towards the end of the film, when his tomorrow morning will be "exactly the same" as yesterday. Furthermore, the "stupid return," as Otto explains, will take place if one believes in it. Although in the beginning he does not take this idea seriously, already in the middle of *Sacrifice* he starts passionately believing in it. Belief is, therefore, the condition of the "eternal return," according to Tarkovsky's reading of Nietzsche, which is accurate enough, since Nietzsche or Zarathustra does present this idea as a "belief" or "doctrine." What is more important, however, is that the director seems to understand it literally, as the return of the same, i.e. in a sense

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[267] Andrei Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time: The Diaries, 1970-1986*, 292.

[268] Andrei Tarkovsky, *Collected Screenplays*, Faber & Faber, Incorporated, 1999, 509.

[269] Andrei Tarkovsky. *Martirolog: dnevniki 1970-1986,* 514.

[270] Andrei Tarkovsky, *Collected Screenplays*, 519-520.

that all things repeat themselves "without the least variations" in an endless circular movement. And to make this happen, one only has to believe in it. For Deleuze, this would be a "vulgar" take on Nietzsche. As we know, Deleuze understands the "eternal return" as the return of the different:

> The eternal return does not cause the same and the similar to return, but is itself derived from a world of pure difference (DR 125).

> When we say that the eternal return is not the return of the Same, or of the Similar or the Equal, we mean that it does not presuppose any identity. On the contrary, it is said of a world without identity, without resemblance or equality (DR 241).

The point is not of course that Tarkovsky is "wrong" and Deleuze "right" in their divergent takes on Nietzsche. Rather, both approach the "eternal return" from different temporal perspectives: Tarkovsky from the perspective of the past, Deleuze from that of the future. Tarkovsky is right by interpreting the "eternal return" as that of the same in the context of his inherent Bergsonism that views the future as the actualization of the past and thus establishes a vertical coexistence between the present and the past as well as their specular semblance. That is to say, *Sacrifice*'s falsifying narration still relies on the crystalline logic of the indiscernibility of the present and the past. What makes it different from earlier films is that in the end its present now passes as the past. Deleuze is similarly right by viewing the eternal return as that of the different because he reformulates the idea of "eternal return" in terms of the future that introduces openness to chance and continuous variation. Furthermore, for Deleuze, the "eternal return" of difference is the natural condition of the universe, while for Tarkovsky the return of the same is a matter of belief in a fantasy. The intense belief in the imaginary creation has already been present in *Stalker*, yet there Tarkovsky's personal voice is split and divided into that of Stalker (belief) and Writer (knowledge/skepticism). The same concerns *Nostalghia* where doubting Gorchakov and madly prophetic Domenico constitute the two conflicting sides of Tarkovsky's vision on belief. *Sacrifice* no longer incorporates the counterweight of doubt; it becomes homogeneously prophetic and thus hypostasizes itself as the dogmatic belief in salvation. In fact, in the chapter on *Sacrifice* in his *Sculpting of Time*, Tarkovsky appears to identify

himself with a prophet by referring to Alexander Pushkin's poem "The Prophet" as the poetic commentary on the film (ST 221). Tarkovsky's personal identification with the protagonist becomes most evident in the *Sacrifice*'s dedication to his son placed before end credits: "This film is dedicated to my son Andriusha - with hope and confidence. Andrei Tarkovsky." Given Tarkovsky's predilection for the protagonists' names starting with "A" that would autobiographically resonate with his own name, the film's dedication to "Andryusha" Tarkovsky could thus be perceived as a dedication to the younger "crystalline" version of himself.

To sum up, despite utilizing a number of Deleuzean motifs characteristic of modern cinema (i.e. falsifying narration, subversion of knowledge, transcendent use of belief, eternal return), *Sacrifice* paradoxically turns out to be anti-Deleuzean and anti-modern. By taking up the messianic role of a prophet of the eternal return, in his final creation Tarkovsky ends up promoting a rather conservative message, that is, the return of the same or the past at the expense of one's self-sacrifice, which is essentially the dogmatic image of thought. This message testifies to the director's inability to move beyond his poetics of resonance and thus break the vicious circuit between the actual and the virtual.

Beyond Tarkovsky

To move beyond Tarkovsky along the Deleuzean progression toward the virtual would imply to move beyond the second passive synthesis of time that underlies his poetics of resonance. What is wrong with the second synthesis, according to Deleuze? Why do we need to move beyond the Bergsonian synthesis of memory in order to get to the pure virtual as the source of thinking? As Keith Faulkner nicely put it, "Two things can go wrong with this synthesis: it can generate nostalgia for a lost unity, or it can ring the psyche into a repeating loop."[271] That is, the second synthesis

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[271] Keith W. Faulkner, *Deleuze and the Three Syntheses of Time*, 45.

prevents the psyche from moving toward the future by inducing the repetition of the same in order to reestablish the lost oedipal harmony buried in the past. For Deleuze, erotic resonances fail to fully counter-actualize sexuality from its physical depth into metaphysical surface by getting stuck between the two. As he writes, "The risk is… that the [sexual] phantasm falls back on the poorest thought, on a puerile and redundant diurnal reverie 'about' sexuality, each time that it… falls back in the 'in-between' of the two surfaces" (LS 220). As examined in the first chapter, "the synthesis of Eros and Mnemosyne still suffers from an ambiguity" when coexistent series of actual and virtual objects become confused and "the pure past [assumes] thereby the status of a former present, albeit mythical, and… [resuscitates] the illusion of an original and a derived, of an identity in the origin and a resemblance in the derived" (DR 109). The ambiguity of the second synthesis is exemplified by the whole of Tarkovsky's work: it does dislodge the subject from the present to the past but it is unable to pull it out from there toward the future, since the pure past, which has never been experienced, has acquired the status of the mythical ground for the present. Tarkovsky's late turn to the idea of sacrifice could be perceived as his desperate attempt to redeem the mythical past in the present, where self-sacrifice itself acquires a sort of price value in the exchange transaction between the present and the past, in which the content of the former is converted into domain of the latter after the price is properly paid. How can we break this viscous circuit between the present and the past? For Deleuze, the exit passage from the second synthesis is already inscribed within the very structure of its resonance that internalizes the difference between coexisting series. That is, the very split or fracture between the present and the past enacted by the second synthesis becomes a new agent of progression toward the virtual, an agent which Deleuze calls "an invisible, imperceptible *dark precursor*" (DR 119, emphases in original). Yet before we move on to the (post-) Soviet "dark precursor" as the prime generator of cinematic thought in the next chapter, let us look, very briefly, at how the mesmerizing power of Tarkovsky's resonances is being replayed in *Solaris*'s remakes by

Steven Soderbergh and Kanji Nakajima. This slight digression from Russian cinema seems appropriate here because these directors propose their own solutions to the structural limitations as well as possibilities of Tarkovsky's poetics.

Soderbergh's *Solaris* (2002) was advertised as both an adaptation of Lem's novel and a remake of Tarkovsky's film. As Soderbergh himself admitted, his version is 20 per cent an adaptation, 20 per cent a remake, and 60 per cent his own original creation. On closer inspection, however, Soderbergh's film appears to be a 100 per cent remake of Tarkovsky's earlier version. Precisely because Soderbergh's *Solaris* is manifestly a Hollywood remake of European art house classic, where the visual poetry and philosophical depth of the latter are inevitably flattened and packaged according to the consumerist expectations, the film produced mixed responses from both film critics and the audience. Commercially, it failed. As 47-million budget film, it grossed only about 15 million dollars at the North American box office and slightly more worldwide. Some critics find the Soderbergh's version far superior to his predecessor's as it is more focused, concise, dynamic and legible; while others, mostly the advocates of the elite criteria of European cinema, are furious about Soderbergh's consumerist misreading of both Lem's novel and Tarkovsky's version[272] as it indeed turned scientific and philosophical problem into a romance. Stanislaw Lem criticized Soderbergh's *Solaris* for departing even farther from his original intentions than Tarkovsky's version by focusing almost exclusively on the psychological relationship between the two main characters, while reducing the vast and alien ocean to a mere "mirror" of humanity. As Lem argued, "the book was not dedicated to erotic problems of people in outer space… the book was entitled "Solaris" and not "Love in Outer Space."[273]

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[272] See, for example, Peter Swirski, "*Solaris*! *Solaris*. *Solaris*?" in *The Art and Science of Stanislaw Lem,* ed. Peter Swirski, 172-181.

[273] Stanisław Lem, "The Solaris Station," *Stanisław Lem – The Official Site*, http://english.lem.pl/arround-lem/adaptations/soderbergh/147-the-solaris-station

It is true that the romance component of Lem's story is precisely what attracted Soderbergh to this project. As he previously announced to the producers, his version of *Solaris* would be a "cross" between Kubrick's *Space Odyssey* (1968) and Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972),[274] that is, a sci-fi love story focused more on emotion rather than philosophical speculation. Therefore Soderbergh's film deliberately mixes genres, aesthetic traditions and film economies. It is both a sci-fi philosophical fable and erotic melodrama, it diligently quotes the most representative features of Tarkovsky's cinematic style yet carefully organizes them according to the general Hollywood audience-oriented pragmatics, it is independent yet produced by major Hollywood producers, and one of them is James Cameron. By its hybrid status, Soderbergh's *Solaris* thus occupies essentially Indiewood position, a position which has been firmly established by such films as *Being John Malcovich*, *American Beauty*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Adaptation*, *Traffic*, to name but a few.

Soderbergh's remake ends with Kris deciding to stay with his wife on the planet and live there happily ever after. Some critics consider such happy ending as a definite improvement of Tarkovsky's so-called patriarchal utopia where it is the son who reunites with the father, not the husband with his wife.[275] Although realistically improbable, Soderbergh's ending is quite predictable according to the genre conventions of the Hollywood melodrama. Furthermore, it is predictable within his own work consistently dealing with the stories of a second chance, such as his *Ocean 11*, shot right before *Solaris*, where the Cloony's character also tries to win his wife back. Also, instead of philosophical discussions, in Soderbergh's remake rare intellectual conversations only touch upon the implications of the Solaris experience. As Kris argues in one of them, "I don't believe that we're predetermined to relive our past. I think that we can choose to do it differently." One may easily see that Kris's assertion of individual freedom follows the Hollywood conventional

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[274] James Mottram, *The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood*, Macmillan, 2007, 369.
[275] See, for example, Andrew Sarris's review of *Solaris* (2002) in *The New York Observer*, December 12, 2002.

expression of the dominant American ideology of individualism. As James Cameron points out in the DVD commentary, "the film is essentially about making choices. There's no right or wrong about Kris' decision to stay on the space station. What's important is that he made his choice." In an interview, Soderbergh similarly states that "what's being explored in *Solaris* is really the idea of choice… The question the film poses is: 'Can you exert free will in this specific emotional situation, or are you bound to repeat the same thing again and again?' That's what the movie is about."[276]

Soderbergh's ideology of free will and new beginning, therefore, displaces Tarkovsky's emphasis on the ontological repetition of the past within the present. The very fact that in the end of the remake the couple starts a new life on the planet Solaris reenacts the conventional Hollywood rhetoric of the migrant settlement narrative: the psychotic imaginary of the planet is thus conquered by the American dream of a new life in a new word far and away.

Besides Soderbergh's foregrounding the romance in his interpretation of *Solaris*, Tarkovsky's aesthetics of the crystal-image undergoes a considerable revision by the remake's parallel montage. Whereas in Tarkovsky's *Solaris* the past and the present interchange to the point of their *indiscernibility* within a single frame (i.e. a copy of Kris's wife in front of the mirror is merged with his actual wife on the photo), in Soderbergh's remake they are, on the contrary, juxtaposed by a color coded flashback narrative: that is, Tarkovsky's crystalline narration is simplified into a classic one where the color-coded *discernibility* between the past and the present constitutes the legibility and progression of the remake's narrative. Kris's past is shown in blue color, while his present on the space station in gold. Both temporalities are united by means of the parallel montage, which is sustained throughout the entire film. For example, the love-making scene in the present cuts back to that in the past just as Reya's suicide on Solaris alternates with her suicide on Earth. Such a parallelism is important because it follows the Hollywood convention of

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[276] James Mottram, *The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood*, 369.

editing proposed by Griffith, where jumping images constantly alternate between various contrasts, such as rich and poor, black and white, woman and man. As many scholars suggest, the parallel editing premised on the alternation between binary oppositions necessarily leads to their eventual merging and reunification, as it is most evident in all Hollywood melodramas employing this kind of montage. Soderbergh's use of parallel editing in *Ocean 11*, where the narration constantly switches from one character to another, also leads to their final reunion at the fountain. Therefore, the parallel editing of the past and the present structurally presupposes their reconciliation in the end.

Kanji Nakajima's film *The Clone Returns Home* (2008) could be seen as a Japanese version of *Solaris*, although with a twist. Now it is not the wife of the protagonist who gets replicated, it is the protagonist himself who is split into clones searching for the origin of his childhood trauma. The film narrates about a young astronaut Kohei who agrees to participate in an experimental cloning program that will "regenerate" his body and memory should he die. When he is killed during a space mission, scientists are able to regenerate his clone. But the clone comes out with a damaged memory which compulsively regresses to the traumatic event of the protagonist's childhood, namely the death of his twin brother Noboru. Just Tarkovsky's Solaris spends much time on earth in the beginning, in order to constitute the nostalgic ground of the narrative, the remake similarly begins with an extensive flashback portraying how the protagonist becomes an inadvertent cause of his twin brother's death. Noboru drowns in the river because of Kohei's prank. The protagonist's guilt for the death of his twin brother is thus transferred into the memory of his clone who, once activated, runs away from the hospital to the primal scene of his traumatic memory, the home, which has been abandoned and derelict for a long time already. On his journey to home the clone comes across the empty spacesuit which the clone mistakes for his dead twin brother. He picks it up and drags it to the home. Meanwhile the scientists decided to produce yet another clone of the protagonist hoping it will be more successful than the previous one. Nevertheless, the second clone

similarly runs away from the hospital in order to find his predecessor, for whom he feels an unexplainable need. Eventually the second clone finds the first one already dead at their dilapidated home and, once again, mistakes him for his deceased twin brother. The protagonist's mourning for the loss thus repeats itself three times: in the original Kohei, his first clone and second one. In the end, the last clone has a dreamlike vision of his young mother holding the hand of his young brother. Even though both of them are actually dead, the final scene is represented something like an uncanny family reunion, with the second clone coming in terms with his trauma, a reunion structurally reminiscent of the final sequence of Tarkovsky's *Solaris*.

The film ostensibly deviates from the original story yet it gets to the very core of the protagonist's traumatic experience depicted in Lem's novel. Since all the replicas of the protagonist's wife are in fact his own projections that keep haunting him, it would be more logical to replicate the protagonist himself in his unstoppable obsession with the childhood trauma. Whereas in Tarkovsky and Soderbergh it is traumatic memories that return to the protagonist, in the Japanese version it is the protagonist who keeps returning to the site of his traumatic memories. Furthermore, Nakajima's film is much more adequate in its representation of psychoanalytic truth. According to Freud, it is not the conscious subject who keeps returning to the traumatic event. Consciousness precisely represses it. It is the death drive along with the repetition compulsion that forces the subject to confront the trauma. This is why Nikajima's story starts only after the protagonist is already dead and his death drive personified in clones literally carries his dead body to the primal scene of his trauma. In this regard, the film's psychoanalytic message coincides with the Buddhist context of reincarnation of one and the same soul through multiple bodies.

Soderbergh and Nakajima's remakes of *Solaris* provide two divergent paths of the development of the second synthesis which underlies Tarkovsky's film. Whereas Soderbergh reintegrates *Solaris* back to the realm of the active synthesis, Nakajima pushes its potential further

towards the third synthesis of time. The former spatializes memory and turns Solaris into a dwelling place for future habitation. The latter, conversely, demolishes the childhood house and thus translates it into a phenomenon of time. The former foregrounds love or Eros, the latter death or Thanatos. Soderbergh's version, in this regard, repeatedly emphasizes its adherence to Eros against Thanatos, not only through the explicit love-making scene but also through Thomas Dylan's poem "And Death Shall Have No Dominion" recited by the characters as a refrain: "Though lovers be lost love shall not; / And death shall have no dominion." Nakajima's film is, on the contrary, permeated by some eerie desexualized and mournful ambience created mainly by the misty derelict landscape traversed by lonely and silent clones. In fact, in *The Clone* there is no subject who could love, what is persistently present in the film is a pure repetition in itself beyond identity and subjectivity: repetition repeats itself first in twin brothers and then in the repeatedly reproduced clones repeatedly returning home. And yet, what is being compulsively repeated here is the event itself, which is the "eternal return" to home that is itself destroyed in the present and perpetually displaced into the pure past. In Soderbergh, on the other hand, memory is fleshed out in a separate flashback narrative which is reactivated in the present toward the end. The very fact that the past is fully actualized and modified in the present constitutes Soderbergh's happy ending.

Tarkovsky's poetics of resonance could therefore be developed into these two directions: either toward the active synthesis of identity, common sense and free will (which would turn memory into a cult and ideology, love into melodrama, past into present, repetition into repetition of the same, virtual into actual) or the third passive synthesis of the future (that would extend memory into amnesia, love into the death drive, past into pure and empty form of time or timelessness, repetition into pure incorporeal repetition in itself, virtual into thought). The next chapter will explore the latter dynamic in the films of late Soviet directors.

Chapter 4: (Post-) Soviet Thought-Image

4.1. Deleuze's Third Synthesis and the Collapse of the Soviet Ideology

Deleuze's Third Synthesis: Passive or Active?

As we discussed at the conclusion of the first chapter, Deleuze's third disjunctive synthesis or cut provides the logic for his theorization of the thought-image of modern cinema. What we haven't addressed yet is whether this synthesis is passive or active. In fact, Deleuze never qualifies it as a "passive synthesis." In *Difference and Repetition*, it figures as the "royal repetition" of the future "which subordinates the other two [repetitions of the present and the past] to itself and strips them of their autonomy" (DR 94). Yet in a secondary literature, most readers refer to it as passive.[277] Anne Sauvagnargues, on the contrary, describes it as "synthèse active de l'avenir."[278] Henry Somers-Hall, in his turn, maintains that it is "neither active, nor passive":[279] "as the pure and empty form of time which is prior to the modalities of the present and the past, this synthesis is rather "auto-synthetic."[280] It appears that all readings of the third synthesis are valid since Deleuze's formulation of it incorporates the aspects of both passivity and activity. When the subject internalizes the difference between the present and the past and thus dramatizes its own dissolution or death, this stage is described in terms of (radical) passivity with the reference to Artaud's "powerlessness to think" and Blanchot's notion of impersonal death which is "neither present nor past but always coming" (DR 112). The latter, for Deleuze, serves as the passage to one's ultimate openness toward the future, that is, toward "the state of free differences when they are no longer subject to the form imposed upon them by an I or an ego, when they assume a shape which excludes *my* own coherence

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[277] See, for example, Keith W. Faulkner, *Deleuze and the Three Syntheses of Time*; Joe Hughes, *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*.

[278] Anne Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze: l'empirisme transcendental*, Presses universitaires de France, 2009, 96.

[279] Henry Somers-Hall, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide*, Edinburgh University Press, 2012, 72.

[280] Ibid., 83.

no less than that of any identity whatsoever" (DR 113). Yet when this synthesis is granted a key role in the process of thinking and creation as such, it is posited as an autonomous *active* force with the reference to (Klossowski's reading of) Nietzsche's "eternal return." As Deleuze writes, in the eternal return, in which "our coherence" is sacrificed "in favour of a superior coherence," only "the most beautiful qualities will appear, the most brilliant colours, the most precious stones and the most vibrant extensions"(DR 244). That is to say, the third synthesis could be perceived as passive in terms of the subject's depersonalization in the pure and empty form of time, which is the temporality of death. Yet it is certainly active when it is taken up as the principle and condition of creativity. Deleuze does not name it as "active synthesis" in order to avoid confusion with the active synthesis of Kant's transcendental unity of apperception, where it is the faculty of understanding of the active self that organizes different mental representations together. Neither does he refer to it as "passive" since such synthesis is qualitatively different from the previous two.

Eisenstein vs. Artaud

Activity and passivity as the aspects of the third synthesis become relevant in Deleuze's discussion of cinematic thinking in chapter 7 of *Cinema 2* where he juxtaposes Eisenstein's action-thought to, again, Artaud's "powerlessness to think." Deleuze praises the former for having discovered the "spiritual automaton" within the spectator who starts thinking not by logical deduction but by directly responding to immediately given movements on the screen presented as *nooshock* ("*a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous and cerebral system directly*" (C2 156, emphases in original). Yet he laments that Eisenstein's idea of the shock to thought makes cinema a highly manipulative medium. As the history of cinema demonstrates, the "cinematographic I THINK" (C2 158) "has degenerated into state propaganda and manipulation, into a kind of fascism which brought together Hitler and Hollywood, Hollywood and Hitler. The spiritual automaton became fascist man" (C2 164). The degeneration of cinematic thought into "the

dummy of every kind of propaganda" (C2 157) in the age of mechanical reproduction could

certainly be explained by a number of historical factors, i.e. by "the rise of Hitler… Stalinism…

[and] the break-up of the American people" (C2 216). In fact, in Russian film studies the regression

of the Soviet avant-garde into the socialist realist propaganda is usually interpreted by the rise of

Stalinism in 1930s. Yet for Deleuze the susceptibility of cinematic thought to state ideology is

already inscribed in the structure of the movement-image. By following Paul Virilio's lead, he

similarly argues that "there has been no diversion or alienation in an art of the masses initially

founded by the movement-image; but rather "the movement-image was from the beginning linked to

the organization of war, state propaganda, ordinary fascism, historically and essentially"" (C2 165).

How does the thought of the movement-image become unavoidably complicit with the

ideological medium of manipulation? As Deleuze argues, such complicity lies at the heart of

Eisenstein's drive to master the sensory shock effect on thought by subordinating it to the organic

totality (the whole) of the film and thus linking it to social (revolutionary) action. According to

Eisenstein's dialectical schema, the thought born by the shock, produced by the explosive collision

between opposite images (i.e. *nooshock*), should be reconnected back to the images in order to

analytically unify or synthesize the individual parts of the film into a coherent whole which is "the

indirect representation of time which follows from movement" (C2 158). The first movement of the

shock-image to the concept of the whole should be further supplemented by a reverse movement

from consciousness to pathos or affect, i.e. "from a thinking of the whole which is presupposed and

obscure to the agitated, mixed-up images which express it" (C2 159). The sublime fusion of the

intellectual thinking of the whole with the *sensual* or *pre-logical* thinking, which Eisenstein calls

"internal monologue" that operates through metonymies, metaphors, synecdoches, attractions, etc.,

redoubles the sensory shock and, as a result, designates the dialectical unity of a work of art. As he

writes,

> The effectiveness of a work of art is built upon the fact that there takes place within it a dual process: an impetuous progressive rise along the lines of the highest explicit steps of consciousness and a simultaneous penetration by means of the structure of the form into the layers of profoundest sensual thinking. The polar separation of these two lines of flow creates that remarkable tension of unity of form and content characteristic of true art-works.[281]

Deleuze categorizes Eisenstein's "joining the highest degree of consciousness to the deepest level of the unconscious" as "dialectical automaton" (C2 161) which, in turn, conditions the pragmatic sensory-motor unity between humanity and the world or (non-indifferent) nature. For Deleuze, Eisenstein's grand synthesis of consciousness (integrating different parts into the whole of the film), affect (manifested in pre-logical thinking by means of metaphors and metonymies), and nature and man (resulting in the subject's active participation in the historical process) constitutes the classical image of cinematic thought as well as its grammar organized along the vertical (differentiation-integration) and horizontal (similarity/metaphor-contiguity/metonymy) axes. Given that such grammar shares structural affinity with the cerebral model of linguistics (C2 211), it is not by accident that narratology and cognitivist film studies, deploying linguistic methodologies, are so attracted to classic (rather than modern) cinema.

Deleuze's problem with Eisenstein is structurally analogous to his critique of Kant's theory of the transcendental unity of apperception: both Eisenstein and Kant grant the (empirical) faculty of the understanding the legislating role in synthesizing the sensible material into global representations. Therefore, just as in *Difference and Repetition* Artaud's "powerlessness to think" is promoted as an alternative to the dogmatic image of thought, *Cinema 2* similarly establishes "an absolute opposition between Artaud's project and a conception such as Eisenstein's" (C2 167), i.e. the same failure of the active synthesis of cognition counters Eisenstein's dialectical optimism. For Deleuze, resistance to the ideologically manipulated thought (i.e. logical common sense) would imply to abandon such thinking altogether. By taking up Heidegger's claim that we are not yet thinking, he argues for the utter impotence of thought as its *primordial* state. Instead of thinking the

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[281] Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, Harvest Book, 1969, 144-145.

whole (or totality) of the film, cinematic thought, he maintains, should rather take its own collapse as its point of departure: the "innermost reality [of the brain] is not the Whole, but on the contrary a fissure, a crack" (ibid.). For Deleuze, the "crack" within subjectivity, which is another term for the death instinct, "runs through and alienates thought in order to be also the possibility of thought, in other words that from the vantage point of which thought is developed and recovered. It is the obstacle to thought, but also the abode and power of thought – its field and agent" (LS 332-333). The radical passivity of thought toward the "dissociative force" (C2 167) of the Outside (i.e. the pure and empty form of time) opened up through this "crack" is what, according to Deleuze, should underlie cinematic representation as such, first by sabotaging the rational organization of film narrative (through visual disturbance, an aberration of movement, a suspension of the world, a delinking of images (C2 168)) and then by foregrounding the cut itself as the disjunctive synthesis of all film components that would communicate with each other in a discordant harmony.

The Soviet Thought-Image Precursors

Although Deleuze considers Eisenstein the founder of the classical image of thought, in the latter's writings we may still find elements that could serve as the potential starting points for the development of the critical thought-image. Deleuze himself points out that both Eisenstein and Artaud share the same idea of shock as the genetic basis of thought: "from the image to thought there is shock or vibration, which must give rise to thought in thought" (C2 166). The difference between the two lies in how this shock is put further into cinematic practice: Eisenstein masters the shock by reintegrating it into the totality of the film, while Artaud, on the contrary, passively dwells on it and thus lets it disrupt the whole of cinematic fabric, which opens up a higher dimension of thought not subjected to ideological determinations. And yet, just as Hegel's dialectics is truncated from its final *Aufhebung* stage in modern and poststructuralist readings, Eisenstein's montage effect of the shock could similarly be rescued from its domestication in the dogmatic image of thought. For

example, in his early article "Montage of Attractions" Eisenstein defines attraction as "any element of the theatre that subjects the spectator to a sensual or psychological impact, experimentally regulated and mathematically calculated to produce in him certain emotional shocks…"[282] For Eisenstein, however, the shocking effect of attraction is not a means to its own end; it should necessarily be conceived within the totality of the entire work. Therefore, he continues, such attractions, "when placed in their proper sequence within the totality of the production, become the only means that enable the spectator to perceive the ideological side of what is being demonstrated - the ultimate ideological conclusion."[283] Nevertheless, if removed from its subordination to the ideological whole of the film, montage of attractions could already serve as a powerful method of political subversion and provocation. Furthermore, in the *Statement on Sound* Eisenstein, along with Pudovkin and Alexandrov, argues for the contrapuntal use of sound vis-à-vis the visual image that would help resolve the complex problems of theme and plot posed by visual montage. But if we focus exclusively on the audiovisual disjunction in its own right, independently of the film narrative, when he states that the "experiments in sound must aim at a sharp discord with the visual images,"[284] we would get a full-fledged strategy for the construction of a critical thought-image. From the FEKS manifesto written by Trauberg and Kozintsev in 1922 we may similarly extract such techniques that would create a new motoric of the eccentric body "by way of the 'impossible' and 'insane'" and thus develop a new "synthesis of movement: acrobatic, gymnastic, balletic, bio-mechanic."[285]

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[282] Sergei Eisenstein, "Montage of Attractions: For "Enough Stupidity in Every Wiseman"" (trans. Daniel Gerould), The *Drama Review*, 18 (1974), 77-85, 78.

[283] Ibid.

[284] Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Grigori Alexandrov, "Statement on Sound" in Sergei Eisenstein, *Selected Works, Vol. 1, Writings 1922-1934*, ed. Richard Taylor, 113-114, 114.

[285] Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg, "The Eccentric Manifesto 1922" in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, ed. Vassiliki Kolocotroni, University of Chicago Press, 1998, 295-298, 297.

The subversive potential of the early Soviet Avant-garde was, nevertheless, rather swiftly swallowed up and dissolved by the Stalinist ideological machine. As examined in the second chapter, the whole purpose of the Soviet censorship consisted in getting away from the accursed legacy of "fractured consciousness." Such internal "fracture" or "crack" within the self, it appears, could manifest itself in cinema only when the repressive regime itself cracks down. It is therefore quite symptomatic that in the early 1980s, when the Socialist ideology fully exhausted its utopian potential, this fractured subjectivity found its full expression in the underground movement called *Necrorealism*. Necrorealist cinema is one of many other mediums of the movement solely dedicated to the representation of death, such as photography, painting, literature, music, performance art. It was born spontaneously out of repeated exhibitionist pranks performed by young idlers with the zombie make-up ("a mix of cotton wadding, bandages, tomato paste, and jam")[286] which Yevgeny Yufit, the founder of Necrorealism, decided to shoot on camera. From a form of merrymaking early necrorealist shorts rather quickly developed into an independent cinematic trend with a definite aesthetic paradigm promoted to mirror the inevitable disintegration of the Socialist social system bogged down in seemingly interminable stagnation and inertia. As the necrorealist ideologue Viktor Mazin comments, necrorealism appeared when socialism was still alive and functioning;

> As a system, however, it was more dead than alive, and although few believed that the corpse of this system would soon be buried, everyone understood that it no longer showed signs of life, evidenced by the gerontocracy, the death of one general secretary after another, the stagnation in the economic sphere, the negligible number of adherents to the ruling ideology, the absence of any sort of collective enthusiasm, and the demise of the aesthetic principles of socialist realism. Thus, confidence in the stability of the system was based entirely on its immobile character, its failure to demonstrate any signs of life or death. The fundamental feature of the system was semiotic replication, a striving towards neophobically precise reproduction of the symbolic order. The supporters as well as the opponents of the system agreed on one point: time was defeated, time was marked by ideological, economic, and socialist decomposition.[287]

Aesthetically, early necrorealist films resemble amateur home videos on zombies, cannibals and serial killers. Yet at that time the genre of horror movie was virtually absent in Soviet Union.

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[286] Viktor Mazin, "From *Cabinet of Necrorealism: Iufit and*" in *Necrorealism: contexts, history, interpretations*, ed. Seth Graham, Russian Film Symposium, 2001, 28-53, 47.
[287] Ibid., 37-38.

Neither can we say that there was an overseas influence of that genre on the development of the movement since the Russian audience had no chance to see most of Western films because of the Iron Curtain. Necrorealists even came up with their own version of punk music. As Mazin recalls, Evgeny Yufit and Andrei Panov, the pioneer of Russian punk, were very much surprised to learn about the existence of The Sex Pistols in the UK, "some new group of cretins like us,"[288] as they responded. Hermetically isolated from the rest of the world, necrorealists were relying exclusively on the early achievements of the Soviet Avant-garde of the 1920s as well as the slapstick silent comedy: namely, montage of attractions (shocking images of death irrationally intercut with documentary footage), audiovisual disjunction and bodily eccentrics. Yet what distinguishes them from the early Soviet film revolutionaries is their dark post-utopian vision of the world hopelessly sliding toward its own extinction. Images of corpses, decay, excrement, irrational violence, sadism, masochism, homophobia, suicide and plain idiocy inundate necrorealist films. Since death as well as extreme violence was always a taboo in the celebratory rhetoric of socialist realism aimed at mandatory optimism, its unrestrained return in the necrorealist allegorical representation served to compensate for its long repression in the Soviet biopolitics or thanatopolitcs which rationally mastered death as its chief yet secret operator. As Foucault argues, in modern societies political and sovereign discourses have always focused instead on life while evading and obscuring death as "the most secret aspect of existence."[289] By officially promoting the positive management and administering of life, the Soviet regime nevertheless kept a strong hold on death as the life's hidden value by regularly sending millions to camps and wars. As Foucault writes, "It is as managers of life… that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed… the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee

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[288] Ibid., 39.

[289] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, Vintage; Reissue edition, 1990, 138.

an individual's continued existence."[290] In the post-ideological milieu of the final years of socialism

Thanatos, paradoxically enough, became for necrorealists the last form of ideology which would

blatantly expose the sinister underside of the Soviet power. And yet, such ideology aporetically

resisted any ideological closure since necrorealists purposefully abstained from any aesthetic

manifestoes in order to prioritize the freedom of artistic expression.

It is quite tempting to categorize necrorealist cinema driven by a "great death-impulse" (C1

124) as the Deleuzean impulse-image since both focus on the expression of the unfettered

elementary instincts in the apocalyptic milieu. Just as in the impulse-image, the typical necrorealist

milieu (e.g. forest, abandoned factory, bathroom, river shore, swamp, etc.) is defined by its "radical

beginning" or "absolute end" (ibid.) where violent impulses are extracted from the perverse modes

of behavior: "cannibalistic, sado-masochistic, necrophiliac, etc." (C1 128) Yet Necrorealism is *not*

naturalism to which the impulse-image is attached, even though "naturalism is saturated with

[death]" (C1 130). Deleuze's description of this image is more suitable for the classic horror genre

characterized by the "predator-prey relationship" (C1 128). In fact, he does refer to Terence Fisher's

The Brides of Dracula (1960) as an example (C1 129). Necrorealism's aesthetics is far more

philosophical than it might appear at first sight. Its ambition is to grasp the enigma of death in a

metaphysical sense, that is, to extract from naturalistically portrayed fake corpses the event of death

in its pure virtuality rather than merely represent it through its actual occurrences. The oxymoronic

term "necrorealism" designates an attempt to represent the unrepresentable, i.e. to make

present/visible that which is absent/imperceptible. As Mazin elaborates, "the concept of

Necrorealism indicates an absent presence and a present absence, the ambivalence, the insolubility,

of the relationship between life and non-life, the double meaning of necrorepresentation."[291] Its

intention is to initiate the viewer into the *strange* experience where no rationalization or common

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[290] Ibid., 137.
[291] Viktor Mazin, "From *Cabinet of Necrorealism: Iufit and,*" 32.

sense can be applied, to immerse her or him into that kind of temporality which "lies between depersonalization and de-realization, between the burial of "I" and the burial of the world; it is a time of initiation, in which there is no longer a past or a future."[292] The cinematic accomplishments of Necrorealism are certainly naïve and amateurish. But it does succeed in making the mysterious reality of death palpably ineluctable. What Deleuze says about Zola's naturalism could also be referred to Necrorealism: "beneath the noise of the instincts, the crack silently extends and transmits itself… as the universal presence… of the silent death instinct" (LS 326).

The philosophical tonality of Necrorealism becomes increasingly evident in Yufit's more mature short *The Knights of Heaven* (1989) filmed in Alexander Sokurov's studio at Lenfilm. It narrates about a group of elite alpinists set out on a mission or experiment the purpose of which remains inscrutable throughout the film. Even though the film is only twenty-minute long, it feels unbearably dragging and monotonous because of extremely long takes, slowed down action and rare, hardly discernible dialogue. At times, the stillness of certain frames is indistinguishable from photographic images. Despite its stylistic difference from the early necrorealist films, characterized by erratic movements and somewhat primitivist film techniques, *The Knights* is faithful to the main necro-aesthetic principles in its exploration of deadness (or necro-state) in characters as well as environment. The film opens with a low-angle view of a pond with the gloomy industrial landscape at the background and, by slowly panning left, sets on the painting placed on the shore depicting two sailors with slit throats: *A Sultry Night in the Reeds* by Leonid Trupyr' (Corpsie), the most representative Necrorealist painting. This pictorial installation serves, perhaps, as an ominous foreshadowing of a disastrous slaughter in which the secret mission of the "knights" will result: all of them go insane and murder each other in a forest as well as the ruins of a factory. Regardless the utter absurdity of the plot, the film's necro-aethetics introduces new visual tropes which will be later

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[292] Ibid., 31.

adopted and developed to supreme perfection by Sokurov's films in 1990s: namely, seemingly interminable silence, still temporality, the character's blending with the external environment, the fusion of cinematic screen with the photo-image, the close-up of the corpse effigy or decayed matter, the lack of psychology or action and rare dialogue. As José Alaniz and Seth Graham comment, "Whether we read [this film] as a Necrorealist parody of Sokurov or a Sokurovian parody of Necrorealism, Sokurov's stamp on *Knights of Heaven* and on the subsequent development of necrocinema, with its longeurs and minimal editing techniques, is hard to deny."[293]

Before we turn to Sokurov's necro-cinema, it is worthwhile to look at Vadim Abdrashitov's *Parade of Planets* (1984) as another example of the Soviet thought-image which also could be viewed as the symptomatic allegory of the collapse of the Communist regime. In a rather surrealistic fashion, the film's "quasi-fantastic story" (as the opening titles introduce it) centers on six forty-year-old reservists called up for the last time to participate in annual military maneuvers. In civil life, each of them is engaged in a certain profession: an astronomer, a trolleybus driver, a stockroom worker, a factory mechanic, a butcher, an architect. During the war games, they are, however, symbolically "killed" and dismissed by their commander before the end of the training period. Instead of returning to their homes and families, they decide to linger a bit longer in their newly state of "ghosts:" "We're all dead now, we're all bodiless spirits!" as one of the characters exclaims. Such diegetically framed "death" allows the protagonists to step outside the chronological temporality of their everyday social reality and explore the transcendental aspects of existence. In their aimless wanderings through the woods, they first come across "the city of women," an idyllic textile factory town inhabited exclusively by beautiful and hospitable females, and then "the world of old people," a resort for senior citizens. Whereas in the former place, while dancing and flirting, they relive the early days of their youth, in the latter they listen to the memories of the nursing

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[293] Jose Alaniz and Seth Graham, "Early Necrocinema in Context" in *Necrorealism: contexts, history, interpretations,* 23.

house's inhabitants and thus envision their own old age (each of them pairing off with their own "crystalline" version in the future). The mythological trajectory of their voyage is accentuated by the figure of fisherman with a boat, an allegorical Charon, whom the characters ask to ferry them to the other shore in the middle of the film, that is, to "the city of the dead."

The mysterious title of *Parade of Planets* is clarified only toward the end of the film. As the astronomer expertly explains, once in a thousand years all planets realign into a certain configuration in the outer space which looks like a "parade of planets" from the earth and this event is happening *now*. In the climactic moment of the film, accompanied by the *Allegretto* of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony and Shostakovich's *Toccata* from the Eighth Symphony, the characters together with the dwellers of the old people house stand in the night with their faces lifted toward the sky trying to observe this wondrous phenomenon. Images of stars from the earth intercut with the image of the earth from the outer space as well as the close-ups of immobile observers anticipating the advent of something absolutely unknown. What Abdrashitov is trying to capture in this astonishing sequence, which should be regarded as the thought-image *par excellence*, is the ecstatic or primordial temporality of *kairos*, i.e. the opportune moment of drastic change or rupture that pierces through the chronological or historical time. All dimensions of time (i.e. birth, death and in-between) are scrambled and condescend together in this kairotic moment of the film which opens up the dissociative force of the Outside. For Deleuze, this sublime sequence would be characterized by the "pure and empty form of time" or Aion in which "an unlimited past-future rises up… reflected in an empty present" (LS 150). We may also refer to Heidegger's notion of kairos as "the moment of vision" or *Augenblick*, to which Deleuze's futural temporality is much indebted. In the cinematic context, Heidegger's *Augenblick* is even more appropriate since he emphasizes the literal

sense of this term – "a glance of the eye."[294] Removed (or carried away) from the sequential temporality of the present and worldly concerns, Abdrashitov's characters *literally* stare at eternity in the sky. As Heidegger describes it, the self, "in a moment of *vision*, *looks* at those Situations which are possible in one's potentiality-for-Being-a-whole as disclosed in our anticipation of [zum] death."[295] What exactly does the mind stare in this "moment of vision"? Heidegger provides various answers: the steadiness of existence, fate, death, "there" or Dasein which "temporalizes itself in the way the future and having been are united in the Present."[296] In other words, in "the moment of vision" one sees time in its totality beyond human subjectivity and thus awaits the emergence of something radically new.[297] In political philosophy, the immeasurable temporality of kairos has acquired a particularly privileged position as it stands for the time of revolution. A number of "kairological" philosophers think about a revolutionary change in terms of the irruption of cosmic temporality into the historical Chronos and each of them has their own variation on kairos: e.g. Benjamin defines it as *Jetztzeit* or the "now-time," Agamben as "messianic" or "operational" time, Negri as the "void," Virno as "degree zero" or the "neutral kernel," Jameson as the rupture that opens up a space for utopia, Badiou as the (Pauline) truth-event which creates a new present, Zizek derives it from the Lacanian Real.[298] What is important for our purposes is that the cinematic figuration of kairos, especially in a totalitarian context, is bound to have political consequences as it magically dramatizes a new sense of freedom and a new beginning within the old course of events, which was indeed the case with the late Soviet society.

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[294] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001, 376.
[295] Ibid., 396.
[296] Ibid., 449.
[297] More on the redemptive Heidegger's redemptive temporality of kairos see Koral Ward, *Augenblick: The Concept of the 'Decisive Moment' in 19th- and 20th-Century Western Philosophy*, Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2012, 97-125.
[298] For the survey of the "kairological" political philosophy, see Roland Boer, "Revolution in the Event: The Problem of Kairós," *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 30, 2013, 116-134.

Many critics described Abdrashitov's parable as "metaphoric, encoded, cosmological,

futurological, suspending the laws of space and time, and intensifying a mysterious dimension to the

plot."[299] As Anna Lawton describes the scene discussed above,

> In retrospect, that scene was prophetic. 1984 has indeed been the end of an era. The cultural world was ready
> for a fresh start. When the new policy of glasnost made it possible, public opinion turned against the odious
> past and labeled a whole epoch with the contemptuous term, "the period of stagnation." It was clear, however,
> that within the general climate of artistic repression creativity did not die.[300]

That is to say, retrospectively that scene is viewed as the mystical anticipation of the social and

political change. The film, nevertheless, is resolutely apolitical because of its sheer mysticism. In

fact, the director even tried to publicly present his work as a "social document about the

contemporary state of ideological commitment [to Socialism]"[301] in order to ward off the censors'

attacks in advance. Its political significance, however, consists not in the direct critique of the

regime but in rendering it illusory and ineffective within the infinity of inhuman or cosmic

temporality. What's particularly interesting about Abdrashitov's thought-image is that the Soviet

censorship did allow it to appear on a big screen despite its fantastic allegorization, which testifies to

the fact that in 1984 Soviet society was ready or ripe enough to be open to the unplanned and

unknown future that could be visually presented in a different mode of cinematic temporality.

A similar thought-image was already constructed in the last years of the Thaw era in

Aleksandr Askoldov's *Commissar* (1967-1987), "the most taboo film in Soviet history."[302] Yet it

had to wait for twenty years for its release. As Yevgeny Margolit observed, "*Commissar* is a film

which could not be released in 1960s in any possible way. Because… it opened up such things for

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[299] Nancy Condee, *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema,* Oxford University Press, 2009, 145.

[300] Anna M. Lawton, *Kinoglasnost: Soviet Cinema in Our Time*, CUP Archive, 1992, 50.

[301] Vladimir Padunov and Nancy P. Condee, "Recent Soviet Cinema and Public Responses: Abdrashitov and German," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, vol. 29: http://www.frameworkonline.com/Issue29/29vp.html

[302] J. Hoberman, *The Red Atlantis: Communist Culture in the Absence of Communism*, Temple University Press, 2000, 92.

which there was no name in social language."[303] Based on Vasily Grossman's story "In the Town of

Berdichev," the film narrates about a female Bolshevik commissar Klavdia whose revolutionary zeal

is inconveniently interrupted by her pregnancy. Having to wait for the weeks before delivery in a

safe place away from battles, she is boarded with a poor Jewish family, the Magazaniks, with whom

she establishes friendship relationship. One of the main themes of the film is, therefore, Klavdia's

transformation from a hard-edged, overcommitted warrior to a nurturing, gentle and humane mother

under the influence of the kind and cheerful Magazaniks. Yet the film was banned and even

destroyed as well as Askoldov himself fired, expelled from the Communist Party and forever barred

from filming not because of the director's preference for humanism over Bolshevism, which is quite

typical for the Thaw humanistic rhetoric. What Soviet officials couldn't accept from Askoldov is his

genuinely sympathetic representation of Jews as the victims of the pre-revolutionary pogroms,

Soviet anti-Semitism, and the Nazi Holocaust, which equated the Communist regime with the tsarist

one and that of Hitler. In the climactic scene closer to the end of the film, when Klavdia with her

new loving family hide in the basement during artillery bombardment, Efim laments about the

Jewish nation as a symbol of suffering humanity oppressed by all ideological systems. At this

moment, Klavdia has a terrifying flash-forward vision (or the "moment of vision") of the Magazanik

family along with other Jews of the town dressed in the uniforms of the Nazi death camps and being

led to the gas chambers. The heroine's diegetically unmotivated clairvoyant flash-forward to the

future Holocaust is Askoldov's thought-image that collapses the historical distinctions between past

and future into the kairotic moment in the empty present and thus exposes the eternal nature of

Jewish victimhood. As Askoldov recalls, one of his colleagues "paternally advised him that he

might yet salvage his film if he changed the family's nationality and cut the flash-forward."[304]After

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[303] Evgeny Margolit, *Zhivye i mertvoe : zametki k istorii sovetskogo kino 1920-1960-kh godov*, Moskva: Masterskaya "Seans," 2012, 533.

[304] J. Hoberman, *The Red Atlantis: Communist Culture in the Absence of Communism*, 91.

the director refused, "[he] was told that the single print [of the film] had been burned."[305] That is to say, it is precisely the film's thought-image conflating different temporalities that appeared most disturbing to the censors.

The Soviet thought-image precursors, which found their expression either through underground amateur filmmaking (Necrorealism), allegorical parable (*Parade of Planets*) or had to wait for its release until the regime change (*Commissar*), confirm Deleuze's thesis that the genuine thought is antithetical to dogmatic clichés as it operates through the rupture of the symbolic order by summoning a different kind of temporality, which is inhuman, impersonal and ahistrorical. Although the genetic origin of such thought lies outside historic temporality, its cinematic presentation still depends on specific historical conditions. Given that cinema is, after all, a mass art form, the ability of cinematic thinking in terms of ruptures or disjunctions reflects the readiness of a given society or nation to comprehend such thinking on screen. The fact that Sokurov, as one critic observed, "was the first in [Russian] cinema to formulate the idea of imperial collapse and the idea of the Other"[306] at the moment of the disintegration of the Socialist system testifies to the revolutionary nature of the Deleuzean thought-image.

4.2. Sokurov and the Unthinkable

Which Sokurov?

Alexander Sokurov has entered the international arena with such films as *Mother and Son* (1997), *Russian Ark* (2002), *Father and Son* (2003) as well as his "tetralogy on power" (*Moloch* (1999), *Taurus* (2001), *Sun* (2004) and *Faust* (2011)), winning acclaim from both critics and viewers. Susan Sontag, for example, calls him "perhaps the most ambitious and original serious filmmaker of his

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[305] Ibid., 92.
[306] Quoted from Nancy Condee, *The Imperial Trace,* 182.

generation."[307] For Frederic Jameson, Sokurov "is but one of a whole generation… of great auteurs,

who seem to renew the claims of high modernism…"[308] His reputation as a visionary whose

"cinematic canvases" pierce the viewer's heart with "breathtaking beauty" and "spirituality not

dependent on any formula of traditional Christianity"[309] has been sealed by Nick Cave's often-

quoted eulogy on Sokurov's *Mother and Son*. And yet, Sokurov's success as the "the great auteur"

and the heir of another Russian visionary, Andrei Tarkovsky, is not without puzzling contradictions.

Even though his films are often included in the official selection of the Cannes Film Festival, the

only Cannes' award that Sokurov's work received (besides a rather generic FIPRESCI Award for

Father and Son (2003)) was not for his visual achievements but, ironically enough, for the best

screenplay in *Moloch*, written by Yuri Arabov. As Sokurov's frequent collaborator, Yuri Arabov is

certainly a "brilliant scenarist… who would deserve a whole study in his own right,"[310] but in

Sokurov's films, dependent more on visual density rather than verbal dialogue, silence is but the

most eloquent and persistent medium his characters communicate with. Similarly, in 2002 the

European Film Academy nominated Tillman Büttner, *Russian Ark*'s German steadicam operator, for

a cinematography award, which Sokurov scandalously objected by claiming that only the whole film

should gain an award.[311] Of course, his latest film *Faust* won the Golden Lion, the highest award of

the Venice Festival, yet Sokurov's eventual success at Venice seems more like a compensation for

his continuous misfortune at Cannes, where he decided not to present his work in 2011.

Sokurov's problem with the critics' recognition is highly symptomatic of his defiant anti-

cinephilic attitude towards the audience. As he explicitly stated, "cinema, fortunately or

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[307] Quoted from Nancy Ramsey, "Outsider at Home With the Inner Life," *The New York Times*, February 1, 1998: http://www.nytimes.com/1998/02/01/movies/outsider-at-home-with-the-inner-life.html

[308] Fredric Jameson, "History and Elegy in Sokurov," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 33.1. (2006), 1-12, 1.

[309] Nick Cave, "Classic cinema: I wept and wept, from start to finish," *Independent on Sunday*, March 29, 1998: http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/classic-cinema-i-wept-and-wept-from-start-to-finish-1153117.html

[310] Fredric Jameson, "History and Elegy in Sokurov," 4.

[311] A. Sokurov and A. Deryabin, "Refusal To Take Part In The Ceremony For The Awarding Of Prizes By The EFA In December, 2002," http://www.sokurov.spb.ru/island_en/ans_2.html.

unfortunately, can exist without a viewer… It annoys the audience… as they believe cinema is created for the viewer."[312] Although we might presume that Sokurov refers to old Soviet times when the shelved films were literally kept without a viewer, his refusal to submit to mainstream aesthetic expectations is driven by his demiurgic ambition to create an alternative reality in its own right, outside the standards of cinematic perception/identification. As he explains,

> By creating a film, we interfere with the work of God – we are creating the Otherworld. It is not a human privilege – let's not forget about that. As if they felt guilt, most directors try to create a kind of reflection on the screen of the real world, 'to show it as it is in real life'. They immerse themselves in the details of the social world surrounding man, in the details of social interactions – that is, they speak of what is well known to every viewer anyway. Yes, it's nice for the viewer to see on the screen all the things that he has seen in his life. And thereby, to be on the same level of life as the author of the created work. This collusion of audience and author creates a most dangerous phenomenon, which is called mass culture.[313]

> Cinema should not reflect real life. It must not be a mirror, good or bad. It must engender a new life, completely different from reality.[314]

Sokurov's utopian commitment to create a "viewerless cinema" as the Other world, understandably enough, confounds the viewer since the words which most critics use by trying to grapple with his films are such as "enigmatic,""imperceptible,""inexplicable,""mysterious," "unfathomable," "unthinkable," etc. As Nancy Condee observes, "To watch Sokurov is to accept in advance one's own voluntary condition of exasperation, disorientation, and frustrated expectation."[315]Yet what's most disorienting in Sokurov's "chaotically diverse"[316] universe is the complexity of his cinematic style which appears to be mired in paradoxes. He is an accomplished auteur yet expresses anunabashed contempt for cinema: "Painting is necessary; music is necessary; literature is necessary; but cinema is not necessary."[317] He is a historian by his first education, but history in his most "historical" films is non-chronological and purely subjective. His documentaries could easily

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[312] Quoted from Stephen M. Norris, "The Island of Sokurov," *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, December 23, 2009: http://rbth.com/articles/2009/12/23/231209sokurov.html)

[313] Quoted from Jeremi Szaniawski, *The Cinema of Alexander Sokurov: Figures of Paradox*, Columbia University Press, 2013, 4 (translation modified).

[314] Ibid., 183.

[315] Nancy Condee, *The Imperial Trace*, 164.

[316] Ibid., 160.

[317] Transcribed from the bonus materials of the DVD of *Moloch*: "An Interview with Alexander Sokurov" (49 min).

be mistaken for features just as his features for documentaries. Most of his films are based on the classical unities of time, place, and action intended to enhance the realist effect; yet for Sokurov they seem to serve the opposite objective. He often works with both nonprofessionals as well as high caliber actors. Some of his films are shot in twilight, thick darkness or mist (e.g. *Stone* (1992), *Whispering Pages* (1993), *Oriental Elegy* (1996)), while others permeated by glowing sunlight (e.g. *Days of Eclipse* (1988), *Father and Son* (2003). His images could be both razor-sharp and crystal-clear as well as blurry and anamorphically distorted. Some of his films are characterized by rapid montage (e.g. *Elegy of a Voyage* (2001), the beginning of *Soviet Elegy* (1990)), while others by excessive long takes (e.g. *Russian Ark*, the ending of *Soviet Elegy*). His style may plummet to the very bottom of aesthetic minimalism dispensing with action and even actors while leaving just one half-an-hour static shot of the barren steppe accompanied by the classical music, as in *Spiritual Voices* (1995), but he could equally jam up to 2000 actors into the hour-and-a-half continuous shot, as in *Russian Ark*. We may categorize his cinema as 'avant-garde' because of "his experimentation with the artistic potential of the medium and his reflection on a range of modes of expression, including literature, music, painting, photography and film;"[318] yet the director pleads "not to call [him] an avant-gardist" since he considers his work "very much bound by tradition… that is the most important thing."[319] He could be blamed for excessive nationalism in his *Russian Ark* but the geographical setting in his films always tends to be international: quasi-England in *Mournful Unconcern* (1983), Turkmenistan in *Days of Eclipse*, quasi-France in *Save and Protect* (1989), the border between Tadjikistan and Afghanistan in *Spiritual Voices* (1995) , Bavarian Alps in *Moloch*, Japan in *Oriental Elegy* and *Sun*, northern Europe in *Elegy of a Voyage*, Lisbon in *Father and Son*, Chechnya in *Aleksandra* (2007), Germany as The Czech Republic and Iceland in *Faust*. He

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[318] Eva Binder, "Sokurov's Film Portraits" in *Cinema of Alexander Sokurov*, eds. Birgit Beumers, Nancy Condee, I.B.Tauris, 2011, 28-43, 36.

[319] Edwin Carels, "The Solitary Voice: An Interview with Aleksandr Sokorov," *Film Studies: An International Review*, Issue 1, Spring 1999, 73.

venerates literature yet the narrative component is utterly squeezed out from his films. Furthermore, most of his films are based on the literary works by such writers as Platonov, Shaw, the Strugatsky brothers, Flaubert, Chekhov, Dostoevsky, Shimao, Solzhenitsyn, Goethe and Thomas Mann. Yet it would be quite difficult to categorize such films as adaptations, since they are faithful neither to the setting nor the plot of the original, but more to its highly fragile and volatile aura that is derived from yet transcends narration. In his cinematic recreation of literary works, Sokurov does not merely translate the "said" into the "seen" but rather strives to transfer into images that which hasn't been said yet in the original. In this regard, his films based on literature are more visual extensions, or follow-ups, of literary narratives rather than their cinematic adaptations: they attempt to show what the story fails to articulate. As Sokurov himself comments on his continuous cinematic experimentation, "I don't give people a chance to get used to a certain style. We actively try to make our films differently each time, and that is why they all turn out radically different from one another."[320]

Even though it is incredibly difficult to pin down Sokurov's protean style, in one of interviews he acknowledged: "I feel as if there were two personalities inside me. One is very active, versatile, and exuberant; the other is sober, strong, and almost ascetic."[321] As Condee aptly points out, "The gulf between these two aspects of Sokurov's cinema—the effete ornament and the ascetic icon—is striking in the extreme."[322] The constitutive bipolarity of Sokurov's style, which manifests itself in editing (rapid montage, long take and static shot), narration (national history and a person's death), setting (half-continent, country, city, house, apartment), temporality (multiple sheets of past and kairos), soundtrack (fusion of various musical traditions, radio noise and silence), visual representation (documentary realism and collapse into two-dimensional surface), etc., may seem to

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[320] Kirill Galetski, "The Foundations of Film Art: An Interview with Alexander Sokurov," *Cineaste* 26:3, 2001, 4-8, 5.
[321] Nancy Condee, *The Imperial Trace*, 165.
[322] Ibid., 166.

be the clue to his cinematic method as it shares a structural affinity with the bilateralism of Deleuze's third synthesis which, on the one hand, expresses itself passively though the empty form of time of difference in itself, which is nothingness or death, and, on the other hand, actively through the disjunctive synthesis of divergent series on the basis of their difference. That is to say, just as Sokurov's exuberant ornamentality is genetically derived from his ascetic minimalism culminated in his anti-cinematic anamorphically distorted black and flat screen, multiplicities and continuous metamorphoses equally spring up from the generative differentiating void of the virtual in Deleuze's third synthesis. In what follows I will retrace the genesis of Sokurov's poetics from the latter extreme to the former by focusing first on his early works dramatizing the unthinkable event of death and then on his later films characterized by stylistic exuberance and affirmation of life.

Sokurov vs. Tarkovsky

Before we turn to Sokurov's necro-poetics, "it is always worth insisting that he has nothing in common"[323] with his appointed predecessor Tarkovsky, a comparison with whom has become a worn-out cliché in both domestic and international film studies and reviews, where "[i]t has generally been agreed upon that Sokurov is to be considered as the "new Tarkovsky.""[324] For example, Robert Bird maintains that "Sokurov's fascination with time as a medium of experience is a sign of his profound kinship to the cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky."[325] For Nariman Skakov, the flow of time as a predominant theme in Tarkovsky's *Mirror* "clearly served as a reference point for some of the core artistic devices in Sokurov's debut film… Like *Mirror*, *The Lonely Voice of Man* explores a theme of spiritual search in spatio-temporal labyrinths."[326] For Sabine Hänsgen, "Similar to Andrei Tarkovsky's work and contrary to its technical characteristics, the cinematic medium here

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[323] Fredric Jameson, "History and Elegy in Sokurov," 10.
[324] Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, *Films and Dreams: Tarkovsky, Bergman, Sokurov, Kubrick, and Wong Kar-wai*, Lexington Books, 2007, 31.
[325] Robert Bird, "Medium Intimacy" in *Cinema of Alexander Sokurov*, 90-109, 96.
[326] Nariman Skakov, "Intertextual Vision of the Potudan" in *Cinema of Alexander Sokurov*, 59-74, 64-65.

[in Sokurov] serves the purpose of contemplative immersion."[327] Johnson and Petrie observe that

"there is much that seems "Tarkovskian" about *Days of the Eclipse* (Dni Zatmeniya, 1988)."[328]

Robinson similarly refers to Sokurov's *Mother and Son* as the "very Tarkovskyan film."[329]

Despite their apparent spiritual affinity and the fundamental engagement with metaphysical

issues their films share, methodologically Sokurov and Tarkovsky are quite different. As Stephanie

Sandler rightly observes, "Pairing Sokurov and Tarkovsky affirms important similarities, but it also

shows how far Sokurov has stepped from his teacher."[330] To begin with, Sokurov ultimately rejects

the idea of direct influence or mentorship from Tarkovsky. As he asserts,

> When I am asked whether I am a student of Tarkovsky, my answer is no, no, and no. I never studied under his supervision, nor did I ever worship him. Nor am I going to continue what he initiated in his work, because in art everyone has one's own path. The path He took could be taken only by Him.[331] (quoted from Schlegel 180).

Furthermore, Tarkovsky himself pointed out how radically different Sokurov's style is in his debut

feature:

> Neither actors nor even amateurs play in this film but simply people taken from the street. Yet there is a certain strange style there, or angle, some strange aspects. There are some episodes there which I openly envy because I would never be able to shoot like that… I can say that in some other scenes I could achieve better results, but that I've never done before… For example… there is a scene where the hero runs away from home and his old father finds him in a city. He is staying at the local market, at some storehouse or garbage place where people throw out meat behind some boxes. You see, what incredible things are there? So naturalistically strange that they turn into poetry…Sokurov has such strange things that are inexplicable, even silly, incomprehensible perhaps. Incoherent… But… genius! The hand of genius.[332]

As this quote demonstrates, Tarkovsky was genuinely fascinated by Sokurov's vision on things,

which he, nevertheless, could not understand. He did recognize the "hand of genius" in *The Lonely*

Voice of Man yet he registered at the same that this was completely different from his own work.

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[327] Sabine Hänsgen, "Sokurov's Cinematic Minimalism" in *Cinema of Alexander Sokurov*, 43-59, 44.

[328] Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, 16.

[329] Jeremy Mark Robinson, *The Sacred Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, Crescent Moon, 2007, 544.

[330] Stephanie Sandler, "The Absent Father, the Stillness of Film: Tarkovsky, Sokurov, and Loss" in *Tarkovsky*, ed. Nathan Dunne, London: Black Dog, 2008, 126-147, 129.

[331] Quoted from Hans-Joachim Schlegel, "Die Transzendenz des Authentischen—Zum Dokumentarischen bei Andrej Tarkovsij und Aleksandr Sokurov" In *Die subversive Kamera. Zu anderen Realitдt in mittel- und osteuropдischen Dokumentarfilmen*. Band 6 der Reihe: CLOSE UP. Schriften aus Den Haus Des Dokumentarfilms. Eвropдisches Medienforum, Stuttgart. /Hg.: Hans-Joachim Schlegel. Konstanz, 1999, 145–151, 145.

[332] Quoted from Viktor Filimonov, *Andrei Tarkovskii: Sny i Iav' o Dome*, Moskva: Molodaya Gravrdia, 2012, 337.

Given Sokurov's self-declared autonomy from Tarkovsky's influence as well as the latter's recognition of the former's uncanny difference, it would therefore be more productive to think the continuity between the two directors through their dissimilarity from each other, a continuity which is analogous to Deleuze's transition from the second synthesis to the third.

Michael Iampolski has provided the most comprehensive account on the difference between Tarkovsky and Sokurov by arguing that the two represent diametrically opposed approaches to cinema, namely to the question of cinematic time. Tarkovsky's temporality is that of the past: "his world is fundamentally that of nostalgia, which has no access to the experience of the present"[333] Sokurov's temporality, on the other hand, is that of kairos, a cosmic temporality of event which falls out of historical linearity of time by splitting it into past and future. It is the time of interval or rupture, which is essentially a non-time or empty time, i.e. "time out of joint" removed from history. Given their different approaches to time, Iampolski argues, Tarkovsky's poetics is that of correspondence, synchronicity and harmonization, while Sokurov's – disparity, dissonance and caesura. Whereas the former perceives the factual duration of time through the character's subjectivity, the latter utterly depsychologizes time by focusing on the moments of void or timelessness. The divergent temporal modalities of both directors predetermine the type of characters they use in their films. Tarkovsky's characters are always trapped in the past and burdened with memories that shape their vision of the world. His typical hero (e.g. Rublev, *Mirror*'s narrator, Stalker) is a passive observer hopelessly trying to enter the present; yet the world of the present can only appear for them as that of the past, i.e. the object of nostalgia. Sokurov's characters are, on the contrary, amnesiacs; they are suspended between life and death and therefore fall out from history and the world. Sokurov often involves historical figures as his characters; yet he consistently pulls them out from their symbolic position in the historical continuum and immerses

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[333] Mikhail Iampolski, "Kinematograf nesootvetstvia: Kairos i istoria u Sokurova," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, vol. 63, 2003, 28-58; http://www.kinozapiski.ru/ru/article/sendvalues/182/

them in the infinity of non-chronological time. In *Soviet Elegy*, for example, Sokurov's Yeltsin sits silently and motionlessly in the kitchen for about five minutes without any sign of thinking or hesitation, an image which dissolves his personality as a political leader and foregrounds instead the atemporal moment which absorbs him. In *Stone*, the ghost of Chekhov returns to his home in Yalta, which is now a museum, and attempts to relive the pleasures of this world for one more time. *Moloch* focuses on one day in Hitler's life in his Bavarian castle in misty mountains and similarly dehistoricizes his political significance in the context of everyday banality. In *Taurus*, paralyzed and mentally disabled Lenin lingers in his purely biological existence in his Gorky residence restricted from phone calls and reading newspapers and thus isolated from the outside political reality. In *The Sun*, the Divine Emperor Hirohito is shown at the moment of his transfiguration into a regular human being. Finally, Sokurov's kairological temporality, according to Iampolski, explains his persistent preoccupation with death as an "event existing outside history" evident in his documentary elegy cycles as well as features, such as *Mother and Son* or *Taurus*, scrupulously reenacting the process of dying.

Iampolski's emphasis on the methodological difference between the two directors is strikingly parallel to Deleuze's differentiation of the crystal-image and the new image of thought, where the former follows the logic of the second synthesis, by establishing a specular reciprocity or "correspondence" between the present and various sheets of past, and the latter that of the third synthesis of time, by prioritizing the cut or caesura as the disjunctive conjunction between all temporal layers. The former image presents the world and all dimensions of time from the perspective of the past, while the latter plunges into the "pure and empty form of time" and opens up the temporality of the future. As discussed above, Tarkovsky's cinematic vision is structured according to the model of the second synthesis which foregrounds the relation of *resonance* between divergent series on the basis of their semblance. Sokurov's poetics, which Iampolski defines as that

of *disparity* or *dissonance*, could be viewed in terms of the third synthesis in which divergent components, such as visual image and audio image, silence and speech, darkness and light, clarity and obscurity, three-dimensional cinematic volume and two-dimensional pictorial surface, etc., connect on the basis of their difference rather than forced similarity. Just like Tarkovsky, Sokurov often incorporates painterly vision into the film image. In *Stone*, *Mother and Son* and *Moloch*, among others, the foggy romantic landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich, which absorb the figure into the sublime grandness of nature and thus emphasize the man's insignificance, become an integral part of visual representation. As Sokurov comments on his use of Friedrich's metaphysical images in *Mother and Son*: "The dramaturgical context of the painting corresponds completely with that of my film."[334] Yet, unlike Tarkovsky's, Sokurov's citation of paintings as a source of inspiration as well as the model for shot composition and perspective does not aim to establish a seamless correspondence or resonance between cinematic and pictorial mediums. In Sokurov, the painterly effect of the film image serves to undermine the mimetic principle of cinematic representation; by using various color filters and extreme wide-angle lenses as well as anamorphically stretching out the image like a canvas to the point of its sheer abstraction, such effect denaturalizes the filmed landscapes and thus visually dramatizes the tension between the pictorial surface and the cinematic volume. As the director comments, in *Mother in Son*,

> I exerted influence on the development of colour as well as on the development of space. I did not want to create three-dimensional spaces but a surface, a picture. In the end I wanted to be honest for once and say: the art of film lies when it claims to be able to create a three-dimensional space, a volume. A three-dimensional space on the screen is simply unachievable… [335]

> I am interested in the two-dimensionality of space and not the volume of space. But if I am someone who never ceases to study artistic methods of representation… then I have to direct my attention above all at the "depth of surface."[336]

Sokurov's cinematic exploration of the "depth of surface," a paradoxical conjunction reminiscent of Deleuze's invocation of Valery's statement "the deepest is the skin" that exemplifies the work of the

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[334] Quoted from Sabine Hänsgen, "Sokurov's Cinematic Minimalism," 51.
[335] Ibid., 52.
[336] Ibid., 56

third disjunctive synthesis placing "internal and external spaces into contact, without regard to distance" (LS 103), is most evidently presented in his documentaries *Hubert Robert. A Fortunate Life* (1996) and *Elegy of a Voyage* deploying the close-up of the painting's material surface as the main technique. As discussed in the previous chapter, in *Solaris* Tarkovsky's representation of Breughel's *Hunters in the Snow* is based on its verisimilitude with the actual reality: by synchronizing a given fragment of the painting with a particular sound (e.g. dogs/barking, church/ringing bells), he attempts to animate the action represented on the vast canvas as if the character (Hari) inhabits it from the inside. Such a translation of static pictorial images into the optical illusion of reality serves the narrative purpose of *Solaris*, i.e. nostalgia for the earth. In *Hubert Robert*, in filming the painting Sokurov goes into the opposite direction, i.e. from the cinematic resonance between the actual reality and its pictorial images to the dissonance between the latter and the concrete materiality of the painting's surface on which these images are painted. While discussing Robert's images of ruins as the pictorial representation of death and decay, the narrator, at the same time, pays attention to the very texture of the canvas. As the camera is slowly inspecting the thick layers of paint on its surface as well as cracks and other deformities as the signs of its decay, the narrator comments: "The body of Robert's painting. This is its skin, the living skin surface. This body is breathing and gets sick very often." That is, besides being the visual and metaphorical representation of decay, Robert's painting is simultaneously rendered as the tactile object subjected to the process of natural decomposition in the museum space. In *Elegy of a Voyage*, Sokurov's narrator visits the Rotterdam museum where he closely observes Pieter Saenredam's *St Mary's Square with St Mary's Church in Utrecht* (1765) by touching the canvas and commenting on its temperature: 'the paint has dried, but the canvas remains warm." Sokurov's pictorial image, therefore, dramatizes the interplay between representation and organic materiality, the visible and the tangible, the image and the object, the idea and the thing.

Sokurov's reduction of an artifact to its objectal materiality is analogous to his representation of the human body, since most of his characters similarly undergo a radical dehumanizing corporeal reduction. Whereas in Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and *Mirror* the female body is highly eroticized, Sokurov's necro-cinema, drawn to suffering and mortified bodies, utterly eschews the female eroticism. As Iampolski observes, "Sokurov… is indifferent to a beautiful female body because the harmony of its forms would overshadow the tragic hardships of the heroine's biography. He is interested in the aged, exhausted, somewhat angular, dried out bodies which bear traces of hysteria, frustration and attenuation."[337] Even in the rare supposedly erotic scenes of his films involving nudity and love-making, sexuality is subject to a Formalist-like estrangement effect. In *The Lonely Voice of Man*, for example, the protagonist, who is in love with his wife, is impotent. In *Save and Protect*, the post-coitus scene with Emma and her lover in a hotel is accompanied by the loud buzzing of flies as if they were corpses. The insects' buzzing is present in another love-making scene where Emma and Rodolphe lay naked in the meadow. As Szaniawski points out, "the effect is that the couple resembles nothing so much as corpses lying in the sun."[338] *Moloch* opens with Eva Brown's exhibitionistic gymnastic exercise on the balcony of Hitler's castle. Her luscious body is tightly dressed in a skin-suit which is nevertheless imperceptible for the guarding snipers spying over her from a distance. Sokurov's systematic desexualization of the body is, of course, the result of his commitment to the realm of Thanatos. The figure of cadaver is therefore the central image in Sokurov's necro-aesthetics. In *Days of Eclipse*, Malyanov converses with the corpse of his neighbor in a morgue. In *Save and Protect*, the camera closely examines Emma's already decaying corpse. In *The Second Circle*, the protagonist has to share the room with the corpse of his father for the duration of the entire film. *Faust* opens with a close-up of the corpse's penis. Mephistopheles' mangled body is shaped like that of a cadaver with a penis grotesquely growing out of his lower

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[337] Mikhail Iampoloski, *Yazyk-telo-sluchai: kinematograf I poiski smysla,* NLO: 2004, 174.

[338] Jeremi Szaniawski, *The Cinema of Alexander Sokurov: Figures of Paradox*, 83.

back. In *Stone* and *Taurus*, the protagonists' naked helpless old body symbolizes their suspension

between life and death. That is to say, Tarkovsky's eroticism is opposed to Sokurov's mortification

of the body in the same way as Deleuze's second synthesis, governed by Eros and Mnemosyne, is to

the third synthesis characterized by the desexualized death drive.

Sokurov's citation of classical music is generally similar to Tarkovsky's: both approach film

music as semantically independent medium that enters into a dialogic relation with the visual image.

Quite often, Sokurov's soundtrack serves to resonate with the film's main idea. For example,

Whispering Pages, permeated by the atmosphere of death, is accompanied by Mahler's

Kindertotenlieder. *Moloch*'s soundtrack, predictably enough, consists mainly of the music of

Hitler's favorite composers: Beethoven, Wagner, Strauss and various military marches. In *Russian

Ark*, the original music by Sergei Evtushenko and classical music by Glinka, Purcell, Tchaikovsky,

and Telemann comprise the soundtrack which symbolizes "an integration of imperial European with

Europhile Russian culture similar to its project in the visual arts: work by Russian composers is

interedited with works by Purcell and Telemann and performed by the Mariinskii Theatre

Orchestra."[339] And yet, Sokurov's use of music still differs from Tarkovsky's as he strives to

liberate the soundtrack from its subordination to the visual order. As he states,

> it is important that music does not surrender to the picture, but goes above and beyond it. If sound illustrates, it becomes equal to image, which is vulgar. The musical dramaturgy should not depend on the visual, but be superior. What the film may not have achieved visually, it should obtain from music.[340]

> For me, sound in cinema is a separate field, which is much more intimate and perfect than image. It doesn't serve the visual order. Image very often needs sound, but sound has no need for anything.[341]

The autonomous manifestation of music within the film fabric that suppresses visual representation

is most evident in the opening episode of *Spiritual Voices* where the static aerial shot of the snow-

covered steppe is accompanied by of Olivier Messaien's music, Mozart's *Piano Concerto no. 23 in*

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[339] Nancy Condee, *The Imperial Trace*, 176.
[340] Alexander Sokurov, "Spasi i sokhrani: Fragmenty besedy Aleksandra Sokurova s Mikhailom Yampol'skim vo vremia s'emok fil'ma" in *Sokurov*, ed. Liubov Arkus, St. Petersburg: Seans, 1994, 349.
[341] Alexander Sokurov, Interview, *Audio Magazin*, 2 (20), 1998.

A and a part of Beethoven's *7th Symphony*. While introducing each musical piece, Sokurov's voice-over narrator melancholically speculates about Mozart's untimely death and his life as a martyr. He describes Mozart's looks and various circumstances of his life yet the parallel visual representation does not change: it is still the same desolate steppe which slowly fades into darkness towards the end of the episode. Sokurov literally forces his viewers to pay more attention to the music they are listening to:

> Listen carefully. Listen carefully to the music and try to feel the sounds, feel how the voices in this work combine with one another… Is there harmony in this music? Isn't each note a separate sound? Doesn't each note assert its own value? Sometimes, when I listen to Messaien, it seems to me that I am not listening to music but to the instrument tuning up all by itself. There is no composer, just a piano in an empty room, and the sound is not the result of warm fingers on cold keys, but is merely a sound generating itself.

That is to say, not only does the filmmaker separate music from accompanying image, he disengages it from its author as well as performer by focusing our attention on its harmony. Furthermore, he wants us to listen to each note separately by giving each of them its own value. What Sokurov means by listening "carefully" in this episode is that we need to push our faculty of listening to its limit so that in its transcendental exercise it could delve into the very depth of sound and hear its birth as a unique singularity. The music heard at the moment of its genesis does not require any visual illustration. Rather, it stimulates a new vision of that which is imperceptible. Through "careful" listening, Sokurov, therefore, helps his viewers see the invisible and think the unthinkable, namely the death of a genius, the birth of a sound, the eternal life of Mozart in his music.

The audio-verbal component in Sokurov's films similarly transcends the standards of intelligible communication. As Iampolski points out, whereas Tarkovsky's heroes are often involved in intellectual debates over moral problems, most of Sokurov's characters "seem to be speechless animals"[342] as they are more silent or quiet rather than speaking. Even when they speak, their speech is rendered mumbling, inarticulate, and barely comprehensible. In *Days of Eclipse*, the protagonist

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[342] Mikhail Iampoloski, *Yazyk-telo-sluchai: kinematograf I poiski smysla.* NLO: 2004, 174.

Malyanov always listens to foreign radio stations, the languages of which (e.g. Turkmen, Armenian, Latin, Finnish, English, Italian) he does not understand. At times, we hear a Russian radio voice in his room monotonously reciting clichés of Soviet propaganda but its presence, albeit comprehensible, only emphasizes Malyanov's indifference to it. Yet he does attentively listen to the corpse who mumbles to him about what it is like to be dead and that Malyanov now shares the same place with it in death. In *Whispering Pages*, loosely based on Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Porfiry Petrovich, the detective in charge of solving the murder, falls asleep during his interrogation of Raskolnikov, while in the novel it is his eloquence and intricate argumentation that drive the protagonist towards confession. In *Stone* and *Moloch*, both Chekhov and Lenin are physically incapable of articulate speech: the former because of returning from death as a ghost, the latter because of approaching it after the third stroke. Sokurov's radical reduction of Lenin's speech to incomprehensible nonsense and animal grunts, as he was stricken by aphasia and dementia in his last days, starkly contrasts with the conventional Soviet representation of the leader as an inspiring orator fond of lively conversations with common people. Sokurov's systematic distortion of clear meaningful speech is, therefore, analogous to his deformation of cinematic vision: whereas the former is muted, cluttered and emptied of rational content, the latter obscured, flattened and stretched out. As Fiona Björling elaborates, it is not by accident that the titles of some films by Sokurov, such as *The Lonely Voice of Man, Whispering Pages, Spiritual Voice*, contain "a noun generally referring to a language-based phenomenon."[343] Yet "in each case the noun is qualified by an adjective which negates or interferes with the idea of language designated by the noun: the voice of man is lonely; the pages and quiet or silent, and voices are spiritual (rather than physical)."[344] For Björling, Sokurov's "subdued dialogue" serves "to follow the human being into a quiet sphere which is beyond language, on the border between existence and death… By exploiting the…

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[343] Fiona Björling, "Quiet Voices: The Significance of Subdued Dialogue and Voice-Over in the Films of Aleksandr Sokurov," *Scando-Slavica*, Vol. 56. 1. 2010, 99-118, 104.
[344] Ibid.

cinema's potential to heighten visual density at the expense of verbal differentiation, he leads the viewer into the extreme existential dilemma of human loneliness."[345] That is to say, Sokurov's use of language is not empirical, it is transcendental since in the liminal state of death that he painstakingly explores one no longer needs language for interpersonal communication; in this state language folds back upon itself in its failure to grasp the Outside of life.

Sokurov's own speech is often integrated in his films as a disembodied voice-over. In fact, we never *see* him speaking even when his narrator is the central figure of the film's action. Tarkovsky does employ the figure of invisible narrator in *Mirror*, whose voice is nevertheless dubbed by Innokentii Smoktunovsky. But Sokurov borrows this strategy from Friedrich's paintings where the contemplating back-view figure, or *Rückenfigur*, is submerged in the immensity of the sublime landscape. In *Elegy of a Voyage*, Sokurov as the narrator literally turns his back on the viewer; the most we can discern of the interlocutor is his silhouette in the dark seen from behind. This technique allows the director to neutralize his presence as the author as well as emphasize the humble intonation of his word. As Silke Panse comments, "With this manoeuvre of making only a silhouette of the author visible, accompanied by a doubtful commentary that manifests uncertainty, Sokurov realises a lack of agency not only with regard to his orientation as a protagonist of his film but also with a lack of 'authority' over his own creation."[346] In *Russian Ark*, the deliberately humbled voiceover narrator similarly serves to nullify his authority in guiding the viewer through the labyrinths of Russian history. It is the overbold and dashing figure of Marquis de Custine who becomes the visible guide (and judge) for the narrator and whose words he often echoes. As Birgit Beumers points out, "The Narrator looks at Russia as the Other, rather than the Self."[347] That is to

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[345] Ibid., 117.

[346] Silke Panse, "The Film-maker as Rückenfigur: Documentary as Painting in Alexandr Sokurov's *Elegy of a Voyage*," *Third Text*, vol. 20. 1, 9–25, 10.

[347] Birgit Beumers, "And the Ark Sails on…" in *Cinema of Alexander Sokurov*, 176-188, 183.

say, Sokurov's disjunction between voice and visible presence implies an ethical dimension in speaking: one may only speak invisibly, with one's tone down, repeating others' words.

To sum up, Sokurov does continue Tarkovsky's legacy but he begins there where the latter stops, namely death. Five out of seven of Tarkovsky's films end with the protagonist's (definitive or presumed) death. Yet it is not death that aesthetically organizes his poetics but memory. In Sokurov's world, on the contrary, the faculty of memory is extinguished by his essentially Blanchotian "attraction" towards the enigma of death, which radically transforms his poetics according to Deleuze's third synthesis of time that prioritizes the disjunction between film components rather than their resonance. Just as Tarkovsky's first feature foregrounded the Bergsonian theme of memory which would pave the path for his entire career, Sokurov, similarly, introduced the theme of death already in his diploma work *The Lonely Voice of Man*, which has remained central throughout all his films. In the next section, I will demonstrate that Sokurov's "space of cinema" is, in fact, analogous to Blanchot's "space of literature," since for both masters in the face of death art develops in the direction of *désoeuvrement*.

Sokurov and Levinas/Blanchot

With an unprecedented consistency each of Sokurov's films keeps exploring the experience of death in all its existential and aesthetic aspects. A great number of his documentaries are titled as "elegy" (i.e. a poem of mourning or a funeral song for the dead) just as the cadaver is the central image of his features. As Sokurov comments on the issue in his interviews:

> Death is not a theme that's exclusively mine. Death is one of the principal subjects of classical Old World art. Even though I am a modern person, all of my roots lie in the traditions of the Old World. For me, Life and Death (more importantly Death) are not quandaries associated with emotional or philosophical attitudes and contexts but are rather questions of art…
>
> Art prepares a person for death. It helps one to make peace with the fact of mortality…

Death is a theme of absolutely fundamental importance, and art, it seems to me, demands thematic fundamentalism.[348]

I show in detail how things work and invite the viewer to join in the [death] ritual, as if it were a rehearsal.[349]

Even though Sokurov denies the exclusivity of his thematic choice by placing himself within the tradition of classical art, his "fundamental" and somewhat anachronistic fidelity to the realm of Thanatos can hardly be compared to any director in the world cinema. Death does figure as an important theme in Dreyer, Bergman, Bresson and even Tarkovsky, but in their films death is thematized in more religious rather than aesthetic or visual terms. Sokurov's thematic emphasis on death is inseparable from his unique approach to its representation, which both undermines and reinvents the very nature of cinematic language. Many critics have noticed and analyzed the ubiquity of death in Sokurov's films. In what follows I will attempt to offer a more philosophical take on Sokurov's "visual necrophilia."[350] Given that it is Blanchot who serves as the main frame of reference for Deleuze's thought-image, it is worthwhile dwelling on the former's poetics of the Outside more in detail, as it provides a systematic ground for what might be called Sokurov's *Blachotism* (contrary to Tarkovsky's Bergsonism).

Just as for Sokurov the ideal cinema does not require a viewer and should be independent from the demands of social reality, for Blanchot literature is similarly to be disengaged from worldly action since it does not mediate the world but negates it, that is, replaces it with an imaginary or virtual one. The true vocation of literature, which, according to Blanchot, is driven by the absolute n of language that, by naming a thing, annihilates it for the sake of the idea of a thing, is to create a world out of nothingness *prior to* the human world. Blachot's space of literature is therefore the space outside the world where the negativity of poetic language is put into its transcendental exercise, i.e. its unlimited unworking or *désoeuvrement*. As he writes,

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[348] Kirill Galetski, "The Foundations of Film Art: An Interview with Alexander Sokurov," 5-6.
[349] Quoted from Nancy Condee, *The Imperial Trace*, 167.
[350] Ibid., 168.

> [Literature] is not beyond the world, but neither is it the world itself: it is the presence of things before the world exists, their perseverance after the world has disappeared, the stubbornness of what remains when everything vanishes and dumbfoundedness of what appears when nothing exists. That is why it cannot be confused with consciousness, which illuminates things and makes decisions; it is my consciousness without me, the radiant passivity of mineral substances, the lucidity of the depths of torpor. It is not the night; it is the obsession of the night, it is not the night, but the consciousness of the night, which lies awake watching for a chance to surprise itself and because of that is constantly being dissipated. It is not the day, it is the side of the day that day has rejected in order to become light. And it is not death either, because it manifests existence without being, existence which remains below existence, like an inexorable affirmation, without beginning or end - death as the impossibility of dying.[351]

That is to say, Blanchot's space of literature is formulated in terms of aporetic tropes which exemplify the transcendental work of negativity folded back upon itself: the temporality of literature is that of *before* the world exists and *after* the world has disappeared, its consciousness is devoid of self but filled with night which is the day that has been rejected to become light, it is not death but the impossibility of dying.

Blanchot's poetics of radical negativity, which creates a non-temporal world without subjectivity, is much influenced by the Levinas of *Existence and Existants* where the theory of the *il y a* is fully presented. Levinas describes the *il y a* through a "thought experiment" borrowed from Husserl: what would remain of the world after the world has disappeared, or to put it more crudely, what would remain of appearance after its disappearance? Levinas's answer is the *il y a*: existence without being (*there is* is therefore not an adequate translation since the *il y a* expresses existence without using the verb 'to be'). Levinas provides a number of metaphors characterizing this abstraction: an atmosphere, a field of forces, a murmuring silence, an indeterminacy, an anonymity, an impersonality, a density of the void, etc. Overall, the *il y a* represents the intrusive presence of something which has resisted form and formal clarity. It is fundamentally incomprehensible and obscure. The encounter with the *il y a* is nocturnal, as it involves the total exclusion of light. The most proper response to the *il y a* is horror, which is distinguished from existential nausea, from existential anguish (Sartre) and from the anguish of being-toward-death (Heidegger). The horror of

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[351] Maurice Blanchot, *The Work of Fire*, Stanford University Press, 1995, 328.

the *il y a* is caused by the indeterminacy of the world (since the space of the *il y a* is nocturnal, anti-perspectival, fluid), by indeterminacy of the self (which is not unconsciousness but rather some impersonal vigilance or waking dream), and by the impossibility of death (since the temporality of the *il y a* is that of *entretemps* which is between life and death and points to the persistence of life in death). Levinas often indicates the inadequacy of subject/object, being/nothingness, life/death, consciousness/unconsciousness, interior/exterior distinctions precisely because the *il y a* is prior to any determination.

The anonymity and formlessness of the *il y a* is thus thematized by Blanchot as the space of literature. In his literary criticism that deals mostly with such representatives of high modernism as Mallarme, Rilke, Kafka, Proust, Beckett, Artaud, Beckett, etc., Blanchot does not aim at the interpretation of their texts *per se* but explores the very experience of writing as the writer's act of mastery of the *il y a* in the form of a literary work. Whereas for Levinas the nocturnal encounter with the *il y a* is the background against which a subject constitutes itself out of formless anonymity, for Blanchot, on the contrary, such an encounter necessitates the disintegration of a subject yet paradoxically results in producing a literary work. Blanchot analyzes this encounter as the experience of *the other night*, which is analogous to Levinas' example of the 'thought experiment' employed in his analysis of the *il y a*: the persistence of existence after everything has been destroyed. Blanchot's *other night* is what persists following the disappearance of things in the night. The other night is not a dialectical counterpart to the day, as a pause in the diurnal-nocturnal cycle filled silence, rest, and sleep. Precisely, *the other night* exceeds the dialectic of day and night, it is an absolute outside, an exteriority that cannot be correlated to interiority, it manifests itself in dissimulation that dissimulates itself and reappears as apparition. "It makes appearance from then on

stem from "everything has disappeared." "Everything has disappeared" appears. This is exactly what we call an apparition. It is "everything has disappeared" appearing in its turn."[352]

Blanchot persistently abstains from the theoretical formulation of *the other night*, which is itself "outside" that resists conceptual grasp; rather, apart from numerous metaphors, he refers to the stories, such as that of Tolstoy or Kafka, that recount that exemplify the disarming and disruptive encounter with *the other night* which ultimately undermines the subject by divesting him/her of all power and decision yet granting him/her with a higher passivity that is paradoxically more powerful than action.

Literary experience as the nocturnal encounter with the *il y a* is also exemplified by Blanchot through his reading of the myths of Orpheus.[353] The myth of Orpheus serves for Blanchot as the prime example of the phenomenological collapse necessarily involved in the process of artistic creation, precisely because the "outside" manifests itself at the moment of rupture and desubjectivation. According to the myth, Orpheus is the artist who is given a chance to rescue Eurydice from the underworld, since she is the source of his art. But he is allowed to do this only on the condition that he cannot look upon her while rescuing her from Hades. Yet impatient Orpheus violates the prohibition and dares to look at her by forgetting the task he has to accomplish, i.e. to bring the source of his art back to light. As a result, Eurydice vanishes back to Hades, Orpheus gets dismembered, and his work remains unaccomplished. For Blanchot, Orpheus is not a failure; the artist *must* look at the very essence of his/her art despite the tragic consequences for the artist as well as the artwork. In fact, work does not matter. What matters is the absence of work, or *désoeuvrement,* maintained during this nocturnal encounter, which is more important than work. For

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[352] Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, University of Nebraska Press, 1989, 253.
[353] Ibid., 171-177.

Blanchot, the artist's task is the perception of the imperceptible, that is, to endure the attraction of the "outside" as long as possible.

The space of literature thematized as the encounter with the ultimate alterity is also explored by Blanchot in his fiction. For such an encounter, Blanchot proposes a more appropriate genre, *récit*, which, unlike the novel, focuses on a single episode, or event (in the tradition of Breton's *Nadja*), rather than on a series of events. Blanchot asserts that *récit* is not only about an event, it is the event itself, i.e. the event which expresses the subject's encounter with death. Blanchot's *L'arret de mort* that portrays the struggle of the narrator's female companion with death is the classic example of how the experience of the *il y a* (neutrality, anonymity, exhaustion, wakeful vigilance, the absence of temporal parameters) is given through the actual experience of dying where death itself is suspended and meticulously explored throughout the entire narration of *récit*. Death here is figured as some powerful anonymous force that attracts and transforms the characters by transporting them into the unknown dimension of living: existence without being.

Sokurov's features of the 1990s could thus be viewed as the visual equivalents of Blanchot's *récits*. In both Sokurov and Blanchot, the plot of the narrative is reduced to a single event of death and characters, deprived of any psychology, are turned into passive and impersonal beings. Their characters, as Deleuze would say, are "beings who have passed through a death, who are born from it, and go towards another death, perhaps the same one" (C2 208). Just as Blanchot's language is self-reflective, tautological, hollow and opaque by retreating into its a-signifying dimension, so does Sokurov's vision become distorted, obscure and nocturnal. Blanchot's temporality of dying is essentially a non-time, "the passivity of a time without present (absent time, time's absence)"[354]or

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[354] Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, University of Nebraska Press, 1995, 14.

"kairos."[355] Sokurov's cinematic time, as discussed above, similarly stands still by falling out of chronological confines. Just as Blachot's "reader does not add himself to the book, but tends primarily to relieve it from an author" so that it would "become a work beyond the man who produced it" (SL 193), so should Sokurov's viewer and listener extract from images and music the impersonal manifestation of art. In the next subsection I will focus more in detail on Sokurov's films that exemplify Blachotian-Levinasian motifs of "existence without being."

Sokurov's Necrominimalism

Sokurov's poetics of death is strikingly apparent already in his first feature as if it were fully formed at the moment of the film's production. *The Lonely Voice of Man* is adapted from the two short stories by Andrei Platonov, *The Potudan River* and *The Origin of aMaster* united by the common theme of death. The *Potudan River* tells a story of a Red Army soldier Nikita returning from the civil war to his hometown where he marries his former love Lyuba yet is unable to consummate the marriage. Embarrassed by his impotence, he runs away, lives like an animal alone until he meets his father who tells him that his wife attempted to drown herself in the Potudan River. He comes back to Lyuba yet it is unclear whether they would live happily ever after, since the film, instead of showing their reunion, ends with a fade to black accompanied by their voices exchanging the words of love. Only one fragment from Platonov's *The Origin of a Master* is added to the film's plot yet it seems to encapsulate the allegorical significance of the entire film: a fisherman curious about what is happening in the realm of death, plunges into a lake in order "to live in death" and "see what is there." In the original, the fisherman drowns, while in the film he comes out of water alive. Just like Platonov's enthusiastic fisherman-philosopher "who believes he has returned from the dead" (C2 209), both Nikita and Lyuba also have returned from death: the former is back from the war, the

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[355] See Yves Gilonne, "La figure du kaïros ou l'instant critique dans L'Instant de ma mort," in *L'Epreuve du temps chez Maurice Blanchot*, Editions Complicités, 2006, 155-173.

latter drowns herself when Nikita leaves her yet survives. In fact, almost all Sokurov's characters dive into death and dare to live there.

Just as many of Sokurov's later films, *The Lonely Voice of Man* is characterized by the stark asceticism of aesthetic form and psychological content. Although the film is about love, its eroticism is zeroed out. Not unlike Bressonian 'models', Sokurov's nonprofessional characters are stiff, emotionally inexpressive, and neutral. Their dialogues are sparse and the body contacts seem rigid and cold. The aura of death is present everywhere in the film. For example, when the couple comes to the registry office to purchase a marriage license, the official who looks like a corpse is unable to issue it because he has no money to return the change; yet he says he will have it soon, when someone will come to register somebody's death. Platonov's story shows Russia right after the civil war, stricken by hunger, devastation, exhaustion, and despair. Sokurov's characters that "passed through death" and retained its "sensory-motor disturbances" are physically inactive: Nikita's father always sleeps because he is bored, while Lyuba escapes to sleep because she is always hungry. Nikita does show some signs of activity, but only when he stokes the stove, although it is summer, or when he makes a coffin for Lyuba's deceased friend. In most of the film's scenes, he is sick, impotent, or unconscious.

Although *The Lonely Voice of Man* depicts events that did happen in post-revolutionary Russia, the cinematic representation of this period is by no means that of realism, since for Sokurov the question 'how to represent death?' is primarily aesthetic and metaphysical rather than historical. As Michael Iampolski observes, death is represented here primarily through Sokurov's innovative use of montage that effectively disrupts rather than sustains narration by the intercutting scenes of violence (half-flayed cows in a slaughterhouse), suffering (exhausted workers turning a huge wheel on a river), deserted landscapes as well as the cuts themselves, i.e. long intervals of black screen

irrupting between images.[356] The so-called "irrational" cut that no longer "marks the end of one [image] or the beginning of another" (C2 200) but rather "appear[s] in its own right" (C2 214) does nonetheless play a rational part in Sokurov's cinematic syntax, as it bursts in only when the characters refer to death. Thus, for example, the long cut accompanies Lyuba's announcement to Nikita that her mother passed away. The black screen interval is shown right after Platonov's fisherman - who is played in the film by the corpse-like official who registers the marriage of Nikita and Lyuba - dives into the water to see "what is there" in death. The half-a-minute-long cut (followed by the shot of a slaughterhouse) overlaps Nikita's meeting with Lyuba in the end, a meeting which, as Iampolski rightly suggests, is most likely to occur in death.

Therefore, Sokurov's first film, although dedicated to Tarkovsky, radically departs from his poetics of the crystal-image by foregrounding the "absence of image"[357] or the "reverse of image"[358] with a "great amnesiac… without love" (DR 136) as its agent.

In the early nineties, when post-totalitarian Russia was in the midst of political and economic turmoil, Sokurov created the films characterized by their extreme metaphysical austerity utterly removed from the current actuality: *The Second Circle*, *Stone* and *Whispering Pages*. Shot in black-and-white, or even black-and-grey at times, all three films, constituting a trilogy dedicated to death, could be considered the masterpieces of cinematic minimalism where the plot development is reduced to a mere encounter with death, the character's psychology to a blunt animality, the bodily kinetics to minute gestures, the film dialogue to a handful of mumblings, montage to infinitely long static shots, landscape to a fuzzy background absorbing the character. Under the reign of the Sokurovian *epoché*, cinematic space shrinks and eventually collapses into a two-dimensional plane, while time seems to be unhinged and frozen.

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[356] Mikhail Iampoloski, "Platonov prochitanny Sokurovym" in *Yazyk-telo-sluchai: kinematograf i poiski smysla*, 123-137.
[357] Noël Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, Princeton University Press, 1981, 57.
[358] Georges Nivat, "Sokurov ou la quête de l'envers de l'image," in *L'ombre de l'image, de la falsification à l'infigurable*, ed. Murielle Gagnebin, Editions Champ Vallon, 2002, 321-337.

Yet it would be a mistake to describe Sokurov's poetics exclusively in negative terms of subtraction or exhaustion. On the one hand, his minimalism that seems to deliberately deflect the legibility of image is a critique of commercial cinema (e.g. Tarantino, Spielberg, Cameron) that presents the phenomenon of death as a spectacle to be enjoyed. In film industry, death is commodified as a carnival, a visual feast, an excessive celebration of vitality, where the process of destruction is beautifully colored and choreographed in fast editing. On the other, by taking the subject's fundamental incapability to grasp its own disappearance as the starting point of his cinematic method, Sokurov forces the viewer to confront death in the least culturally mediated manner. Stripped off from its symbolic and phantasmatic conventions, Sokurov's death fills the entire screen space in all its unavoidable facticity and oppressiveness. Even though in his films there is no story to tell except that "one dies" and there is nothing to see except the nothingness itself, what he offers the viewer does nevertheless uproot his or her perception from its habitual passivity of visual consumption and compels it to participate in the artistic creation of a new world and a new, unknown life out of emptiness. As Sokurov comments,

> The most important quality the film image can possess is its capacity to offer the viewer sufficient time to peruse the picture, to participate in the process of attentively looking for something. Not meditative contemplation – that's something else – but looking for something. It should be possible for information to be concealed or for the entire image to be gradually withdrawn. Ideally, the filmmaker would never allow the viewer to comprehend or even perceive the image, at once, in its entirety. Confronted with a true cinematographic work of art, the viewer is never a passive contemplator, but someone who participates in the creation of this artistic world.[359]

With the world and time suspended, Sokurov's non-mimetic images call for the viewer's participation in the slow and meticulous reconstitution of a life from scratch: from tiny movements, immobility, shadows, silence, rustles, squeaks, whispers, sighs, intonations, etc. In this regard, Sokurov's poetics of death is essentially that of emergence.

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[359] Lauren Sedofsky, "Plane Songs: Lauren Sedofsky Talks with Alexander Sokurov–Interview", *Artforum*, November 2001.

The Second Circle tells a story about a young man who comes to visit his sick father, but the father has already died and the son has no choice but to bury him. The entire film is thus dedicated to the son's awkward and desperate attempts to handle the burial process, the overly bureaucratic and absurd logistics of which is shown with a ruthless straightforwardness. Even though the setting is recognizably Soviet, the cultural context has no significance in the film, since the son spends the entire time with the dead body of his father in his dark and small apartment. The protagonist played by nonprofessional Piotr Aleksandrov seems to be utterly unprepared for such a responsibility: he doesn't know how to clean the dead body, thus he takes it outside to clean it with snow because there is a temporary water shortage in the house; in the beginning he is robbed and thus has no money to bury the father until the representatives of the funeral home are pressed to take care of this by themselves. Throughout the entire film he remains stupefied and disoriented. Sokurov's excessive austerity seems quite justifiable here as he forces the viewer to face death in all its naked, culturally unadorned presence: the young man is absolutely alone as he has no relatives or friends to assist him, the female representative of the funeral home who treats the father's dead body like a disposable object is brutally rude to him, the money is stolen, the water is shut off, he cannot escape to any other place but has to stay with his father's corpse without good or bad memories of him. Sokurov's hyper-realistic and tactile representation of the room's cramped space where the young man is hopelessly trapped serves to intensify the suffocating atmosphere of the film: besides its claustrophobically small size, it is stricken by extreme poverty and decay as the camera often stares into its old walls and piles of trash. Just as in most of his other films, the spatial confinement of *The Second Circle* proves to be one of the dominant techniques in Sokurov's thanatopia.

As in the previous features examined above, the plot of his next 1992 film *Stone* is starkly minimalistic: a young night watch in the Chekhov museum in Yalta, played by the same non-professional from *The Second Circle*, is visited by the ghost of Chekhov himself. He appears from

the bathtub where he bathes, dresses up, converses with the guard, eats his sandwich, drinks wine,

goes for a walk, sits on the bench under the snowstorm and finally disappears. Yet despite *Stone*'s

visual darkness and the same gloomy focus on death, it is nevertheless brighter and much less

oppressive than Sokurov's other necro-films. In fact, *Stone* is his only feature dedicated entirely to

one's return from death, although such motif was already present in *The Lonely Voice of Man*.

 The fact that the hero is neither dead nor dying but is rather reborn from death is reflected on the

nature of the film's visual representation as it radically departs from the documentary hyper-realism

of *The Second Circle* by transforming three-dimensional cinematic space into the two-dimensional

surface of painting. As Iampolski comments,

> The imitation of surface in *Stone* relies on two main components: first, the heightened texture of the image, its systematic 'veiling' which creates the effect that many frames appear as though shot through a slightly clouded glass, i.e. they have an autonomous surface. Second, the strange angular displacement, the distortion of the image, imitating the view of the surface from an oblique angle. This unusual deformation is particularly striking because it introduces the same anamorphic effect as, for example, in Holbein's "The Ambassadors'... Sokurov, however, works with the reality in front of the camera as though it were painted![360]

Besides its cloudy veiling and anamorphic distortion, most of the film is shot almost in complete

darkness as if its images were pulled out of the primordial night of the black screen for a moment in

order to fall back there again. Furthermore, towards the end, when the characters are outside under

snow storm, the oppressive darkness of the film tends to be displaced by almost complete whiteness.

Therefore, the film's visual solution, which emphasizes the pre-phenomenological and pre-

cinematic dimension of the image (vagueness, flatness, darkness or whiteness) that undoubtedly

presents a considerable challenge to the viewer's perception, seems to thematize death in terms of

the genetic constitution of representation itself, i.e. the emergence and dissolution of image. That is,

the genesis of film image, which alternates between surface and volume, light and darkness, clarity

and obscurity, speech and silence, resonates with the ghost's gradual re-adoption of the identity of

the Russian classic. First, the ghost emerges as faceless, naked and helpless, as if he were a newborn

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[360] Mikhail Iampolski, "Representation-Mimicry-Death: The Latest Films of Alexander Sokurov" in *Russia On Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema*, ed. Birgit Beumers, I.B.Tauris, 1999, 127-144, 131-132.

child. To use Levinasian language, he appears after his disappearance in order to manifest his existence without being. Yet later, when he dresses up and tries his pince-nez next to the photograph of his actual self almost hundred years ago, his face finally resembles Chekhov or the image of Chekhov in cultural memory. That is, to return to his own self he acquires the appearance seen by others; this is why Sokurov places Chekhov's ghost in his house turned into a museum, i.e. a public place. Towards the end, during his walk in the town, Chekhov's silhouette blends with the blurry landscape to the point of his disappearance. Chekhov's transition from the corpse to a living being (or a renewed version of himself) as well as his further regression to (or mimicry with) the painterly setting parallels, therefore, the image's emergence out of nothingness. As Iampolski argues, the constitution of identity is, for Sokurov, based on the resemblance or resonance between the self and the other, that is, on repetition through difference: "Return and repetition is always based on difference, on the impossibility to repeat verbatim."[361] Chekhov's ghost attempts to meticulously reproduce his previous lived experience and appearance though dressing, tactile sensations, gestures, tasting food, playing piano, speaking, contemplating nature, etc. Yet he fails, nothing is the same as it used to be during his life. And it is his death that serves as the caesura between his former self and current otherness. Although the general tonality of the film is melancholic, its overall message is more optimistic and life-reassuring as it dramatizes the interplay of difference and repetition in the process of becoming. As I will demonstrate in the conclusion of this section, it is this principle of resemblance through disparity that would organize Sokurov's visual aesthetics in his later works and constitute the core of his ethical project.

Whispering Pages concludes Sokurov's black-and-white trilogy on death and shares the same stylistic characteristics with the previous features: long takes, sparse dialogue, the use of filters and distorting lenses, thick darkness, narrative exhaustion. According to its subtitle given in the

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[361] Mikhail Iampolski, *Demon i labirint: diafragmy, deformatsii, mimesis*, NLO: 1996, 135.

opening credits, the film is "based on the works of Russian writers of the XIX century." A more

literal translation of the subtitle would be "based on the *motifs* of Russian prose of the XIX century,"

which emphasizes the indeterminacy of the literary source for adaptation. Although Sokurov

generally relies on the basic storyline of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, he does not recount

the plot of the novel but rather extracts the atmosphere from its motifs as well as the motifs of

Gogol's Petersburg tales. What Sokurov hears and extracts from the whispering pages of Russian

literature is, of course, death that is visually translated into the oppressively gloomy ambience of St

Petersburg, which, beginning with Pushkin, has been symbolically portrayed as the city of death.

Characteristically enough, the film was shot not in St Petersburg but on the German flooded island

in the North Sea where abandoned factory and mine served as the setting. In fact, one cannot really

tell whether Sokurov's city is real or painted since it has neither sky nor earth but consists of

enormously tall buildings rising from the water and fully enclosing the space of the film, which

Diane Arnaud dubbed as "figures of enclosure" (*figures d'enfermement*)[362] that create the stifling

and claustrophobic effect of film viewing. The urban representation of death is rendered mainly via

the aimless somnambulistic wanderings of Raskolnikov, presumably tormented by guilt after his

murder of the old usurer, through the dark and anamorphically distorted streets crowded with

beggars, drunkards, prostitutes and murderers like the protagonist himself. Accidentally he bumps

into a passerby who starts violently beating him for this. Later, he witnesses a ritualistic mass

suicide of young women joyfully jumping off the building into a pit full of water. As Sylvie Rollet

comments,

> The image of a tortured, uninhabitable space becomes central in *Whispering Pages*, as if it constituted the
> visual equivalent to the drama lived by Dostoevsky's characters. The sinister façades of the antiquated
> buildings, the dark maze of archways reduce the characters to mere elusive shadows or bodies seized in a
> perpetual fall. If Sokurov's universe seems even darker than Dostoevsky's, it is because the moral conflict that

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[362] Diane Arnaud, *Le cinéma de Sokourov: Figures d'enfermement*, Editions L'Harmattan, 2005.

tears the writer's characters has here contaminated the entire space. The image of the post-lapsarian world can only be one of dereliction, without an outside.[363]

Unlike Dostoevsky's novel, Sokurov's film does not offer any spiritual salvation to its protagonist but only further plunges him into his moral despair. In the end, Raskolnkov, exhausted by his irredeemable sufferings, lies down under the bronze statue of a lioness in the street and, after trying to suck her nipple, disappears in the watery murkiness of the ominous cityscape. The last image, as Szaniawski remarked, may refer "to a further layer of Russian literary culture, namely Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman.*"[364] This hypothesis is visually endorsed by the similar postures of both Sokurov's gigantic lioness, majestically raising its paw, and Peter's horse rearing up on its hind legs on the pedestal. Just as Pushkin's horseman destroys the unfortunate Eugene in the poem, Sokurov's lioness similarly seems to conquer Raskolnikov's vain protest.

Although internationally famous, *Mother and Son* and *Taurus* add aesthetically little to Sokurov's visual conception of death, already formed in his previous features, since here the same devices are employed: anamorphic distortion, flatness, de-realized painterly landscape, the character's blending with the setting, visual density and opaqueness, lack of action, a dialogue consisting of a dozen of words, seemingly interminable hypnotic stasis. Technically, they add new color filters: yellow and green in *Mother and Son* and green, blue and brown in *Taurus*. And thematically, they modify Sokurov's focus on death by dealing exclusively with the process of dying. Although the director affiliates them with separate thematic clusters – *Mother and Son* as the first part of the trilogy exploring the intimacy of human/familial relationships (along with *Father and Son* and *Two Brothers and a Sister* (in filming stage)) and *Taurus* as the second part of his "tetralogy of power" – both features generally share the same preoccupation with the life's entropic sliding into non-being. We may say that these films epitomize the culmination of Sokurov's "visual necrophilia." Again, like in his previous features, Sokurov's representation of death is dramatized

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[363] Quoted from Jeremi Szaniawski, *The Cinema of Alexander Sokurov: Figures of Paradox*, 120.
[364] Ibid., 123.

through the death of cinema, or its method of mimetic realism, which is replaced by painting.

Mother and Son, in this regard, is his most painterly saturated film: it profusely cites El Greco, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Millet and especially Friedrich. As a result of such excessively painterly vision, nature is thoroughly virtualized and rendered as a pictorial simulacrum. As José Alaniz has argued, *Mother and Son*'s "representation of nature counts among the most fabricated, simulacral and *unnaturalistic* in the history of motion pictures."[365] As Sokurov himself commented, "I am not shooting a concrete picture of nature, I am creating it… I destroy real nature and create my own."[366] In Deleuzean sense, such artificial landscapes push the power of the false to the very limit, where "descriptions become pure, purely optical and sound" (C2 155) and thus completely break with empirical reality. Yet for Sokurov, the painterly simulation of nature is by no means its aestheticization. It is, as he comments, rather "a moral issue: landscape as a witness of death… In itself, it carries an artistic image or idea. Not every human face contains some artistic essence, but every landscape does" (Lauren Sedofsky *ArtForum* 40.3). That is to say, in Sokurov's universe nature is subjected to the same dynamic of the death drive organizing other film components. As Nick Cave observed: "Even the landscape appears to be in mourning for the mother's imminent demise."

By 2000s Sokurov's Blanchotian-like steadfast fidelity to death started appearing somewhat redundant to some critics. As Dmitry Bykov, for example, eloquently expressed his skepticisms in his review of *Taurus*,

> Sokurov is a rather poor philosopher… As though his camera, always fascinated with pathology, death, ugliness, madness, attempts to examine through them the phenomenon of human being at its purist. As any devotee of Eastern philosophies, Sokurov is very suspicious about reason, any theorization or, simply put, ratio. He is interested in the life of body or the life of spirit but by no means in the life of intellect…

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[365] José Alaniz, "'Nature', illusion and excess in Sokurov's *Mother and Son*," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, vol. 2. 2. (2008), 183-204, 184.

[366] Paul Schrader, 'The history of an artist's soul is a very sad history', Interview with Alexander Sokurov, *Film Comment* 33.6 (November-December) 1997, 20-26, 23.

> [*Taurus*] is a classic example of Sokurovian minimalism, yet now it is pushed to absurdity. Not only are the means of representation minimized as well as expenses and dialogues. Minimized are demands and ambition: never has Sokurov… created such a primitive feature before. Never has the poverty of his philosophy (if this is a philosophy at all) been exposed so clearly.[367]

Bykov's disappointment with *Taurus* is caused mainly by his expectation to see Sokurov's Lenin as a "giant of thought" and "intellectual athlete," a man who dared to change the course of world history and tragically failed. Men of power, he argues, are interesting precisely when they are *in* power and fame. Sokurov's reduction of Lenin to a mumbling piece of flesh is, for Bykov, an easy job to do and a mediocre accomplishment since anybody could be shown in such amorphously disabled state in the face of death: a Voltaire, a saint or Sokurov himself. In *Taurus*, Lenin's dementia is indeed one of the main motifs. As his German doctor jokingly suggests to Lenin, he would be cured if he is able to multiply 17 by 22 (1917 is the year of the Bolshevik Revolution, while 22 stands for the current year in the film, 1922, and Lenin's birth date, April 22nd). Throughout the entire film Lenin keeps trying to solve this simple calculation, but with no success. Sokurov diligently reproduces Lenin's desperate attempts to regain his will and master his paralyzed body. By adamantly refusing his servants' assistance in dressing and walking, he keeps repeating to them: "By myself, by myself." Yet his struggle for autonomy never succeeds. In one of the most striking images, Lenin attempts to move himself from the couch but his body no longer responds to his commands. As a result, his crooked body diagonally fills the entire frame with its uncanny spasmodic contortions. After his washing in the bathtub, his helpless body is wrapped in sheets and carried towards his wheel chair as if he were a toddler. In the final sequence, his mobility is reduced to an utter minimum. Left alone in the garden, he falls asleep, wakes up, regains consciousness, loses it again, daydreams, opens his mouth, stick out his tongue, voluptuously licks his lips, etc. Throughout the five minutes that the sequence lasts, Lenin's face undergoes multiple defacializing transformations. Shot in twilight with green filters, the image is very dark and one can barely

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[367] Dmitrii Bykov, "Puteshestvie s mertvetsom," *Novy mir*, 2001/ 7: http://magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/2001/7/bykov.html

discern his silhouette blending with the blurry background. Virtually nothing happens during this sequence except that his cries of anguish are answered only by the mooing of a cow lowing in the meadow nearby (which literally equates Lenin to an animal) and the sound of thunder in the end is accompanied by the image of open sky (which welcomes him to death). In Deleuzean sense, this sequence is particularly interesting as yet another example of Sokurov's "pure and empty form of time" that unleashes multiple impersonal individuations and metamorphoses.

Obviously enough, Sokurov's Lenin is deliberately dehistoricized: placed between two deaths, i.e. between his massive brain stroke that paralyzed his body and half the brain and the actual death that would occur two years later, such Lenin is precisely what Deleuze meant by the *mummy* as the spiritual automaton of modern cinema, "this dismantled, paralyzed, frozen instance which testifies to the impossibility of thinking that is thought" (C2 166). Bykov's critique of Sokurov's defiance of Reason is, therefore, quite justified since there is indeed no rational thought in the classic Eisensteinian sense in his films. Sokurov's thought-image presents thinking as "the reverse side of thoughts" (C2 167) at the very moment of its genesis, which begins, to repeat, with the impossibility or failure of thinking in its confrontation with death. His paralyzed mummy symbolizes the *impower* of thought in its encounter with the Outside, i.e. the infinity of time, which disrupts the rational standards of cognition and, at the same time, sets up a new ground as "groundlessness," "as a completely undifferenciated abyss, a universal lack of difference, an indifferent black nothingness" (DR 276) "from which everything comes: intensity-linkage-resonance-forced movement; differential and singularity; complication-implication-explication:; differentiation-individuation-differenciation; question-problem-solution, etc." (DR 284). Sokurov's necro-minimalism is therefore a necessary, albeit prolonged and rather anachronistic, preparation for another stage of his career, characterized by baroque plenitude and life-affirmative ethics, where it is

the difference between self and other that becomes the main principle of the constitution of personal and historical identity.

Back to the Crystal Image?

Beginning with *Russian Ark*, Sokurov's poetics undergoes a radical transformation as it no longer focuses on the formless void opened by the subject's approaching its own dissolution in the experience of death but rather on the resonance of divergent series that are nevertheless mediated by this void. One may argue that Sokurov's construction of crystallized pairs, such as Russia and Europe, pre-revolutionary Russia and post-communist Russia, Hirohito and Charlie Chaplin, son and father, is a sign of his retreat from the third synthesis of time to the second one, which would imply the director's renewed interest in Tarkovsky's specular poetics of resonance as well as the characteristic values associated with it, such as nostalgia, memory, eroticism, and tradition. Indeed, many critics expressed their negative responses to the conservative nostalgia and nationalism of *Russian Ark* as well as the incestuous homosexuality of *Father and Son*. Sokurov's engagement with the resonant conjunction of images is, nevertheless, not Tarkovskian as it emphasizes the pure irreducible difference as the key genetic condition for such resonances. The difference between the actual and the virtual is certainly present in Tarkovsky's crystal images; yet there it is overshadowed by the *indiscernibility* of the coupled interchanging elements. Sokurov, on the contrary, foregrounds the disparity or dissonance between resonating series as the only possible ground for their synthesis. Given this, his later images are still constructed according to the third synthesis, although now it is the active aspect of this synthesis (which, according to Deleuze, ensures communication and differentiation between all divergent series) that serves as the main factor for their organization. Such dynamic has already been introduced in *Stone* examined above, where the formation of Chekhov's identity is visually dramatized as the interplay between formless nothingness, from which the ghost emerges, and his public identity symbolized as his generic photograph in the

museum. Yet there the preference is given to the former, i.e. "a completely undifferenciated abyss,"

in which Chekhov dissolves in the end. After *Russian Ark*, Sokurov moves more in the direction of

the latter, i.e. the constitution of identity which nevertheless preserves otherness, or internal fracture,

as its generative core. Let us look at few examples now.

    Russian Ark opens with the completely black screen lasting for about thirty seconds and

accompanied by the narrator's voiceover: "I open my eyes and see nothing. I only remember there

was some accident. Everyone ran for safety as best they could. I just can't remember what happened

to me." It is important to emphasize that Sokurov's 90-minute long-take journey through the various

"sheets" of 300 years of Russian history, spatialized in thirty-three rooms of the Hermitage

Museum, begins with the black screen, which is usually interpreted as a metaphor for the Soviet rule

that is forgotten or repressed as some traumatic tragedy. Besides its diegetic significance within the

film's narrative (as the event of Soviet accident/flood that made everyone run for safety), the initial

black screen provides the viewer with the first anchorage point for self-identification and continues

to underlie her or his perspective on Russia's past throughout the film since the invisible narrator we

hear for the first thirty seconds never discloses himself afterwards. Furthermore, the film concludes

with the dissolved white image of the Neva River outside the museum, which again stresses the

narrator's disconnection from the past. After the camera-consciousness enters inside the palace, the

narrator feels lost and disoriented. That is, he is *not* connected to the museum's space in a sensory-

motor sense, just as historical figures he observes remain oblivious of his presence. The only

character who notices the narrator's unseen presence is the nineteenth-century French diplomat and

writer Astolphe de Custine, author of the travelogue *La Russie en 1839*. It is precisely this

crystalline tension between the invisible yet heard Russian in the present and the visible and guiding

French in the past, who does interact with the museum's imaginary inhabitants, which would

structure the narrative trajectory of the film's voyage through the virtual corridors of Russia's

history. Given this disjunction between the narrator's voiceover and his invisible presence in the museum, *Russian Ark* is *not* nostalgic for Russia's pre-revolutionary past; he is not immediately connected to it but is rather mediated by an interval or caesura which also structures Russia's relation with Europe. As Kaganovsky rightly argues,

> In *Russian Ark*, the double remove of the narrator – first, his invisibility and limited knowledge… and second, his need for a "guide" – creates the distance necessary for nostalgia. But the double remove of the narrator does more than that. By staging his own (and our) incomprehension, blindness, lack of belonging… , *Russian Ark* creates a nostalgic distance not only toward the past, but toward nostalgia for the past… The misunderstanding and dismissal of *Russian Ark* as a nostalgic film occurs precisely here: the film is not nostalgic about the loss of Russia's past; it is nostalgic for the loss of nostalgia about Russia's past… If we remove the black screen of the introduction and the dissolved screen of the conclusion to Sokurov's *Russian Ark* and see only the colorful… spectacle of Russia's tsarist past, we will find ourselves squarely in the place of nostalgia… But if we remain with the invisible narrator… we will be looking directly at the disharmonious blot, the gaze's eruption as a traumatic *real*. [368]

That is to say, in order to adequately approach Sokurov's engagement with the past, it is necessary to preserve this "disharmonious blot… as a traumatic *real*" which both connects and separates multiple temporalities and spatialities in the film. All critics are mesmerized by the film's single, seamlessly continuous shot that encompasses disjointed layers of the past. Yet the continuity of cinematic vision proceeds from its internal fracture, which nevertheless functions as the suture between temporally and symbolically disconnected series. If there is any redemptive project for Russia's post-traumatic future in *Russian Ark*, it lies precisely in maintaining its otherness as the basis for any identity it may assume. There is no Russia *as such* in *Russian Ark*, what we see in it is Russia as Europe's Other and its otherness is what seems to be perfect for Russia. It is this model of identity based on difference that Sokurov's ark attempts to preserve for his nation.

The crystalline principle of visual organization is further developed in *Father and Son* that explores the intimate relationship between the two and could be seen as the most Tarkovskian film in Sokurov's oeuvre. At Cannes, critics immediately suspected the film in its implicit homoeroticism, which Sokurov vehemently denied and which is nevertheless undeniable, since half-

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[368] Lilya Kaganovsky, "I open my eyes and I see nothing': Sokurov, Nostalgia, and the Limits of Vision," *Culture et mémoire: quelles représentations?*, Les Éditions de l'École Polytechnique, Paris, France, 2008, 223-229, 227-228.

naked father and son repeatedly hug and caress each others' bodies and verbally express their mutual affection. The film is, however, not about homosexuality. There are certainly homoerotic overtones in it but their sexual nature is not what Sokurov wanted to say by his film. The characters of the father and the son are not modeled after real human beings, psychologically they are quite flattened and simplified; rather, they interact as images or crystal images, to be precise. Just as Sokurov destroys nature and creates a new one from paintings, the same he does to the protagonists in this film: by making the father and the son visually and psychologically similar, Sokurov have them reverberate as if they were integral parts of a single crystal image, in which Sokurov discerns the utopian ideal of human and familial intimacy. According to Iampolski, Sokurov's ideal of "absolute intimacy" lies in the post-symbolic realm of the Imaginary structured according to "mirrors and doubles."[369] In the film, the father no longer represent the symbolic Law but Love since he purposefully quit his military job in order to stay with his son. Their intimate relationship is, therefore, purely phantasmatic and dreamlike, shot in the sunlit and fluid setting. Neither mother nor girlfriend is allowed to enter their crystal-like idyll where "the son can play the role of the father, and the father that of the son."[370]A woman would probably disturb the dual structure of their specular reciprocity. Their visual and psychological resemblance results in the intense physical proximity between the two which, in the scene when the father tries to calm his son down after the latter's having a nightmare, increases to the point of the fusion and literal indiscernibility of their bodies. As Iampolski argues, the motif of doubling is already present in Sokurov's previous feature but *Father and Son* "desperately"[371] attempts to redeem it by giving it an ethical dimension. We may say that this film could serve as a hallucinatory and anti-nostalgic sequel to Tarkovsky's *Mirror* characterized by the son's longing for the absent father, since it is precisely *Mirror*'s principle of crystalline indiscernibility that provides Sokurov with the model of their harmonious relationship.

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[369] Mikhail Iampolski, "Truncated families and Absolute Intimacy" in *Cinema of Alexander Sokurov*, 109-122, 113.
[370] Ibid., 120.
[371] Ibid., 114.

The redemptive quality of the crystal image is similarly deployed in *The Sun* that explores the last hours of the Japanese Emperor Hirohito before his relinquishing the divine status. As the third installment of Sokurov's "tetralogy of power," *The Sun* appears to take the most humanizing approach to a dictator, which is probably due to the director's fondness of Japanese culture expressed in his highly lyrical documentaries: *Oriental Elegy, A Humble Life*, and *dolce* (1997). Unlike his other tyrants, Sokurov's Hirohito is a poet, a sensitive aesthete, a scholar, a philosopher, a loving husband, who knows nothing of the Sino-Japanese conflict and Pearl Harbor. In this regard, he is equally dehistoricized but for another reason: he is a man on the path of redemption since he willingly accepts the fact of his mortality. The emperor's transfiguration into a common person is most tellingly exemplified by the scene in which American reporters humorously compare him with Charlie Chaplin: "He looks like Chaplin, hey Charlie." The emperor diplomatically rewards them with a Chaplinesque pose. Such discovery of resemblance between Hirohito and the film actor signals the transformation of the emperor, distinguished by the godly uniqueness and incomparability, into a human being open to metamorphoses and becomings. And it is the crystal image that facilitates the becoming of the divine Hirohito into the human Charlie. Once again, Sokurov emphasizes the ethical dimension of the resonance between disparate elements.

By characterizing Sokurov's aesthetic position in the late 1980s, Iampolski categorized him as a "moralizing avant-garde artist."[372] From our analysis above, we may conclude that since the 2000s Sokurov tends to be more like a "post-avant-garde moralist." Whereas in his early features Sokurov explored practically all aesthetic and existential aspects of death by placing the subject into the state of *approaching* death, *staying* with death, and *returning* from death, in his later more traditional works his focus has shifted to life, or *a* life, which, nevertheless, incorporates death and alterity at its core. Precisely because the shadow of death has never disappeared from his later films,

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[372] Michail Iampolski, "Sokurows Regiearbeit," *Kunst und Literatur* 3 (1990), 309-315, 309.

Sokurov's ethical and somewhat conservative affirmation of humble and spiritual life persists to be non-dogmatic and thus exemplifies the Russian version of Deleuze's thought-image.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was not to read the history of Russian cinema chronologically by utilizing Deleuze's film concepts but to extract from it the same coherent system into which they are organized in his *Cinema*'s books. As demonstrated in the first chapter, such system derives its genealogy from Kant's doctrine of the faculties and threefold synthesis of apprehension, reproduction and understanding, which in Deleuze's hands undergo a radical transformation: instead of forming a unity under a given ideological common sense, our faculties (sensibility, memory, thought) are pushed to the transcendental limit of their capacity. In *Cinema 2* as well as *Difference and Repetition,* the transcendental exercise of the faculties is orchestrated along the three passive syntheses of time which the mind, shocked by the encounter with something intolerable, passes though in its successive ascendance toward the virtual. Viewed in the light of such epistemological progression, cinema for Deleuze persistently moves away from clichés and dogmas, imposed by the state sponsored movement-image, toward thought and creating new ideas.

Despite being thoroughly supervised by the state censorship, Soviet cinema undertakes an analogous progressive journey toward thought yet its time-image is occasioned by different historical conditions. Whereas in European cinema the crisis of the action-image was, according to Deleuze, caused by World War Two, in Soviet cinema such crisis took place only after Stalin's death in 1953. And yet, given that the next ruler Nikita Khrushchev never abandoned the Socialist ideology but only tried to humanize it through recourse to early Leninist ideals, the Thaw cinema is replete with various contradictions and compromises with the state regime, one of which is the sublime action-image that simultaneously celebrates heroic sacrifice for the revolutionary cause and problematizes its overall purpose. War movies of the Thaw period equally try to destabilize the sensory-motor schema of the action-image by foregrounding the characters' aberrant movements and their encounter with purely optical and sound situations to which they can no longer react; yet

their spatial disorientation does not go as far as in poetic cinema, exemplified by Kalik's *Man Follows the Sun* and Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* that present the world through the eyes of the child and the artist, respectively.

According to Deleuze, the emergence of the time-image is triggered by the redirection of perception from action to recollection, which occasions the birth of a new spiritual subjectivity based on time rather than spatial parameters. Kalatozov's *Cranes Are Flaying*, in this regard, is the first Soviet film that, by centering on a weak and fragile heroine unable to leave her past behind, favors recollection over action in the post-war context. The redemptive role of memory is further explored in Shepit'ko's *Wings*, yet the film's engagement with the subject of traumatic memory cannot be explained by the director's personal recollection of actual events, as is the case with Kalatozov. Shepit'ko's version of memory is artificial or "second-hand" (i.e. "post-memory") since she creatively reproduces what her parents might remember about the war and thus pushes the faculty of memory away from its empirical anchorage, that is, toward its transcendental limit. Tarkovsky's first feature *Ivan's Childhood* even further succeeds in granting autonomy to memory as such by liberating it from subjective agency or consciousness since his protagonist can remember his past only when he is asleep or dead.

Beginning with *Solaris*, Tarkovsky's oeuvre seems to occupy an exceptional status in Soviet cinema since memory in his films is treated independently of its empirical application. Not only are his characters fully immersed in the past that conditions their lives in the present, at times their memory refers to what never happened to them. Given Tarkovsky's systematic emphasis on the transcendental operation of memory, it is possible to speak about his poetics as inherently Bergsonian, since most of his film components, such as time, space, characters' subjectivity, soundtrack, pictorial and poetic citations, are organized according to the principle of mutual reciprocity or resonance. That is, in his films multiple temporalities coexist, internal and external

spaces interpenetrate, characters split into doubles, music mirrors the image and poetry enters into a dialogue with visual order. In Deleuzean terms, Tarkovsky's poetics of resonance could be best described in terms of the second passive synthesis of time and the crystal-image as its cinematic incarnation, i.e. an image characterized by the indiscernibility of the actual and the virtual. The second synthesis also explains why his films are so heavily charged with eroticism since, for Deleuze, Eros and Mnemosyne are inseparable from each other. Furthermore, the Deleuzean transition from the second synthesis of the erotic past to the third synthesis of the desexualized future and thought similarly illuminates Tarkovsky's aesthetic evolution whose later features further progress towards the virtual and foreground what Deleuze terms as "falsifying narration," i.e. the affirmation of the false as truth. Stalker's Zone, Gorchakov's passage across the pool with a candle, Alexander's salvation of the world: these are examples of Tarkovsky's messianic "power of the false."

Yet Tarkovsky didn't quite manage to overcome his fidelity to Bergsonism, even though his last film makes an explicit reference to Nietzsche's eternal return. It is Sokurov who, as his appointed successor, took up the passage from the second to the third synthesis by collapsing memory into amnesia, Eros into death instinct, body into corpse, dialogue into silence, three-dimensional space into two-dimensional surface, coexistent temporalities into a pure and empty form of time or timelessness. Contrary to Tarkovsky's Bergsonian poetics of resonance, Sokurov's Blachotian necrominimalism exploits audiovisual disjunction as the major synthesis of film components. The viewing experience equally undergoes a radical reconfiguration under the principle of the discordant accord of the faculties where listening merges with seeing, seeing with touching and speaking with silence. And yet, in his later films, such as *Russian Ark*, *Sun* and *Father and Son*, we may witness a certain relapse to the specular mode of representation characteristic of Tarkovsky's crystal image, an aesthetic also marked by Sokurov's propensity toward moralism.

This taxonomic outline of Russian cinematic progression toward thought is by no means exhaustive and, in fact, begs for inclusion of a number of other prominent names and trends. For example, it would be interesting to trace in more detail how the revolutionary aesthetic of the Soviet montage school was superseded by the socialist realist model in the 1930s and question whether such transition was forced by totalitarian repression externally or proceeded naturally, due to its own aesthetic logic of evolution. Given that at that time in Europe (especially in France untouched by totalitarianism) the modernist emphasis on fragmentarity and novelty was similarly replaced by the classicist affirmation of narrative coherence, heroic agency and tradition, such a conversion, facilitated by the introduction of sound, could be viewed as the inevitable result of universal fatigue and exhaustion caused by the avant-garde's excessive striving toward experimental variation and revolutionary change that was destined to reach some form of stability sooner or later. In Deleuzean terms, the passage from one aesthetic to another could be examined as the development of the passive synthesis of the unconscious perception into the active synthesis of understanding, a passage which is also occasioned by the mind's fatigue of unlimited perception. As James Williams points out, "Exhaustion and fatigue are necessary aspects of the first synthesis of time as passing present."[373] In addition to this, we could also examine how the legacy of the Soviet avant-garde was not entirely buried by the Stalinist socialist realism but found its further development in later Soviet films: such as Vertov's camera mobility in Urusevsky's acrobatic cinematography, Eisenstein's emphasis on the disjunction between sound and image (proclaimed in his "Statement on Sound") in Sokurov's films, Eisenstein's "montage of attractions" and the bodily eccentrics of Trauberg and Kozintsev in Muratova's aesthetic. In the light of the serial connection between the first passive synthesis and deeper syntheses of the unconscious elaborated in *Difference and Repetition*, we may

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[373]James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time*, 47.

argue for a philosophical rather than chronological continuity between the avant-garde experimental poetics and later periods of Soviet cinema.

Furthermore, the Soviet time-image would be quite underrepresented without Paradjanov's and especially Muratova's cinema. Whereas the former borrows the force of the time-image from the folklore tradition, the latter exemplifies yet another version of the thought-image predicated on the disjunctive synthesis of seeing and saying. Just like Sokurov, Muratova is obsessed with the theme of death, yet the emphasis of her cinematic experimentation is put more on the sound image rather than the visual image. Her characters cease to communicate yet never stop repeating the same words to themselves and each other and thus express the primordial force of pure repetition in itself. By being completely dissociated from the visual image, Muratova's speech acts become fully autonomous, which produces a disruptive yet creative dissonance in her films. In fact, quite a few scholars have already argued that "dissonance" and "heteroglossia" are the key determinations of her aesthetic.[374]

Finally, our taxonomy could certainly be expanded to contemporary Russian cinema that continues to deploy the transcendental exercise of the faculties, despite the unending vitality of the post-Soviet action-image. To name only few recent examples, Vyrypaev's *Delhi Dance* (2012) celebrates the beauty of a dance which is never visually performed but only described in lengthy passionate monologues of the characters staring into the camera. The movements of the dance are, therefore, metaphysically abstracted, or counter-actualized, into speech acts which strive to present it as a pure idea rather than action and reach the transcendental limit where body and language converge. Vladimir Pankov's *Doc.tor* (2012) similarly deploys the disjunctive synthesis of the thought-image by commingling multiple temporalities, genres and mediums in its modern rendition

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[374] See, for example, Irina Sandomirskaia, "A Glossolalic Glasnost and the Re-tuning of the Soviet Subject: Sound Performance in Kira Muratova's *Asthenic Syndrome*," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema,* Vol. 2.1. (2008), 63-83; Eugénie Zvonkine, *Kira Mouratova: Un cinéma de la dissonance*, Editions l'Age d'Homme, 2012.

of Bulgakov's *A Young Doctor's Notebook*. Aleksei Fedorchenko's *Silent Souls* (2010) and *Celestial Wives of the Meadow Mari* (2012) explore the metaphysical questions of life and death in the context of nearly extinct folkloric traditions of Russia's ethnic minorities and thus exemplify Deleuze's notion of a "missing people."

To explore the presence of the time-image in *contemporary* Russian cinema would, of course, require a different use of Deleuzean film concepts. Rather than applying them developmentally by tracing the historical production of the virtual in film, as demonstrated in this study, we would look at how post-Soviet time-images are informed by national and foreign traditions of cinematic thinking and how they are mobilized to counter the persistent proliferation of movement-images. By utilizing the developmental model of the transcendental genesis of the faculties in film, I aimed at showing how the gradual demise of the Soviet ideology is somewhat parallel to the growing power of the time-image: the less the Communist censors take control over cinematic production, the deeper the film image plunges into the virtual and the more experimental its thought becomes. The case of Russian-Soviet cinema makes it strikingly evident that the freedom of thought and the creation of new ideas could only take place outside the dogmatic image of thought.

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