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Nostalgia for a Great Past

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Abstract: Andrei Tarkovsky (1932 – 1986), the great Russian film director, has a renown that has grown slowly but surly over the past decades. Refusing to be labelled a dissident, from his start he made utmost subjective veracity his inner compass, running up against a system, in which mendacity seemed to be endemic.

Due to his international reputation he was in some ways privileged among Soviet filmmakers, nonetheless he could realize only seven films because of constant hampering by the authorities.

Nostalghia (1983) is about a Russian intellectual visiting Italy with a research interest regarding an 18th Century Russian composer. But the film is very little plot-driven and mainly about the feelings and melancholic reveries of a Russian far from his home. More importantly, it is about the possibility of spiritual communion between Eastern and Western Europe, namely Italy and Russia. In a way Italy could be considered the heartland of Western Europe, and Russia the cold heartland of Eastern Europe.

Tarkovsky's protagonist states in the beginning of the film bluntly that he is deeply sceptical about the possibility of this communion. Tarkovsky in person repeated this assessment not less bluntly in interviews and discussions. Notwithstanding this apparent scepticism, he endeavoured to create a true artistic unity between an important Italian work of art and an important Russian work of poetry: the "Madonna del Parto" (c.1465) by Piero della Francesca and the poem "Ptichka – Little Bird" by Aleksander Pushkin.

In another rather spectacular scene of the film, from the back of the equestrian monument of Marc Aurel, the doomed idealist Domenico gives a speech on universal brotherhood. Tarkovsky gives on that occasion Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" an apparently rough ride conveying a deep meaning.

Diplomacy not being a major concern for Tarkovsky, he made daring statements worth to be diplomatic about.

This inquiry concentrates on Andrei Tarkovsky's second last film *Nostalghia* (1983). My approach mirrors the fact that I am an Art Historian by trade.

Andrei Tarkovsky (1932 – 1986) became famous in the West with his first film *Ivan's Childhood* which won him the Golden Lion at the Biennale of Venice in 1962.

At the time, the Western European left was still very influential and had a lot of intellectual prestige. Tarkovsky was fond of remembering that Alberto Moravia on one hand, and Jean-Paul Sartre on the other discussed his film. Moravia was highly critical, Sartre very favourable, coining the expression "Socialist Surrealism" in describing the phantasmagorical evocations of the memories which again and again come up in the dreams of the 12-year-old Ivan, underlining poignantly his loss of his family and his happy childhood. This explains his wrath and his determination to fight against the Germans. Taking advantage of his small size, he is successful on reconnaissance missions. But in the end he is captured and put to death.

It is the tension between the stark images of the dark and gloomy atmosphere, the harsh reality of war, and the sunlit dreams with their poetic imagery which sets this film apart from other war movies.

This international success paved the way for Tarkovsky to become the director of a very prestigious project, a film about the greatest Russian Icon-painter Andrei Rublev, who painted the famous icon of the Trinity, the "Troiza" which can be admired in the Tretjakov –Museum in Moscow. As for *Ivan's Childhood*, Tarkovsky worked for this film closely together with Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky, himself a film-director, who after his flight from the Soviet-Union in the early Eighties had a distinguished career in Hollywood.

The film, which after almost two years of work was completed in 1966, ran afoul with the authorities. There were different rather shocking aspects in the depiction of 15th century Russia, namely the cruelty of internecine warfare. Tarkovsky had studied the chronicles of the time and insisted that his rendition of atrocities in the Russian Middle Ages was moderate¹. Tarkovsky's earlier film as well, as his later works are notably devoid of cruelty. So, it was certainly not a feature of his personality. Some commentators speculated that something of the dark decades in the early Soviet-Union seeped through in this film. Tarkovsky's intention was to contrast the fratricide warfare of the time with the praise of universal brotherhood in Rublev's painting of the Trinity which in Tarkovsky's view indicated the miracle of art. Whereas during the whole film we don't see even once Rublev painting, in the end, after more than two hours in black and white, we witness the triumph of colour in the icon paintings.

The film reached the West only in 1971. Ingmar Bergman described how he discovered this film much later almost by chance in the Swedish Film Institute in Stockholm and was mesmerized by it.

In 1972, Tarkovsky managed to conclude his next film *Solaris*, based on a famous Science Fiction novel by Stanislaw Lem. Lem was bewildered and almost desperate about the collaboration with Tarkovsky and made a funny description of his character which was very winsome but simply could not be pinned down². *Solaris* became under the hands of Tarkovsky almost an anti-science-fiction film, in the sense that nostalgia, the longing for our home, the planet earth, developed into a dominant feature of the film. Moreover, Dostoyevsky's concern with guilt and shame became crucial in the film, much to the distress of Stanislaw Lem.

Zerkalo or Mirror, a highly autobiographical film, was completed in 1975. Confusing about this film is that the same actress acted as Tarkovsky's mother back in the Thirties and as his present-day wife which he just had divorced. Documentary footage and old Music by Tarkovsky's all time favourite Johann Sebastian Bach, furthermore by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi and Henry Purcell are interspersed, and so are poems by the director's father Arseny Tarkovsky, but there is no recognizable plot. Tarkovsky himself confessed that the montage of the final version, after he had everything filmed, was an excruciating experience. It was like a broken mirror and he tried to put together the pieces. According to the author, there were more than twenty possible versions. When finally everything fell into place it was like a miracle. In this film Tarkovsky revealed with utter sincerity his interior life and his sense of guilt towards his closest relatives. The author was accused of having created an elitist and incomprehensible film which hurt him deeply, so much so that he even briefly considered giving up completely his directing career, because the hostility came not just from bureaucrats but even from some of his colleagues. In the beginning of his book *Sculpting in Time* he put some long quotes by very simple minded viewers of his film *Mirror*. It was this kind of resonance which encouraged Tarkovsky to go ahead along his path. To cite only one, a woman stated watching this film she felt for the first time not to be alone.

Over the years he had to struggle with the authorities of Mosfilm again and again and although he refused to be labelled a dissident he gained a moral authority for making utmost subjective veracity his inner compass³.

Stalker (1979) was Tarkovsky's last film created in the Soviet Union. It was based on a novel by the Science Fiction writers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky *Roadside Picnic*. The stalker is a guide into the "zone", which is the result of a meteorite collision with earth. The laws of nature are somehow suspended and inside the "zone" is a room in which the innermost wishes of a person can come true. Together with a "writer" and a "professor", a scientist, the stalker ventures into the "zone". His two companions are somewhat downtrodden representatives of the famous "two cultures"⁴. Some years ago, a very hip writer, Geoff Dyer, wrote a bestseller on this film *Zona*. Tarkovsky who, at least in Germany, was considered in the years following his death as rather "un-cool", has become almost a household name, following Geoff Dyers success comment on *Stalker*. Dyer claimed that *Stalker's* images have been resting in his mind for more than thirty years. Tarkovsky's images are indeed of this quality, they sometimes reveal their meaning, if ever, only after decades.

Nostalghia

When the Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky finished 1983 his film *Nostalghia* in Italy, some Italians had difficulty to recognize their beautiful country in this film. Some blamed Tonino Guerra for the also not always favourable depiction of Italians in this film⁵. Tarkovsky depended greatly on the famous scriptwriter who worked with Fellini, Antonioni and Rosi, because the film was created in Italian, a language which Tarkovsky had not completely mastered. But I think one would be badly mistaken to assume that Tarkovsky was not in complete control of every detail in the creative process that lead to this film. He took his inspiration for portraying "il bel paese" not so much from picture cards or coffee-table books, but rather, one could guess, from Giorgio de Chirico's *pittura metafisica*, with its sun-drenched places that announce or denounce mysteriously the power of darkness.

Tarkovsky was not your fluid storyteller. He found an image for his idea of the cinematic image: a drop of water that mirrors the entire world. This is an obvious exaggeration but indicates Tarkovsky's tendency to concentrate everything to the highest possible degree.

Take for example the first scene of *Nostalghia*. In the morning mist a beetle drives into and out of the frame, describing a wide curve and stops. First a woman with luxuriant curly hair comes out of the car. Even the fact that it is a beetle should not be overlooked. No other car is so similar in shape to the pregnant womb of a woman. The motive of pregnancy is alluded to in various instances in the beginning of the film. The woman says something in Russian and a man inside the car asks her bluntly not to talk in Russian. We know immediately this guy is cranky and more importantly: he is no gentleman because he is grossly impolite.

I remember that Hungarian friends used to joke years ago about the assumed oxymoron of a "Russian gentleman". To put it a bit pugnaciously, the ideal of a gentleman requires ideally an interior life of the handy pocket size variety, typical for western Europeans or Westerners in general; with no obstructions by heavy mood swings. This statement will be easily understood by people, say, from Prague or Vienna to those from Osaka and Manila. Westerners, quite naturally, will have difficulties to understand it.

The Italian interpreter is used to the slightly uncouth ways of her Russian customer and continues to speak in Italian about the fresco-painting *Madonna del Parto* by Piero della Francesca. She confesses that she cried when she saw it for the first time. This way of wearing her heart on her sleeve is again very Western and more specifically very Italian. Maybe not all Russians are more introverts than this Italian lady, but certainly Tarkovsky was. He was extremely shy and only much

later in the film he lets his Russian alter-ego comment on this profusion of emotion. When the Russian intellectual Gorchakov is fully drunk he confides to a little girl his conviction that “only the feelings we don’t express remain”.

Eugenia, the interpreter starts to walk through the restlessly drifting wafts of mist, but the Russian refuses to come out of the “womb” He mutters in Russian that he is sick of these beauties of Italy. Tarkovsky noted in his diary on the 8th of April 1982 a remark by his hero Leo Tolstoy, who wrote from Luzern to his friend Vasily Botkin about the “pain of solitary joy”. I think this is precisely what Gorchakov’s misgivings are about. Not being as individualistic as Western Europeans are, the need for sharing experiences is visceral for Slavs in general and for Russians in particular. Tarkovsky expanded on it in an interview 1982: “To Gorchakov as well, the Italian experience turns out to be life changing. The beauty of Italy, and her history, makes a great impression upon his soul, and he suffers because he cannot internally reconcile his own background with Italy. In spite of his experiences in Italy initially only having a character of being purely external, he soon realizes that when he returns to the Soviet Union it will involve the end of something. This causes him to feel depressed, as he knows that he will never be able to forget or put behind him what he has experienced in Italy. Knowing full well that he cannot make use of his Italian experiences increases his internal pain, *nostalgia*, which includes an awareness of the fact that he is totally unable to share his experiences with his dear ones at home, even with those who were closest to him before he left for Italy.

This awareness of not being able to share with others his impressions and experiences makes his stay quite painful. He is tormented, but at the same time the need to find a soul mate is stirred within him, someone who can understand him and share in his experiences.

The film is really a sort of treatise on the topic of the nature of *nostalgia*, or about that experience which may be referred to as nostalgia but contains so much more than a longing. A Russian can only with the greatest of difficulty part with new friends and acquaintances. His impending return to the Soviet Union turns into a nightmare, but this longing back to Italy is only one of many constituents comprising this complex phenomenon referred to as *nostalgia*.”⁶

Gorchakov reluctantly leaves the car and shuffles tiredly along the trail behind his Western counterpart. Also with this image Tarkovsky makes a statement about the Russian backwardness in relation to the West. He links it daringly to an emotional heaviness and unwieldiness. Tarkovsky made in his film *Mirror* (1975) a more extensive statement about the historical reasons for the separation of Russia from the West, by quoting a famous letter from 1836 of Pushkin to Chaadayev, but here he wanted to emphasize the emotional side of the problem.

Fluttering Birds

In the next scene we see Eugenia inside the crypt-like low vault of a medieval church where the fresco of the *Madonna del Parto* (1450-1475) is located. It has been pointed out that the setting of this work of art has been deliberately changed by Tarkovsky⁷. Eugenia asks the sacristan why women are generally more religious than men, a question she could never answer for herself. The old sacristan expresses his traditionalist views on the role of women as wives and mothers and then we see a solemn procession of pious women through the wood of Romanesque columns, carrying pyramids of lit candles and a probably wooden statue of the Madonna covered with a heavily adorned cloak or veil. The whole procession is most likely also an invention by Tarkovsky as well as the litany to the holy mother which the women recite. In the background we see dimly lit by candle light the fresco by Piero della Francesca. The prototype of Mary as “Ark of the Covenant” is Byzantine but entered in the Middle Ages the Litany of Loreto⁸.

The grand simplicity of the angels opening the tent which prefigures the opening of Mary's dress has inspired Tarkovsky to a creation of great poetic beauty: a woman tears open the veil of the statue and a great many little birds fly out toward the vault of the church. This happening is so sudden and surprising that a British Slavist writing on the film found this was ridiculing religious feelings. In my humble opinion he could not be further from the truth in this particular case. The freeing of birds harks back to an old tradition of Russian peasants to free a little bird kept in custody on the feast day of Easter. This tradition would have been long forgotten, if not Pushkin had dedicated to it a little poem⁹. "Ptichka" ("The Little Bird") dates from 1822, when the young Pushkin, Baron Anton Delvig, and other poet friends contrived a poetic contest--"a sort of wager, or a steeple-chase, by our young poets," as Countess Yevdoksiya Rostopchina later noted down the recollection of Pushkin's brother--on the theme of "the little bird, set free." The image came, as Pushkin wrote in a letter to Nikolai Gnedich, from "the Russian peasant's touching custom of setting free a little bird on Easter."

Away from home, I reverently observe

The age-old custom of my native land:

At Eastertide, the bright feast of rebirth,

I set a little bird free, by my hand.

And thus I have access to consolation;

For why 'gainst God should I e'er grumble so,

If on one little being of His creation

I was allowed its freedom to bestow!

Therefore this scene has multilayered meaning: it is first of all a simple eulogy on motherhood serving the miracle of life. Furthermore, it extols the beauty of freedom. If at the Easter celebration in old Russia the peasants gave freedom to one single bird, here they are many who are freed. And the kind of curtain which is opened recalls the then very popular metaphor of the "iron curtain" separating Eastern Europe from the West..

Tarkovsky would emphasize on other occasions the importance of inner, spiritual freedom. For instance, in the *Mirror* we listen extensively to the stately tune of an aria from Henry Purcell's *Indian Queen* (1695) which speaks about "freedom in chains", when the author as a young boy under humiliating circumstances discovers his inner dignity and wealth. This reference is rather indirect, since it's just an instrumental rendition of the aria, but, knowing Tarkovsky, I am quite sure he intended to convey this message of "freedom in chains". Tarkovsky spoke about the notion of "inner freedom" in one of his last interviews he gave in 1985 to two Polish journalists, Jerzy Illg and Leonard Neuger¹⁰. Similarly to Leo Tolstoy he admired the French culture for the palpable sense of social freedom¹¹, but inner, spiritual freedom was even more important to him.

Eugenia, the interpreter, is reading a book of Russian poetry in Italian translation. Sitting in the dark lobby of a small hotel, Andrei and Eugenia converse about the possibility of communion between different cultures and Gorchakov is very sceptical. Their words are accompanied by the transient shapes of the smoke rising from their cigarettes. Similarly the chances to bridge the gap between cultures appear vague and vacuous¹². Nonetheless, Andrei makes on that occasion a rare political statement. There is only one way to overcome this situation: "to abolish

the frontiers of the states". But also in discussions, Tarkovsky could insist on the impossibility to translate one culture into another¹³.

Two Types of Italians

According to his tendency to condense everything to the extreme, Eugenia represents for Tarkovsky all things questionable about the West, about the Italian society of the Eighties. Domenico, however, a former maths teacher, is an idealistic Italian who even quotes saint Catherine of Siena. Other Italians come only fleetingly onto the screen: the four people in the fuming waters of the spa in Bagno Vignoni or Eugenia's "man", to whom she returns after an argument with Andrei. On the phone she claims that he comes from a noble family in Orvieto and is "interested in spiritual problems". We see him lunching in an old and noble apartment in Rome, accepting an envelope by some petitioner. The simple gesture of covering an envelope with the tablecloth indicates in a most effective way the corruption rampant in Italy at the time, the so-called "tangentopoli" which was denounced by an Italian judicial investigation starting from 1992.

Eugenia, the young and beautiful interpreter, seems to be a kind of trophy hunter preying on "interesting" men. She apparently feels humiliated by the fact that Andrei doesn't take any consistent erotic interest in her. After his visit to Domenico, she awaits Andrei in his hotel room drying her hair with a hairdryer because in her room the shower didn't work. When he starts telling her about the special mission Domenico entrusted to him, she flies into a temper. She declares that they, the Russians, talk about freedom, but don't actually know what to do with it. From what follows then it becomes clear that she means sexual liberties. His only comment in Russian is that she must be crazy.

Later, in a small dilapidated and swamped church he encounters a little girl called Angela. He is drunk and is only now articulating, what he apparently was not ready to tell Eugenia directly. He extols the beauty and purity of great love stories in literature. His unabashed praise of "platonic" love is only possible because he is drunk and he can hope that the little girl is more receptive to this kind of outdated discourse than Eugenia.

As mentioned, Domenico unifies in his character, all that Andrei admires in Italy. The unwavering activism contrasts with Andrei's growing feebleness. His name alludes to the founder of the Dominican order of preachers. St. Catherine of Siena whom he quotes, belonged to the tertiary order of the Dominicans. On the other hand, Domenico shows characteristics of the Russian "holy fools", the *yurodivy*. Tarkovsky noted already in 1976 a statement by Leo Tolstoy in his diary who wrote that he should write like a "holy fool"¹⁴.

Domenico is a preacher and a doomed idealist and he was able to find a very prominent pulpit for his preaching, the Piazza del Campidoglio on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, which is modestly the model for the Capitol in Washington. Tarkovsky could not have chosen a site more charged with meaning. Whereas St. Peter's Square is the most prominent site of the Roman Catholic Church, the Capitol piazza is symbol of Rome's political authority. The equestrian monument in the centre shows Marcus Aurelius, who as a Stoic philosopher on the throne of the emperor embodies the ideal of the wise leader. Michelangelo Buonarroti invented the shape of the place. The design on the pavement adorns now the Italian 50 Cent piece of the Euro. It expresses in highly suggestive fashion the magnetism of power. Tarkovsky answered to this oval web, which in the film is hardly ever visible, with his long banner crossing the whole length of the piazza and looking like white simple underwear shirts bound together with the long sleeves, thus alluding to people joining their hands. The disjointed slogan on the banner can be deciphered only after a while and reads: NON SIAMO MATTI SIAMO SERI: We are not crazy, we are serious. In its simplicity it is not really reassuring. A place which symbolizes political power becomes the site to demonstrate for the solidarity among the weak.

The Price of Change

From the back of the bronze horse, Domenico is already preaching for days, “like Fidel Castro”, as Eugenia informs Andrei dryly on the phone. It would be worthwhile to analyze his speech which is disjointed and torn to pieces like the banner extended over the place. As early as 1970, long before Tarkovsky had any idea of ending up in the West, he wrote in his diaries that the greatness of contemporary man lies in the readiness to protest against a soulless civilization¹⁵. It should be noted that Domenico’s speech though it has political implications, in its main thrust is not political. But we direct our attention to the treatment given to Beethoven’s Final Choir of the Ninth Symphony “The Ode to Joy”, since it is the Anthem of the European Union. Tarkovsky gives it a rough ride. It is not sure whether Tarkovsky was aware of the fact that the Ode was since 1972 the Anthem of Europe, but its appeal to universal brotherhood makes a very suitable choice. The pathos of Schiller’s ode and the grand style, but also the somewhat bombastic aspect of Beethoven’s music led to slightly irreverent reactions like the silly, but also very funny rendition by Mr. Bean. Tarkovsky, who was praised by his friend Claudio Abbado for his deep respect for classical music¹⁶, took a very different approach and dared a lot. For practical reasons, he was forced to cut it short. He did so using a technical problem which makes the music bursting out in a loud blasting and jarring sound. This acoustically expressive sound coincides with the flames, because Domenico has doused himself with gasoline and set himself on fire. It is an artful montage creating a perfect synesthesia, because the flames and the sound merge completely. This artful execution is in striking contrast with the dreadful fact represented.

Domenico puts himself to death as a sign of protest, confronting an assembly of people frozen in immobility. It is not clear, whether Tarkovsky had the student Jan Palach in mind who in January 1969 chose self immolation as a sign of protest against the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact Forces. He certainly was familiar with Ingmar Bergman’s film *Persona* (1966) which shows on TV the self immolation of a Buddhist monk in Vietnam in protest against the oppression of the Buddhist majority.

The final of the film insists that readiness for sacrifice should be the driving force behind political action. Beethoven’s choir interrupted by screams of pain calls our attention to the fact that the fight for the lofty ideals of the French Revolution *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* may entail a high cost in terms of personal wellbeing or sometimes may cost even the ultimate price. The act of *performance art* which Andrei on Domenico’s behalf executes in Bagno Vignoni when he carries a burning candle across the basin translates Domenico’s spectacular action into the nitty-gritty of our everyday existence: not the pursuit of happiness but keeping alight our spiritual lives in a self-consuming movement towards an aim beyond material existence.

Tarkovsky was in favour of openness of the work of art in the sense that in his view it should not carry a well defined meaning, but be multi-layered. Anna Makolkina is probably right when she states that *Nostalghia* is not just about homesickness: “For Tarkovsky, home is not only one’s native land, not only Russia, but it’s the lost world of noble beliefs...”¹⁷ She even seemed to be convinced, that some Russian viewers left the cinema after twenty minutes because the film was not according to their expectations which were based on the title of the film. Tarkovsky was adamant that his film was also about the specific Russian brand of homesickness which he once described as a consuming, devouring state of mind¹⁸. It is characteristic for his attitude though that he didn’t choose a more Russian word for nostalgia, which is much more used among Russians, but the international word with Russian spelling to emphasize the slightly different meaning.

An Ambivalent Image

Nostalghia is ultimately directed to a spiritual home beyond our earthly existence, but it implies as well a meaning with more political relevance, the nostalgia for the great past of Russia. Tarkovsky could rightfully claim to be an heir to Russia's Silver Age, since his parents studied in the literature institute, newly founded by Valery Bryusov, who was an eminent figure in that movement¹⁹.

We will always note that behind Tarkovsky's gruff statements about the impossibility of communication between different cultures, between the East and the West, there lingers his timid hope to be able to bridge the gap, as he managed in a highly artistic fashion with the painting of Piero della Francesca and Alexander Pushkin's poem.

The final scene of *Nostalghia* testifies to this hope though it is fundamentally an ambivalent image: showing Andrei together with his German shepherd leaning on the ground in front of a huge puddle with the homey izba behind him. The hollow window arches of the San Galgano Abbey mirror in the puddle. The Italian church ruins embrace his Russian home, a feather-light snowfall sets in and a woman's voice sings "Kumushki", a traditional song describing girls letting flower-crowns float on the Danube river. One is free to see this image as a final confirmation of an impossible unification or as a sign of hope. Tarkovsky commented this image in the following way: "I trust that it is free of vulgar symbolism; the conclusion seems to me fairly complex in form and meaning, and to be a figurative expression of what is happening to the hero, not a symbol of something outside him which has to be deciphered."²⁰

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¹ *The Passion According to Andrei* Interview by Alexander Lipkov 1967, Nostalghia.com.TheTopics

"True, we showed this aspect of life in concentrated fashion, but at the same time with reserve. Moreover, as I have said, the time was so cruel that in this manner, increasing the tension in individual parts, we were able to preserve the necessary balance between the dark and light aspects of the time, a balance that was required by our fidelity to historical truth."

² „Tarkovsky reminds me of a sergeant from the time of Turgenev — he is very pleasant and extremely prepossessing and at the same time visionary and elusive. One cannot 'catch' him anywhere because he is always at a slightly different place already. This is simply the type of person he is. When I understood that I stopped bothering." English translation on Nostalghia.com *The Topics, Tarkovsky and Lem on Solaris*,

Stanisław Bereś, *Rozmowy ze Stanisławem Lemem*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Cracow 1987

³ His sister Marina Tarkovskaya said in an interview: „Andrej, ich will es betonen, war nie ein Dissident, aber die Behörden der UdSSR haben in ihm trotzdem einen Fremdling gewittert, einen Menschen mit innerer Freiheit – gerade das konnten sie ihm nicht verzeihen.(Andrej, I would like to emphasize, was never a dissident, but the institutions of the Soviet Union sensed in him a stranger, a man with inner freedom - this exactly they could not forgive him)“(my own translation P.S.) Irina Tschaiako, Zum 80. Geburtstag des Filmregisseurs Andrej Tarkowskijs, 3.4. 2012. Die Stimme Russlands, http://german.ruvr.ru/2012_04_03/70511584/

ANDREI TARKOVSKY, DIRECTOR AND SOVIET EMIGRE, DIES AT 54, by Walter Goodman, *The New York Times*, December 3, 1986, “ ‘I am not a Soviet dissident’, he said at the time.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/30/obituaries/andrei-tarkovsky-director-and-soviet-emigre-dies-at-54.html>

"His is a magical name for any Russian because he never lied. He was revered for no superficial reason. He was the one person who brought truth into the kingdom of lies." The Russian stage director Irina Brown, in: *Monster in the Making*, by Stuart Jeffries, *The Guardian*, September 19, 2003

⁴ Snow, Charles Percy (2001) [1959]. *The Two Cultures*. London: Cambridge University Press.

⁵ Andrei Tarkovskij, *Martirologio.Diari*, Florence 2002, p.554, March 21, 1983, p. 555, March 24, 1983

⁶ *To Journey Within* Gideon Bachmann in conversation with Tarkovsky 1982, Nostalghia.com.TheTopics

⁷ James Macgillivray, *Andrei Tarkovsky's Madonna del Parto*, Nostalghia.com

⁸ Gregory Thaumaturgus (c. 213–c. 270) wrote: "Let us chant the melody that has been taught us by the inspired harp of David, and say, 'Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy sanctuary.' For the Holy Virgin is in truth an ark, wrought with gold both within and without, that has received the whole treasury of the sanctuary" (Homily on the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin Mary). quoted from Steve Ray, *Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant*, <http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/mary-the-ark-of-the-new-covenant>

⁹ Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin, translated by Rachel Douglas, www.schillerinstitute.org

¹⁰ Jerzy Illg and Leonard Neuger, *"I'm interested in the problem of inner freedom..."* Nostalghia.com.TheTopics Z Andriejem Tarkowskim rozmawiają Jerzy Illg, Leonard Neuger", in *Res Publica* (1), Warsaw 1987, pp. 137–160, "Internal freedom — since as you are aware political freedom and spiritual freedom are two different concepts. When we speak of political freedom then in fact we do not mean freedom — we mean rights. The right to live in a way that's agreeable to our conscience, that we think of as necessary. The right to serve society — as we ourselves understand this task. The right to feel free. The rights. And some duties, naturally. One must have rights regardless of anything else. But when we talk about freedom, we have in mind... I don't know — if you want to be free you are always free. We know that people even in prison can be free. One should also never link freedom with progress, this absolutely cannot be done. Since the beginning of human consciousness and individuality man could either be free or not free — in the inner sense of the word. That's why when we talk about freedom we shouldn't confuse the topics of rights and freedom, inner, spiritual freedom."

¹¹ Tarkovskij .Diaries, p.476, p. 100: "Paris is very beautiful: you feel free..."

¹² Tarkovskij noted in his diaries on April 28, 1978 a phrase by Goethe: "Who wants to understand a poet, must visit the land of that poet", Tarkovskij, Diaries, p. 225

¹³ "This calls to mind one incident at a press conference at the Rotterdam Film Festival. That evening, he talked a great deal about national culture, asserting that 'culture cannot be translated into another language in principle.' One could not say that this assertion was self-evident, all the more so for the Dutch, who take pride in their multicultural society. Therefore, it was with some bewilderment that they turned to Tarkovsky with a question, naively counting on his elaboration: 'What, in your view, is 'culture'?' His reply was terse and exasperated: 'If you came here and you don't even know what culture is, then I really don't know what I'm doing here talking with you at all!'" Olga Surkova, *Tarkovsky vs. Tarkovsky*, Nostalghia.com.TheTopics

¹⁴ Andrei Tarkovsky, Diaries, p. 191, April 20, 1974: "Also writing one needs to be a holy fool."

¹⁵ Andrei Tarkovsky, Diaries, p.44, September 9, 1970

¹⁶ Ebbo Demant, *Andrej Tarkovskij - Exil und Tod*, Film on YouTube, 8/14

¹⁷ Anna Makolkina, *A Nostalgic Vision of Tarkovsky's Nostalgia*, in *Before the Wall Came Down: Soviet and East-European Filmmakers Working In the West*, Ed. Graham Petrie & Ruth Dwyer, University Press of America, 1990, pp. 215 – 221, p.216

¹⁸ „Our "nostalgia" is not your "nostalgia." It is not an individual emotion but something much more complex and profound that Russians experience when they are abroad. It is a disease, an illness that drains away the strength of the soul, the capacity to work, the pleasure of living. I analyze this nostalgia confronting it with a concrete story, that of a Soviet intellectual who comes to Italy." Andrei Tarkovsky interviewed by Maurizio Porro (1983) Cannes:Tarkovsky, Nostalghia.com.TheTopics

¹⁹ Jerzy Illg and Leonard Neuger, *"I'm interested in the problem of inner freedom..."* Nostalghia.com.TheTopics "What can I say then about my family here? My father is a poet. He was quite a young boy when the revolution came and one cannot really say he was an adult before the revolution. That wouldn't be correct at all. He grew up already during Soviet times. He was born in 1906, so in 1917 he was 11 years old, he was a completely immature boy. But he was familiar with the cultural tradition, he was educated. He graduated from the Bryusov Literary Institute and he knew many, almost all of the leading Russian poets. Of course one cannot imagine him apart from Russian poetic tradition, from that line of Blok, Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Pasternak, Zabolotsky. This was for me very important, in certain way I received all this from my father."

²⁰ Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema* 1986. Trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998, p.216