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Sculpting the End of Time: The Anamorphosis of History and Memory in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975)

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See table of contents

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Article abstract

Articulating a materialist conception of rhythm and temporality in the medium of film, this paper seeks to explore the way in which Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975) is *constituted* by the alternation of explosions and implosions of historical time-images. The author makes a detailed analysis of several sequences of the film in order to lend support to the central argument: that spectators are taken "out of time" through an *anamorphic* experience of death in the material contact transmitted by a spectral dimension of history and memory. This argument allows political considerations regarding the mediation of social memory and mourning and also epistemological considerations regarding the critique of traditional historiography and the literary bias of narrative storytelling.

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RÉSUMÉ

Sur la base d'une conception matérialiste du rythme et de la temporalité du cinéma, cet article s'attache à explorer la manière dont le film *Le Miroir* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1975) est *constitué* par l'alternance d'explosions et d'implosions d'images-temps historiques. L'auteur fait une analyse détaillée de plusieurs séquences du film, afin d'étayer une thèse principale selon laquelle les spectateurs sont conduits « hors du temps » à travers une expérience *anamorphique* de la mort transmise par un contact matériel avec une dimension spectrale de l'histoire et de la mémoire. Cette thèse permet des considérations d'ordre politique concernant le travail social de la mémoire et du deuil, et des considérations d'ordre épistémologique concernant la critique de l'historiographie traditionnelle et la tendance littéraire de toute activité narrative.

ABSTRACT

Articulating a materialist conception of rhythm and temporality in the medium of film, this paper seeks to explore the way in which Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975) is *constituted* by the alternation of explosions and implosions of historical time-images. The author makes a detailed analysis of several sequences of the film in order to lend support to the central argument: that spectators are taken "out of time" through an

anamorphic experience of death in the material contact transmitted by a spectral dimension of history and memory. This argument allows political considerations regarding the mediation of social memory and mourning and also epistemological considerations regarding the critique of traditional historiography and the literary bias of narrative storytelling.

Sculpting Out of Time

> I think that what a person normally goes to the cinema for is *time*; for time lost or spent or not yet had. He goes there for living experience; for cinema, like no other art, widens, enhances and concentrates a person's experience—and not only enhances it but makes it longer, significantly longer (Tarkovsky 1986, p. 69).
>
> For many years I have been tormented by the certainty that the most extraordinary discoveries await us in the sphere of Time. We know less about time than about anything else (Tarkovsky 1994, p. 53).

Andrei Tarkovsky's semiautobiographical film *Zerkalo*, or *Mirror* (1975), projects such tormented certainties and extraordinary discoveries, recording the coming to consciousness of a change in the universe created by the cinema, a change in the conception and experience of time. According to Tarkovsky (1986, pp. 83-84), this is what really astounds audiences and turns them into passionate admirers of films like *Mirror*: the development of this cinematic technology has "revealed hitherto unexplored areas of reality."

At three separate moments in the argument of his book of reflections on the cinema, *Sculpting in Time*, Tarkovsky (1986, pp. 63, 82-83, 179) allows himself room to comment upon the modern spectator's searching need for "time lost or spent, or not yet had." Each time Tarkovsky implicitly invokes the redemptive power of the cinema as that which compels cinema goers to compensate for the gaps of modern experience. Tarkovsky (1986, p. 179) makes it clear that the degree to which this "lost time" is restored and restorative depends a great deal on the dimension of humanity and spirituality in the director who then vicariously

shares it, condenses it, and sculpts it in the uncompromisingly affective images of time printed on film. While this redemptive theory of time compensation in cinema seems to be argued consistently, it is fundamentally at odds with Tarkovsky's materialist conception of rhythm and its relationship to the dynamic currents, pressures, and traces of life in film as I have argued elsewhere.[1]

Moreover, the "search for time lost, spent, or not yet had," while motivated by the critical impulse to recover from an alienated form of modern subjectivity, only exacerbates the crisis of losing, spending and not yet having time. Even Tarkovsky is finally forced to admit that the rhythms of the time machine of cinema undeniably belong to the rhythms of modern life and their inevitable "time deficiency." In other words, we are always "out of time" even in the halls of the cinema, for the attempt to make up for time lost is itself already determined by the position of always spending time in order to gain it again. Moreover, this loss of the present, which is felt as nostalgia for what already was and can never return again, paradoxically produces another level of nostalgia for something that remains in a state of anticipated desire in a future endlessly deferred, a nostalgia for that which is not yet had. Paradoxically then, the cinema "produces nostalgia" even as it holds out the promise of recovering from the "spiritual vacuum" of modern conditions—conditions that have exacerbated the sense of not having a present onto which one might have a hold.[2]

In other words, we are somewhat dispossessed of our being "present" to our perception, memory and experience because we are inserted and disjoined, even in the passing present, into the continuous clash of an infinite future and past.[3] This insertion and dislocation in the passing-splitting of the present, however, is mediated by the virtual-actual economy of the image. In Bergsonian and Deleuzian terms, Tarkovsky's films, especially *Mirror*, explore and embody this "passing" of time as a kind of mobile mirror in which perception and recollection endlessly pass into one another in the medium or milieu of the time-image.[4]

For these reasons, what Tarkovsky calls a "time deficiency" is also a possibility for a different mode of being and belonging *in*

time and also, *out of* time. To be "out of time"[5] implies an acute lack of time and this produces the desire to measure, compress and accelerate the moments in which time is lived. However, to be "out of time" also implies an intense longing for suspension, for timeless drift, for remaining motionless. This patience, paralysis, or suspension of judgement may itself engender a new ability to live in the phases of time. When boredom or mild suffering exposes us to the immediacy or drift[6] of time and the sense of our own mortality is brought forward, the expansion or contraction of temporal experience allows something new to emerge: a moment of contact with otherness, words with which to speak, or a silent openness to the unknown. Finally, to be "out of time" is to let oneself experience, in an especially visceral way, the lure of the end of time; to allow the temporal extension and concentration of the viewing experience to open onto the explosive passage of catastrophe itself; to reach the limit or threshold of temporal experience in the epoch ending moment of disaster.

In *Mirror*, this lure of accessing the end of time is presented in the most banal and creative ways. For example, just after the child of the narrator, Ignat, has been visited by two mysterious guests and is asked to recite a fragment of Pushkin's letter to Chaadayev regarding the Christian destiny of Russia, we witness the passing of the extraordinary in even the most domestic of shots: in the obsessive attention given to recording the disappearance of a humid ring of vapour left by a cup of tea. As the camera cuts to a close-up of the vanishing ring, the electronic track of choral music rises in intensity. The voices of the low chant are drawn out, accelerated, and concentrated into the terminal pitch of alarm. This climatic chant suddenly vanishes in the tremendous silence of the gradual dissolution of the humid mark, a silence that is not simply the absence of sound but its very implosion, pregnant and resonating with the momentous memory of the rise of voices. Irrupting and accomplishing itself outside of the material duration of vapour, it seems to pass "out of time."

Paradoxically, the elemental materiality of the cinematographic image which is "sculpted in time" also "sculpts out of

time" because it puts viewers into contact with something else. This disjunction between soundtrack and time-image allows for a new category of perception. Cinema goers stand suspended and gaping before the phenomenality of something so ordinary and yet usually unperceived: the inevitable collapse of material being in time, a collapse marked and inscribed with the weight of disappearance. Just as the heat mark evaporates and shows us something of the eternally fleeting nature of change and mortality, so too the rhythmic gap of the musical reverberation bears more than mere absence of voices but continues to affirm the ontology of their tonal presence in the weight, lifted by the terrible silence, of their echoing memory. Audiovisual technique operates an allegorical inscription in the Benjaminian sense of the term, as allegory is distinguished from symbol:[7] rather than symbolizing the eternal moment, it allows time to seep into and materially inscribe itself in the eternally fleeting nature of the work of art as a fragmented passage, ruin, and reminder of the immanence of death in historical being.

The magical and mysterious aspect of this allegorical inscription of History is made even more tangible since a series of aural and visual correspondences are generated between the "vaporous bodies" materialized on screen throughout the film. This image of the ring of vapour, its *implosive disappearance*, reverberates later and sets the tone for the vision of the found documentary footage inserted into the diegetic environment of the film, recording the *explosive appearance* of the building pressures of the nuclear mushroom cloud rising above Hiroshima. Throughout the shots and sequences of *Mirror*, time breathes like a series of hot respirations and expirations.

However, *Mirror* does not record this change in the experience of time by means of a mere projection of apocalyptic endings nor by means of prophecies of the end of history. In favour of this closing of consciousness, this exemplary film relays to us, through the velocities of modern mass events, the rhythms of the life-world of experience, and the fictions of apocalypse, a visible and mysterious image of ourselves as mutants[8]—of the way we inhabit and are inhabited by conscious and unconscious forces of time and powers of memory and forgetting.

Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, from this perspective, incarnates one of the cinema's ultimate fantasies about time travel in the medium of the cinematographic image. The subject (viewer, director, people in general), endlessly being stripped of the capacity to hold or to fix time, must relinquish this impulse to confer continuity upon existence by becoming inserted within the structure of homogeneous, empty time. The subject must simply *pass time* in time's multiple heterogeneity, experience time as the body must experience its own generation and corruption and *become* that "middleness" or medium/milieu through which time passes and makes its passage, becoming a witness to the traces of time and an assembler of these traces—in their furrows and explosive gaps as well as in their drifting suspensions.[9] In the halls of cinema the time-passer is a contemplative observer who loses time in the middle of a world that materially passes at variable speeds, and this experience of no longer having a time to him/herself is also the experience of the loss or the absence of an absolute temporality. This is the final, and most important, meaning of the "time deficiency."

Perhaps this is why Tarkovsky's films not only enhance, widen, and concentrate the experience of time, but also make the passage of time "significantly longer." Even in films like *Mirror* the 106 minutes of the "actual chronometric time" of film unrolling before spectators eyes seems to outstretch the normal experience of this interval or period of time. Why? Because the multiple registers of rhythmic duration inscribed in the material passage of the film pull spectators hypnotically out of and into the difference of coexisting temporalities, one image after another. This also explains the strange pleasure and difficulty spectators face when leaving the projection of Tarkovsky's films, for they must also "lose the temporalities" of the film to which their thought is already intimately tied in order to "wake up" from that ostentatious contact with the half-awakened state of reverie induced by the film's rhythms. For a "heady" moment, the spectator as time-passer remains suspended between the different orders of temporal experience, this experience never being reducible to one or the other shore but rather in the gulf that opens between each.

This suspension of interest before, during, or after the film does not render the time-passer passively expectant and mute but opens up an active form of attention, creating the potential of becoming "charged with time" (Agacinski 2000, p. 63). No longer having the time of one's own, no longer being able to engage oneself in the temporality of an action, this negative suspension means that the time-passer has lost time in order to be able to open him/herself to the temporal singularity of events, to bear witness to the rhythms of these traces, and to be available to a transformation by these traces. The temporal materiality of film, its rhythm, effects a serial metamorphosis of reality. In the attentive absorption to the alien rhythms of the film we witness the passage of time, from the intensity of its compression to the plasticity of its expansion, and in the inscrutable cipher of pressures of this historical material of duration we relay the radical alterity of this serial-becoming of temporality through which we too must pass.

When the Historical Gaze Becomes an Anamorphic Vision

Tarkovsky's *Mirror* is an implicit critique of historiography from this point of perspective, for the phases of historical time are transmitted outside of their setting and placement within an absolute temporality in the scriptural economy of a chronicle of events. Like many postwar films, *Mirror* demonstrates that when the past, present, and future phases of time are shattered like crystal fragments, the merely chronological continuum of history and memory is transformed into a series of discontinuous and incommensurable intervals. For when time is no longer derived from movement but eccentric and aberrant movement derived from time, then story, memory and experience are fundamentally transformed, mediated by incommensurable intervals and irrational divisions of time.[10]

As the incommensurable and irrational divisions of time "pass" in the rhythmic temporality of film, they bring about a narrative crisis in ways that are already familiar to contemporary film theorists of Postmodern Historiography.[11] Without insisting on the pertinence of placing Tarkovsky's work within this category of film poetics, we may ask how films like Tarkovsky's

Mirror problematize traditional historiography and the literary bias and culture of historical narrative. The following features may be listed in general terms and then applied to *Mirror*:

1) The past is recounted self-reflexively rather than assuming the impersonal, disinterested and objective tone of the scientific historian; *Mirror* is narrated in an autobiographical form that does not simply reconstruct the phases of the lived past but continuously plays with its remembrance in reflexive ways.

2) The traditional order of story and plot is eschewed, the sequence "beginning-middle-end" is reorganized, and a "summing up" of the meaning of the past is implicitly refused, except in a partial, heterogeneous and open-ended manner; *Mirror* does not chronicle the past-present-future narratively, nor make sense of history in terms of the intrigue of an unfolding plot, but deploys a topical itinerary of links and send-offs to recurring places or stations of memory (*lieux de mémoire*).

3) An indulgence in "creative anachronisms" is encouraged, superposing stories and juxtaposing storytellers, exploiting the cinema's potential for repetition and narrative undecidability; *Mirror* confuses temporal orders deliberately by forcing spectators to confront the *unheimlich* phantasmagoria of the medium as a place for the exchange between actual and virtual images, between the imagined and real, through the use of doubles (the same actor playing the child of the narrator and the narrator as a child; the same actress playing the wife of the narrator in the present and the narrator's mother in the past).

4) The normally concealed attitude historians have to their material is foregrounded; irony and melancholy make for the overriding mood of the rhetorical tropes that explicitly organize historical discourse and memory in *Mirror*.

5) Audiovisual fragments and scraps form intermedial "collages" of memory resistant to the totalizing power of prose narratives of history, the conventions of historical time (chronology, progression, completeness), and the scholarly apparatus of footnotes, bibliography, and written sources; *Mirror* projects history as a hallucination made possible by the vision and voice of a "collector" who does not justify and corroborate the accuracy of his discourse, a collector interested in working against the grain

of official history by means of found newsreel footage, traditional painting and lyric-epic poetry.

6) The authority of the medium of historical inscription (codex, parchment, printing) is implicitly called into question; in *Mirror*, history and memory form a kind of rhythmic pulse "sculpted in time" through the medium of cinematography, time emerging outside of or unaffected by written or spoken discourse.

This final observation makes it clear that there is more at stake than the description and distinction of another "poetics of history" made possible by film within the late stages of Modernity. The audiovisual mediation of history is not simply one more representation of historical events among others: it calls into question the epistemological framework of representation itself. The material duration of the time-image and its multiple rhythms, always in a state of becoming, would remove the possibility of any rationalizing or stabilizing logic to manage the multiplicity and speed of temporal experience by which historical events might be chronicled.

Clearly such a perspective on the filmic vision of history is pertinent to the analysis of the rhythmic temporalities of *Mirror*, a film which is structured by the alternation between the multiple rhythms of collective and personal memory and between historical and fictional temporalities. *Mirror* reveals the fundamentally social character of memory, the way in which personal memory and collective memory mutually constitute one another, and it is upon this mutually constituting work of memory that the historical narrative of the film is articulated in all of its complexity.[12] The narrative emplotment of history in *Mirror* makes its appearance in the film in the alternating exchange between the transgenerational story of a broken family (the narrator's son repeating something of the story of the narrator as a boy) which is expanded onto the history of generations of other families (Soviet and Spanish) broken by the events of World War II. This alternating exchange is made intelligible in the complex visual structure of the chronotopes[13] transmitted by the memories of a narrator and other members of his family (1930s, at the dacha; 1940s, events of World War II; 1970s, narrator's apartment). *Mirror* is organized by the elliptical

emboîtement set between two mirrors that, facing each other, reflect the infinite series of exits and entries set between the gaps of three generations of family, between the narrator as a child and the child as a narrator (de Baecque 1989, p. 78). Although such an exchange of memory seems to make *recognizable* at least the semblance of a transhistorical destiny of a people (family/nation), it is itself uncertainly shuffled and "fabulated" between the historical and fictional temporalities of image-crystals.

If these multitemporal sequences are not organized around any clear central Text/Law or eschatological narrative, we may at least say that they carry the burden of the absence of this law. In other words, they do not simply *heretically reject* this mythic-epic Law nor *lose it to memory* but are inscribed in the memory of its loss. A memory of loss already carried by the tropes of XIX century Russian literature (Dostoevsky/Tolstoi/Chekhov/Pushkin) and the prophetic word and utopian/dystopian vision of the poet, Arseny Tarkovsky, the director's father, this memory of loss organizes the intertextual-intermedial *work of memory* in *Mirror*. The religious impulse surging out of Tarkovsky's *Mirror* organizes and transmits this mythic order of truth somewhat diabolically through the absence or loss of the father/Moses figure.

However much *Mirror* models itself on the work of the passage of paternal tradition and the memory of its loss, still it should be emphasized that this work of memory in the film is not a clear transmission of any kind of memory but a passage into its oblivion also, a stammering through the gaps separating coexisting temporalities, the impossibility of reunions, the opacity and difficulty of homecomings. These gaps are narratively imagined in *Mirror* through divorce, misunderstanding, and absence of family relationships (the hyphens separating three generations of father-son, husband-wife, son-mother relations). More, these gaps are rhythmically inscribed in the medium of film, in the difference of time pressures in scenes and between scenes, and in the different charge of historical and fictional temporalities.

Commenting upon the historical ontology of Tarkovsky's time-images and their hallucinatory effects, Youssef Ishaghpour

(1996, p. 75) has observed how "each time *reality* is metamorphosed by the temporality of a gaze that has become a vision."[14] I would argue that this temporal and serial metamorphosis of reality is effected each time the historical reflection of the gaze transforms the hot expiration of time into an anamorphic spectre of death.[15] The anamorphoses produced by Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, then, are not merely discursive reflections of a plurality of contesting ideological positions of History, Counter-History, and Popular Memory. Rather, on the level of the time based medium of film, they effect a serial metamorphosis of historical reality by foregrounding the death spectre in the multiple rhythms of the viewing experience, an experience that makes time visible at the horizon of the end.

The anamorphic effect is significantly mediated by the figure of the orphan rebel who permits the passage from the personal memories of the narrator's childhood to the collective memories of the events of World War II. Afasyev, an orphan boy, having lost his parents in the Leningrad blockade, disobeys the military discipline and commands of his "shell-shocked" instructor to turn about-face or to shoot on target; instead he turns about-face twice and shoots obliquely. Through the rebellious eyes of Afasyev—a figure of disorientation and dislocation—viewers are taken through a series of three separate apocalyptic sequences of war: the hand-grenade prank, the Lake Sivash crossing, and the end of World War II.

Shell-Shock and the Hand-Grenade Prank

After his show of hostile disobedience, Afasyev rises above the platform and rolls his body down the steps, throwing a hand-grenade near the feet of the instructor on the training ground below. Anticipating the blast, the instructor shouts: "Afasyev don't do it! Get down! It'll kill you!" He throws himself and rolls over the top of the grenade. In the absolute silence of the shot, the camera shows a close-up of the hands clasping the grenade for two seconds. Focus-out. Pan back, medium shot. From behind, we see the instructor curled up absolutely still and in foetal position. At the same time, we hear, growing gradually louder and louder, the rhythmic pulse of his heart. In the follow-

ing shot, the perspective is reversed. Crossing back to a position above the instructor, the camera holds the figures of three children in the depth of field and then dips downwards: we see the instructor's skull-like shell-cap, a diaphanous hemisphere turned up like a bowl. As the heartbeat intensifies and throbs irregularly, the camera continues to dip obliquely. The camera pulls the image out of focus as it descends into the dark impenetrable surface of the wooden platform until it moves in vertically above the instructor's head. The beat overheard is now joined with the visual close-up, revealing dimly, the throbbing pulsation coursing to his wounded scalp.

This shot literally takes spectators through the spectre of imminent death, of the anamorphic distortion of the skull, a cinematic derivation of the optical effects of Baroque painting. The anamorphic skull is all the more "real" since its apparition is consumed in sight and sound, by being pulled spatially and pulsed temporally in the screen of the set and in the surgical-magical vision of the camera. The dull, regular and daily temporality of military routine is transformed in this moment into the temporality of the end, the moment of expectant explosion. Finally, Afaseyev announces: "It's a dummy." Afaseyev stands "dumb" because he too understands the vanity of his rebellious prank in the light of the instructor's ultimate gesture of sacrifice.

The Lake Sivash Crossing

After playing the prank of the hand-grenade with the shell-shocked instructor, Afasyev takes his leave and the children march behind him. This brief shot makes the children's march parallel to the newsreel footage of the trudging soldiers crossing Lake Sivash. Literally, an orphan introduces this orphan film archive.[16] As Tarkovsky (1986, pp. 130-131) notes, these soldiers were recorded "in one single event continuously observed" by an extraordinarily gifted cameraman who penetrated the dramatic moment of the Soviet advance through the Crimea in 1943 before dying on the same day. The Lake Sivash sequence is also introduced analogically by recording the step of the children as they are put into a kind of contact with the rhythms of the documentary film. It is from this point of perspective that

the footage is to be seen, since it is enunciated socially by Afasyev and the troop of children he leads: the cut to their rising off the platform demonstrates the way spectators must bridge the gap separating the shot of the children as they rise to take their leave and the shot of the "fall" of their "fathers" in the previous shot. The social practice of the historical imagination in *Mirror* is inseparable from this emblematic eschatology: the visibility and visuality of the scene imposes, in the passive but open attentiveness of spectatorship, an act of the imagination to take on, or pass within, the historical burden implied by the economy of this transition from the orphan children to the lost fathers, a transition that is structured by the "horizon of the end." Yet how does this sequence speak?

Behind the splash of boots we hear the drums and voices from the requiem refrain building and falling. Underscoring the continuous splash of the water, we hear the dim regular beat of the drums of a kind of requiem refrain, itself loosely discontinuous with the splash of water. The disjunction of sounds has the remarkable quality of supporting the irregular rhythm of the men's feet even while it calls attention to, and holds onto, the historical distance between viewers and the bodies on the screen. It creates an aural daze in the viewing experience, one located in the disorientation of the ear to the reality of the image.

In the next series of shots, we witness the traces of a historical event recorded in all of its singularity: the soldiers marching and trudging through the mud along an endless grey horizon, shoring up their strength and attempting to salvage their cannons and equipment on a raft to cross the Lake. The shots of this sequence are recorded like an immense melancholy time-sculpture, but as a "sculpture" they do not commemorate the dead and the absent but bear witness to them in their distance. Although it may be read by some as a witnessing of a kind of heroic sacrifice by and for the people of the Russian nation in a time of the Soviet engagement in World War,[17] I would argue that this sequence does not set viewers in the empty homogeneous time of historiography or the nation-state. In other words, the witnessing does not have the character of a tribute to the "anonymous soldiers" with whom spectators might identify

and commune in the invisible image of the nation-state. Instead, it articulates another temporality—one of profound unmooring—one to which the movement of the raft offers an emblematic parallel.

This audiovisual drift and dislocation permits viewers to pass and become the passage of the historical traces of film, to become witnesses to a time to which they do not belong but which brushes up against them, activating memories and inventing another form of historical consciousness. This is why Tarkovsky (1986, p. 130) claims that he knew upon seeing this "orphan newsreel" for the first time that this episode had to become "the heart and nerve" of a picture that had started off merely as his own "intimate lyrical memories."

How does the voice of the poet speak? The time-monument recedes out of the frame and this time we see two officers moving against the current to encourage the men with the wave of their hands to continue onward and onward. Music and water give way in the insistence of this very gesture to push onwards, to the heraldic voice of the poet, Arseny Tarkovsky, reciting his poem, *Life, Life*. It is significant that the poetic recitation does not chime in from the beginning of the sequence but follows midway and takes its cue from the marching of feet, the irregular splash of water, as well as the dim suspension of the requiem refrain. The oral voice is underscored and lifted by the material rhythms of the world, the marching trod of a generation of living soldiers; more, this rhythmic temporality is the very measure against which the oral voice is registered and transposed. The rhythm of his voice—the historical breath of the body and the imaginary of the poet—dynamically interacts with the step of the soldiers' boots and the gestures and the shadows of the film.

The historical "flesh" of the voice of the poet speaks over the endless horizon of grey earth, water and sky, in prophetic exhortation: "All of us are on the seashore now, and I am one of those who haul the nets when a shoal of immortality comes in. Live in the house—and the house will stand." Nowhere do the words and the images seem to betray and to oppose each other more: the visual traces inscribed by the camera cannot coincide with the strident echoes of Tarkovsky's utopian exhortation to build

the house, yet a powerful dimension of the film is formed out of their incommensurable but complementary relationship. The poetry of this sequence of shots does not consist in the mere recitation of written verse about the meaning of life, a meaning which would symbolically "explain" the sense of the images. The past cannot be saved nor salved by the words of the poet; the word of the poet passes alongside the passage of the past and out of the temporal division of word and sound, secular past and utopian future, perception and shaped expectation, a powerful act of the historical imagination is relayed.

Discussing the material forces of this utopian impulse in films and its effect on spectatorship, D.N. Rodowick (1997, p. 154) argues that this "not yet" of a subject or a people describes a virtuality or potentialization of forces that is "not unlike Ernst Bloch's concept of utopia as *Vorschein* or anticipatory illumination. Utopia is not an unrealisable ideal here. It too is virtual and real as material forces that urge, perhaps unsuccessfully or successfully, an immanent becoming." This is why the poet can make a claim on the "immortality" of the people, not because the people are affirmed in some timeless and essential identity and rescued by the prophetic power of the poet, but because the principle of a people's utopian hope to live together is projected in a kind of "anticipatory illumination" that would invent the future of an emergent people.[18]

The time-machine of the cinema generates this promise even more irresistibly, for however much it mummifies and embalms the presence of bodies in time, it also works to reactivate the immanent becomings of the body of the collective. I would argue that the dynamic historical materiality of these shots and the breathing imaginary of the voice-over bring about the beginnings of a creative utopian position and a social force of energy, for the multiple rhythms and temporal passages of film materially inscribe the not yet and the unknown body of the collective in the furrows and the strata of time.

The End of World War II

In the black and white newsreel images of Prague, Reichsberg and Hiroshima, viewers must pass into the radical alterity and

explosive day and night of the end of World War II. The blast of canons, pointed heavenwards, are illumined in the darkness by the blast of the light of their fire, overheard. Daytime: the speed of the images of the May Day parade in the liberation of Prague do not provide a perception of the celebration of peace, nor are the images underscored by the massive cheer of applause, but by the blast of cannons heard before, and a dissonant alarm of trumpets. Night once again: a split second perception of thin slivers of shooting, hovering, and falling lights, as of fireworks, and a panel of projected light scintillating in the darkness. Bombarding echoes of the soundtrack continue to blast, roar and rip underneath this dazzling impression of beauty and we hear the slammed sound of the bass chords of a piano continue to reverberate and evanesce. Daytime: close-up of the window ledge and the arms of men and a pole, and travelling down the pole we see a dark torn flag waving in the air, signalling German surrender. Close-up, right, of the corpse of Hitler (face and torso) in uniform, a book laying open on the right side of his uniform. As the camera shows an officer kneeling by Hitler's side in the trenches—surrounded by sandbags, and filming him with an early film-camera—trumpets are heard blowing and building a dissonant crescendo, an alarm or warning of bombing. Acoustically, we hear the sky ripping, as a missile tears sound or as a body might take air in too suddenly. Visually, the sequence intensifies the shots of night and day seen before, for they are compounded, compressed, accelerated, and made more powerful: in the showers of light fired heavenward we sense something of the cosmological trance of technology and war.

The dark echoes of a dissonant piano chord are heard as the camera closes in on a photograph of the body of a corpulent man, head bent against the wall of the trenches with his left fist shielding his eyes, one arm propped against the wall of earth and clutching the crutch beneath this elbow. A young boy behind him is looking at him in wonder. The camera pulls out two seconds, in order to impress a sense of duration onto the image and to create a certain habit of attention in its viewing, with no musical accompaniment but only the suspension of silence. Emblematically, the entire film is mirrored in this photographic image

and the attention given to it, in the relay of the gaze, from within the trenches, of the child to the spectacle and the grief of war.

The next shot projects an overhead view of a mushroom-cloud explosion over Hiroshima, mentioned earlier in relation to the vaporous implosion of the teacup. The electric organ music holds a dissonant, echoing chord growing in volume according to the volumetric expansion of the cloud. As the explosion distends in a colossal column of darkness and light, it discloses the surface below: black dots of islands rocked like boats around the surging base of white. Again, organ music gives way to the dark chords of a piano, and the tones of their reverberation.

Cut to Afasyev in the snowscape, a cinematographic recomposition of the tableau by Pieter Breughel the Elder, *The Hunters in the Snow*: facing the camera obliquely, medium shot, his brief gaze seems to contract and to hold this vision of the Hiroshima cloud, not projecting but receiving its rhythmic thrust, as it were, from out of the future. As this scene ends, we see the rebel orphan, after having climbed a snowy hill, introduce other clips of the massive effects of Maoist euphoria; seen in profile perceiving the flight of a small bird, his gaze transforms the temporality of the historical material of the documentary clips into an apocalyptic vision through the intermedial frame of the Breughel-like tableau of the snow scene.

The complexity, ambiguity, and contradictory nature of such a scene, producing as it does a discourse on the production of the temporal experience of history and memory, cannot be underestimated. *Mirror* reveals that to transmit is also to transform this personal experience of rebellious refusal to speak in the name of the absent, a shattering of mirrors refracted in the polemical and abandoned eyes of the child and reoriented as a will to face the dead in all their enigmatic opacity, silence, and irrevocable distance. In other words, there is an ethics-poetics-politics in the tact of this counterhistory. Tarkovsky does not contest official History for the purpose of skirting its authority with playful irreverence like some Dadaist modernist filmmaker; on the contrary, *Mirror* reverently reflects the utopian dimension of this History *negatively* in the anamorphic effects of the

temporal medium of film. This is the importance of understanding the time-passer as a child, an orphan, hostile to instruction. This child is not merely an instance for the enunciation of a counterhistory or vision but a figure of the very dislocation and transformation of time itself. Through the blockade boy spectators are put into contact with a kind of temporal transformation of experience: that through which the noise of time may be heard and the breath of time felt.

Another Sense of an Ending

What happens to the historical memory of catastrophic events when the "sense of an ending," normally consolidated by strategies of narrative representation, can no longer contain the historical material debris of time mediated by audiovisual technologies? This question takes us into the heart of the problem concerning the mediation of the historical event in the multiple rhythms of film. As Walter Benjamin recognized, in what has practically become a commonplace in critical discourse, human experience retreated from the realm of its possible transmission in story due to the acceleration of the explosive forces of technological mediations such as those shocking the human body on the battlefields of World War I.[19] If history can no longer be put into the narrativity of story and, refusing to be mastered, breaks down into images that outstrip the potential structures of human comprehension, then that history, "passing in real time," can only be witnessed in its radical alterity. This is why I would like to argue that Tarkovsky's *Mirror* situates the storyteller somewhere between the affirmations made by Walter Benjamin and Osip Mandelstam:

> The storyteller: he is the man who could let the wick of his life be consumed completely by the gentle flame of his story (Benjamin 1968, pp. 108-109).
>
> My desire is to speak not about myself but to track down the age, the noise and the germination of time… Over my head and over the head of many of my contemporaries there hangs congenital tongue-tie. We were not taught to speak but to babble—and only by listening to the swelling noise of the time and the bleached foam on the crest of its wave did we acquire a language (Mandelstam 1965, p. 77).

For Benjamin, the storyteller was traditionally a guardian of culture, a transmitter of counsel and wisdom, a craftsman of an intergenerational memory that "would consume" his own life as it gently handled the wick of a story begun before himself. For Mandelstam, this role of the storyteller is reversed in modern life, for the storyteller is a dislocated orphan of the archive tradition of family, a listener of forgetting not a teller of memory, a forgetting that is the fragmented, incomplete, and inchoate "noise of time" and temporal rupture, a forgetting that breaks the continuity of speech, stammering and stuttering. Perhaps these visions of storytelling are not so opposed since to remember is also to forget: to assemble members of memory is to transmit an orphaned archive that seeks a home beyond the orphanage, a foster home of rememoration. What does it mean to sustain in the craftwork of the storyteller that sacrificing effort to bring a perfect narrative about through a variety of retellings? Is it not also to listen attentively to the atavistic imperatives of the absent, the untold, and the dead?

This is another way of asking how one can call attention to the force of forgetting always already structuring the act of remembering. In the context of remembering and forgetting the experience of modern technology and warfare and the catastrophic meaning of death in the twentieth century, it may be asked whether or not this ritual of re-telling is inevitably marked by the symbolic effort to redeem the voices, faces, and things of the past from their usury and mutability as mortal beings in time. Or whether this re-listening/re-telling is not also structured by an opposing impulse—a refusal to remember, a hostility to finding closure in the remembrance of mourning and grief.

Clearly the decline of storytelling as a cultural mediation of history making has met with the popular rise of a kind of therapeutic practice of remembering, repeating, re-telling in the audiovisual techniques of television and cinema—techniques that point in the direction of obsession, trauma and fantasy (Elsaesser 1996). The question then becomes: what motivates the compulsion to repeat? Can it in any sense be qualified as a redemptive impulse? The implication being that these two moments of the storyteller may not construct each other after

all but reveal opposing epistemological and political tendencies in the social work of memory and forgetting. One tendency would attempt a "remembering of the dismembered" in the reconciling work of mourning, in which the sickness of memories are negotiated and re-worked in the trials of opposing narratives and re-tellings, rebuilding the "protective shield" of the past or repressed "forgetting" that Freud saw as penetrated by trauma. The other tendency would wish merely to bear witness to the sources of the past in their opacity, to hold the wounds open rather than let the scars heal, to listen to the melancholic spade of the gravedigger and refuse to let grievous loss be commemorated.

However opposed these tendencies may be, an opposition particularly exacerbated by the crisis of the representation of history, they are still both structured by the utopian promise of the future, of the settling of final things in the last analysis—by the framework of eschatology itself. In the first, this promise and this hope is "restored" to the "horizon of experience and expectation" dilating in the past and re-told to help bring new perspectives into the horizon of the present.[20] In the second, the principle of this hope is melancholically deferred by the form of time gaping between present and past and allegorically repeated in its heterogeneity until the epoch ending Messianic moment of apokatastasis.[21]

Most critical analyses suggest that the historical horizon of the work of memory in Tarkovsky's *Mirror* is essentially "restorative" by pointing out the redemptive motifs and a few of the commemorative themes that structure the complex narrative; this is legitimated and even reinforced to some extent by Tarkovsky's writings and declarations of the film as an emblem of "historical sacrifice." The possibility of another perspective is precluded by the rather superficial attention to narrative/thematic patterns and authorial intentions which prevail over any consideration of the time based medium of film itself. I would like to argue for this other perspective by showing how this sequence calls attention to rhythm, the way the image *speaks* the melancholy work of memory and mourning *in time*. In Tarkovsky's *Mirror* the storyteller is orphaned from the home of

memory; witnessing the clamorous noise of time the storyteller stutters.

It is no accident that the prologue sequence of *Mirror*, a brief television documentary about the hypnotic curing of a young man's stutter, introduces and initiates the complex work of memory in the film. The prologue is more than the metaphorical springboard for the rest of the film but that which metonymically imparts a certain temporal tonality, tenor, and tremor to the various pieces of the shattered experience of memory to follow. Beyond the *mise en scène* of the stuttering boy, *Mirror* manifests this stuttering effect of the historical event by pushing narrative principles (*mise en récit*, plot) to their limits, accelerating diegetic strategies so that they no longer regulate the periodic occurrence of events in a narrative structure but, in a kind of hyperdiegetic suspense,[22] mark their arrival in a flash of memory.

Mirror does not employ the technique of "flashback." Events do not flash in order to receive retrospective causal explanation, nor in order to generate the narrative succession of action. I would like to argue that the "flashing" work of memory in *Mirror* marks the moment of the arrival of events in order to provoke a kind of startled "awakening" to their radical alterity. This concept may be applied to a great number of the moments of the film because it is not organized cognitively by the fullness of memory, not is it recollected narratively in a story. Instead, *Mirror* is founded in loss and absence and dispersed in the fragments and traces of a story; re-organizing memory and history in terms of their gaps, send-backs and cancellations, it introduces the pause, the hyphen, and the stutter to speech. Setting time loose from the structures of story, *Mirror* transmutes temporal experience. The sequential passage of one historical or fictional scene into the next must be seen as a function and configuration of this enigmatic transformation of temporality.

Enigmatically enough, one of the key narrative moments of Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, featured towards the film's ending, concerns the death of the narrator. In this scene we witness, next to a wall of mirrors, the narrator Alexei hidden behind a screened curtain. As he is lying down on his deathbed (Postwar 1970s), we

are informed by a doctor that he is dying for personal reasons untreatable by medical science. We are told by two women, one of whom, knitting, resembles Fate, the other resembling the poetess Anna Akhmatova, that he is dying of guilt—the guilt of feeling unworthy of his family. He tells the doctor and his visitors repeatedly to leave him alone. His hand, lying on the sheet next to bird droppings, reaches out to pick up a small wounded bird with wet feathers. In slow motion, the hand clasps the bird, turns gently and then caresses its head which peeks out beneath the thumb. Alexei, with shortened breath—an ominous sign of his last breath—says, "Everything will be all right" as if addressing the bird. Again he sighs and whispers, "Everything will be…" and he is heard breathing and expiring. In the softness of this expiration, the camera lifts and holds the frame of the image just above his hand; the rhythm of the breath and the duration of the image emphasize the contemplative suspense of this lifting. In slow motion and silence the arm lifts into the frame and the hand, capturing the light of the sun, opens—the bird is tossed into this light, lifting into the horizon of the next image. As we follow the flight of the bird we are lifted by the camera into the last scene of the film.

In terms of the dying narrator Alexei, we witness the narrative trope or pretext that would organize as well as generate the heterogeneous series of memories reflected throughout the film: the cliché of a man acquiring a conscience on the edge of death. While we do not hear the narrator speak of his feverish guilt of being unworthy as a father-husband in a family fragmented by war, misunderstanding, and divorce, his gesture and his breath, however, do generate the work of memory, opening out towards the luminous presence of the "child figure" and to the half-remembered and half-forgotten experiences of his childhood projected in the last scene. Significantly, the hyperdiegetic work of memory—a moment of startled awakening to the figure of the "child" and the utopian memory of childhood—is founded in the respiring-expiring breath of the time-image.

The scene of the "last breath" of the narrator is more or less a direct adaptation/citation of Tolstoy's celebrated novella *The Death of Ivan Illych*. This seems appropriate for, in both cases,

the last breath shows how no one in either story seems to belong to the same temporality, an unbelonging or disjuncture in temporal experiences especially accentuated at the moment of death. This is true for Tolstoy's Ivan Illych: as a judge whose offices must be replaced, his mortal illness is viewed by his associates and friends as a delicate but rather unfortunate moment in a bureaucracy of inevitable successions and promotions; as a father and husband protecting and providing for the social vanities and the daily needs of his family affairs, his dying is viewed as a miserable inconvenience in a life lengthened by the banality of dinners, balls, marriage proposals; finally, as a man facing himself, brooding over his imminent death, exasperated by the unworthiness of his life and his guilty conscience, his life is illumined with new meaning in the anticipation of death since his life is held out towards the horizon of eternity—with the help of the Christ-like peasant, Gerasim.

Tarkovsky describes the last scene of Ivan Illych as the search for forgiveness and authentic life[23] felt by an unkind and limited man dying of cancer who, although surrounded by a nasty wife and worthless daughter insensitive to his suffering and preoccupied with social vanities, nevertheless is overcome by a feeling of goodness, pity, and forbearance towards them.

> And then, on the point of death, he feels he is crawling along in some long, soft black pipe like an intestine… In the distance there seems to be a glimmer of lights, and he crawls on and can't reach the end, can't overcome that last barrier separating life from death. His wife and daughter stand by the bedside. He wants to say, "Forgive me." And instead, at the last minute, utters, "Let me through" (Tarkovsky 1986, pp. 107-108).

The difference between these two phrases is the difference of a rhythmic gap, a stammering, for literally in the Russian "Forgive me" is *prosteete* and "let me through" is *propoosteete*. The syllabic difference that utters the *poos* between *pro* and *steete* stammers between Heaven and Hell, light and darkness, grace and gravity. Far from being a literal or a semi-autobiographical adaptation of Tolstoy's novella, *Mirror* begins where Tolstoy ends, by recording

something of the rhythms of Ivan Illych's breath—this gasping—between the intention (*prosteete*) and the distention (*propoosteete*). This rhythmic gap between words, this caesura marking a kind of pause of breath, is also emblematic of the inscrutable separation between generations, the impossible passage of the *return to the same*. Like Mandelstam's prose essays, *Mirror* inscribes this pipeline of pressures between the living and the dead, not as a vessel of domestic or intergenerational connection but as an abyss germinating with the noise of time.

Such observations help to lend support to the materialist conception of rhythm, over against that kind of critique to which the filmmaker himself lends credit, in which there is ultimately a restorative impulse at work, an "aesthetics of redemption" at work "in the end." I have argued that the medium of this film organizes another "sense of an ending" in order to open up questions about the "subject" of History and the mediation of the work of memory. Briefly put, the historical subjectivity of *Mirror* (the author, the narrator, the family, the people) is not an ideal image of unity that already exists and which must be awakened into self-consciousness; instead, it is an alternating breath of contingent and unmoored histories, remembered in virtual and real circuits, on the basis of which a future might be invented.

How does such a history generate its remembrance? Around the figure of the child and the disorienting experience of dreaming about childhood. The utopian memory of childhood in *Mirror* invariably responds to the problem of the mediation of the catastrophic historical events; the pathology of the narrator is related to the traumatic remembrance of history, one in which individual and collective memories are transposed in the redemptive work of mourning or in the allegorical work of melancholy grief. The memories of childhood generate—out of the material pressures and repetitions of historical time—an awakening and an openness to the potentially radical alterity of the future.

In a philosophical sense, childhood is what activates memory, it is the cradle of the house of memory: childhood plays with remembrance by miniaturizing the immense space of the world or by accelerating or decelerating the time of the world. The child is also the figure of that kind of innocence and naiveté

that could be invested with the unspeakable power to hold, because he does not possess the language that might organise for speech, all memory and all experience.[24] When language stutters and "history breaks down into images" in Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, the child is the rebellious orphan figure through which the velocities of catastrophic events must pass. However, the child is also the ageless model of innocence who inhabits the dacha of memory, the mobile symbolic space in which this history must be organized for the future. The narrator's tortured journey back to childhood and his repeated effort to access the house of memory (seen in the last four sequences) takes viewers back to this possibility. In the dark-luminous visions of hope and desperation, the child is inevitably torn between the melancholy of a lost world and the utopian wish to generate a new world.

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NOTES

1. For a detailed argument of the epistemological stakes involved in this materialist theory of rhythm, a theory which must be read against the grain of some of Tarkovsky's own notions, refer to part II of my dissertation, *A Critical Theory of Rhythm and Temporality: The Metamorphosis of Memory and History in Andrey Tarkovsky's Mirror (1975)* (Nelson 2003).

2. In his very suggestive essay, "Consumption, Duration, and History," Arjun Appadurai traces the production of nostalgia to consumer culture and the forces of fashion and mass merchandising. The production of *ersatz* nostalgia and the production of *patina* on commodities produces a desire in consumers for memories that they, or their social class, have lost. The production of "armchair nostalgia" takes this logic of the loss of the present to a new level: "Rather than expecting the consumer to supply memories while the merchandiser supplies the lubricant of nostalgia, now the viewer need only bring the faculty of nostalgia to an image that will supply the memory of a loss he or she has never suffered" (Appadurai 1996, p. 78).

3. Hannah Arendt, in her "Preface" to the collection of essays in *Between Past and Future* calls attention to this position of thought in political terms as she discusses Kafka's parable of the antagonism of thinking between present, past and future (Arendt 1968, p. 14).

4. It should be noted that Gilles Deleuze's Bergsonian concept of the "time-crystals" (Deleuze 1985, p. 101) does mention Tarkvosky's *Mirror* as an emblematic example of this kind of moving mirror of perception and recollection. However, Deleuze does not emphasize the concept of the "medium or milieu" as the point of passage. Due to the limits and the orientation of this essay, I will not be discussing the applications nor the limits of Deleuze's semiotic terminology of the time-image and the time-crystals which I am applying freely here. For a more nuanced and critical discussion of these concepts, see Nelson 2003 (pp. 100-105).

5. For the thoughts and many of the key words animating this paragraph I am grateful to Laura U. Marks for sharing her draft versions of programme-notes for the special program "Out of Time" featuring works of experimental video and film which she co-curated with Robin Curtis at the 2001 Oberhausen Short Film Festival.

6. "Drift," or the "inability to locate a stable sense of the present" is an epistemological concept of the modernity of experience articulated by Leo Charney in *Empty Moments: Cinema, Modernity, and Drift* (Charney 1998). Charney suggestively identifies "drift" with the constellation of problems and possibilities presented by twentieth-century philosophy, physics, and modernist arts.

7. See Walter Benjamin's distinctions of allegory and symbol, which may be found in the chapter entitled "Allegory and Trauerspiel" in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (Benjamin 1998, p. 224).

8. As Jean-Louis Schefer (1997, p. 21) suggests in his brilliant essay, *Du monde et du mouvement des images*: "Le cinéma, en le sachant très peu (attentif pour le mieux à ses singularités formelles), a créé un autre monde. Ni le cinéma ni le roman ne sont pour cela moribonds ou en crise. Nous en percevons pour l'instant un effet de retour dans une espèce de conscience d'univers: et cet effet de retour dû à la multiplication d'images de toutes sortes est de cet ordre: nous percevons comme une chose notre *qualité* de mutants historiques, notre qualité *d'espèce*. L'image nous a montré que nous sommes une espèce *mutante*. Nous sommes, depuis la première image projetée, l'impossibilité réelle des hommes-images; ils se sont depuis lors multipliés, ils occupent la surface du monde."

9. Sylviane Agacinski has made a compelling argument in favor of this conception of the time-passer or "passeur du temps" when discussing the importance of Benjamin's figure of the "passeur" in the "Book of Passages" which is *The Arcades Project*, a figure that belongs both to the *flâneur* and the *ferryman*: to the flâneur because it is a gratuitous way of getting lost and an inefficient way of losing time, and to the ferryman because it is a way of taking passengers across different shores of time (Agacinski 2000, pp. 57-58).

10. In order to come to an understanding of the philosophical implications of this shift, see Deleuze's conception of the "powers of the false" or "puissances du faux" in Deleuze 1985 (pp. 165-202).

11. See Rosenstone 1996.

12. See my discussion of Ricoeur's essay "Mémoire et histoire" in Nelson 2000 (pp. 153-168).

13. I borrow this term from the literary criticism of Bakhtin (1937, p. 84). *Chronotope*: the "time-space" of a fictional setting where historical relations become visible and stories "take place." No priority is given to either time or space but they are fused into one organic whole; time thickens, becomes visible and "takes on flesh" and space becomes charged with the movements of time, plot and history.

14. My translation of Ishaghpour's suggestive observation: "Chaque fois la *réalité* est métamorphosée par la temporalité d'un regard devenu vision."

15. For a detailed and scholarly account of the history of the techniques of anamorphic image making as well as the anamorphic effects of images, see Jurgis Baltrusaïtis' *Anamorphoses* (1984). Also, see Lacan 1973, for the interesting observation regarding Hans Holbein's baroque masterpiece, *The Ambassadors*, that an anamorphosis is effected in the dramatic entr'act, *intermezzo* or *intermedium*, of the viewing experience when spectators change their position in the gallery of tableau's exposition and, looking back—in a glimpse—catch sight of or are caught by the specter of death.

16. Orphan films are cinematographic and televisual archives that have been abandoned by institutions and anonymous producers for various historic reasons. Their

loss, and thus of an irrecoverable audiovisual testimony of the historical events of the twentieth century, has been the subject of renewed critical interest internationally.

17. Again Tarkovsky's own remarks confirm something of this interpretation: "The scene was about that suffering which is the price of what is known as historical progress, and of the innumerable victims whom, from time immemorial, it has claimed. It was impossible to believe for a moment that such suffering was senseless. The images spoke of immortality, and Arseny Tarkovsky's poems were the consummation of the episode because they gave voice to its ultimate meaning" (Tarkovsky 1986, p. 130).

18. The most penetrating insights regarding the connection between rhythm, history and this kind of utopian political awakening may be found in Osip Mandelstam's essays, "The Word and Culture" and "Government and Rhythm" (Mandelstam 1997, pp. 67-71).

19. Walter Benjamin, discussing the waning tradition of storytelling techniques in the fiction of Nicolai Leskov, signaled the decline of this mediating role of the traditional storyteller in audiovisual culture, writing: "With the [First] World War a process began to become apparent which has not halted since then. Was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefront grown silent not richer—but poorer in communicable experience? What ten years later was poured in the flood of war books was anything but experience that goes from mouth to mouth. And there was nothing remarkable about that. For never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power. A generation that had gone to school on a horse drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath these clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile, human body" (Benjamin 1968, p. 84).

20. Paul Ricoeur's essay, "Mémoire et histoire" (1998) thoughtfully ends by invoking something of this possibility. In the discussion concerning the curative function of re-writing history, he invokes Reinhart Kosseleck's renewal of the Augustinian historical categories of the "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation" (Kosseleck 1985), in order to show how historical re-writing might "restore" the future anteriority of lost or forgotten horizons of experience and expectation.

21. For a more detailed discussion of the emergence of this tendency in the work of Walter Benjamin, see Jay 1996.

22. In what sense is this flashing work "hyperdiegetic?" Edward Branigan, in the chapter, "Beyond Plot: The Complex Temporality of Hyperdiegetic Narration," makes the following useful distinction: "[T]he hyperdiegetic, then, stands for the barest trace of another scene, of a scene to be remembered at another time, of a past and a future scene in the film (a hybrid scene) for a scene that is evaded and remains absent" (Branigan 1992, p. 190).

23. This is indeed a novella that characterises the autobiographical situation of the film, especially the ambiguous ending which is so close to life that it "shakes us to the depths of our being" (Tarkovsky 1986, p. 108). In Tarkovsky's words: "*Mirror* was not an attempt to talk about myself, not at all. It was about my feelings towards people dear to me; about my relationship with them; my perpetual pity for them and my own inadequacy—my feeling of duty left unfulfilled" (Tarkovsky 1986, p. 134).

24. I would like to thank Johanne Villeneuve for her comments about this utopian and dystopian figure of the child and childhood in Tarkovsky's films. I am also indebted to her discussion of the political metaphor of awakening in the work of Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch (Villeneuve 2000).

FILMOGRAPHY

Mirror (1975). *Director*: Andrey Tarkovsky. *Production Company*: Mosfilm, Unit 4. *Producer*: E. Vaisberg. *Production Manager*: Y. Kushnerov. *Assistant Directors*: Larissa Tarkovskaya, V. Karchenko, Masha Chugonova. *Script*: Andrei Tarkovsky, Alexandre Misharin. *Photography*: Georgy Rerberg, Sovcolor with b/w newsreel sequences. *Camera Operator*: A. Nikolayev, I. Shtanko. *Lighting*: V. Gusev. *Editor*: Lyudmila Feiginova. *Art Director*: Nikolai Dvigubsky. *Sets*: A. Merkunov. *Special Effects*: Y. Potapov. *Music*: Eduard Artemyev, J.S. Bach, Giovanni Batista Pergolesi, Henry Purcell. *Costumes*: Nelly Formina. *Make-up*: V. Rudina. *Sound*: Simon Litivinov. *Poems*: Arseny Tarkovsky, read by the poet.

Leading Players: Margarita Terekhova (*Masha, Alexei's mother/Natalia, Alexei's wife*), Filip Yankovsky (*Alexei, age 5*), Ignat Daniltsev (*Alexei/Ignat, age 12*), Oleg Yankovsky (*Alexei's father*), Nikolai Grinko (*male colleague at printing shop*), Alla Demidova (*Lisa*), Yrui Nazarov (*military instructor*), Anatoly Solonitsyn (*doctor passing by*), Innokentky Smoktunovsky (*voice of Alexei, the narrator*), Larissa Tarkovsky (*rich doctor's wife*), Maria Tarkovskaya (*Alexei's mother as an old woman*), Tamara Ogorodnikova (*woman in Pushkin-reading scene*), Y. Sventikov, T. Reshetnikova, E. del Bosque, L. Correcher A. Gutierres, D. Garcia, T. Pames, Teresa des Bosque, Tamara des Bosque.

Length: 106 minutes.

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