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Temporal figures: Andreï Tarkovski's MIRROR

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Abstract

Without art, our life will be painful, bitter, without taste and without light. It's a system of signification, of meaning of sign, of image, of sound... irrational which aims to lift the veil long thrown by reason over sign. Art gives us the rhythm of life, gives us hope to continue and to savor every moment, every fragment of time that passes without taking anyone's permission.

In art, this kind of rhythm is represented differently depending on the genre to generally designate and evoke movement. But when it comes to cinema, rhythm operates in a very particular way, acquiring an artistic dimension especially when it comes to Andreï TARKOVSKI, that he considers it as temporal intensity, which nevertheless marks the aesthetics of silence.



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* Introduction

Cinema is an infinite world where ideas, truth, homage, fantasy, archives, memories, the utopia of dreams... all coexist together without the slightest fault or rupture. However, they are intrinsically linked, forming a single, discrete, silent, sensitive word that is common to all languages : rhythm.

Rhythm is par excellence, the soul of the film alongside the script, editing, image and sound, which gives emotion, sensation and generally ensures filmic continuity. But when it comes to TARKOVSKI's films, cinema as such, with its principles, is ahead of other directors.

As we know, TARKOVSKI is one of the few artists who believe in the legitimacy of art, in revealing the

truth so much repressed by reason, alongside an aesthetically strong choice in which all the principles of cinema respond to a vision of his own, to a new concept, the kinoobraz (i.e. « cinematographic image » as a unit). As we know, according to the vocabulary of cinema, rhythm is a variation or even a succession of times, of degrees of intensity, whether in sound or image. In the case of sound, technically speaking, it refers either to the acceleration, slowness or cessation of a musical passage, sound effects or speech (timbre, strong or weak tonality, etc.). As for the image, it is part of the actors' performance, with the sequence of shots giving the sensation either of tension rising into the air, or of prosperity (slowness, slowing down), or it anticipates the next action at the end of the suspense. In TARKOVSKI's work, rhythm is seen as a temporal intensity that exceeds all ordinary norms of its use in the aesthetics of silence, which is the emblem of TARKOVSKI's cinema.

TARKOVSKY uses rhythm to reveal and reinforce the relative or absolute value of time. We have chosen a cult scene from the film *The Mirror* (1975) where the heroine, after taking a shower, stands against

a mirror and looks at herself in the mirror.

The Mirror, a drama, is Tarkovsky's fourth feature film, made in 1974. In the opinion of critics and theorists, it is undoubtedly the most autobiographical of his films, whose original title was *Confession* before becoming *The Mirror*.

The Mirror is a hermetic film, difficult to understand with a rambling plot, demanding on every level and dizzyingly deep. This time it's a documentary drama in which the director chooses to look back on his own experience to the point of examining his own conscience and his own memories. This undoubtedly reminds us of Tarkovsky's life and childhood, where memory is materialised by the register of recollection, Tarkovsky's register where time and image merge in a vast tangle.

In this film, Tarkovsky takes a close look at his own memory, from which he draws suggestions and all the dramatic and emotional power, because he can convey most faithfully and most personally the troubles, the joys, the memories of people close to him, the living memory of an era, of the children of Russia. *The Mirror* is a complete work in which the consciousness and memory of a filmmaker, an artist and

a philosopher are reflected, "a complex mind at the head of a complex work, which manages to capture the essence of the essence, completing a vertiginous metaphysical loop" (Sep. Ar. Quentin 2017) . Face, time and shot succession follow a very particular tempo, -intimate but universal- where the face will be the portrait of silence, through a succession of times spread out from the beginning of the film to the end, marking the apogee of an extremely ingenious use in this magnificent scene where the notion of time is called into question.

*** What sets this study apart**

Tarkovsky is one of those directors who believed in the legitimacy of cinema as a pure artistic creation, whose aim is to awaken the senses and move people. His work is like an unknown land, steeped in ambiguity both in terms of content (the themes addressed) and form (technically speaking). A trailblazer in the field of the image, his work is of current interest to many researchers, given its interdisciplinary nature.

*** On figural ontology**

« Although the face cannot be written, said or represented, it is nonetheless the foundation of locution, inscription and representation : it is the advent of

meaning » (Aumont 1992, 24). The face is the locus par excellence of all the mysteries of life and the psyche, and the most adored in cinema, it is the most enigmatic and sought-after surface. Given the autobiographical nature of the film, a psychoanalytical interpretation is nonetheless possible, albeit excessively limited given the film's almost infinite conceptual and plastic potential.

The narrator, more or less identifiable with the author, narrates the memories that link him to his mother : it is a dialogue between the son and the mother, made up of guilt, incomprehension and fascination. The fact that the mother takes on the features of the woman could reinforce this interpretation. Indeed, it is the same actress (Margarita Terekhova) who plays both the mother (Maroussia) and the woman (Natalia), just as it is the same young actor who plays both the narrator at the age of 12 and the narrator's son at the same age. But in reality the coalescence of the Doubles, mother and wife and son and father, subverts the Oedipal schema by slipping into fantasy and dream. The film is less biographical and psychoanalytical than ontological and memorial.



**Figure N° 1. Beginning of scene
(screenshot)**



**Figure N°2 : Middle of scene
(screenshot)**

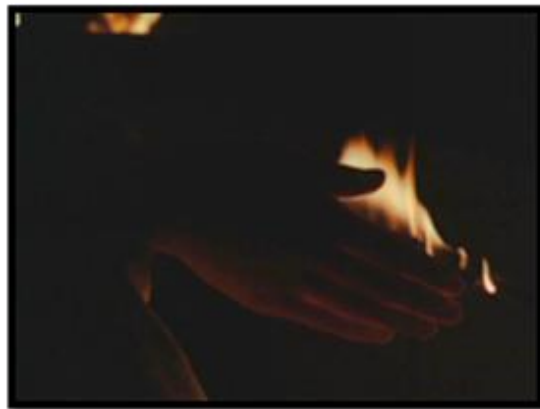


Figure N°3 : End of scene (screenshot)

Everything takes place inside a dacha, the house, the place par excellence of secrecy, of traces crossed by time, according to a thickness and an intensity relative to the lived experience. A dacha constructed from the smallest details of the narrator's childhood memories. Memory is the material of the film, exploring the facets of a memory that is both personal and universal.

The *Mirror* cannot therefore be reduced either to a simple autobiography or to a childhood story – which is why Tarkovsky refers to the dacha as « the house », which is no longer an element of a past reality but a fragment torn from a dream.

And while Tarkovsky emphasises the essential nature of the film's autobiographical basis, he also insists on his freedom as a creator to blend this material into a work that allows everyone to read their own story in it. In the introduction to *Sealed Time*, Tarkovsky quotes a woman who wrote to him from Gorky : « My childhood was like that. But how did you know ? » (Tarkovski 1989, 12) – and for him this fulfils his artistic mission to speak for everyone and to challenge this feeling on the big screen.

As Loïc Millot notes « The protagonist only intervenes in four sequences in the film, which is very few in terms of a film with autobiographical pretensions ; added together, they hardly amount to more than twenty minutes for a film lasting 102 minutes [...] The term autobiography, like that of 'film-autoportrait', must be qualified [sic] because it tends to restrict the complexity and unanimist scope of the work » (Heurtebise 2015, 5) .

This film, with its autobiographical pretensions, does little to highlight the presence of the protagonist, and this lack of nuance tends to make the work more complex. This move beyond the personal level of remembrance is evident in the film through the

presence of two types of images that are impossible – for different reasons – to equate with memories : on the one hand, we have archive images, which are above all images of wars, the Spanish War, the Second World War, Sino-Russian tensions, and on the other, we have dreamlike images, images of dreaming, levitation, leaving the body or simple contemplation. Memory is reflected in the archive and the dream : the archive extends the image of Fmemory into the collective, moving from the I to the We ; while the dream extends the image of memory into the psychic, moving from the I to the Self.

It's as if we're dealing with the « same » image but in three different ways. This is because the three images can respond to each other – as in a musical fugue where the same melodic element is repeated in different keys : this is how the episode involving the grenade (memory) and the image of the nuclear explosion (archive) come together visually in the image (dream) of the luminous flame mysteriously held between two female hands (fig.3). What's more, the image of the Soviet balloons in weightlessness (archive) is combined with the dream image of the levitating mother, and is finally brought to life

in the final image of the narrator's death, with the bird taking flight from the mortuary bed.



Figure n°4 : Temporal triad (screenshot)

Archive, dream and memory establish a circuit in which memory is the lowest common denominator that expands towards the world and the other (archive) or plunges into the unknown and the unspeakable (dream). What is most personal is perhaps at the same time most mystical and universal, and at the same time most collective and historical, as Tarkovsky has said : « In *The Mirror*, I wanted to make it clear that Bach and Pergolesi, a letter

by Pushkin, the passage of Soviet soldiers across the Syvach Sea, as well as intimate and domestic events ; all these things are equally important for the human experience. In terms of personal spiritual experience, what happened yesterday for one man has as much significance as what happened 100 years ago for mankind » (Tarkovsky 1989, 180).

The film *The Mirror* is presented as a succession of temporal strata, presented non-chronologically and linked together by multiple analogies. What Tarkovsky is trying to translate into film is what Philippe Descola has called analogism, that way of thinking in terms of a global referential system that allows us to go from one thing to any other, by means of sensitive variations and connections that make little sense to our reason. (Descola 2005, 54) This film appeals to this mode of thinking, which consists in the place of correspondence par excellence, where we have objects, landscapes, intonations and actors that begin to resonate and revolve around a central point where everything becomes connected, intrinsic. Each thing calls on its echo, creating an atmosphere like a resultant referring to the main thing.

This analogy expresses the experience of an endless cyclicality in

which the elements circulate within a diffuse totality : the image reflected in the mirror may be partial, but it is nonetheless total in that it fully expresses a moment in the world ; in other words, the poetic image expresses this totality, a complete understanding of the universe.

Nothing is more revealing in this respect than the scene in the film where, through a camera shift from behind the mirror to in front of it, the image of the child narrator's young mother becomes the image of the adult narrator's aged mother. The passage from image to reflection (from the seeing mirror to the mirror seen) is at the same time a passage from the past to the present. Chronological time is totally abolished by a universal memory in which all moments coexist.

The technical choice of the close-up only serves to ravage the viewer with the splendour of the detail that steals all gaze and reflection. It is a symptom of the state of each person's soul, especially when it comes to these two Tarkovskian portraits, which flow with blood and ashes. Germaine Dulac's opinion on the close-up cannot be ignored : « (...) The psychological shot, the close-up, as we call it, is the very thought of the character projected onto the screen.

It's their soul, their emotions, their desires. The close-up is also the impressionistic note, the fleeting influence of the things around us » (Dulac 1924, 66).

The close-up, as it is conceived, brings the viewer face-to-face with the character, breaking the distance that separates them. It also allows us to penetrate directly into the inner life of a character, extracting his or her most intimate emotions and reactions, known as « the plane of psychological analysis » (Heurtebise 2015, 7).

With this contrasting lighting, the close-up of the two faces becomes stronger and stronger, giving the image of the face a more realistic and dramatic dimension. This light brings out a soft glow like a crack in the dark background, allowing a state of rebirth. This glow exposes the character's nakedness in the face of the situation in which he finds himself and the questions that torment him ; in other words, this crack is the in-between of the visible and the invisible of what his nakedness displays, just as it is confused with his own intentions.

In this nudity, her face detaches itself from all kinds of fetters, it rushes towards the source of light that is close by, its parts and its features melt into the true feeling that

envelops that of hatred, because at that moment, it expresses it. The face is in the process of unravelling, fragmenting and disfiguring itself, leading to something else, particularly in that gaze that trembles between light and shadow, revealing the intimacy of the night. Through this attitude, his face introduces a psychological dimension to the image it reflects, to the situation on which it depends and to the meaning it constructs, in which silence restores the unity of the self. This dimension allows us to grasp his mental evolution, and understand the mechanisms of the human psyche, but to access his innermost depths, his unknown and elusive world, silence is seen as the only way out.

However, silence as a matter of meaning is not a simple means of representation, like any other means of illustration, for silence itself is an infinity in itself, but through the image of the body and especially that of the face, silence « transcends psychoanalysis to capture the unspeakable mystery of life » (Cons. Egger 1990). The status of the face, or even the image of the face, is contemplated through questions posed around truth and lies, in order to unveil the image of the mask, because every image is schizophrenic : one side hidden and

the other unveiled as the dark side of a painting, its underside, or even its weft or subjectile. The image of the face lies between being and appearing. Not only is the gaze the strongest element in this face, but it also takes precedence over the others in this interaction, because of its importance, according to Le Breton : « the grasp by the gaze makes the face of the other the essence of his identity, the most significant rooting of his presence » (Le Breton 1998, 104).

Faced with this epiphany of the face, silence is victorious, celebrating on the director's behalf the triumph of his quest and the culmination of his vision. From this perspective, silence is transcribed into a pathetic dimension that highlights its ambiguity as one of the most eloquent concepts.

The idea displayed and described in a few seconds in this passage testifies to its importance and particularity. We saw earlier that the idea suggested by the choice of *mise-en-scène*, the close-up, the splendour of the faces – even if they are sometimes ugly, and it is this ugliness that marks the beauty of this passage – actually goes beyond the purpose of the confrontation. The point is that every confrontation ends up receiving or having an answer, a solution to its

cause. But in our case, things are done differently, because they are concerned to respond to another register, in which silence is important.

The purpose of this face-to-face meeting was to identify the interactions in the dialogue, or rather in the discrete discourse. In other words, to highlight any attempt to establish a relationship or contact from near or far, which will subsequently revise the director's vision and the scope of the entire film, that of the status of the human being as a set of affects, actions and reactions, and his or her relationship with others and with self. Dealing with the questions of existence is a unique approach, one that only silence can cope with, and it did. In this key fragment, silence feeds on the real problem that marks the disagreement and even hatred that has taken root in the life of this two-faced woman, in order to master it and then free herself. Silence, through the implied use of words, faces and facial expressions, was able to send out the right image, because after all, these are the means of expression and the channels through which silence is disseminated. Silence has been able to restore a climate conducive to the scene, a climate of its own, in order to detect

with the power of the image part of the meaning, not to say all of the meaning, for that would be absurd. Silence, by its very nature, does not reveal the whole secret or the whole truth ; after all, it was never intended to reveal the absolute truth.

Silence, on the other hand, merely picks up the trail and tries to draw more clues from it in order to find a way of making sense ; it already retains and preserves truth and meaning, but by its complex nature it would never reveal them, except to present clues and possibilities, as a form of hope for continuing and preserving the continuity of the attempts. And, as is our case, the director has the pure conviction of the qualities of silence that resembles him, believing that the confrontation and face-off between the woman and her own image is merely a pretext to serve his own personal ends. It was another opportunity for him to fulfil his desires, his fantasies, his freedoms in the case of this wife/mother who illustrates only him and his own torments. Silence, through its access to the chaotic world of the woman, allows us to visualise the images of a face disfigured by hatred and the impact of time, which is having fun damaging it more and more, revealing to us at the same time the

world of the director – unfortunately for him, it's the same world. In the creation of his faces, silence reaches its apogee, measured by the intensity of the expressions.

Silence is a kind of lead pencil for the filmmaker, and every time he wants to see these images, he pulls the string of silence that gives him a part of the meaning, the significance that conjures up his absence. Silence is a mark of the distinct, it is of the order of the distinct, because it belongs to the domain of forces, their affections and their transmissions. In this first stage of evolution, silence appears in the form of secrecy, meaning that secrecy is also a form of silence, which finds its soil within. Through this abstract form, it becomes increasingly complicated to define, but it is thanks to this form that it has chosen to be recognised, after all, secrecy is a discipline that manifests itself as such. The role of silence through its 'secret' avatar is to identify the most affected areas of the mind, which are for it a favourable terrain, which it must take charge of, envelop and combine with.

It is envisaged, then, that the silence has thematised, through a detail that marks the latter as well as its presence, is the wife's smile, which is intended as a modality of meaning, but above all as a source of

rhythm. The smile and the unravelled face then both form the net of meaning that gives her back her *raison d'être* and self-recognition, just as Le Breton describes it in his own way : « Silence opens us up to the depths of the world ; it forces us into metaphysics by removing things from the murmur that usually envelops them, and thus liberating their contained power » (Le Breton 1997, 157). As it stands, the camera takes the two portraits face to face, and we can see that this choice is not insignificant, nor is it advantageous for the recognition of meaning. For « the opposite situation is no longer the visual expression of specular fascination and confusion ; on the contrary, it represents the place where the mirror is broken » (Roux 2001, 152).

Finally, this moment, through these variations, constantly puts back the woman's quest for truth, identity and self, in order to celebrate their real portrait, whatever its appearance or dimension. With this in mind, the director constantly varies the *mise-en-scène* to succeed in making the invisible visible, and showing the eloquence of silence that manages to defy any fashion and determine the variety of its scope.

Andreï Tarkovski's *The Mirror* questions the spatio-temporal

conditions of our view of the world. To the chronological time of ordinary conscious experience, Tarkovsky offers the imaginary prism of a diffracted time in which the present, past and future no longer cancel each other out or exclude each other successively but, on the contrary, coexist in the same « time » and respond to each other beyond duration, following a well-ordered rhythm. The most striking and sublime moment comes at the end of the film when the child, whom the narrator was, finds his mother as she is in his adult present : in this moment, the past and the present come together and coincide in the same image. From then on, the present itself can finish passing, which is why the narrator can die : the narrator dies from the moment he sees his mother in the past as she is in the present.

The film ends with a scene of the mother before the birth of her son, who literally sees her future on two different time scales, the child to come and her old age signalling the child grown up. It's as if time had to be thought of both as something that extends from the present in the direction of the past and the future at the same time, and also as the slippage, the overlapping of past and

future time through each present moment.

So, with this coexistence, we can guess that the face projects onto the outer space the structure of the gaze from within, and again, the metaphor will be crudely proposed : the face is represented as a double because it superimposes a kind of transparent mask on another, deeper, « therefore » truer face, this implicit and perhaps unconscious reference to the back of the face : what the face lets us see and hides at the same time is what lies beneath it, the invisible that it makes visible. The face provokes vision, it is vision. And if the face is equal to two faces, superimposed or merged into one another, it is also multiple in a completely different sense, because it is capable of expressing several feelings at once. There is a whole polyphony to the face, because it expresses ‘chords’ of feelings, in the musical sense of the word, that are repeated over and over again.

Just as polyphonic music chases after several speeches, several lines at the same time, the cinema face can say several things at once, but it is undoubtedly prey to time ; « Effects of time : an ageing of faces, leading in some cases to their hideousness ? No doubt. But it is also, and above all, a more constant,

more subtle and more profound submission of the face to time, the production of a face in time, or rather, the passage from a face-in-time to a face-for-time, as a somewhat parodic phenomenology might say. The essential thing is not the ageing, the natural, visible and organic transformation of the face, but the irrational, invisible, inorganic threat that is constantly affecting it, and which is not the threat of death (death is not a threat but a horizon), but something like the threat of neither-death-nor-life » (Aumont 1992, 161).

In the same vein, Gilles Deleuze sums up the film : « The Mirror is a two-sided rotating crystal, if we relate it to the invisible adult character (his mother, his wife), four-sided to the two visible couples (his mother and the child he was, his wife and the child he has) » (Deleuze 1999, 87). And the crystal turns on itself, like a searching head questioning an opaque medium : what is Russia, what is Russia ?

In this film, Tarkovsky makes no secret of the fact that he composed it from his own memories, in which he explains : « the destinies of two generations are superimposed by the meeting of reality and memories : that of my father, whose poems we hear in the film, and my own. The

house in the film is an exact reconstruction of ours, and was built on the same site. You could say that this is a documentary film. The wartime newsreels and the love letters from my father to my mother are documents that shape the story of my life » (Kovacs and Szilagyı 1990, 108). The man's vision of his childhood is interspersed with black and white documents of the war, and the image of his wife is energised by very short, hard-hitting documents of the Spanish Civil War, Tarkovski projecting the image of a suffering Russia into his own body.

* **Temporal Coexistence**

According to Antoine de Baecque (2002), *The Miroir* has three main movements : the search for lost time, memory and dreams. Throughout the film, these three movements never cease to intertwine, with memory translating into dreams, especially in this scene, and the emotional continuity of the film is truly split between the completeness of the field and the off-screen. The off-screen which, as we shall show, is the space of memory, which in turn merges with the field to become its purchaser. It is well known that the off-screen exerts a very strong hold on the diegesis, a hold that is even stronger when the characters are caught in enclosed spaces where the

effect is not the same, even though the field is an open space, a portion of space that gives the impression of being a delimited space.

The off-screen is all the more interesting when, as Robert Bresson describes it, the effect precedes the cause, and Pierre Beylot (2005, 204) goes further, pointing out in « *Le Récit Audiovisuel* » that it is of the hypothetical order in a classical configuration.

Tarkovski describes this kind of causality and presents it as a form of consciousness in his diary, saying that this kind of causality is only a form of consciousness, « and that the essence of life is beyond this form » (Tarkovski 1993, 300). So to say that the off-screen has the character of an assertion.

This kind of assertion is found in the coexistence of different temporalities ; that is, the image of the young and old mother played by the same character, Alexis playing the child's father, reflecting the narrator who is the director and sometimes his father, the times of youth going on to moments of old age, where we get the impression that a reconciliation between time and space is taking place. But in any case, what is striking is the sedimentation of the characters that Tarkovsky envisages as objects, which, in

addition to deciphering the symbolism of their figure, brings all the director's interest to identify what is not there, and goes so far as to show through absence itself.

This brings to mind Giorgio Agamben's analysis of Guy Debord's cinematographic work, in which he points out that there are « two ways of seeing what there is nothing left to see. One is advertising and pornography, which act as if there were always more to see, always more images behind the images, and the other is the image exposed as an image, revealing the imagelessness (...) that is the refuge of every image » (Agamben 1998, 76).

In the Tarkovskian image there is above all what is not there, there is, to use Marc Vernet's terms (Aumont, Bergala, Marie et Vernet 2008, 212) an off-field of what is revealed within the field itself. The off-field within the field in Tarkovsky remains above all in the realm of the trans-spatial.

For a better understanding, we might consider an explanation from Maurice Blanchot, who explains in *Les deux Versions de l'Imaginaire* a text appended to *Espace Littéraire*, that any image can help us to recapture a subject, but it risks sending us back not to the absence of the subject, but rather to its absence as presence. Blanchot explains that

this absent figure, sculpted in the time of the protagonist Masha standing in the room, a position very similar to the first scene of the film, and whose silhouette is barely distinguishable in the field, is stripped of its functionality. Remember that she is constantly receding into the background before she appears in the foreground, and is thus defined by the very presence of her withdrawal, and therefore her virtual absence, since she is relegated to a time that does not belong to her : « Remoteness is here at the heart of the thing. The thing was there, which we grasped in the living movement of an understanding action, and, having become an image, instantaneously, there it becomes the ungraspable, the inactual, the impassible, not the same thing removed, but this thing as removal, the present in its absence, the graspable because ungraspable, appearing as disappeared, the return of that which does not return » (Blanchot 1968, 347).

This remoteness is all the more interesting in that it represents the counter-field of Masha's image at the beginning of the film, spied on by the camera as she looks away, her spirit absent in her very presence, turned towards the distance, her secret insinuated into the off-screen of the field, in this case, the endless horizon

that she scans. And as Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote, « the screen has no horizon » (Merleau-Ponty 1971, 82). Masha stares into space.

In the same way, in this scene where the protagonist fixes her gaze on us indirectly this time, as the camera pans towards her back, facing the mirror that she is looking at, meditating on and focusing on, she is there before our eyes, but we feel her total absence, We have the impression that her presence is only illusory, compared to her presence on the ice, in the old version, in which this body is only a simple form occupying the space of the image, but the absence of the thing we feel makes us feel its presence in an intense way.

The presence of the out-of-field piercing the central image creates a kind of conversion in the role of the field and the out-of-field, with the out-of-field made more palpable by the effect of the presence of an absence that is absent on the screen, on our eyes, whereas the field is just a kind of cover for the whole, overflowing to the sides, its real, physical character no longer important. We have an out-of-field inside a field, which is also in another out-of-field, that of the child's dream at the start of the scene. A form of spiral that torments the scene,

ultimately the whole film, a form that suggests the source of this form, we understand that it is undoubtedly the unconscious fed by the conscious, the memory, the desire to change things, like destiny for example, but which ends up remaining the same.

This indistinct figure of the woman is very interesting, partly because of its crystalline character, like a ghost trapped in the freeze of time, but also because of its real, physical character that incites its presence, but not quite. The image, explains Paola Marrati in her study of Gilles Deleuze, « is never only in the present, it always has a temporal density, it is inhabited by a past and a future that haunt it and that in no way coincide with the present images that precede and follow it » (Marrati 2003,88). We can see that the direction of the woman's gaze towards the right edge of the frame is reinforced by the wall pillar (forming a vertical line that reinforces the drama and accentuates the tension), which links the rest of the field of vision to the rest of the image, and the second figure shows that the field is transcribed into a second field ; This second field is the off-field that crosses the field from the inside, creating a kind of depth of field, which in turn illustrates the depth of the dream, this world of the

unconscious that competes with logic, this consciousness directed by the world around it.

Through the meeting of the past (fig.2 : pictogram of the young woman) and the present (fig.2 : pictogram of the old woman) in a dream format, a waking dream, love comes face to face. The most sincere, revered and sought-after emotion in the arts – to be staged, in images – is made possible with Tarkovsky, one hundred per cent, through the channels of silence. In this globe of emotion, of hide-and-seek, of the unspeakable, of absence and presence, the silence of this scene gives us its emotional dimension, emotion worked with an immanent rhythm.

For Tarkovski, immanent rhythm signifies an emotional and affective logic that is opposed to the intellectual logic largely dedicated to the cinema of montage. Montage is an articulation of shots already filled with time, « to assemble the film into a living, unified organism, whose arteries contain this time with its diverse rhythms that gives it life » ; for this director, immanent rhythm also signifies the degree of intensity of the time flowing through the shots : The rhythm of a film, » writes Tarkovsky, « does not lie in the metrical succession of small pieces

stuck end to end, but in the pressure of time that flows within the shots themselves » (Tarkovsky 1989, 109).

* **Conclusion**

For the filmmaker, time or immanent rhythm is perceived « as the weight of truth ». And time appears « when it refers to something that extends beyond, to infinity. In short, when it refers to life » (Tarkovsk,113). For Tarkovsky, cinematic rhythm and duration are about truth.

It should be noted that Tarkovsky does not use the conventional method of connecting two distinct memory-images. In *The Mirror* we usually find such a direct connection without any rhetorical intermediary between the various memories. In this way, memory is given without intermediary. It is also a kind of unconscious memory. But Tarkovsky does not express the cause of the evocation of a memory. He always shows directly the image of the memory already evoked by a certain impact. He gives us the impression that each memory is reborn in the present, so that our own memories take on life and form.

Moreover, *The Mirror* is the story of a man who speaks, but of our existence ; « not only of the man whose voice we hear in the background, but of us, of our father,

our grandfather, and our son. The man who will have to answer for his life to the past and to the future » (Tarkovski, 13). This is because *The Mirror* constantly reflects the intersecting relationships between the various characters. Each of them seems to us, at a glance, independent of the others. They suffer from incommunicability, isolation and guilt. Tarkovsky's work as an artist is to search the shattered world for the thread that links the destinies of each individual, including his own destiny.

Above all, he reconstructs an inter-communication network ruined in ordinary life, between people, instead of leaving them to live their individual lives indifferently. So much so that, in *The Mirror*, their lives are not singular, but are constantly repeated and intersecting. The bird that stands next to a poor boy and a sick man at the same time, the album of Leonardo da Vinci leafed through by father and son, the fallen coins that link the protagonist's mother and his wife in the scenes in the middle of the film.

In his divorce, the protagonist (in allegory to Tarkovsky himself) remembers his parents' divorce. He sees in his mother's fate that of his wife. Let's not forget the figures of the Spanish refugees who intersect with those of the Russian families

who in turn left their hometowns to escape the fighting. The boy who lost his parents in the war meets a teacher wounded in the war.

In *The Mirror* Tarkovsky has inserted many documentary fragments ; the civil war in Spain, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the battle between China and Russia, and the long sequence of soldiers crossing the river. They all reveal the great influence of history, a collective time, on individual lives. Through the direct confrontation between subjective time and literally real time, he reveals the fine thread that eternally connects individual existences. This is why the memory of the *Mirror* is defined as an ethical mirror. It reflects a relationship established between different generations across the flow of time.

The representation of time necessarily raises a problem in relation to the nature of the cinematographic image. Time is made up of three distinct dimensions : the past, the present and the future. We evoke the past through memory and the future through thought, while we, as present beings, live in (or experience) the continuous flow of the present. In this respect, it is obvious that each temporal dimension would require a different form to bring out its ontological

difference. Yet the cinematic image is given as a present image. This is why cinema develops various ways of representing the different aspects of time by exploiting the different possibilities offered by rhythm when sound and image meet.

Time constructed as a linear form of successiveness is deconstructed in favour of a space made up of jumbled places and a time of interconnected strata. They allow us to think and meditate, not intellectually, but emotionally and in a living way, on the conditions of the potentiality of the cinematographic image but above all of our ordinary perception of the world around us.

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