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Back to the House II: On the Chronotopic and Ideological Reinterpretation of Lem's *Solaris* in Tarkovsky's Film

ROUMIANA DELTCHEVA AND EDUARD VLASOV

Живите в доме—и не рухнет дом.
Я вызову любое из столетий,
Войду в него и дом построю в нем.

Arsenii Tarkovsky

One of the most complex issues in the transposition of the literary narrative onto the screen is to determine how restrictive the narrative itself is with respect to the chronotopic and ideological transformations it must undergo in the process of screening. Since the plot in the narrative has concretely defined spatiotemporal parameters, these parameters are necessarily disrupted whenever some kind of transformation is undertaken on the part of the director. In this article we trace the correspondence between Stanislaw Lem's novel, *Solaris* (1961), and Andrei Tarkovsky's film version of it (1972). We will concentrate on the degree to which the conceptual core of Lem's novel influences the construction of the artistic and ideological matrix of the film.

The focus of our discussion is the mechanisms employed by Tarkovsky in the broadening of Lem's overall philosophical message by the specific construction of space and the introduction of particular intertextual planes, both of which find their spatial and ideological embodiment in the unique Tarkovskian image of the House. In undertaking a chronotopic-generic analysis of the film *Solaris*, set against the framework of its original literary source, we aim at reinterpreting the work—especially given the unmerited inferior evaluation it received both from critics and the director himself. We want to recontextualize the film with respect to Tarkovsky's other works by stressing its more universal humanitarian message, which is visually constructed by a peculiar subjectivized treatment of time and a highly abstract manipulation of space.

This work is the second part of a cycle in which the poetical and ideological exploitation of the image of the house in the process of screening a literary text is treated. The first article of the cycle is Roumiana Deltcheva and Eduard Vlasov, "Back to the House: On the Transformation of Spatial Forms in Screening Chekhov (The Case of Nikita Mikhalkov's *Unfinished Piece for Player Piano* and Woody Allen's *Interiors*)," *Russian Literature* (Amsterdam) (Summer 1997).

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SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE FILM

Tarkovsky's main approach in screening Lem's novel can be defined as *the overcoming of genre constraints*. While the verbal narrative is a fairly canonical instance of science-fiction writing, the film presents problems with regard to its generic description. Different critics have used diverse labels for it: from a "classic Soviet Science Fiction counterpart to *2001—A Space Odyssey*" to "psychological melodrama" and "[science fiction]-comedy-drama."¹ These manifold interpretations can be accounted for, on one hand, by the director's intentionally ambivalent approach to *Solaris* and, on the other, by the parable-like quality of the text source.

Lem constructs his narrative along a straight, unidirectional spatial axis. He follows the events occurring in the life of his protagonist, Kris Kelvin, on his arrival at the station orbiting Solaris. Kelvin, a psychologist, is sent to this distant planet after certain inexplicable happenings have destroyed a crew of eighty-five astronauts posted there. His mission is to determine the causes of the carnage. There, Kelvin discovers that the commander, Gibarian, has also recently died—committed suicide, he later learns. The remaining two crew members, Snaut and Sartorius, are reluctant to provide any explanations about the sinister occurrences on Solaris. Kelvin is told only that the mysterious events began after the crew's radiation experiments on the strangely behaving ocean, which covers practically the entire planet. In the course of his investigation, Kelvin is confronted with the ocean-induced image of his dead wife, Hari, who had killed herself ten years ago indirectly because of Kelvin. Kelvin's attitude to Hari undergoes a gradual progression, from horror and revulsion to love and need for the specter. Simultaneously, Kelvin realizes that the ocean has the power to bring back the past, especially those parts that humans try to forget or suppress. This power, however, is irrational and emotionally based; it cannot be grasped by the purely rational mechanics of science and technology, no matter how advanced. The novel ends with Kelvin's actual landing on the ocean, driven to it not by his training as a scientist, but by his rekindled emotions from the encounter with his beloved. The overall plot traces Kelvin's movement from outer space to the station, and from there to the ocean of Solaris. The movement aims at reinforcing what Johnson and Petrie define as "a critique of anthropocentric thinking, focusing on the limitations of human knowledge and the human intellect . . . the main theme is Kris's realization that the human values we cherish, such as love, have no significance or meaning in a universe that is probably organized along principles that we can never even begin to understand."²

The major deviation Tarkovsky undertakes in his film consists of a principal shift in the overall intention of the narrative prompted by the firm belief that love and human emotion have a primary meaning in the universe. The director, who also co-authored the script with Friedrich Gorenstein, radically changes the spatial directionality of the plot development. Instead of the unidirectional model employed by

¹The first definition is given by Phil Hardy, quoted in James Robert Parish and Michael R. Pitts, *The Great Science Fiction Pictures II* (Metuchen, 1990), 383; the second is in *ibid.*; and the third is in Donald C. Willis, *Horror and Science Fiction Films II* (Metuchen, 1982), 359.

²Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue* (Bloomington, 1994), 101–2.

Lem—from outer space to the ocean, via the station—Tarkovsky introduces a ring composition. The action in the film begins with a rather long sequence of scenes taking place on Earth. Kelvin (Donatas Banionis) comes to his father's home prior to his departure to Solaris, where he must conduct his investigation concerning the strange events there. Berton (Vladislav Dvorzhetskii) arrives there too to further instruct Kelvin for his mission. He brings a video film of his own sinister encounter with the ocean and the consequences on Earth following his trip—a press conference and disbelief expressed by scientists and the media. After a conversation with his father (Nikolai Grin'ko) and Berton, Kelvin leaves for Solaris. The major section of the film takes place on the station, where Kelvin meets Snaut (Iurii Iarvet), Sartorius (Anatolii Solonitsyn), the image (on videotape) of the dead Gibarian (Sos Sarkisian) and the “*Solaris*-stimulated reconstruction” of his late wife Hari (Natalia Bondarchuk).³ The final scene in the novel—the ultimate contact established with the sentient ocean—is entirely absent from the film. Tarkovsky altogether rejects the possibility for such a contact. On the contrary, he returns his character to Earth. In the closing sequence, Kelvin is shown in the same environment, his father's home, where he began his journey. Thus, while in the novel Kelvin manages to fulfill his quest to establish direct contact with Solaris, Kelvin from the film does not even attempt such an interaction. Instead, he returns to Earth, to the house.

It is a known fact that Lem was strongly dissatisfied with Tarkovsky's interpretation of his novel and even threatened to withdraw altogether his support from the project.⁴ By no means should these divergences in the views of Lem and Tarkovsky affect one's apprehension of the film as an artistic product in its own right. Tarkovsky exploits the supernatural elements of the Solaris ocean to expose his philosophical concepts about global issues of humankind. As Hoberman points out, “*Solaris* maintains Lem's wonderful premise (a planet consisting entirely of a single, apparently sentient ocean), but jettisons the Pole's characteristically sardonic metaphysics. Within Lem's complex framework one senses another movie struggling to be born.”⁵

The main distinctive feature of the spatial organization of the film, which differentiates it from the novel, is the introduction of the obvious opposition, House versus Station.⁶ This opposition manifests itself on two levels. On a purely technical level, we are presented with the images of the cozy, earthly house and the distant, impersonal experimental station. On a symbolic level, we can identify the juxtapo-

³ Willis, *Horror and Science Fiction Films II*, 359.

⁴ See J. Hoberman, “Introduction to ‘Between Two Worlds,’” *American Film* 9, no. 2 (1983): 14; Maya Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, trans. Natasha Ward, ed. Ian Christie (London, 1989), 53.

⁵ Hoberman, “Introduction,” 14.

⁶ In a comparative article on Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and *Stalker*, Simonetta Salvestroni makes a similar conclusion with regard to the spatial organization in the director's overall artistic production: “Typifying all of Tarkovsky's films to date . . . is a binary spatial organization. Each sets a quotidian world, grey, monological, and violent, against an anti-world which is dynamic, malleable, and full of color, the dominion of possibility and of choice” (“The Science-Fiction Films of Andrei Tarkovsky,” *Science-Fiction Studies* 14 [1987]: 294). Although our treatment of the exploitation of space in *Solaris* differs from Salvestroni's approach, the common apprehension of a juxtaposing relationship merits attention. For the image of the house as a symbol of “known territory” in opposition to the hostile and impersonal outer world in Tarkovsky's films in general see Johnson and Petrie, *Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, esp. 225–29.

sition of the familiar, safe world of the home with the alien, mysterious interiors of the "foreign territory." Following Bakhtin, we are faced with two distinct chronotopes: the idyllic chronotope and the chronotope of the castle.⁷

According to Bakhtin, the essence of the idyllic chronotope

finds expression predominantly in the special relationship that time has to space . . . : an organic fastening-down, a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory with all its nooks, crannies, its familiar mountains, valleys, fields, rivers and forests, and one's own home. Idyllic life and its events are inseparable from this concrete, spatial corner of the world, where the fathers and grandfathers lived. . . . This little spatial world is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world. But in this little spatially limited world a sequence of generations is localized, that is potentially without limit.⁸

The representation of the house in *Solaris* closely follows these requirements. Tarkovsky presents us with the image of a typical European estate, at the center of which is the old-fashioned wooden house surrounded by old trees with thick foliage. A predictable pond completes the idyllic image of the place.

The movement away from his home places Kelvin in a milieu which is strange, different, "other." The motif of the quest and the character's penetration into an alien world evoke the chivalric romance and one of its inherent chronotopes, the castle where the hero's actions necessarily occur within closed, confined spaces. These spaces are totally detached from their outer surroundings and they function according to intrinsic "magic" laws. These isolated topoi—although outwardly resembling home by virtue of their closed volumetrics—are always hostile to the hero. This feature of the chronotope determines the peculiarity of the chivalric romance and the Gothic novel. As Bakhtin points out,

This world is not . . . his [the hero's] national homeland; it is everywhere equally "other." . . . In its own way this chronotope is very organic and internally consistent. It is no longer filled with rarities and curiosities, but with the miraculous; everything in it—weapons, clothing, a spring or bridge—either has something miraculous about it or is outright bewitched. There is also a great deal of symbolizing in this world, but not of a sort that is crudely rebus-like; it is rather of a type closer to the oriental fairytale. . . . In the majority of cases, moreover, there is no trace of the "free" relationship of a man to space . . . what we get rather is an emotional, subjective distortion of space, which is in part symbolic.⁹

Tarkovsky avoids any kind of spectacular visual display that is traditionally encountered within the framework of the science-fiction genre and which is an obligatory element in the canon set up by directors such as Stanley Kubrick, George Lucas, and Ridley Scott. In pure science-fiction film classics, for example, in *2001*—

⁷ See also Darko Suvin, *Metamorphosis of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven, 1979), 3–42.

⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin, 1981), 225.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 153, 154, 155.

A Space Odyssey (1968), *Star Wars* (1977), and *Alien* (1979), we deal with “rarities and curiosities” of a crude rebus-like nature. The numerous instances of robots, sophisticated machinery, and special effects, lavishly displayed and utilized in these films, have a material, technical significance; they are titillating to the senses but devoid of any metaphysics. In this sense, they are neither miraculous nor symbolic. Tarkovsky rejects the outwardly sensational aspect of his story and intentionally divests his station setting of any exhibition of high technology or special effects.¹⁰ Even the presence of the giant master computer from the novel is ignored by the director. He refers to it only indirectly in connection with the sending of Kelvin’s encephalogram into the ocean.

Tarkovsky’s humanist approach to the film is not, however, entirely without textual support from the novel. In fact, although Lem’s *Solaris* is considered a science-fiction classic, it does not focus on the aimless display of technological achievements as a source of excitement to the reader’s senses. It is actually quite traditional in the portrayal of the human world in some future epoch. In a study of the novel’s discourses, Balcerzan catalogues the traditionalistic and innovative features in Lem’s narrative. He points out that, in terms of the alternative possible world constructed within the boundaries of the text, there is nothing exceptional to set it apart from our own actual reality and its defining parameters.¹¹ In this sense, Lem has already created the preconditions for Tarkovsky’s pursuit of a symbolic exploitation of the spatiotemporal dimensions in *Solaris*, disregarding in turn the “magic” transmutations encountered in its American science-fiction counterparts.

The direction toward the “oriental fairy tale” quality in the chivalric romance coincides with Tarkovsky’s metaphysical searches which give his film a parable-like character.¹² Thus, the construction of the station’s interiors is not oriented toward the display of externally effective technical “markers,” but toward the introduction of entities which, in the context of the space station, are of a strange, “miraculous” nature. For example, entering Gibarian’s quarters, Kelvin finds a child’s drawing of a person hanging on the door. Underneath the figure, the word *chelovek* is scribbled, in which the “k” is symmetrically but incorrectly inverted.

Another element—highly untypical of the science-fiction environment—is the presentation of the library, where the key scene takes place. In the novel, it is merely another room for research and scientific inquiry. In the film, via its specific spatial

¹⁰ Compare also the critics’ reaction after the film came out: “Russia’s answer [*Solaris*] to 2001 [is] not in its display of space hardware but in the speculative quality of its ideas. . . . [T]he Chinese-box pattern, and the bafflingly oblique and haunted feel of the early sequences, suggest Resnais at least as much as Kubrick” (Penelope Houston, “Festivals 1972—Cannes,” *Sight and Sound* 41, no. 3 [1972]: 155).

¹¹ See Edward Balcerzan, “Seeking Only Man: Language and Ethics in *Solaris*,” *Science-Fiction Studies: Selected Articles on Science Fiction, 1973–1975*, ed. R. D. Mullen and Darko Suvin (Boston, 1976), 142.

¹² The most obvious Oriental influence on Tarkovsky—the philosophy of Zen-Buddhism—is found in *Stalker* (1979). Yet Eastern thought can be identified in his other works as well. Tarkovsky himself admits: “I am ever more interested in Oriental philosophies, in which the sense of existence lies in contemplation and in the fusion of man and universe. The West is too rational and the sense of Western existence seems to be rooted in a pragmatic principle: a little bit of everything in perfect equilibrium in order to keep one’s own body alive as long as possible” (Andrei Tarkovsky, “Between Two Worlds,” *American Film* 9, no. 2 [1983]: 77).

characterization, Tarkovsky completely detaches the library from the rest of the station. He abandons the futuristic framework of the novel and recreates the atmosphere of an old-fashioned study. In addition, in it he places a bust of Socrates, the Venus of Milo, a mask of Beethoven, chandeliers, stained glass, heavily ornamented furniture, and a number of paintings by Brueghel, all of which are distinct markers of the stages of human civilization. Significantly, the antique bust of Socrates in the library refers us back to the house of Kelvin's father, where the figure appears for the first time in the study. Thus, the sculpture connects the two spaces and, along with the other details, introduces the notion of highly subjective time, reinforced by the emphasis on the total isolation from the outer world.¹³ As Snaut, characterizing the library, points out, "after all, there are no windows in there."

Both the idyllic chronotope and the chronotope of the castle/chivalric romance are distinguished by their subjective treatment of time. In Bakhtin's characterization, these types of time are very similar. In the idyll, time is totally subordinated to the communal nature of the characters' lives. In turn, communal life is conditioned solely by the unity of place.¹⁴ The motion of time in the idyllic chronotope is not represented as a vector following historical progress. Rather, its movement is defined as a cyclical progression in which there are recurrent phases, such as birth, growth, and death. It is in the idyllic chronotope that the theme of the return of the prodigal son can be fully and consistently realized. This theme dominates the final section of the film.

In the chivalric romance the subjective attitude in the structuring of time also predominates. Here, subjectivity arises not from the closed cyclicity but, rather, from the miraculous component required by the chivalric chronotope of the castle. Besides,

time begins to be influenced by dreams . . . we begin to see the peculiar distortion of temporal perspectives characteristic of dreams. Dreams no longer function merely as an element of the content, but begin to acquire a form-generating function, in the same way that "visions" are made analogous to dreams . . . the chivalric romance exhibits a *subjective playing with time*, an emotional and lyrical stretching and compressing of it.¹⁵

On one hand, Tarkovsky's subjective play with time and his intermingling of reality and fantasy correspond to the rules of the science-fiction genre: for instance, the exploitation of the difference between Earth time and the passage of light years. On the other hand, these two chronotopes underlie the unique Tarkovskian relativization of time.

Tarkovsky's subjective attitude to time and his conscious play with it are striking leitmotifs found throughout his oeuvre, starting with the inclusion of prewar visions in Ivan's dreams in *Ivan's Childhood* (*Ivanovo detstvo*, 1962) up to the achronic interplay with the hero's biographical stages in *The Sacrifice* (*Zhertvoprinoshenie*, 1986).

¹³ Tarkovsky's highly subjective approach in his treatment of time, especially with regard to art, is discussed in depth by Johnson and Petrie, who devote various sections in their book to this particular aspect of Tarkovsky's aesthetics (*Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, 31–39, 125–26, 187–202, 236–38, 250–61).

¹⁴ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 225.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 154, 155.

In the artist's confession we find the following statement concerning the essence of time:

I am convinced that "time" is no objective category, since time cannot exist without man. Certain scientific discoveries tend to reach the same conclusion. We do not live in the "now." The now is so short, so close to zero without being zero, that we have no way of perceiving it. The moment which we call "now" immediately becomes past, and what we call future becomes present and then at once it becomes past. The only possible present is our fall into the abyss which exists between future and present.¹⁶

Here, Tarkovsky practically declares his conception of the time-independent existence of humankind. That is the underlying motivation of his approach and of his use of the science-fiction genre. He uses the formal framework allowing him to place his story in the future, thus distancing it from his immediate audience. At the same time, following his understanding of the sole existence only of the past, he creates a more philosophically generalized topos in which primacy is given to memories and visions, cultural artifacts and the home "nest," that is, to the visual/material manifestations of the past.

The presentation of the home nest emphasizes its universal rustic elements. All the scene sequences taking place in the house are devoid of markers suggesting either a concrete geographical location or a futuristic setting. Moreover, the past-ness and naturalness of the parental house is emphasized by its immersion in nature: nature penetrates the interior of the house, with branches of trees decorating interior spaces and the ever-present symbolic Tarkovskian rain falling in the rooms. This detail recurs at the Station immediately after Hari's monologue in front of the mirror. The rain begins to fall in the technocratic interiors as soon as the domestic theme of the parental house is introduced: Hari's conversation with herself gradually metamorphoses into a dialogue with Kelvin's mother.¹⁷

Tarkovsky establishes another opposition to technological progress by introducing a running horse—a recurrent token of rural life in its connection with nature. After the introduction of the real animal, in flesh and blood, the horse appears again—but this time as a picture—in Gibarian's quarters on the station. The image of the horse is exploited on two levels. Technically, the horse is given as the natural alternative to the sophisticated means of transportation used by Kelvin to reach the Solaris Station. Notably, the horse on the estate is shown living in the garage, while there is no trace of a vehicle. On a wider, metatextual level, the scene with the horse at the beginning of the film establishes the continuity with Tarkovsky's immediately preceding masterpiece, *Andrei Rublev* (1966), which cathartically ends with an idyllic episode depicting horses at a riverbank. This sequence is followed by shots of Eastern Orthodox frescoes and icons. A similar icon decorates Kelvin's quarters at the station

¹⁶ Tarkovsky, "Between Two Worlds," 77–78.

¹⁷ A variation of the rain-within-the-house theme is the episode in *Andrei Rublev* when poplar fluff fills the temple, which intentionally creates the impression of snow falling inside the shrine. In this religious context, the unexpected and extraordinary snowfall despite the circumstances is reminiscent of Brueghel's "The Adoration of the Kings in the Snow" (1567). The parallel with Brueghel is relevant here since this artist's works had a strong influence on Tarkovsky.

in *Solaris*. While in *Andrei Rublev* the icon explicitly functions as national/religious identification, here it is transposed into a larger cosmopolitan context.

From the perspective of national/religious identification, Tarkovsky's overall legacy can be divided into two clear-cut groups. In *Ivan's Childhood*, *Andrei Rublev*, *Mirror* (*Zerkalo*, 1975), and *Nostalgia* (*Nostalgia*, 1983), Russofile and Orthodox motifs dominate; in *Solaris*, *Stalker*, and *The Sacrifice*, Tarkovsky demonstrates a definite shift to a more global, humanitarian approach to humankind. In this context, the refusal to geographically concretize the father's estate is of particular significance in conveying the idea of the homogeneous basis of humanity. Given this other orientation in Tarkovsky's value system, it is difficult to accept the definite localization of the topoi presented in *Solaris*, as some critics suggest. Describing the setting of the film, Montagu writes, "A scientist [Kelvin] lives with his mother [*sic*] and father and son [*sic*] in a country *datcha* not far from Moscow."¹⁸ By introducing a double marker of national identity—the Russian capital and a specific kind of a Russian summer-house—Montagu restricts the potential meanings that the presence of the estate in the film actually activate. The exact location of the parental house remains as unspecified as that of the station, which is opposed to it. Furthermore, Tarkovsky himself refuses to give the house its exact location in Russia as he does in *Mirror*.

Tarkovsky proceeds with the episode of Berton's return from his meeting with Kelvin in the countryside to his urban residence. Originally, the episode of Berton's return was shot in Tokyo—a place which in the early 1970s was already perceived as a "city of the future," marked by an obviously non-European urbanistic culture.¹⁹ The typically Japanese features of the scene are not subverted in the course of the sequence. We can see the silhouette of the Tokyo television tower looming in the distance; he drives on the left-hand side of the freeway; the road signs display Japanese characters. Logically, the parental house should be situated in the vicinity of this Oriental megalopolis. Yet, apart from this brief inclusion of the Asian milieu, Tarkovsky does not introduce any other visual Oriental details. Neither the names of the characters, nor their outer appearance possess Oriental characteristics; significantly, none of the names are of Slavic origin, either. In this respect, Tarkovsky faithfully follows up on the idea of conscious universalization of humankind in the future, already introduced through the system of characters in Lem's novel.²⁰

In addition, in his conversation with Kris about the amorality of science, Berton makes a reference to Hiroshima. While on a humanitarian level such a reference is perfectly natural, on a topographical level Berton's remark in a way prefigures his subsequent spatial movement in the Japanese surrounding. In this context, we con-

¹⁸ Ivor Montagu, "Man and Experience: Tarkovsky's World," *Sight and Sound* 42, no. 2 (1973): 94. The same Moscow environment is also suggested by Houston, although immediately after that statement, she proceeds with the localization of Berton's return home as "an extraordinary car drive . . . along what look like the freeways of Tokyo" (Houston, "Festivals 1972," 155).

¹⁹ Andrei Tarkovsky, *Time within Time: The Diaries, 1970–1986*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (Calcutta, 1991), 43–44.

²⁰ Curiously, Tarkovsky kept this international approach even on the level of cast selection: along with his Russian choices (Solonitsyn, Grin'ko, Bondarchuk), he invited two prominent representatives of the Baltic school (Banionis, Iarvet) and the Armenian actor Sarkisian. His initial intention for the role of Hari was Swedish actress Bibi Anderson (Tarkovsky, *Time within Time*, 5, 9, 13).

sider the episode of Berton's return as a signifier of the non-nationalistic essence of Tarkovsky's ideological paradigm in *Solaris*. Perhaps the tendency toward such clear-cut "hyperuniversalization" of the futuristic reality and avoidance of national/religious identification account for Tarkovsky's evaluation of *Solaris* as his weakest film.²¹

INTERTEXTUAL PLANES IN *SOLARIS*

The basic component which sets Tarkovsky's film apart from Lem's novel is its intertextual structure, outreaching in a multitude of directions. Lem's novel already introduces a kaleidoscope of both real-life and fictional scientists and their theories, inquiries, and achievements. In addition, Lem uses the names of universal cultural symbols to label objects and phenomena which justifiably exist in the science-fiction genre. Thus, Kelvin arrives at the Station on the spaceship *Prometheus* and later recalls another one called *Laokoon*, evoking corresponding associations with two prominent characters of Greek mythology, the latter also referring us to Lessing's treatise; one of the key books for unravelling the mystery of *Solaris* is entitled *The Little Apocrypha*. What we find in its germinating phase in the novel is brought to full fruition by Tarkovsky in the film.

One of the basic issues developed by Lem concerns the role of modern science and the limits of scientific quests, but Tarkovsky plays down this theme. The director's effort to show the human side of his characters prompts him to give up special visual effects and sophisticated machinery. Yet he preserves the tokens marking the professional characterization of astronauts and space investigators. For example, during the conversation with Berton, Kelvin watches a videotape of Berton's press conference following his trip to *Solaris*. In this black-and-white tape—which, being connected with scientific questions, is visually juxtaposed to the color in the rest of the film—Berton is shown delivering his report against the background portraits of Konstantin Ziolkovskii, Iurii Gagarin, and John Glenn. Except for the earlier reference to Hiroshima, these are perhaps the only direct references to science in the film. From there on, the dominant referential sphere addressed is that of culture.

The intertextual leitmotif is activated at the very beginning of the film by the utilization of Bach's Choral Prelude in F minor as the musical accompaniment to the film's credits. *Solaris* establishes the trend in Tarkovsky's subsequent creative activity to combine classical music with an original score. This film marks the beginning of Tarkovsky's collaboration with Eduard Artemiev, one of the few Soviet composers at the time able to compose electronic music with the help of a synthesizer. In both *Solaris* and *Stalker*, the combination of electronic and classical music establishes a meaningful dichotomy.²² Artemiev's modern score naturally blends in the overall fu-

²¹ Hoberman, "Introduction," 14.

²² Compare the interplay of Artemiev's score with Bach, Purcell, and Pergolesi in *Mirror*. A similar implementation of classical pieces such as Verdi's Requiem and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, in particular the "Ode to Joy" ("Freude, schöner Götterfunken") is present in *Nostalghia*. It is significant to note that the exploitation of the classical pieces underscores key, climactic episodes in Tarkovsky's films (see also Johnson and Petrie, *Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, esp. 198–201). Thus, the Bach choir serves as a sound background for the scene of conception in *Mirror*; the "Ode to Joy" accompanies Domenico's self-immolation in *Nostalghia*. Notably, F. Coppola uses the same device in *Apocalypse Now* (1979): he pre-

uristic setting of *Solaris*, while Bach's classical music positions the film within the framework of world culture.

The most capacious intertextual space in *Solaris* is the one connected with literature and philosophy. Snaut is the individual around whom this space is gradually constructed. He, more than any of the other characters, actualizes the names of prominent personalities from the history of the human mind. He integrates the participants of *Solaris* into a global cultural framework by his allusive references to well-known writers and their characters. On the level of plot, Snaut invites the other protagonists to celebrate his birthday in a "literary" environment—the interiors of the Gothic-like library. Notably, this occurrence is entirely absent from the novel, where the science-fiction milieu is never disrupted by the drastic inclusion of a different chronotope.

The first meaningfully charged name brought up is that of Martin Luther. Snaut recollects the classic scene with the ink pot. The significance of Luther being mentioned can be approached from two directions. On one hand, he embodies the theme of overcoming the devil. This issue is relevant both within the ideological framework of the film and in the context of the sequence of events. At the station the human protagonists enter into direct physical contact with enigmatic phenomena, which, realistically/scientifically speaking, defy explanation. During the course of the film the three men try to rid themselves of these physical/visual contacts, which are instigated as much from the outside—*Solaris*—as from the inside—their memories and conscience. The forceful attempts by the scientists to destroy their apparitions correlate in essence with Luther's primitive, but vigorous, device for deliverance from the devil. On the other hand, Luther's figure symbolizes the possibility of establishing one's own individual religion. For Tarkovsky, who, following Dostoevsky, saw in religion not an organized institution but an inner illuminative faith, the creation of a Protestant (Protesting?) belief is of extreme significance. In *Solaris*, the quest for a personal belief is pursued unburdened by the institutional particularities of the different churches, as is the case in *Andrei Rublev* (the conflict of Eastern Orthodox versus pagan) and in *Nostalghia* (the interaction between Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism). *Solaris* raises the theme of religious devoutness to the universal level of the coexistence/struggle between Good and Evil.

The next prominent intercultural theme is Faustian. In the film, Faust is not juxtaposed to Mephistopheles; moreover, the only character on the station who could

sents the attack and destruction of a Viet Cong hamlet by American helicopters to the accompaniment of Wagner's "The Ride of the Valkyrie." Dealing with similar philosophical issues, Coppola exploits poetical techniques for the creation of an intertextual dimension, which are also typical of Tarkovsky. Thus, at the end of *Apocalypse Now*, Kurtz (Marlon Brando) is surrounded by cult books: John Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Jesse Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* (on *Apocalypse Now* see Roumiana Deltcheva, "Destination Classified: On the Transformation of Spatial Form in Applying the Narrative Text to Film [The Case of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*]," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* 23, no. 3 [1996]). In *Mirror*, a Leonardo da Vinci folio is presented; in *Solaris*, Snaut leafs through an old edition of *Don Quixote* with illustrations by Gustave Dore. Both directors make their characters recite metaphysical poetry: Kurtz recites sections from T. S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men*; the Stalker (Aleksandr Kaidanovskii) recites a poem by Arsenii Tarkovsky.

play the role of Mephistopheles—Sartorius—is referred to as Faust by Snaut. This intertextual reference is already present in Lem’s narrative: in a raging alcoholic fit, Snaut defines Sartorius’s essence by an extended comparison with Faust.

You believe in the mission of mankind, don’t you, Kelvin? . . . Just don’t go to the lab, if you don’t want to lose your faith. It belongs to Sartorius—Faust in reverse . . . he’s looking for a cure for immortality! He is the last knight of the Holy Contact, the man we need. His latest discovery is pretty good too . . . prolonged dying. Not bad, eh? *Agonia perpetua*. . . He wants to punish this ocean, hear it screaming out of all its mountains at once. . . . But he’s only afraid of the little hat. He won’t let anybody see the little hat, he won’t dare, not Faust.²³

Tarkovsky takes up the Faustian legend and, in the process of its screen implementation, completely inverts it. He does not exploit the idea of the contract with the devil but, rather, the goal of this contract—the quest for immortality. On the station, Sartorius is the only figure who behaves as an actively practicing scientist. Snaut, in turn, is shown as a philosophizing idle man; Kelvin, instead of completing his mission, is too preoccupied with Hari and his feelings for her, ultimately turning “a scientific problem into a bedroom farce.”²⁴ Sartorius is looking for a formula against immortality; his ultimate goal is to eliminate the possibility for the regeneration of memory. In other words, Sartorius is looking for possible ways physically to influence the mental process. In a way, he is searching for the elixir that in a Faustian context would control eternal youth. While Kelvin and Snaut remain on the level of meditation concerning the essence of science in relation to humankind, Sartorius is the only one who attempts to manipulate science for his goals.

The theme of immortality/youth is adjacent to the issue of the idealization and idolization of childhood, which permeates Tarkovsky’s creative activity, starting from *The Steamroller and the Violin* (*Katok i skripka*, 1960) and *Ivan’s Childhood*. In *Solaris*, Sartorius is the only active personage whose “visitor” is a child, although of a strange sort. Gibarian and Kris are haunted by women. With regard to Snaut, both the verbal narrative and the film remain equally ambiguous as to who exactly visits him. The hint of a child’s presence in Sartorius’s laboratory is already suggested in the novel during Kelvin’s first visit there and his awareness of light tiptoeing behind the door (“a succession of little short footsteps . . . the rapid drumming of a pair of tiny feet”).²⁵ The single glimpse in the film of the creature living with Sartorius suggests either a child or a dwarf.

The motif of the strange/abnormal child is introduced in the film as early as Berton’s press conference. He tells of a “large child, about four meters tall, with

²³ Stanislaw Lem, *Solaris*, trans. Joanna Kilmartin and Steve Cox (New York, 1970), 183–84.

²⁴ Willis, *Horror and Science Fiction Films II*, 359. The separation of physical versus spiritual on the level of the characters underscores both the novel and the film. While Sartorius does not once deviate from his role as the great experimenter, Snaut and Kelvin are presented as men of the soul. To reinforce the distinction between Sartorius and Snaut and Kelvin, Lem incorporates Snaut’s long philosophical monologue expressing skepticism about the human’s fitness to be a leading force in the pursuits of science (Lem, *Solaris*, 71–73). Tarkovsky addresses universal spirituality through Kris’s question to Snaut: “Do you remember Tolstoy and his incapability to love humankind in general?”

²⁵ Lem, *Solaris*, 42.

blue eyes and black hair, naked," floating upon the ocean. Thus, the appearance of the child on the Station is preset in the earlier, "earthly" section of the film. Transposed to the station, the image of the child bifurcates in terms of its manifestations with respect to Gibarian and Sartorius. In their essence, both Gibarian and Sartorius have the same objective—mastering the non-cognizable. Once this is achieved, the physical formation of morally determined creatures becomes possible. Yet at a certain point Gibarian understands the futility of such a goal and realizes that science requires a moral responsibility. His suicide is justified by this awareness. That is why he is surrounded in his last videotape by purely human markers: a family environment characterized by the presence of a wife-like figure and a child.

Conversely, the child in Sartorius's room possesses untypical, abnormal features. It is difficult to determine either its age or sex. In a way, Sartorius's child presents a perverted treatment of the theme of childhood. Hence, the subsequent distinction in the film between Dostoevsky and *dostoevshchina* is introduced specifically by Sartorius, who qualifies all the events happening on the station as *dostoevshchina*.²⁶ In this sense, Sartorius simultaneously becomes the bearer of the Faustian quest for immortality—which in Tarkovsky's value system coincides with the struggle for the unachievable—and the embodiment of *dostoevshchina*—the perverted apprehension of childhood in terms of Freudian overtones.

At the same time, Gibarian and Kelvin are presented as bearers of the true Dostoevskian quality. In some respects, Gibarian's suicide can be correlated to Svidrigailov's shooting himself after his realization that he has obtained access to the forbidden and impossible.²⁷ In connection with Gibarian's suicide, Kris says, "Gibarian died of shame," and then defines shame as "the feeling which will save humanity." Kris's words enter into a dialogic relationship with Dostoevsky's formula that "Beauty will save the world." The question of innocence and shame, and the initial state of beauty are already present with regard to Kelvin himself. The only thing he takes with him to *Solaris* is the reel "with the campfire on the snow," depicting a scene from his childhood in which he is lighting up a fire on a hill during a chilly winter day. By bringing together Faust and Dostoevsky, Tarkovsky constructs his specific framework for the treatment of the theme of childhood. His interest in the issue is further validated by his widely manifested intention to film *The Idiot* in the 1970s.²⁸ Taking this unfulfilled project into consideration, the connection with Cervantes via Dostoevsky, particularly *The Idiot*, becomes more than logical.²⁹

²⁶ Significantly, Sartorius' verbal discourse about *dostoevshchina* coincides with his dropping of his spectacles and the ensuing long fidgeting to fix one of his lenses which has fallen out of the frame. His actions explicate his character: he is the unrelenting searcher who tries to "see" into things, in order to understand their essence and justification for existence. Conversely, Snaut—the anti-searcher and "anti-Faust" (to use Joseph Brodsky's term)—falls into a drunken stupor, totally dimming his apparatus for visual perception.

²⁷ During the shooting of *Solaris*, Tarkovsky took out excerpts from Dostoevsky's notebooks (including his remarks on Svidrigailov) illustrating Dostoevsky's negative attitude to "the supreme idea of socialism," which he understood as mere machinery. Tarkovsky implements Dostoevsky's words into his own critique against Sartorius's mechanical searches and his favorable approach to the sensitive and romantic Kelvin and Gibarian (Tarkovsky, *Time within Time*, 36).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 68–69, 72, 82, 90, 92–93, 106, 109, 111, 114–15, 371–77.

²⁹ See *The Idiot*, pt. 2, chaps. 1, 6.

The reference to *Don Quixote* is introduced in the chivalric interiors of the station's library during the celebration of Snaut's birthday. The host quotes Sancho's famous monologue about dreams, while leafing through the folio.³⁰ The reference to this particular section from the world's literary heritage emphasizes one of the main issues of *Solaris*: the borderline between reality and illusion. In this respect, *Don Quixote*, with its protagonist's constant vacillation between his fantasies and the prosaic real state of affairs in the world, perfectly corresponds to the philosophical issue of Lem's novel and Tarkovsky's film. The clash between reality and illusion is presented through the prism of the dream. The state of sleeping and dreaming acquires major significance in *Solaris*. The mysterious *simulacra* which visit the humans originally appear to them while they are sleeping. This choice for their materialization immediately raises the question of their status as material products of the sentient ocean or ideal creations of the protagonists' minds. The impossibility of a finalized solution to this issue structures the ambiguous ambiance pervading the film.

In terms of the plotline, the referral to Cervantes's novel is justified by the theme of the *belle-dame* and her phantasmal nature. One of the main problems that Kelvin must solve on a personal level is to determine the essence of his perception of the Hari who appears on the Station. The process of Hari's "humanization" in the course of the story is parallel to the process tracing Kelvin's change in his apprehension of her. From an indestructible Phi-creature, Hari in the end acquires flesh-and-blood qualities which, ultimately, underlie her mortality and final "death." This metamorphosis, within Tarkovsky's personal ideology, is significant not in terms of the physical aspects of the shift—that is, the physical contact—but in terms of the gradual increase in the degree of Hari's tangible perceptibility. This tangibility necessarily encompasses all senses: visual, tactile, olfactory, aural. The visual and the aural strike through the whole film: the director plays on a leitmotif of a recurrent image of the human ear as a symbol of communication, and, on the visual level, he exploits the transition among different planes of visual representation: documentary, photographs, drawings, and paintings.

Tarkovsky's obvious orientation and emphasis on the visual arts manifests itself even before *Solaris*. In *Ivan's Childhood*, he utilizes parallel montage of climactic scenes intercut with Dürer's engravings, specifically "The Apocalypse." In *Andrei Rublev*, he centers his work around a performer of a sacred form of visual representation—an iconographer.³¹ In *Solaris*, the disturbed figure of the searching artist bi-

³⁰ See *Don Quixote*, pt. 2, chap. 68.

³¹ We would like to point out that Anatolii Solonitsyn, who plays Andrei Rublev, is given the role of the cynical and amoral Sartorius in *Solaris*. Solonitsyn's third major part in Tarkovsky's films was as the writer in *Stalker*. In terms of the creative nature of his work, the writer should be closer in spirit to Rublev; yet in terms of his personality he is no less cynical and bitter than Sartorius. Here, one can identify Tarkovsky's implicitly critical attitude to the figure of the artist. This idea is strengthened by Tarkovsky's exploitation of actor Nikolai Grin'ko in his films. In *Andrei Rublev*, Grin'ko plays the historical Danila Chernyi (Daniel the Black)—Rublev's teacher. He is merely a contemplator, a kind of a spiritual father to Andrei, not interested in original quests, only in the truthful representation of outer and inner reality. He teaches Andrei to be more "natural" and, hence, more "objectively idealistic." The role of Danila Chernyi is a logical follow-up to Grin'ko's first role in a Tarkovsky film as Colonel Griaznov in *Ivan's Childhood*—the mature, kindly officer who becomes a surrogate father for the orphan Ivan (Nikolai

furcates into Sartorius's maniacal endeavors and Kelvin's seeking persona. The inclusion of an icon replica of Rublev's Holy Trinity fresco in Kelvin's station cabin underlines the connection between Rublev and Kelvin. The continuity in terms of the significance of visual art is sustained by the substitution of the semi-anonymous Russian fresco by two clearly identifiable, more cosmopolitan artists—Brueghel and Rembrandt.

Brueghel's "The Hunters in the Snow" (1565) is presented as a natural continuation of the reel which contains impregnated images of Kelvin's youth. The painting itself contains the detail of a young boy building a campfire, stressing the elemental link of the human to his natural environment. Apart from the aesthetic aspect of the painting—Brueghel was an artist who really appealed to Tarkovsky—"The Hunters in the Snow" objectively corresponds to the underlying problematics of *Solaris*.³² In fact, the painting concisely displays all relevant elements of the film plot. We are shown the coldness of the alien world, all frozen in snow; yet, the hunters are nevertheless relentless in their quest for the unknown and intangible; the only "warming" presence is that of the child in the lower left corner, as a signifier of the earthly, known, and homely. In this respect, Kelvin, who brings the tape to the station, actually brings warmth, coziness, and innocence to the coldness and impersonality of the alien outer space. Through direct montage, Brueghel is so organically integrated into the film's content that he becomes an inseparable part of its essence, his creation is inscribed in the cosmic quest of the film. The segments of Kelvin's film are glued to the shots of "The Hunters" to create the impression that the boy Kelvin, after his last glance at the camera, transcends from the documentary into the canvas.

Exploiting the possibilities of the science-fiction genre and the ambiguous indeterminacy of the setting in *Solaris*, Tarkovsky fully implements Brueghel's distinctive artistic technique (as embodied in "Netherlandish Proverbs" [1559]) to present a unified idea by means of a multitude of atomistically structured units. In the context of diverse destinies which meet, intersect, and clash on *Solaris*, Tarkovsky builds up a mosaic of experiences which mirrors Brueghel's polyphonic structures. These Brueghelian configurations represent multiplying personal worlds and consciousnesses, which are unified only by their coexistence in time and space; that is, by their common chronotope. In "The Census at Bethlehem" (1566), Brueghel integrates Jesus's cradle in a collage of segments depicting life's routines. Unlike in

Burliaev). In *Solaris*, Grin'ko plays Kelvin's biological father; in this choice, Tarkovsky exploits the actor's uncanny similarity in physical appearance to his own father, Arsenii. In *Stalker*, Grin'ko reappears impersonating the scientist. Unlike Sartorius, however, his scientist is kinder, more human and benevolent. By the recurrent inclusion of Solonitsyn and Grin'ko in his films, Tarkovsky establishes and sustains the juxtaposition between the father figure as a symbol of wisdom, tranquillity, and blending with nature, and the figure of the ever-searching, disturbed, and detached scientist who wants to break away from his earthly bond. This juxtaposition, being carried out by concrete actors, is primarily anchored in the visual manifestation of their essence, given to them by the director.

³² See Johnson and Petrie, *Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, 108, 110, 251–53. See also Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky*, 56, 89–92, who claims that Brueghel's painting "would seem to be Hari's substitute for personal acquaintance with the Earth" and, at the same time, "could serve as a pattern for the sense of space in Tarkovsky's films" (p. 92). Curiously, the two times Turovskaya refers to "The Hunters in the Snow," she erroneously calls it "Winter Morning" (pp. 56, 92).

Andrei Rublev and *Stalker*, in *Solaris* the issue of the divine disperses into the wider, universal context of morality and conscience.

In *Andrei Rublev*, on both the level of the visual and the level of montage, the idea of god and the divine are isolated from the social-historical situation. Rublev's paintings are presented as separate shots, without direct integration into the environment; furthermore, they are the only segments in the film, besides the cathartic horses at the river, rendered in color. The Golgotha procession is introduced as a separate story-within-the-story episode, without strict linkage to the plot.³³ In *Stalker*, there is a juxtaposition between the home and the mysterious spaces of the Zone. Yet the Stalker feels "at home" not in his family house, but only in the Zone. The Room, where the visitors can find the divine, is located at the heart of the Zone, and the Stalker is the only person who knows the way there. Through this spatial delineation of the Room, Tarkovsky establishes a clear-cut borderline between the divine and the earthly world. In *Solaris*, the Station is not home for Kelvin, in spite of the possibility for revival of his past and physical contact with the impossible. For Kelvin, the divine is encountered on Earth, somewhere among the perennial groves and the rustic homes, dispersed in a Brueghelian kaleidoscope.

The second major influence on Tarkovsky from painting is Rembrandt. Yet while Brueghel's art is directly incorporated in the film narrative, Rembrandt is indirectly evoked by the enactment of the cathartic and programmatic "Return of the Prodigal Son" (1669), performed by Kelvin and his father. This enactment sustains Tarkovsky's conception of the unbreakable link between life and art. Here, the director transgresses the technical device of mere montage. He carries the integration further by the absolute blending of earthly and art(ificial) reality. Moreover, this process depicts life and art in their mutual interaction. *Solaris* deals with the issue of the impossibility of establishing a true borderline between life and art and, more widely, between the material/physical and the nonmaterial/ideal.

Tarkovsky's name always evokes the notion of a unique artistic individuality. For him, the essence of the creative process and the subsequent results should bear the imprints of originality and novelty, displaying the director's artistic imagination and personal ideology, unrestricted by the petrified structures of an existing cultural artifact. He writes:

Clearly the hardest thing for the working artist is to create his own conception and follow it, unafraid of the strictures it imposes, however, rigid these may be. . . . I see it as the clearest evidence of genius when an artist follows his conception, his idea, his principle, so unswervingly that he has this truth of his constantly in his control, never letting go of it even for the sake of his own enjoyment of his work.³⁴

³³ Mentioning Golgotha evokes Brueghel's "The Procession to Calvary" (1564). The major compositional characteristic of the painting is the blending of Christ carrying his cross with the crowd, so that at first glance he is quite imperceptible. The same technique evolves in Tarkovsky's representation of the divine: from the isolated "close-ups" of God in *Andrei Rublev* to the fragmentary, dispersed presentation of the divine, lost in the universe, in *Solaris*.

³⁴ Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (London, 1986), 76.

In spite of this declaration for total freedom of creation and independence of the Other's thoughts, Tarkovsky nevertheless remains constantly drawn to existing texts. The attraction to the literary heritage is reflected in his very particular creation of an intertextual network within his films. This quality in Tarkovsky's approach to Lem underlies the following observation: "My father [Arsenii Tarkovsky] categorizes *Solaris* not as a film but as something akin to literature. Because of the internal, authorial rhythm, the absence of banal devices and the enormous number of details each with a specific function in the narrative."³⁵ The intertextual planes in *Solaris* are constructed according to the norms governing the same process in literature—by the visual, verbal, and aural evocations of names, titles, and sounds and the respective worlds they actualize by connotation. The intertextual layer of the film automatically widens the field of its perception. The problematics underlying the work acquires a generalizing status, while the poetics employed are elevated from mere visual details structuring the intertextuality of the film to fundamental images of archetypal nature.

THE IMAGE OF THE HOUSE

In *Solaris*, Tarkovsky exploits the basic philosophical issues of Lem's novel, but then modifies them by his ideological and aesthetic systems. As Lem himself complained to the director, the film adaptation "supplanted the tragic conflict inherent in progress with a cyclical, biological idea . . . not to mention the way it reduced the ethical and philosophical conflicts involved to nothing more than the melodrama of a family squabble."³⁶ Tarkovsky substitutes the chronologically progressive development of the plot with the biological cyclicity of the idyllic chronotope. The central image of this chronotope remains the parental house. This image is reworked and interpreted by the director in a particular ideological way.

The *simulacra* which haunt the human protagonists on the station are defined as "nitriño systems"—they do not possess the atomistic structure typical of Earth creatures. The basic issue of *Solaris* focuses on the nature and the influence which these organisms have on the humans as atomistic systems. Throughout the film, Tarkovsky makes it clear that, despite their inner essence, the visitors manifest atomistic qualities and are, hence, perceived as atomistic formations by the humans. For the director, the notion of a nitriño system has a wider content, which is sustained in the progression of the film: the apparition Hari is equalized in terms of significance to art, childhood memories, and human conscience. In principle, this is a horizontal synchronization and leveling of a vertical hierarchy. According to Lem's original concept, Hari is simultaneously an all-powerful independent emanation of the sentient ocean and a secondary product of human conscience and memories. By putting her on equal grounds with art, memories, and conscience, Tarkovsky affirms the non-atomistic, "nitriño" essence of the latter three. In this framework, the shot of Hari's drinking alcohol visually marks the diffusion of the boundaries between atomistic and nitriño realities. When Hari manifests her purely human emotions toward Kris, Tarkovsky actually declares the independence of the human inner world from the

³⁵ Tarkovsky, *Time within Time*, 58.

³⁶ Quoted in Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky*, 53.

outer, physiological aspect. This idea is further pursued by the detail of the chandelier floating in weightlessness. The chandelier belongs to the interiors of the library and, in the context of the film, is inseparable from the domain of literature and art. This symbolic synecdoche visually demonstrates the nonmaterial, antiphysiological, “weightless” essence of art.

Tarkovsky consistently builds up the idea of the common origin of Hari and art as products of baffling unconscious processes in the human psyche and imagination. Hari is the “material” bearer of the past and, at the same time, the instrument for establishing an achronic contact with it, that is, actualizing it into the present. This actualization imbues the memories with an eternal, ever-present essence. On the Station, Hari carries out the same act the earthly Hari performs: she commits suicide. Yet instead of a lethal injection, the second Hari opts for drinking liquid oxygen. One can view the particular manner of suicide as symbolic, since the effect of liquid oxygen is not one of immediate destruction, but, rather, of deep-freezing the body. This state is very significant in the total context of Tarkovsky’s film, which plays on the juxtaposition of cold *versus* warm. Hari’s frozen condition, however, is only temporary. Her nitrino origin eventually allows her to regenerate and, implicitly, to “become warm” again.

Having established Hari’s bond with human art, memory, and conscience, Tarkovsky raises her physical metamorphosis to the level of philosophical generalizations concerning art and the individual’s inner world. He visually propounds his view that thought and conscience can remain only temporarily frozen, but that, ultimately, they are warmed up and regenerated. This revival can be achieved with the help of memories and contact with art. The idea is reinforced in the *mis-en-abyme* exploitation of Brueghel’s “Hunters,” in which precisely the child is depicted standing by the campfire—the only “warm” detail presented in the cold winter landscape. The phenomenon of regeneration/warming-up is justified by the nonatomistic nature of the Visitors on Solaris; yet each time they reappear they cause the humans—who struggle to destroy their dependence on their memories and conscience—to fall into a state of terror and depression. Snaut confesses: “I still can’t get used to all these resurrections.”

The primary image which Tarkovsky connects to the concept of warmth is the house. In his dream on the station, Kelvin sees his mother transposed from her earthly environment into the cosmic setting. Her appearance immediately evokes the idyllic chronotope of the parental house. This domestic dimension is emphasized by the presence of Kris’s dog from childhood and other details from the homely interiors: the twigs in the vase on the windowsill, the water jug, the basin. Besides this topoi transformation of Kelvin’s quarters into a private room, there is a parallel chronic alteration: while Kris is talking with his mother, there is a sound from the grandfather’s clock, and his mother is heard saying, “It’s slow again. I’ll go and set it right.” Within the boundaries of the idyllic chronotope of the house, Kris himself acquires qualities of a nitrino nature. When Kris hurts his arm, his mother washes away the blood with the water from the jug. In the course of her healing actions, Kelvin’s wound gradually disappears, mirroring the regeneration of Hari’s terribly wounded hand in an earlier scene. Thus, Tarkovsky brings together the motif of the house with the motif of the reviving power of memories and conscience.

Toward the end of the film Snaut admonishes: "Remember the myth of Sisyphus." It is an awareness expressing the director's views that any attempt by the scientists to master the ocean of *Solaris* is futile. The only viable locus for the human is the home, symbolized by the visual image of the house. For Tarkovsky, the house is not an object for cognition or mastering; it is the container of the primeval, initial state of humankind. To leave the house on any quest presupposes the posing and resolving of a set of issues and problems. That is why the mission on *Solaris* can end either in success or in failure; in other words, why we have an established binary paradigm. This binarism determines the oscillating human existence between two extremes and the rejection of a state of equilibrium. The house, on the other hand, is perceived as a place where no questions concerning the essence of being are asked; rather, being simply *is*, life is lived, not mastered.

One of the last shots on Earth, before Kelvin's trip to the station, is a close-up of a campfire consuming the blueprints of a house. The shot can be treated as symbolizing the elimination of the materialistic/atomistic nature of the house as a consequence of construction. Tarkovsky elevates the image of the house to the ideological register of his film. Its generalizing meaning is revealed in the final shots of *Solaris*. The end resembles another final shot with a house—the conclusion of *Nostalghia*. In that film, Tarkovsky places a typical Russian house in an Italian environment. The national juxtaposition is further stressed by the incorporation of a religious component: the house is surrounded by an Italian cathedral.

The end of *Solaris* lacks such a strict visual antithesis. The image of the house is presented as a generalized symbol devoid of national markers, as a universal mediator through which the outer world is apprehended.³⁷ The final scene is a reenactment of a Biblical plot: the prodigal Kelvin is on his knees before his father at the threshold of his parental house. The shot is structured as locating the exact disposition of the house in Tarkovsky's ideological universe: gradually moving the camera away from the house and up into the sky, he shapes the estate as one of the *mimoids* floating in the *Solaris* ocean. This shot refers us back to Berton's vision of the giant child carried on *Solaris*. In Tarkovsky's ideological framework, the island of the final scenes integrates the major issues dispersed throughout the film: the innocent state of childhood unawareness and the immediate naturalness of unconscious artistic discourse.

Solaris is the first film in Tarkovsky's artistic production to take up and play on the image of the house. The motifs of childhood and the quest of the searching personality which dominate *Ivan's Childhood* and *Andrei Rublev* find their material concentration in the introduction of the theme of the house in *Solaris*. This becomes a key image in all Tarkovsky's subsequent films. An encompassing glance at Tarkovsky's legacy allows us to trace the director's path from the construction of the house in *Solaris* to its destruction in *The Sacrifice*. No doubt, the burning of the house in the finale of his last film is the ultimate pictorial decoding of its title.

³⁷For a detailed analysis of the technical aspects in the activation of the house as a key image in film see Deltcheva and Vlasov, "Back to the House."