Time, Bergson and the Film Theory of Andrei Tarkovsky

By

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Abstract

The original motivation for this thesis was to draw attention to an unexposed work of film theory, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, written by one of our greatest contemporary filmmakers, Andrei Tarkovsky. I was attracted to the book for two reasons: it held practical value and expressed a motivational and spiritual vision of art; and secondly, it brought an intelligent and sensitive voice into the recently chastised (or neglected) classical film theory discourse.

The book, written over several years, is not a tightly organised theoretical work. However, what is obvious after even one reading is the importance placed on time. This drew me to the study of time and eventually to one of its most vocal and provocative thinkers, philosopher Henri Bergson.

Bergson distinguished between two types of time, as experienced and as conceptualized. The former is real time, what Bergson calls duration, and the latter spatialized time. This distinction, between duration and spatialized time, frames all of Bergson's philosophy. Tarkovsky is impassioned with a similar view of time -as experienced- and stretches this passion into all areas of film: purpose, theme and form.

The most important of these for his film theory is the conception of rhythm. Tarkovsky defines rhythm as the flow of time (time-thrust) running through a shot. This, and not editing, is cinema's main formative element. This rhythm is similar to the flux of real time, duration, that forms reality in Bergson's philosophy.

The thesis also discusses the problematic position Tarkovsky's theory holds within classical film theory discourse. Tarkovsky's films and film theory exhibit many tenets of realist theory (long take, depth of field, moving camera, discussion of camera objectivity). He also opposes formalist montage principles. However, his appeal to inner subjectivity and psychological truth call forth an “anti-realist” expressionistic sensibility. This is discussed within a Bergsonian context of psychological dualism and the oscillation between a realist-and idealist position.

This thesis, then, is an articulation of the strong emotional and intellectual bond that these two thinkers share. It concentrates on the profound affinities: the shared epistemological distinction between art and science; their spiritual sensibility; their preoccupation with lived time; and their dependence on psychology. Out of the strongest thread in this bond, the preoccupation with lived time rather than spatialized time, grew a workable film theory.

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INTRODUCTION

For the uninitiated, Tarkovsky's films seem to be an acquired taste. What is most striking, and perhaps difficult, about his films is their unique rhythm. The incredible length of his takes, mesmerizing fluidity of his camera movements and use of silence with electronic and classical music are some of the formal qualities underlying this rhythm. The ethereal aura surrounding some of Tarkovsky's iconography (water, rain, fire, mist) complements this "near spiritual" rhythm. This rhythm, which forms the basis of his film theory, is connected to Tarkovsky's sense of time. As Tarkovsky says, according to "the director's sense of time.... [a] person watching either falls into your rhythm (your world), and becomes your ally, or else he does not, in which case no contact is made" (*Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema* 120).[1]

At the turn of the century, Henri Bergson, out of a dissatisfaction toward existing views on time and reality, developed a philosophy of time. Bergson's philosophy rose to a level of popularity, especially within the non-philosophical and

[1] Subsequent quotes from Tarkovsky's *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema* will be footnoted in the text by page number only. All footnotes in the essay refer to the bibliography (works cited). If the author's name is cited in the text, then only the page number will follow. If there is more than one book from the author the title will be cited in the text or accompany the page number.

artistic community, unmatched by any philosopher since. After World War I Bergson's philosophy began to wane and was eventually eclipsed by personalism, phenomenology, and existentialism -all of which owe a great debt to Bergson.[2] Bergson distinguished between two types of time, a time that is experienced and a time that is conceptualized. The former is real time, what Bergson calls duration, and the latter a necessary and pragmatic spatialization of time. The central dichotomy in Bergson's philosophy, then, is between duration (lived time) and spatialized time (conceptual time). Experienced time rests within the consciousness of a person and can not be "stopped" or analyzed like the mathematical conception of time as a line. Tarkovsky also expresses time as the "I" of a person (57). This lived time, duration, is the stuff that reality is made of: indivisible, creative, and changing. Tarkovsky's vision expresses this "philosophy of change"[3]:

> Because it [cinema] is a living process, artistic creation demands a capacity for direct observation of the ever-changing material world, which is constantly in movement (94).

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[2] For an historical account of Bergson's "rise and fall" I refer the reader to R.C. Grogin's *The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914*.

[3] W.H. Carr, Bergson's strongest supporter, referred to Bergson's philosophy as the "philosophy of change."

Bergson's philosophy of time and its interconnection with reality, more so than any existing film theory, sheds insight onto Tarkovsky's inimitable films and film theory. Duration, the flux of time that flows through reality, forms the core of Bergson's philosophy. Duration can be sympathetically compared to the core of Tarkovsky's film theory: what Tarkovsky calls rhythm, the flux of time running through a shot. The time that flows through a shot and "imprints" itself onto the film and the audience's consciousness, and not montage, is Tarkovsky's guide to film form.

This thesis, then, takes Tarkovsky's somewhat scattered theoretical principles and gives them form through Bergson's concept of duration. The time that flows through a shot, and the editing style that unobtrusively fuses the shots, is seen as a part of the whole, that whole being Bergson's flux of reality.

Tarkovsky's film theory is unique in its confluence of classical realist aesthetics (long take, depth of field, moving camera, objectivity) and the appeal to inner, subjective truth that allows for an infusion of expressionism. This is likened to Bergson's psychological dualism of surface and fundamental self and his oscillation between a realist and idealist view of reality.

There is no evidence of Tarkovsky having had first hand contact with Bergson's work. However, the sympathetic bond between his work and Bergson's is not surprising or coincidental (perhaps inevitable) considering their emotional and intellectual similarities; and obviously, the bond grows stronger as the similarities increase. For example: central to their work is the theoretical and philosophical implications of time and the value they place on "lived time" over conceptual time; they both express a dualist epistemology of art and science; they are both spiritual, Tarkovsky in a traditional religious sense and Bergson in a more mystical sense; they both address philosophical, social and spiritual problems in terms of establishing balance; they both oppose fragmentation, Bergson of time and Tarkovsky of film (editing); and lastly, both see grave limitations when applying symbols and abstract language to an understanding of reality and art.

Perhaps it is because of his own self-professed "metaphysical bent" (57) that Tarkovsky's musings on film, art and reality bear a strong affinity to a philosopher with whom, in all likelihood, he was not familiar. What I have done is to point to these similarities and extrapolate from the most profound among them -the preoccupation with lived time (duration)- a workable film theory.

Chapter 1

TARKOVSKY AND BERGSON: AN INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a brief historical account of Tarkovsky. It continues with a consideration of his place within the history of Soviet film theory and raises the problem of theoretical positioning (realism vs. formalism) that will be addressed later. With the *Stalker* I expose the fundamental belief that underlies Tarkovsky's thoughts: the appeal to an inner, subjective reality and truth. Bergson's introduction is a straightforward exposition of the key concepts in his philosophy.

ANDREI TARKOVSKY

Tarkovsky was born in 1932, in Laovrazhe, the Ivanova district of the Soviet Union. He died in 1986, only months after the release of his last film, *The Sacrifice*. His prior films are *Ivan's Childhood* 1962, *Andrei Rublev* 1966, *Solaris* 1971, *The Mirror* 1975, *Stalker* 1979, and *Nostalghia* 1983. Tarkovsky's films form an intense, personal and consistent oeuvre that have become an enigma for critics and audiences. What may remain undiscovered, however, is Tarkovsky's own theoretical thoughts on film and art.

Tarkovsky's meager film output can be traced to the difficulties he incurred with the Soviet film industry. During Tarkovsky's career, films were judged by State

representatives and placed into one of three categories. The first category meant full approval and wide distribution. The second category met with approval but limited distribution; and the third category meant disapproval and distribution limited to low-end cinemas and workers' clubs (Herbert Marshall 92.) Tarkovsky's films, personal, complex, unconventional, and sometimes politically "unsafe" (especially the anti-Stalinist *The Mirror*), were sometimes relegated to the third category. Tarkovsky relates his tribulations:

> I have worked for twenty-four years in the Soviet union, for the state organization on which allmovie activity depends, and have produced only six films. I can say that in those twenty-four years I have been unemployed for eighteen ("World FilmDirectors, 1085).

Soviet Film Theory

In between these long intervals Tarkovsky wrote *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*. The book served as a cathartic release for Tarkovsky's creative energy during these periods of inactivity. The resulting film theory is a unique blend of classical realist aesthetic (long take, depth of field, moving camera) with an infusion of expressionism (subjectivity). In his introduction, Tarkovsky tells us that he read and reread books on film theory (never mentioning specific titles or names) and that they left him unsatisfied. His own theory, stressing subjectivity and

time, is the result of this dissatisfaction.

In charting the course of Russian film history one will find a series of important connections between filmmaker and theorist. The names Kuleshov, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Vertov stand out as prominent figures in the evolution of film language, theory, film/politics. Although these four filmmaker/theorists are not singular in their visions – and indeed their aesthetic arguments are infamous- they had in common the belief that montage is cinema's main formative principle. Tarkovsky can be seen as continuing in this rich tradition of Russian filmmaker/theorist, but changing its course.

This opposition is best defined against the early Eisenstein. In the essay "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram," written in 1929, Eisenstein states: "Cinematography is, first and foremost, montage" (28). Many decades later Tarkovsky states:

> Nor can I accept the notion that editing is the main formative element of film, as theprotagonists of `montage cinema', following Kuleshov and Eisenstein, maintained in the twenties, as if film was made on the editing table (114).

In most summaries of film theory the aforementioned Russians are lumped together as formalists and opposed to the realist dictums of Kracauer and Bazin. It is

tempting, and all too easy, to follow this clear opposition between montagists and non-montagists and classify Tarkovsky as a realist. However, given Tarkovsky's expressionistic (subjectivity) tendencies, this remains problematic.

Tarkovsky's Vision

Another factor in the writing of the book was the contact Tarkovsky had, through letters and in person, with his audience. Following Tolstoy, Tarkovsky believes in art as communication and that the greatest reward for an artist comes from the knowledge that their vision can "speak" and reach out to people. Tarkovsky had this belief in art as communication reaffirmed when he discovered, first hand, that people felt such a strong empathy toward his films. This also eased his conscience toward cries of elitism.

Tarkovsky's vision is of a need to find balance in a world increasingly determined by scientific and materialistic thought. It is this same tendency at the turn of the century that Bergson's philosophy countered. The deep affinity in temperament and sensibility between Tarkovsky and Bergson stems from the importance they both place on time. For both thinkers time is inextricably bound

to truth, reality and the balance that is necessary for a healthy society.[4]

For Tarkovsky, art is an attempt to redress the balance between material comfort and happiness and spiritual and creative activity. Art is "an example of perfect balance between moral and material principles" (224) and stands as the last refuge for humanist and existential concern. More so than Bergson, art for Tarkovsky takes on a spiritual purpose: to prepare the human soul for goodness (165).

The film that perhaps best expresses Tarkovsky's philosophy of life and art is "Stalker. The film's science-fiction setting plays backdrop to the theme of modern futility. Two men, a Writer and a Scientist, are stripped of their self-confidence, spirit, faith and ability to love. They have decayed as the environment around them has. Their final hope is a room, nestled within a danger-ridden forbidden area known as the "Zone," where it is said that one's deep inner wishes are granted. The Stalker serves as a guide for the two men in their search for this wish serving room.

[4] The Canadian thinker Harold A. Innis is another "temporalist" with a strong kinship to Bergson and Tarkovsky. Innis sees society in terms of the spatial or temporal bias of communication and feels that the spatially biased existence of today's industrial, technological, and consumeristic society can only be "balanced" by a reintegration of temporal principles. See Innis' *The Bias of Communication*, especially the essay “A Plea for Time.”

During the dangerous trip the Stalker relates a tale about a previous Stalker who had entered the room to wish his dead brother back to life. Upon returning home he discovers that in place of his brother's rebirth he has become extremely wealthy. The Zone had materialised his true inner wish and not what the Stalker had imagined it to be. Upon this discovery the stalker hangs himself.

This fable contains insight into Tarkovsky's use of truth and reality. "Art is realistic when it strives to express an ethical ideal. Realism is a striving for the truth..." (113). In this quote Tarkovsky is not interested in external, scientific truth or reality but in an inner subjective truth. The room had granted the truth of the deeper self and not the apparent reality of the surface self. (As I will show later, Tarkovsky applies this psychological distinction between deep and surface self as a guideline to mise-en-scéne.) Tarkovsky holds a similar view of art. The filmmaker must be true to his or her inner self, and there lie reality. Out of this dictum emerges the tension that exists in Tarkovsky between classical realist aesthetics and an expressionist (subjective) sensibility.

After weathering the death traps paving the Zone's road, the men lose the courage to look into themselves and do not enter the room. The Stalker begs the Scientist, who had intended on destroying the room, to let the room exist

as the last depository of faith. They return to their urban wasteland as they left, bereft of spirit or hope. The three men sit still and quiet in a café. The Stalker's wife, who must bear the weight of her husband's despair and the courage to care for their crippled, mutant child, comes to meet her husband. The woman, in her simplicity and courage, reminds the men of the quality that can not be stripped from humanity... faith and the capacity to love:

> Her love and her devotion are that final miracle which can be set against the unbelief, cynicism, moral vacuum poisoning the modern world, of which both the Writer and the Scientist are victims.... Is everything subject to logic, then, and can it all be separated into its components and tabulated? In this film I wanted to mark out that essentially human thing that cannot be dissolved or broken down, that forms like a crystal in the soul of each of us...faith (198-99).

Stalker is a perfect example of the role that Tarkovsky believes art should play. He sees art as the spiritual ideal of its epoch, a "yearning for the ideal." Art must also sustain an awareness between an epoch's central concerns and the individual's relation to it. Each art must concern itself with the problems of its epoch in a dual manner: "...art must transcend as well as observe; its role is to bring spiritual vision to bear on reality" (96). Art, then, arises out of a conflict between the condition as it is and how it could be. An art that does not function on this dual level of observation

and transcendism can not exploit the full spiritual potential of art.

One is struck by Tarkovsky's moralist, humanist, and Christian sensibility, but the relationship between time and art holds the key to an understanding of his film theory. To Tarkovsky cinema is a search for "lost time" (Tarkovsky mentions this on at least three separate occasions, pages 63, 82-83, and 179). Whereas Bazin's realism stresses spatiality (unity, depth, lateral movement) Tarkovsky's stresses the temporal. Hence the centrality of "time" to his film theory.

Time is as central to Bergson's philosophy as it is to Tarkovsky's films and theory. This is one of the principal reasons why there is a strong affinity between them. This will become more apparent as the paper evolves. However, because the bond between Tarkovsky and Bergson runs deep a lengthy exposition of Bergson's philosophy is required.

HENRI BERGSON

The thinking of Henri Bergson (1859-1941) is marked by the sensibility of a poet in philosopher's garb. Bergson lived and wrote in a period marked by relentless scientific progress. This escalation of science and technology altered the shape of the collective consciousness. The incredible impact of Darwin (1809-82), Marx (1818-83), and Freud (1856-1939) contributed to this scientific and deterministic zeitgeist. Sparked by his poetic and artistic sensibility, Bergson took it upon himself to counter the pervasive determinism of the late 19th, early 20th century. The works that I will be drawing from are *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (1889), *Matter and Memory* (1896), *Laughter* (1900), *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1903), *Creative Evolution* (1907), and *The Creative Mind* (1946), an important collection of early and later essays. I will treat his thoughts as a whole and concentrate on those most important to his philosophy and Tarkovsky's film theory: duration, reality, consciousness, the self, memory and intellect/intuition.

Two Types of Time: Experienced (Duration) and Conceptualized (Spatialized)

Consistent throughout Bergson's work is the bedrock position that time plays in his philosophy. In *Time and Free Will* Bergson distinguishes between two types of time, conceptualized and experienced. Time that is spatialized, abstracted and divided is the former, lived time the latter. Spatialized time becomes a fourth dimension of space rather than real time. Real time, what Bergson calls duration,

flows, accumulates and is indivisible. The homogeneous quality of space -all parts being equal- make it infinitely and arbitrarily divisible. One part of space can be substituted for another. True time, heterogeneous and qualitative, can not be treated as a straight line or an undifferentiated mass.

When treated as such, spatialized and conceptualized, time can be predetermined. However, this time, like clock time, is unlike time as we experience it (lived time). Duration is a seamless flux of interpenetration that loses its essence when thought of in any other way. "Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and swells as it advances" (*Creative Evolution*, 7).

Bergson defines duration by way of consciousness. Our true inner self, our emotions, thoughts, and memories do not lie next to each other like shirts on a clothesline but flow into one another. Our consciousness is not a succession of states but a simultaneous overlapping. We have an appointment at 1:30 pm and refer to our watch to insure promptness. When we reflect on the appointment, how we got there, the things that may have happened on the way, and how the appointment went, we do not think of them as divisible events but as an interpenetrating whole. Likewise, clock-time is a pragmatic guide and not a barometer of the event. Abstract time can not be likened to real time as Bergson describes it -an overlapping flux, similar to the indivisible consciousness.

The Problem of Determinism and Free Will

Bergson countered the prevailing mood of determinism at the turn of the century by attempting to place free will back into humanity. Bergson's attack on determinism was unique and subtle. He did not refute determinism on religious or moral grounds, but with his theory of time. Oddly enough, Bergson began his academic life as a student of Herbert Spencer, a materialist, and displayed a strong aptitude for mathematics. However, Bergson claims that his philosophical outlook changed when he realized that time played no part in Spencer's materialism (*The Creative Mind* 10).

Bergson opposed determinism, whether in the form of a mechanistic or teleological philosophy, because it deprived time of any creative function. Mechanism implies that reality is already given in its systematic and causally related structure and teleology implies a life that is playing out a prearranged program (*Creative Evolution* 44-45).

In his first book, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, Bergson began his life-long attack on determinism by distinguishing between two types of time and how they operate and relate to the self and the outer world. In Bergson's psychological dualism, which mirrors his temporal dualism, there are two aspects of the self, a surface self that applies itself to action, utility,

and everyday social conduct and a deeper fundamental self that experiences duration and interpenetrates with every emotional and psychological state:

> Hence there are finally two different selves, one of which is, as it were, the external projectionof the other, its spatial and, so to speak, social representation. We reach the former by deep introspection, which leads us to grasp our inner states as living things, constantly becoming, as states not amenable to measure, which permeate one another and of which the succession in duration has nothing in common with juxtaposition in homogeneous space (*Time and Free Will* 231).

The moments where we grasp our fundamental self are unique. This is why we are rarely free. We spend the majority of our life "outside ourselves" conforming to action, the intellect and social habit, living for our external rather than internal selves. A person can go through their entire life on this surface self, doing just what is necessary, selecting rather than creating and never acting out their true fundamental being.

However rare, the potential for free act remains. In our fundamental self (grasped through intuition) no two moments are identical. Duration swells with the novelty of each passing moment. The fundamental self can not be predicted according to past consciousness. Like duration, it is a state of becoming and change. Bergson concedes that actions performed by the surface self are indeed mechanical

and deterministic, but acts of the true fundamental self, not tied to the necessities of the everyday, are free acts.

Bergson argues that mechanically and teleologically bound philosophies that disclose a prearranged life only consider spatialized time and the surface self. True time is a creative flux that cannot be pre-determined. The key to an understanding of free will is not to confuse temporal with spatial elements: simultaneity with succession, heterogeneity with homogeneity, qualitativeness with quantitativeness and duration with extension.

Memory

Connected to the two aspects of the self are Bergson's thoughts on the mind-body problem. In *Time and Free Will* Bergson leaves us with a bridge between the self and the outer world. He addresses this in his most complex book, *Matter and Memory*. Bergson's dualism stems from the polarity of life and matter. In *Matter and Memory* this polarity becomes the mind-body dualism, and Bergson attempts to solve this dualism by way of memory.

Bergson distinguishes between two types of memory, habit formed memory and pure recollection (habit and pure memory). The former is stored in the brain (matter), the service-house of action, and the latter within consciousness (life). (Bergson is vague on where, if not in the brain, pure memory is stored.) Bergson

believes that nothing is forgotten. Pure memories live on forever. What happens is that the brain, with the aid of perception, censors the memories and selects the one's that are most necessary for immediate action. Habit memory dominates because it has more pragmatic value. Pure memory, like the fundamental self, is less called for and resurfaces during moments of disinterestedness (dreaming for example), or on the rare moments when it can serve as a helpful guide to immediate perception.

For example, when we drive a car the brain summons the habitualized ability to drive that we have "memorized" through repeated practice. The brain does not recall the "unrepeatable" individual instances of each driving lesson, complete with the unique memory of what occurred on each occasion. Habitual memory does not have a creative impact on our consciousness.

However, just as the life force (élan vital) imposes itself on matter, the spirit (pure memory) can force itself onto the utilitarian brain. This is how Bergson lessens the severity of the Cartesian mind-body separation. The body is an instrument for action. Pure perception helps select what is necessary for this bodily function. However, pure perception and pure memory exist only in theory because perception is always effected by memory and pure memory is dependent on the brain for

materialization. Therefore the brain, which cannot actually produce a representation or image, is the meeting house for mind and matter.

Bergson applies the same logic to attain balance between idealism and realism. Neither pure consciousness nor pure things-in-themselves exist wholly independently of one another. Although the brain and the body may be matter based and consciousness and pure memory spirit based, common sense dictates that they must intersect. Therefore life unconsciously oscillates between a realist and idealist position.

Intuition and the Intellect

Outside of Bergson's views on time he is best remembered (and most severely criticized) for his attempt to place intuition atop the intellect as a means of acquiring absolute knowledge. These views fit in nicely with his dualism of life/matter, duration/spatialized time, and pure memory/habitual memory.

Simply put, Bergson sees the intellect connected to matter and spatialized time and intuition connected to life and duration. The intellect, by nature, is a spatializing mechanism. To acquire knowledge it employs concepts, symbols, abstraction, analysis, and fragmentation. In effect, the intellect places a "veil" over

reality and treats whatever it approaches in static terms.

Bergson states that "movement is reality itself" (*The Creative Mind* 169). The intellect, unable to treat mobility, falsifies movement. It can only express movement in static terms. It "substitutes for the continuous the discontinuous, for mobility stability.... But in doing so it allows what is the very essence of the real to escape" (*The Creative Mind* 222-223). In the earlier *Creative Evolution* he states that the intellect "dislikes what is fluid, and solidifies everything it touches" (52-53). It is clear that in Bergson's view the intellect is best suited to the study of inert objects, immobility and being, and intuition to the study of movement and change (duration). In his system, then, intuition can approach the flux of reality and the intellect can only take static "snapshots" of reality. It is only in this sense that the intellect "falsifies" reality. In doing this the intellect gives us a necessary, pragmatic grasp of reality.

Intuition is the means with which to grasp the essential element of reality, duration. Bergson introduces his intuition/intellect dualism in "An Introduction to Metaphysics" and develops it in *Creative Evolution*. He calls intuition the "sympathy by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with

what there is unique and consequently inexpressible in it" and the intellectual process an "operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is, common to that object and to others" (*The Creative Mind* 190).

Bergson does not neglect the pragmatic value of the intellect. The intellect's ability to master tools outside of the self and employ concepts and symbols is of the utmost importance in acquiring knowledge about reality. However, the intellect can never enter into a sympathetic bond with change, movement or becoming. (And in Bergson's view reality is not the object that changes or moves but change and movement.)

In explaining how intuition works Bergson refers to consciousness. The one thing that we have the purest intuitional grasp of is ourselves. However, even with the self, as we noted earlier, this is not a given. Most of our life is spent wading through our surface self. It is only on the rare occasion that we let ourselves flow and experience our conscious states melting into one another like, as Bergson says, the notes of a melody.

Bergson's project is to transport this same accuracy of knowing ourselves into the philosophical method. He sees intuition and the intellect as two complementary avenues leading to knowledge and reality. (The confusion this may imply will be

shortly addressed.) He does not discount the intellect or propose to eliminate it.

This idea of transferring the intuitive knowledge that we have of ourselves onto objects and people is difficult to contemplate. To what extent, absolutely or relatively, Bergson meant it is uncertain, although I would guess the latter. (And if the former as an impossible ideal.) However, it is less difficult to imagine an artist attempting such a process through their art work by approaching outer reality with an intuitional sense of duration.

This is, I believe, what Tarkovsky expresses in his theory and practice and why Bergson's project, if unsuccessful as a "metaphysical science," is more successful in aesthetics and art. By instilling their art with an intuitive sense the artist can communicate an inner truth to their audience. What relationship this truth has to other forms of knowledge is another question, one that Bergson spent his life striving to answer.

Metaphysics: What is Reality?

Intuition is the process that enables one to grasp duration and real time. Collapsed together these form the cornerstone of Bergson's metaphysical system and its ontology of reality. How does Bergson characterize reality? For Bergson reality is

inseparable from duration and hence shares the same temporal qualities: flux, movement, change, and becoming. Time is not a passive thing that is acted upon, but the substance of life (consciousness, evolution, change, creation).

The point in Bergson's metaphysics is to distinguish between a reality that exists out of pragmatic and utilitarian necessity and a reality that is a flux similar to one's consciousness. Dividing anything, time, movement, reality, is only a function of the intellect, the body, and the brain: matter at the service of immediate action; but, what forms reality is the tension of the life force (élan vital) imposing itself on matter. Here we are led to Bergson's evolutionary theory.

Bergson accepts evolution as a scientific fact, but believes it is creative rather than mechanistic. He treats reality and life as a flowing consciousness, both individual and evolutionary. The progression of his work, from *Time and Free Will* to *Creative Evolution* (not his final work) culminates in the parallel between duration in an individual and the élan vital in the universe. The same force that constitutes the fundamental self, duration, becomes the same force, only magnified, that governs evolution, the élan vital. Common to both is consciousness. The reason, therefore, that time holds such a supreme position in Bergson's philosophy is because it is the

bond that unites individual reality (duration) to the universal reality (élan vital).

Bergson's metaphysics can be seen as an inversion of Plato's. Plato saw the fundamental nature of reality as eternal and unchanging. The reality we see is a derivation of the Platonic Forms that exist outside time and space. In Plato's system time is an illusion, a "moving image of eternity" (Bergson quotes Plato in *Creative Evolution* 345). However, for Bergson reality is a continuous becoming and the static "snapshots" that the intellect takes a pragmatic account of that reality.

Chapter 2

TARKOVSKY AND BERGSON: A CONFLUENCE

INTRODUCTION

It is unlikely that Tarkovsky read Bergson first hand. However, he does refer often to two French literary giants strongly influenced by Bergson: Marcel Proust and Paul Valéy.[5] In the following chapter I will discuss the similarities in thought that appear between Tarkovsky and Bergson in certain areas (epistemology, memory, time, reality,) and how the key concept in Bergson's philosophy, duration (the confluence of these areas), provides a basis for Tarkovsky's film theory. The chapter concludes with a look at the similarities between their respective positions on art.

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[5] Bergson's thoughts had a widespread influence on the artistic community. His importance today is understated partly because his thoughts have been deeply assimilated into the thoughts and works of countless artists and thinkers. Culled from my various sources and readings, especially Gunter's *Henri Bergson: A Bibliography RevisedSecond Edition*, Grogin's *The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914*, and Kolakowski's *Bergson*, here is a list of philosophers, psychologists and artists who are either self-professed "Bergsonians" or have been influenced by him: William James, Georges Sorel, Alfred North Whitehead, Teilhard de Chardin, Jacques Maritain, John Dewey, Herbert Read, Carl Jung, Eugene Minkowski, T.E Hulme, Charles Péguy, Paul Valá,áry, Nikos Kazantzakis, William Faulkner, and Marcel Proust. Gunter includes the following as writers who may have had a "partial Bergsonian influence": Virginia Woolf, Eugene Ionesco, André Gide, T.S. Eliot, William Golding, Wallace Stevens and Jorges Louis Borges (8).

Epistemology: Science and Aesthetics

Of the many similarities between Tarkovsky and Bergson some are too general to link specifically, while many share a more profound affinity. One such affinity is the epistemological distinction between science and art. In Bergson's philosophy it is expressed by the distinction between the intellect (science) and intuition (metaphysics) and forms the basis of his metaphysics and epistemology. In Tarkovsky's case the two categories of knowledge are labelled scientific and aesthetic (37).

In Bergson's philosophy, the implication of this is far reaching. Employing already known elements, the intellect can only grasp the immobile. The intellect will inherently abstract and divide movement. Intuition enables one to lock into duration (the flow of life itself). Tarkovsky's sentiment toward an intellectual approach to art bears a sympathetic bond to Bergson:

> For the empirical process of intellectual cognition cannot explain how an artistic image comes into being -unique, indivisible, created and existing on some plane other than that of the intellect (40).

In "Introduction to Metaphysics," written in 1903 and reprinted in *The Creative Mind*, Bergson paints a confusing relationship between the intellect (science) and intuition (metaphysics). Intuition is direct apprehension, unimpeded by symbols, and the method employed by metaphysics:

"Metaphysics is therefore the science which claims to dispense with symbols" (191). Are, then, science and metaphysics two distinct ways of acquiring knowledge of the same object, one relative (science) the other absolute (metaphysics), or are they assigned different areas of study?

For example, Bergson says: "...analysis operates on immobility, while intuition is located in mobility... That is the very clear line of demarcation between intuition and analysis" (212). However, what Bergson aims at is an epistemological situation where science and metaphysics "meet in intuition" and that there would be put "more of science into metaphysics and more of metaphysics into science" (227). This seems to cloud the demarcation between science and metaphysics. In the next paragraph he counters the essay's opening statement about there being "two ways of knowing a thing" when he agrees with the ancient philosophers who say that there are not two different ways of knowing a thing.

Bergson addressed these confusions in one of two lengthy essays written specifically for *The Creative Mind*. Bergson opposes what he considers the established view among many philosophers: that science can only achieve a relative knowledge and metaphysics a "hypothetical and vague" knowledge (50). He believes that they can both become "equally precise and certain." Although they are

complementary, they do not approach the same object nor employ the same method. We can not have science studying an object to arrive at relative knowledge and then have metaphysics come in to complete the task. Bergson says: "Instead of this, let us allot to them different objects; to science let us leave matter, and to metaphysics, mind" (50). Earlier he states:

> To metaphysics, then, we assign a limited object, principally spirit, and a special method, mainly intuition. In doing this we make a clear distinction between metaphysics and science (42).

Therefore, "science and metaphysics will differ in object and method, but will commune in experience" (51).

In summary, science, employing a method (intellect and analysis) that can only "freeze" movement, must study what is inert or experiences only minute duration. Metaphysics, which employs intuition and is able to flow with duration, is left to study mobility.

In Tarkovsky's distinction, science and aesthetics, he also states that both are capable of truth:

> And so art, like science, is a means of assimilating the world, an instrument for knowing it in the course of man's journey towards what is called `absolute truth' (37).

However, Tarkovsky is interested in subjective, spiritual truth rather than the "objective truth" (37) of science.

Like Bergson, he notes a difference in approach and principle between these two forms of knowing. For example, compared to science, art is more universal, it is not verifiable in the same way as science, it does not have a practical goal, it is subjective and emotional rather than objective and intellectual, and it acts on the soul (37-41). These comments are far from being undeniable. Many people would argue that science is also subjective and that art employs logic as well. The point is that Tarkovsky expresses broad, general distinctions between science and art that bear an affinity to Bergson's distinctions between science and metaphysics. For example, Bergson assigns science to the study of matter and metaphysics to the study of the spirit (*The Creative Mind* 42 & 50), while Tarkovsky assigns science to logical, pragmatic tasks and art to spiritual matters (37-38).

Like Bergson, Tarkovsky also notes a respectful alliance between the two forms of knowledge:

> And if cold, positivistic, scientific cognition of the world is like the ascent of an unending staircase, its artistic counterpart suggests an endless system of spheres.... One may complement or contradict another, but in no circumstances can they cancel each other out; on the contrary, they enrich one another, and accumulate to form an allªembracing sphere that grows out into infinity (39).

In Bergson's dualism the intellect employs concepts and symbols that falsify movement (divide what is indivisible). Tarkovsky also opposes abstract, symbolic

and conceptual approaches to art. Tarkovsky stresses that images must be taken as they are. He claims there is nothing hidden in his films, no coded meanings but only the "desire to tell the truth." People want symbols and secret meanings because they are not "accustomed to the poetics of the cinema image" (133).

He disregards the view of cinema as a system of signs for the same reasons (176). The film image should evoke an affection, a response, and a feeling, not a concept. He believes that the ideal spectator is one who takes in a film as a traveller takes in the countryside because:

> ...the effect of an artistic image is an extraªmental type of communication. There are some artists who attach symbolic meaning to their images, but this is not possible for me (Ian Christie, 1981)

Critics continually hound Tarkovsky for "revelations" concerning his personal iconography. A list of recurring Tarkovskian iconography would include: milk, water, earth, fire, rain, dogs, horses, puddles, dank rooms, and mist laden ponds. As stated, Tarkovsky is reluctant to give symbolic readings to his imagery. However, at a conference in Italy he concedes somewhat and expresses his attraction to water in Bergsonian terms (change and flux):

> Water is a mysterious element, a single molecule of which is very photogenic. It can convey movement and a sense of change and flux.... Maybe it has subconscious echoes -perhaps my love of water arises from some atavistic memory or some ancestral transmigration (Tony Mitchell, 55).

Memory & Consciousness

In an article written in 1911, "Life and Consciousness," Bergson writes: "I will characterize consciousness by its most obvious feature...memory" (7). Memory and consciousness are inextricably woven to duration. Tarkovsky shares a similar sensibility toward this inner life. He is not interested in the formal or aesthetic renderings of time in art but "in the inner, moral qualities essentially inherent in time itself" (58).

Memory, which for Bergson (pure memory and not habitual memory) forms the soul of the fundamental self, becomes for Tarkovsky the inner, moral quality of time. Tarkovsky considers time and memory to be "two sides of a medal" because memory can not exist without time. Memory, like time, is complex and can never be exhausted. Without it a person would be "falling out of time" and "doomed to madness" (57-58). After collapsing time and memory Tarkovsky writes: "Memory is a spiritual concept!" (57). Bergson also likens memory to the spirit:

> When we pass from pure perception to memory, we definitely abandon matter for spirit (*Matter and Memory* 313)....but pure memory is a spiritual manifestation. With memory we are, in truth, in the domain of spirit (*Matter and Memory* 320).

Bergson's pure memory, "independent recollections," occupies a prominent role in Tarkovsky's films and film theory. Tarkovsky even makes reference to Marcel Proust:"Proust also spoke of raising `a vast edifice of memories,' and that seems to me to be what cinema is called to do" (59). Most of Tarkovsky's films employ memory in a creative and formative function related to either the theme or structure. With reference to *The Mirror* he says:

> It seemed to tell us something about the special quality of our memory -about its capacity for penetrating beyond the veils drawn by time, and this was exactly what the film had to be about (132).

Bergson identified two types of memory, habitual and pure. Habitual memory is better suited to serve the needs of perception and action. Since the brain, the service house of action, decides what memory to select, habitual memory becomes dominant in everyday living. However, pure memory brings "something spontaneous and creative into life" (Gross, 375).

In the essay "Bergson, Proust, and the Revaluation of Memory" David Gross says that there is a third memory Bergson intimated but never named: "unsolicited" independent memories disengaged from immediate action or perception. A person

dominated by these "unsolicited" recollections would be overwhelmed by the flood of images and hindered in their ability to cope with reality (375-376).

This occurs in three of Tarkovsky's films: *Solaris*, *The Mirror*, and, most prominently, in *Nostalghia*. With *Nostalghia* we have a case of a film echoing the inner state of the filmmaker. Tarkovsky intended the film to be a psychological study of how strongly bound the Russian people are to their culture, nationhood and sense "of people. The title refers to an angst-like nostalgia that hangs over a Russian poet while doing research in Italy. During his stay the poet remains an alienated outsider "who can only watch people's lives from a distance, crushed by the recollections of his past, by the faces of those dear to him, which assail his memory together with the sounds and smells of home" (203). (The astronauts in *Solaris* are, likewise, "assailed" by their unconscious materialised by the nearby planet.)

Tarkovsky claims that he too was engulfed by this same nostalgia while shooting the film on location. When he first saw all the footage he was struck by its "unrelieved gloom." This was not something he set out to do, but happened because, "irrespective of my own specific theoretical intentions, the camera was obeying first and foremost my inner state during filming" (203-204).

Duration vs. Spatialized Time

In the beginning of the third and possibly most important chapter of his book, Tarkovsky emphasizes time as, above all, human and experiential. His vision of time is less ambitious than Bergson's while maintaining what is essential to duration: time as it is lived and experienced: "Time is the condition for the existence of our `I'" (57). Neither Bergson nor Tarkovsky take an extreme realist (time as absolute and existing on its own, as Newton believed) or idealist (time as an illusion, as Plato believed) position on time. They see time as the interconnection between the subject and the object. Like Bergson, Tarkovsky considers time not as a "thing" but as that which allows a person to experience themselves and grow into their personality (57).

In *Time and Free Will* Bergson defines duration as the "form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states" (100). Duration endures, accumulates and ceaselessly changes. The time that an enduring ego experiences is likewise flowing and changing. This time is distinct from the conceptual, spatialized time of mathematics or physics.

In the opening pages (3-10) of *Creative Evolution*, written eighteen years later, Bergson continues to define duration in terms of the inner self:

> My mental state, as it advances on the road of time, is continually swelling with the duration which it accumulates: it goes on increasing rolling upon itself, as a snowball on the snow (4).

As Bergson says, we may sometimes think with only a part of our past, "but it is with our entire past...that we desire, will and act" (8). The past does not evaporate. Tarkovsky expresses a similar sentiment:

> But what exactly is this 'past'? Is it what has passed? And what does ' passed' mean for a person when for each of us the past is the bearer of all that is constant in the reality of the present, of each current moment....Time cannot vanish without a trace for it is a subjective, spiritual category; and the time we have lived settles in our soul as an experience placed within time" (58).

Bergson concludes that "to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly. Should the same be said of existence in general?" (*Creative Evolution* 10). Bergson thinks so.

Time as a Metaphysics

Tarkovsky is impassioned with similar metaphysical issues as Bergson. Bergson's philosophical project spreads into areas of psychology and biology, but deals primarily with the question, what is the nature of reality? Because of their interconnection within his philosophical system, Bergson uses several terms interchangeably to define reality, but the start and end point remains duration.

Bergson defines reality as duration (real time), flux, consciousness, and pure memory. In Bergson's metaphysics these temporal elements interpenetrate. Real time is defined as duration, duration as flux and consciousness, consciousness as memory, and the life-force as a supra-consciousness.[6] Tarkovsky refers to reality in Bergsonian terms ("The director's task is to recreate life: its movement, its contradictions, its dynamic and conflicts" (187-88) and "The author's conception becomes a living, human witness...only when we are able to plunge it into the rushing current of reality...." (94), but replaces reality with "truth." This becomes his metaphysical quest, and tied to it time, memory, poetics, art, faith and spirit:

> I entirely subscribe to the view that [scientific] truth is reached through dispute. Left to study a question on my own, I tend to fall into a reflective state which suits the metaphysical bent of my character.... (11).

My interpolation is to make clear that Tarkovsky is not interested in scientific truth (surface truth) but in inner, metaphysical truth.

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[6]In *Solaris* the title planet is an amorphous water-like mass of consciousness, able to materialize the unconscious desires and thoughts of the men on the nearby space station. What better metaphor for Bergson's life as consciousness!

For Tarkovsky, as Bergson in his arena, the importance of realism (or truth) does not rest on the verisimilitude of the image; this remains only surface reality, akin to Bergson's distinction between the fundamental self (inner consciousness, reality) and the outer self that reacts to and for utilitarian needs. If, for Tarkovsky, neither the mechanical nature of the camera or the appeal to representationalism are in themselves barometers for film realism, then what is?

The same passion and confluence of real, experienced time (versus conceptual time), duration, consciousness, and memory that exists in Bergson's "philosophy of change" exists in Tarkovsky's films and film theory. When Tarkovsky says that "the time that we have lived settles in our soul as an experience placed within time" he points the way toward a film theory based on Bergson's concept of duration. One of the goals of this thesis is to show how valuable such a theory might be as an alternative to contemporary accounts of realism and film.

Film: An Imprint in Time

> Time, printed in its factual forms and manifestations: such is the supreme idea of cinema as an art.... On that idea I build my working hypotheses, both practical and theoretical (*Sculpting in Time* 63).

Tarkovsky poses the question, what is the essence of film, what are its "determining factors" ? (62) He begins by describing the experience of Lumiere's classic realist text, *Arrivée d'un Train*. He refers to the film as "that work of genius." What strikes him above the film's simplicity, impressionistic affect, and historical value is that it manifested for "the first time in the history of the arts...the means to take an impression of time" (62). Time could now be captured, contained, and mummified. It formed the primary aesthetic principle of film. The attention early film history paid to gaining artistic acceptance by theatrical and literary adaptations deprived film of its most precious potential: "the possibility of printing on celluloid the actuality of time" (63).

Tarkovsky defines the director's work as "sculpting in time." Several pages later Tarkovsky reiterates his belief in the aesthetics of time for cinema:

> Cinema came into being as a means of recording the very movement of reality: factual, specific, within time and unique; of reproducing again and again the moment, instant by instant, in its fluid mutability -that instant over which we find ourselves able to gain mastery by imprinting it on film (94).

This notion of "imprinted time" or "sculpting in time" is the aesthetic principle that he uses as his guideline[7] for development of form and imagery:

> That was when the idea of `imprinted time' occurred to me [*Ivan's Childhood*]; an idea that allowed me to develop a principle, with points of reference that would hold my fantasy in check as I searched for form, for ways of handling images (94).

In a wonderful passage, Tarkovsky brings in the Japanese word for rust, "saba," [sic][8] to define the passage of time. An object that acquires the signs of aging, a tree or a chair for example, are said to exhibit saba, a "natural rustiness." He then says: "Saba, as an element of beauty, embodies the link between art and nature" (59).[9]

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[7] In fact the reason Tarkovsky so admires Bresson is because he believes Bresson is the only director who can successfully model a film on a prearranged theoretical formula (94-95).â

[8] Tarkovsky is quoting a Soviet journalist, but the correct spelling for this Zen term is "sabi."

[9] This quote has interesting consequences for realist film theory. The link between nature and film is critical for realist film theory. Bazin confuses matters by suggesting a causal (indexical) relationship between film and the pro-filmic event with such terms as mummified, imprint, tracing, mold, and fingerprint. Tarkovsky's position, while similar to Bazin's, is more concrete: cinema manifests "saba," a remnant of a passing of time, of something that has lived, experienced and aged. Nature and art adjoin by the condition of their dual existence. For Bazin film is subservient to nature. For Tarkovsky art and nature co-exist. Art represents the aging of nature; time is the causal link. Just as an old tree, a creased photo or a rickety chair can signal "lived time" and "pastness," film, itself susceptible to age but also rejuvenation, stands as an emblem of a living past. This is the advantage film holds over other arts, and an element that likens it, spiritually, to nature: the illusion it gives of both "pastness" and "here and now."

The Aesthetics of Time-Thrust

When Tarkovsky discusses the specifics of form the central element of the film image is rhythm. Tarkovsky defines rhythm as the flow of time within the frame, not unlike the flow of time that is central to all of reality in Bergson's philosophy. Time is placed above space:

> One cannot conceive of a cinematic work with no sense of time passing through the shot, but one can easily imagine a film with no actors, music, decor or even editing (113).

He points to several famous "one-shot" films (*Arrivée d'un Train*, Warhol's *Sleep* and an unnamed Pascal Aubier film).

Tarkovsky believes that the rhythm generated by the "time-thrust" within the shot, and not editing, is the "main formative element of cinema" (119). This time-thrust allows us to know "the movement of time from the flow of the life-process reproduced in the shot" (120). Each director has their own particular rhythm according to their own "search for time." Tarkovsky describes this rhythm in Bergsonian fashion when he refers to the "life-process" within a shot, the internal rhythm of the individual director, and the metaphorical comparison of the varying rhythms of shots to the rhythms of a brook, spate, river, waterfall and ocean.

Joining shots of varying rhythm must not be used for shock effect or as an arbitrary device. It must come from "an inner necessity, from an organic process going on in the material as a whole" (121). Anything else will appear false. This is necessary because a "sense of time is germane to the director's innate perception of life" (121). Again, Bergson is present in the need to maintain the "whole" in view and not to abstract.

Tarkovsky discounts the notion that montage is the central formative element" in cinema (114). Idea-making and conceptualizing are not the natural qualities of cinema. Tarkovsky discounts the rhythm achieved by editing as external to the images. While filming, Tarkovsky concentrates on the flow of time in the frame and believes the editing process adds nothing to this natural flow of time:

> Editing brings together shots which are already filled with time,
> and organises the unified, living structure inherent in the film;
> and the time that pulsates through the blood vessels of the film,
> making it alive, is of a varying rhythmic pressure (114).

The creative process in editing involves getting the correct order according to the rhythm already established within the shots. Contrary to established principles of editing, Tarkovsky does not believe editing can add anything of temporal value.

Editing is just a matter of matching the rhythm of the shots:

> In a curious, retroactive process, a self[a]organising structure takes shape during editing because of the distinctive properties given the material during shooting. The essential nature of the filmed material comes out in the character of the editing (116).

Editing forms the structure but not the rhythm of a film. Tarkovsky, then, discounts Eisenstein's metric montage (as well as intellectual, but not necessarily the rhythmic, tonal, and overtonal):

> The distinctive time running through the shots makes the rhythm...rhythm is not determined by the length of the edited pieces, but by the pressure of the time that runs through them (117).

Tarkovsky opposes the younger Eisensteinian aesthetics for Bergsonian reasons:

> I am radically opposed to the way Eisenstein used the frame to codify intellectual formulae.... Eisenstein wasn't trying to convey his own experience to anyone (or reality per se), he wanted to put across ideas.... Moreover Eisenstein's montage dictum, as I see it, contradicts the very basis of the unique process thereby a film affects an audience. It deprives the person watching of that prerogative of film, which has to do with what distinguishes its impact on his consciousness from that of literature or philosophy: namely the opportunity to live through what is happening on the screen as if it were his own life, to take over, as deeply personal and his own, the experience imprinted in time upon the screen, relating his own life to what is being shown (183).

Apart from the aversion to an intellectual approach, Tarkovsky expresses a

Bergsonian quality in the words "to live through." As Bergson distinguished, there is a time conceptualized and a time experienced.

Time, then, is the living, dynamic quality that flows through a shot and editing the fragmenting, spatializing mechanism that is a pragmatic necessity in the completion of the film. Tarkovsky expresses the Bergsonian distinction between real time and abstract time in the following passage:

> Time, imprinted in the frame, dictates the particular editing principle; and the pieces that `won't edit' -that can't be properly joined –are those which record a radically different kind of time. One cannot, for instance, put actual time together with conceptual time.... (117).

Tarkovsky remains indifferent or unapproving of intellectual montage and analytical cutting because it can not add temporal value to a shot. Cuts that simply move the story along or produce specific effects (crosscutting for suspense) are utilitarian narrative devices. They do not reflect immediately on time as experienced. Tarkovsky scorns Eisensteinian montage because it aims at producing "ideas." We do not reflect on the time elapsed, flown through, or experienced but on the meaning of the individual shots and their relationship to the adjoining shots.

Duration as a Theoretical Guideline: Interpenetration & the Relationship Between the Edit and the Shot

As stated, Tarkovsky does not believe that editing forms rhythm, the basis of cinema's main formative element. "Time-thrust," the time pressure running through a shot, has that distinction. But obviously, one cannot discount editing altogether. Tarkovsky believes that editing is purely structural and does not add to a film's over-all rhythm. "Editing entails assembling smaller and larger pieces, each of which carries a different time" (119); or "Editing is ultimately no more than the ideal variant of the assembly of the shots, necessarily contained within the material that has been put onto the roll of film" (116). Can such a guideline lead to any general principles? It can if based on Bergson's concept of duration.

Bergson's definition of duration as the present pregnant with the past has no better analogy than the cinema. In her article "What Bergson Means By Interpenetration" Karin Costelloe points to interpenetration as the key to duration and to an understanding of Bergson's philosophy. She describes interpenetration as an indivisible element that is part of what Bergson takes to be in constant flux and change: duration, consciousness, life. Interpenetration is a process whereby "the

nature of what comes after only finds its explanation by reference to what came before" (148).

The relationship of one film frame to the next can be seen as analogy for interpenetration, as can the general principles of montage. In interpenetration "the parts depend for their qualitative character upon their connection with the whole of the rest of the process" (149). It is contrasted to independence or discreteness. The frames of a film interpenetrate much the same way as musical notes.[10] Individually, film frames are meaningless, but as they flow through the projector gate they come alive.

According to Bergson memory, as well as time, is forever growing and "pregnant." Nothing in memory is ever "lost." Likewise the frames of a film remain stored after they are seen (In both the projector and the consciousness that perceives them.) There is no absolute present in any one frame. At 1/24 a second, a frame is not perceptible to the naked eye. Therefore accumulation and interpenetration play an integral part in cinema.

Editing has a specific function in relation to the rhythm established in each shot. The rhythm ("time-thrust") established by the time-pressure within the frame

[10] In *Time and Free Will* Bergson uses music as an analogy for duration: "...as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another" (100).

is similar to the flux of time in Bergson's duration. In theory,duration is indivisible; a feature length film without edits (undivided) is of little theoretical interest, but the illusion of a film that flows seamlessly is not. This was Tarkovsky's theoretical principle for *Stalker*:

> ...it was very important that the film observe the three unities of time, space and action.... in " *Stalker* I wanted there to be no time lapse between shots. I wanted time and its passing to be revealed, to have their existence, within each frame; for the articulations between the shots to be the continuation of the action and nothing more, to involve no dislocation of time.... I wanted it to be as if the whole film had been made in a single shot (193-194).

Tarkovsky is not speaking of "invisible editing," but an editing style that does not add false "rhythmic" quality of its own. The editing should unobtrusively merge the flow of time already formed in each shot.

Bergson defines duration as the interpenetration of consciousness. Therefore a film theory based on it must also allow for edits that reveal subjective states (memories, dreams, flashbacks, flashforwards, unconscious thoughts, daydreams). Our thoughts flow and overlap, past and present forming the future, a continual becoming, therefore montage necessarily accommodates such a time. Obviously these cuts are limited to films that deal with such a discourse, therefore can not be a general aspect of the theory.

Appeal to Psychology: Bergson's Two Aspects of the Self

Tarkovsky's distinction between surface reality and the psychological truth beneath it consolidates the link between his film theory and Bergson's duration. The same dualism that Bergson holds for the self, Tarkovsky holds for a theory and practice of cinema. This is why consciousness and memory play such vital roles in Tarkovsky's films.

Tarkovsky believes that the screenwriter should have a strong knowledge of psychology ("psychological insight") and both director and scriptwriter must have "something in common with the psychologist-screenwriter, and also with the psychiatrist...the script writer can, indeed must, bring to bear on the director his own knowledge of the whole truth about that inner state, even to the point of telling him how to build up the mise-en-scéne" (75).

Tarkovsky works with the same dualism that Bergson notes between the outer (surface) self and the inner (fundamental) self: "...usually a person's words, inner state and physical action develop on different planes." True mise-en-scéne must be able to know what is happening on all these planes and synthesize them.

Tarkovsky's emphasis on psychology must not, however, be confused with Freudianism. Tarkovsky's brand of psychology is closer to Bergson: the true fundamental self lying below the surface self (the spatializing intellect, the action-

oriented brain, and the need to comply to social conduct), the importance of consciousness with respect to an understanding of duration and the fundamental self, and the radical difference between aesthetic and scientifically arrived at knowledge. The point is not to fall prey to inappropriate analogies[11] (film/mind theories), but to state that, within the confines of narrative art, film is highly equipped to accommodate duration as both a theme and theory. Tarkovsky's theory, based as such on duration, is strongly supported by his own films.

Summary

Duration is best, but not exclusively, expressed in the flow of a continuous shot. Tarkovsky's film theory, cloaked in Bergson's conception of reality, approves of time as it flows through a single take (time-thrust), structural editing that conforms to the rhythms of the "time-thrusts," and (interpenetrating) shots that duplicate duration. Editing that does not play an important role in time as experienced, such

[11] As Noel Carroll aptly points out in “Film/Mind Analogies: The Case of Hugo Munsterberg” film theories strictly based on psychological frameworks are inherently faulty because the analogy rests on the false assumption that we will gain greater knowledge of film by means of an area, the mind, that we know less of than film. The contrary approach, looking at film as a means of acquiring insight into the mind, would be more fruitful or logical, and, indeed, I believe is what Tarkovsky (partly) attempts.

as purely intellectual montage, cutting for specific effect (horror, shock, suspense), cutting that removes the extraneous action (utilitarian), and analytical cutting, is not instrumental to a Bergsonian/Tarkovskian based film theory. Its importance rests in other areas (pragmatic, structural).

For Tarkovsky, film's greatness lie in its ability to communicate the feeling of time anew, of a time sprouting there and then in front of an audience. The notion of "time imprinted" or "mummified" is only anti-Bergsonian (spatialized) if one does not consider the individual, living, growing consciousness that first creates the film and the one that later perceives the film. Tarkovsky expresses this in a passage that bears a strong Bergsonian presence:

> It [time] becomes tangible when you sense something significant, truthful, going on beyond the events on the screen; when you realise, quite unconsciously, that what you see in the frame is not limited to its visual depiction, but is a pointer to something out beyond the frame...a pointer to life.... Just as life, constantly moving and changing, allows everyone to interpret and feel each separate moment in his own way, so too a real picture, faithfully recording on film the time which flows on beyond the edges of the frame, lives within time if time lives within it; this two-way process is a determining factor of cinema....

> Once in contact with the individual who sees it, it separates from its author, starts to live its own life, undergoes changes of form and meaning. (117-118)[12]

With these elements in place, time, memory, and psychological accuracy, it is only a small step to the formation of a film theory based on Bergson's duration. Tarkovsky begins by discussing time philosophically and how it relates to all of humanity's experiences. He then relates it to cinema's destiny ("...what a person normally goes to the cinema for is time....He goes there for living experience" 63), then as a general working principle for cinema, and finally to the specifics of film form.[13]

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[12] This passage also shares a kindred spirit with Bazin. Thinking along the same lines as Bazin, Tarkovsky disapproves of montage because he feels it deprives the film image of its full potential to connect to the audiences own reality. Rather than pointing to the horizon beyond the frame, highly selective editing points inward to one specific meaning.

[13] The position time holds in Tarkovsky's theory seems to point toward essentialism. If so, it is only because Tarkovsky feels that film is not just a "hybrid" of other existing arts and that for film to be an art it must distinguish itself from other arts. He does, however, say that he has not articulated the absolute and determining property of cinema: “The question of what determines cinematic language is as yet unsolved, and this book only attempts to elucidate one or two points” (173).

TARKOVSKY AND BERGSON ON ART

In the third chapter of his long essay on comedy, *Laughter*, Bergson discusses the relationship between art and reality. The necessities of living (work, social conformity, bodily functions) force a veil in between both ourselves and the flux of reality and our superficial and fundamental self. This veil is "dense and opaque for the common herd, -thin, almost transparent for the artist and the poet" (158). The common person is bound to a pragmatic communicational system that includes language, symbols, concepts and abstractions. These are necessary but, in Bergson's system, can not approach duration.

The artist is less bound to this utilitarian "system."[14] Bergson's artist is in a better position to experience duration because of the artist's natural inclination to disengage from the pragmatic and utilitarian demands of social conduct:

> So art, whether it be painting or sculpture, poetry or music, has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself (162).

[14] Tarkovsky is also opposed to a systematic (structuralism, semiotics) approach to art because he believes it deprives art of its poetry and ambiguity (176).

The "surface" bound social creature is blocked from this reality by an unswerving dedication to the service of the routine and mechanical. When work, physical pleasure and mindless leisure pursuit become the daily routine, access to the fundamental self becomes blocked.

Tarkovsky's theory of art is similar to Bergson's. After distinguishing between science and aesthetics, Tarkovsky says: "Art could be said to be a symbol of the universe, being linked with that absolute spiritual truth which is hidden from us in our positivistic, pragmatic activities" (37). Also echoing Bergson: "Art cannot be given purely utilitarian and pragmatic objectives" (182).

Bergson defines the artist as a soul that is naturally "more detached from life" ("Laughter 160). Tarkovsky expresses a similar praise for the capacity to stretch beyond the surface self:

> ...I am fascinated by the capacity of a human being to make a stand against the forces which drive his fellows into the rat race, into the rut of practicalities: and this phenomenon contains the material of more and more of my ideas for new work (209 & 212).

Simonetta Salvestroni points to Tarkovsky's use of children as a manifestation of this ability to disengage. Salvestroni believes that the recurring link in Tarkovsky's films between water and children (*Stalker*, *Ivan's Childhood*, *Andrei Rublev*, *The Mirror*) "has an analogical basis...which also points to the privileged status of

childhood as a sanctuary from the mechanical rigidity of adult life" (303).

According to Bergson the artist is still bound in part to action. Therefore the difference between an artist and lay person is relative and not absolute. An artist wholly removed from action and the necessities of living would be as "unhealthy" to society as the person who floats through life on the surface self (mechanically).

Bergson sees a tension between the individual and the society in terms of the individual's ability to strike a healthy balance between the necessities of social living and the creative and spiritual potential of the individual. It's as if there are two realities, a pragmatic reality that we apprehend daily, routinely and intellectually and a spiritual reality that we apprehend intuitively. It is neither possible nor desirable to be locked in one or the other. Rather, Bergson proposes a balance between the two necessary modes of reality. Tarkovsky also stresses a balance, one that has always been the domain of art: "Art embodies an ideal; it was an example of perfect balance between moral and material principles..." (224).

Nature always maintains a veil in between itself and humanity. Hence art, for Bergson as it is for Tarkovsky, is a communication of the highest order, although there is a subtle difference distinguishing the two. For Bergson, closer to Bazin's

position, nature reveals itself to us through the artist's "privileged" vision though not, as for Bazin, by a combination of camera and artist:

> [The artist] realises the loftiest ambition in art, which here consists in revealing to us nature (*Laughter*, 161).

And for Bazin, in his famous passage:

> Only the impassive lens, stripping its object of all those ways of seeing it, those piled-up preconceptions, that spiritual dust and grime with which my eyes have covered it, is able to present it in all its virginal purity.... (*What is Cinema*? Vol.1, 15).

In Tarkovsky's case art does not reveal or unveil "a reality but the artist's inner world: "the artist becomes the voice of those who cannot formulate or express their view of reality" (164). Where Bergson says the artist reveals nature to us, Tarkovsky says "the artist reveals his world to us" (41).

Chapter 3

REALISM IN FILM THEORY

INTRODUCTION

I begin the following chapter by briefly discussing the divergent role of the term realism in philosophy and film theory and then move on to consider Tarkovsky's place within existing classical film theory discourse.

Because of Tarkovsky's stated opposition to the principles of classical (early Eisenstein) montage theory it would be easy to label him a realist based on the clear stylistic emphasis of formalism with montage and realism with mise-en-scéne. However, to employ editing and its antithetical position (long take, depth of field, moving camera) as the only distinguishing factor between formalism and realism is limiting. For example, even within the formalists -Kuleshov, Eisenstein, Vertov, Pudovkin, Arnheim, Balazs- there are important, fundamental differences. In this chapter I look at some of the subtleties within Tarkovsky's theory that make a clear positioning (realist/formalist) problematic.

These include the filmmaker's role in the representation of reality, how the camera's mechanical nature effects this role, and Tarkovsky's notion of the cinema image.

Tarkovsky's "subjective" theory is then connected to Bergson's fusion of idealism (the inner world) and realism (the outer world) and how it relates to Bergson's psychological dualism of the surface self and the fundamental self.

Realism

There is a great difference in the use of the terms reality and realism in film and philosophy. In philosophy it occupies a huge terrain (metaphysics), one that I have neither the space nor adequate knowledge to cover. Metaphysics is categorized according to various systems: general, such as monism (reality reduced to one essence) and dualism (to two), specific (idealism, realism, materialism, naturalism), and individual (Plato's Forms, Fichte's Absolute, Hegel's Idea, Schopenhauer's the Will.)

Bergson's metaphysics characterizes reality as dynamic change, movement, and real time (duration). When we have intuition of our inner self we are in union with a duration that is identical to time itself. However, although the duration is of a similar kind there is a difference in tension and magnitude. At these moments we can be experiencing time, but reality as the total of all things (matter, movement,

time, evolution, consciousness) remains outside our ken. We can only catch a glimpse of this vast, complex and dynamic flux (the élan vital).

Bergson's concept of reality, then, is grander than the reality or concept of realism dealt with in film theory. In film theory, realism does not address questions of reality, but rather the relationship between reality and the filmed event.[15] It is in this respect that realism opposes formalism, the former stressing film's ability to observe the physical world and the latter stressing film's ability to interpret it. Hence, a realist and formalist may differ according to how a filmmaker should treat reality, but they may both agree (more or less) on the nature of reality. Realism becomes a relative term whose standard, whether it be in style (acting for example) or subject matter, can shift from one period to the next.

Realism can refer to many things: cinematographic representation (verisimilitude, accuracy); relationship between filmic (the film world) and pro-filmic (real world) event; shooting style (long take, depth of field, "styleless" style); attention to character development; attention to real life conventions; subject matter

[15] However, because of Tarkovsky's self-professed "metaphysical bent" his theory of film realism can not be separated from his philosophy of life, aesthetics, and ethics and hence bears a stronger philosophical stamp than most other film theories.

(everyday living, poverty, working class, etc.); genre (documentary, cinema verite, direct cinema), or movement (Socialist Realism, Poetic Realism, Neo-Realism, Free Cinema). Discussion of realism in film can interact between any number of the above, but a theoretical view begins with the first three.

Tarkovsky's "Subjective" Form of Realism

What makes Tarkovsky's film theory unique is the confluence of realist aesthetics with expressionism. Tarkovsky's realist film theory is suggestively at odds with the convention in realist film theory stating that the filmmaker's intervention must play a subservient role to the mechanical nature of the camera. The filmmaker, according to both Bazin and Kracauer, must be an honest observer of reality. Tarkovsky also believes that "cinema is an art which operates with reality" and not against it (177). Like Bazin and Kracauer, although with different consequences, Tarkovsky accords a role to the camera:

> ...the roll of film imprints mechanically the features of the unconditional world which came into the camera's field of vision, and from these an image of the whole is subsequently constructed (177).

In a Bazinian twist, Tarkovsky says "the basic element of cinema, running through it from its tiniest cell, is observation" (66). The key to "poetry in cinema" is

that the "cinema image is essentially the observation of a phenomenon passing through time" (67). So far his position is quite within the conventions of realist film theory.

But what exactly is the "cinema image"? Tarkovsky's notion of cinema image is a combination of what the camera records mechanically and the filmmaker's vision that shapes it. This is where he collapses the objectivity of the camera with the subjectivity of the filmmaker:

> In cinema it is all the more the case that observation is the first principle of the image....But by no means every film shot can aspire to being an image of the world.... Naturalistically recorded facts are in themselves utterly inadequate to the creation of the cinematic image. The image in cinema is based on the ability to present as an observation one's own perception of an object (107).

Tarkovsky divides artists into those who create their inner world and those who recreate reality. He says that he belongs to the former. However, he claims that this is not decisive because the "inner world created by cinematic means always has to be taken as reality, as it were objectively established in the immediacy of the recorded moment" (118). Is there a contradiction here between the inner subjective world of the artist and the outer objective world of the recorded moment? What type of role does Tarkovsky envision the camera playing?

Contrary to classical film theory, Tarkovsky stresses the artist's role "because of the mechanical agency of the camera. Classical film theory places a great

emphasis on the photographic nature of film. A vulgar film realism might state that because the camera is mechanical its natural inclination is toward objectivity, and the filmmaker must enhance this by upholding a "less-is-more" (non-interventionist) aesthetic. No theorist has actually said this, although Kracauer has come close. Kracauer believes that cinema, like photography, is naturally suited to observe and record physical reality: “Film...is uniquely equipped to record and reveal physical reality and, hence, gravitates toward it” (*Theory of Film* 28).[16] The implication here is that film should gravitate toward the outer, physical world and not the artist's inner world.[17]

Tarkovsky believes that because the camera has the potential for objective reproduction the filmmaker should appeal to his or her inner world. Truth to this

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[16] In his article "The Specificity of Media in theArts" Noel Carroll gives an historical account of such art theories, what he calls the "medium-specificity" thesis.

[17] Based on this, Kracauer constructs what he calls the basic and technical properties of cinema. The basic property of cinema is its photographic nature and the technical properties all else (editing, sound, lighting, etc.). He then makes the technical properties subservient to this single basic property. To not entirely exclude the technical properties, Kracauer says that the cinematic approach must be guided by "the "right" balance between the realist tendency and the formative tendency; and the two tendencies are well balanced if the latter does not try to overwhelm the former but eventually follow its lead" (39).

inner world decides whether an image is realistic or false. Appeal to subjective reality takes precedent over scientific or objective reality (217-218).

This is why in Tarkovsky's book the word truth appears more often than reality. Because of the camera's "objective"[18] nature the artist must be truthful and honest. Tarkovsky is not, however, a subjective idealist; reality is not a just a mental image. Tarkovsky merely believes that the only reality an artist can faithfully depict is subjective: "By means of art man takes over reality through a subjective experience" (37). Reality does not exist only in one's consciousness, but only that which exists in one's consciousness can be faithfully attended to.

Tarkovsky makes this point throughout his book: that reality is always filtered. With reference to the quote on page 58 (...the roll of film imprints), what the camera mechanically records is only a part of the whole. That whole being the interaction between what was recorded, how, and the filmmaker's experience of it. Therefore, even allowing for the references Tarkovsky makes to objectivity and the

[18] The point here is not to debate the nature of the camera's objectivity. For example, is it more objective than other mechanical tools such as the paintbrush, pencil or typewriter? At what point does it become objective? Does an image reproduced by a camera have a different psychological effect on a person? I am merely using it with all the meaning it has accrued through the course of film theory.

camera's mechanical nature, the emphasis on a mediated, subjective reality takes precedence within Tarkovsky's film theory. Regardless of whatever objective qualities the camera may possess they always remain a part of the whole (the camera world and the shaping consciousness of the artist). The objectivity that Tarkovsky refers to in several of the quotes must be understood in a relative sense because, as he says, it is:

> ... meaningless to talk about naturalism in cinema as if phenomena could be recorded wholesale by the camera, irrespective of any artistic principles, so to speak in their `natural state' (185).

The difference between Tarkovsky's theory and classical realist theory is perhaps most evident in the following quote from Kracauer's *Theory of Film*: “All this means that films cling to the surface of things. They seem to be more cinematic, the less they focus directly on inward life, ideology, and spiritual concerns” (x-xi). Although Tarkovsky acknowledges some aspect of camera objectivity his realism stresses the "inward life." As stated earlier, Tarkovsky believes that art must observe, as the camera is well suited to do, but it must also transcend (96).

Fusion of Idealism and Realism

Tarkovsky's subjective form of film realism can be understood in terms of Bergson's fusion of realism and idealism. Bergson believes objects gain their uniqueness through the consciousness that perceives them, but that they also exist of themselves. Bergson synthesizes the manner of oscillating between idealism and realism because on their own they are incapable of connecting the objects in themselves with the consciousness that perceives them. Here is a quote from *Laughter* that connects this oscillation between realism and idealism in art:

> So that we might say, without in any way playing upon the meaning of the words, that realism is in the work when idealism is in the soul, and that it is only through ideality that we can resume contact with reality (162).

Tarkovsky expresses a similar sentiment in his own words:

> I think in fact that unless there is an organic link between the subjective impressions of the author and his objective representation of reality, he will not achieve even superficial credibility, let alone authenticity and inner truth" (21).

Here we can see the same dichotomy between realism and idealism that Bergson speaks of: the need for a link, or at least an understanding, between things in themselves and things as they have meaning only for the consciousness that perceives them. The artist, according to Tarkovsky, is bound to this same shaping

consciousness, therefore there can be no naturalistic/mechanistic reality 'out there.'[19]

This position is also similar to Bergson's psychology of perception. Pure perception is never possible because memory always intermingles with our perceptions. In a similar sense, Tarkovsky's camera that records can never be "purely" objective because the cinema image completes itself only after the artist's shaping consciousness "intermingles" with it.

Tarkovsky shares Bergson's view of reality as lived by the subject, and not as the world as object.[20] Even if Bergson's conception of reality transgresses Tarkovsky's there is this common acceptance of an inner reality. Bergson states this in "An Introduction to Metaphysics":

> There is at least one reality which we all seize from within, by intuition and not by simple analysis. It is our own person in its flowing through time, the self that endures (*The Creative Mind*, 191).

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[19] This is a partial reply to the many contemporary theorists who criticize realism for being politically naïve and reactionary because it assumes an "objective" reality-as-it-really-is that the camera neutrally records.

[20] This is Igor Korsic's point in *Suspended Time* with reference to Bazin. He argues that Bazin was not the naïve objectivist as painted by his critics, but that his theory dealt with the experiences of the subject and the film. The references Bazin makes to the mechanical and objective nature of the camera are important from a psychological and metaphysical stance and not merely as a "neutralizing" factor (79).

The Importance of Psychology to Tarkovsky's Film Realism

> "Nothing in cinema at the present time is more neglected or superficial than psychology. I'm talking about understanding and revealing the underlying truth of characters' states of mind; this is largely ignored" (75).

The appeal Tarkovsky makes to psychology also sheds light onto the subjective quality of his realism. Tarkovsky equates film realism with inner truth. A film attains realism when it embodies inner psychological truth. Being faithful to pictorial fidelity through detail or concentrating on subject matter is, on its own, not enough. "The image is indivisible and elusive, dependent upon our consciousness and on the real world which it seeks to embody" (106).

Surface reality appeals to just that, fidelity to external phenomena. Tarkovsky is scornful of surface reality based only on superficial technique:

> ...a faithful record, a true chronicle, cannot be made by shooting by hand, with a wobbly camera, even making blurred shots -as if the camera-man hadn't quite managed to focus- or by any other gimmicks of that kind (69).

Fundamental reality must also employ psychological reality. Tarkovsky stretches this consideration into mise-en-scéne. An arid mise-en-scéne directs itself toward an "idea" and surface detail. A rich mise-en-scéne follows life and "the personalities of the characters and their psychological state" (25). Mise-en-scéne is least "truthful"

when it employs cliche (A fence separating two lovers for example.)

Like Bazin, he is advocating a more ambiguous mise-en-scéne. Tarkovsky believes that mise-en-scéne should do more than just explicitly relate a scene's meaning. The best mise-en-scéne begins with the inner state of the character:

> The director, then, to build up a mise-en-scéne, must work from the psychological state of the characters, through the inner dynamic of the mood of the situation, and bring it all back to the truth of the one, directly observed fact, and its unique texture. Only then will the mise-en-scéne achieve the specific, many faceted significance of actual truth (74).

The "many faceted" nature of truth hints at the Bazinian ambiguity within reality and the mise-en-scéne necessary to maintain that ambiguity. The "inner dynamic" refers to the duration that the character experiences.

Tarkovsky is more interested in the psychology of the characters than plot development:

> I have always been interested in a person's inner world, and for me it was far more natural to make a journey into the psychology that informed the hero's attitude to life, into the literary and cultural traditions that are the foundation of his spiritual world (204).

This is why his mise-en-scéne and narrative structure are so dependent on a psychology of the inner world. One critic points this out:

> His narration is based paradoxically upon the stream of consciousness technique, with the use of reality, dreams, visions, memories, literary fragments and pictures in a manner as natural as a person's thoughts (Maria Ratschewa, 28).

In Tarkovsky's "psychologically" based mise-en-scéne there is no contradiction between "observation" (a central tenet of classical film theory) and "inner reality," or the objectivity of the camera and the subjectivity of the individual because Tarkovsky's notion of realism, like Bergson's, is tied to the inner self and not to surface reality. Tarkovsky's distinction between surface reality and psychological truth echoes Bergson's psychological dualism of the surface self and the fundamental self: below the surface reality of a scene is the psychological reality that bears its vitality, richness, and "truth." Hence the image we see can appear "unrealistic" according to natural laws or representational fidelity, but remain "truthful" to the psychology of the character.

Here is an example from *Nostalghia*. A Russian poet doing research in Italy is haunted by the images and memories of his cultural past. They effect his state of mind to the point where he becomes alienated from his surroundings and unable to adjust. In the film's final shot, a slow track back, we see a Russian house nestled within an Italian cathedral.[21] This "fantastic" image is outside the pale of natural

[21] This shot is reminiscent of the final shot in *Solaris*. The camera pulls back to reveal an idyllic scene of the astronaut Kris at his home. We soon realize that this is a mental image within the planet's "consciousness." This too is a result of Kris' nostalgia for a life spent amidst the splendour of earth, water, trees and grass.

laws. It is not realistic in the sense of fidelity to physical convention. It takes as its cue the mental state of the estranged poet and not physical reality. This form of realism appeals to inner subjectivity rather than outer objectivity.[22] With this appeal to psychological truth we see how a tension can exist in Tarkovsky's films between a classical realist aesthetic (long take, depth of field, moving camera, "objectivity" in time) and an overriding sensibility (psychological truth) that may stress content, style, or imagery beyond the limits of classical realist dictum (i.e. too expressionistic). It is because of the camera's objectivity that Tarkovsky stresses the artist's inner subjectivity. This, as well as the dependence on the subjective/psychological truth of the characters and mood of a scene, are what constitute a problematic between certain conventions of classical realist film theory

[22] Tarkovsky holds the same reasoning for an artistic rendering of dreams and memory. How can an artist recreate this inner reality, the "interior world of the individual imagination...to reproduce what a person sees within himself" (71)? Tarkovsky believes this is possible, but not through such (superficial) conventional and cliche methods as slow motion, soft focus, or soundtrack cues. The filmmaker must remain as close as possible to the material facts of the dream and the mood so "all the elements of reality which were refracted in that layer of the consciousness" are attended to (72).

and Tarkovsky's brand of film realism.[23] Perhaps it would be better stated to refer to Tarkovsky's theory as "film truth" rather than "film realism."

[23] For example, the scene just described from *Nostalghia* is shot in a single, continuous long take. But, would Bazin approve of its "fantastic" element or basis in psychologism?

CONCLUSION

In the opening of the fourth chapter, “Cinema's Destined Role,” Tarkovsky states that every new art is an answer to the spiritual need of its time and must address those questions that are central to its epoch. Tarkovsky states that cinema is the first art to evolve out of a technological invention. It is the art of the twentieth century. Cinema, then, must address the questions and problems of its epoch (82). Had Tarkovsky read the later writings of Harold Innis, he would have agreed with Innis' claim that technology and industrialization lead to a "spatial bias" that is marked by a social and cultural climate of materialism, secularism, progress and efficiency (*The Bias of Communication* 75-91 & 190-192). In fact, Tarkovsky's search for "lost time" echoes Innis' "plea for time."

Born of this technological era, cinema is the art that matches humanity's growing urge to master "the real world" (82). But cinema, as an art, must also meet humanity's spiritual needs:

> ...it's as if the cinema-goer were seeking to make up for the gaps in his own experience, throwing himself into a search for `lost time'...to fill that spiritual vacuum which has formed as a result of the specific conditions of his modern existence: constant activity, curtailment of human contact, and the materialist bent of modern education (82-83).

Here we can see how Tarkovsky has taken Bergson's concern for time and applied it to cinema to make cinema "the time haunted art. Born of a technological invention, cinema is, to that extent a spatializing, technological "monster." However, as an art, it is still bound to the artist's consciousness and soul and, as every artist is a product of their society, addresses the problems and concerns of that society. Tarkovsky sees reality with Bergsonian eyes –in constant flux and change- but then carries this vision over into film because the time of a film interacts with the endless stream of individual consciousnesses.

The Implications of a Tarkovskian/Bergsonian Film Theory

Duration, the flux and interpenetration that forms "indivisible" real time, underlies Tarkovsky's film theory. Tarkovsky states that "rhythm," film's main formative element, is not achieved by the fragmentation of editing but by the sense of time (time-thrust) flowing through a shot. Editing spatializes (fragments) out of structural and pragmatic necessity. This parallels the intellect in Bergson's philosophy that spatializes out of pragmatic and utilitarian necessity. The creative element in editing does not come from clever or flashy juxtapositioning, but from the act of matching the varying "rhythms" already established in the shots. Editing

must strive toward the "ideal" or illusion of a seamless flux (as Tarkovsky did with *Stalker*).

Since duration is linked to consciousness and memory, cuts that appropriate consciousness also play a role in Tarkovsky's theory. Given the importance Tarkovsky places on psychology, memory, consciousness (also the unconscious) and subjectivity this is only natural. However, their importance will vary depending on the theme and the subject matter.

A Tarkovskian/Bergsonian film theory values, above all, the feel of time flowing through a shot. As a filmmaker, this is what Tarkovsky concentrates most on. This is evident while watching a film by Tarkovsky, but difficult to articulate or express. Few filmmakers communicate this sense of duration as well as Tarkovsky (Ozu and Dreyer come to mind). It is an internally felt sensation of time, achieved by more than just the length of the take or pace of the camera movement, but by the entire mise-en-scéne.

All that is seen and heard within the frame (and sensed outside of the frame) is woven together to complement and augment the rhythm of the scene or shot: the actions of the characters, the delivery of dialogue, the attention to objects and empty spaces, the soundtrack, the tone and grain of the film stock, and the indistinguishable play between color and black and white. These elements of the

mise-en-scéne work toward establishing the temporal flow, the rhythm of the shot/scene. The importance of editing rests in its ability to gauge and appropriately match these rhythms.

Tarkovsky: A Bergsonian Filmmaker

In Tarkovsky's aesthetics art is a "yearning for the ideal." Tarkovsky's desire as a filmmaker is communication of this ideal. The point of this paper has not been to analyse Tarkovsky's films. However, I feel comfortable in stating that the ideal Tarkovsky strived so elegantly to communicate bears a Bergsonian sensibility. His films begin as a subjective world but once made become something new for each spectator. To employ Bergsonian terminology, his films are becoming and never being because of their chameleon-like state.

This is why Tarkovsky opposes talking in terms of rigid symbolism. Critics consistently inquire about the symbolism behind his imagery: what does milk signify? what does water signify? what is the zone? One answer would constitute a being: finite, closed, and static. Tarkovsky takes symbolism to mean something else. He quotes the Russian poet and scholar Vyacheslav Ivanov:

> A symbol is only a true symbol when it is inexhaustible and unlimited in its meaning, when it utters in its arcane (hieratic and magical) language of hint and intimation something that cannot be set forth, that does not correspond to words (47).

This is similar to the way Bergson expresses the inexpressible (duration, reality) by way of poetic metaphors and analogies because he feels it can not be expressed by means of the intellect (concepts, abstract language, science).

Tarkovsky's sensibility toward the meaning of his films -open- echoes the sense of becoming and novelty that is central to Bergson's philosophy. By leaving his films open at certain levels (imagery, poetics) they remain alive to change. Repeated viewings of Tarkovsky's films never fail to breath anew... they evolve "creatively" in time.

Tarkovsky and Bergson: Imprinted in Time

Bergson and Tarkovsky share this intense preoccupation with time. Few thinkers have made time as central to their philosophy as Bergson, and, likewise, few filmmakers or theorists have been as concerned with time as Tarkovsky.

Bergson's project was to retain the fundamental characteristic of time: its flux, simultaneity, heterogeneity, indivisibility and creativity. Since he felt

that consciousness and reality express themselves and are experienced by these same characteristics, metaphysics must do likewise. History has not been kind to Bergson, but re-evaluations are underway.[24]

Bergson applied his temporalist temperament to every area of philosophy he approached. He may not have solved all these problems (mind/body, idealism/realism, intuition/intellect) -and as A.R. Lacey jokingly adds, he is in good company (140)- but he inspired many thinkers and artists in the areas of art, metaphysics, and religion. As noted earlier, his philosophy all but disappeared after World War I. However, of late, there has been a resurgence of interest in Bergson. Since the technological advances of his time have only continued, it is not surprising that his philosophy still bears relevance for today's increasingly materialistic society. The strong (and most surely circuitous) presence of Bergson's ideas in Tarkovsky's lifework bears testimony to this.

As Susanne Langer points out, Bergson was fated to fail because of his attempt to bring a non-discursive method into a discursive field: "The demand

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[24] Note the many books dealing with Bergson that have been published in recent years: *Henri Bergson: A Bibliography Revised Second Edition* by P.A.Y. Gunter (1986), *Bergson and Modern Thought: Towards a Unified Science* ed. by P.A.Y. Gunter and Andrew C. Papanicolaou (1987), *The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914* by R.C.Grogin (1988), and *Bergson* by A.R. Lacey (1989).

Bergson makes upon philosophy -to set forth the dynamic forms of subjective experience- only art can fulfill" (114). By highlighting the many points at which Tarkovsky's art intersects with Bergson's philosophy I hope to have discovered one such fulfillment.

Appendix

Bergson and the "Cinematographical Mechanism"

Now that I have introduced Bergson's thoughts into a contemporary filmic context I will address, retroactively, Bergson's own "damaging" view on cinema. They bear important consequences for film theory.

In several essays and in the final chapter of *Creative Evolution* Bergson employs the "cinematographical apparatus" as an analogy for the spatializing nature of the intellect. The camera begins with a real movement, breaks it down mechanically into a series of static single frames and then returns the movement through the projecting apparatus. The movement that we see is a reconstituted illusion. Bergson likens this process to the intellect:

> Such is the contrivance of the cinematograph. And such is also that of our knowledge. Instead of attaching ourselves to the inner becoming of things, we place ourselves outside them in order to recompose their becoming artificially. We take snapshots, as it were, of the passing reality....We may therefore sum up...that the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind (*Creative Evolution*, 332).

Bergson holds art in high esteem because it can communicate a more direct vision of reality. The artists' disengaged vision gives us this privileged view of reality. The intellect, because of its pragmatic nature, thickens the veil between reality and consciousness and can not give us this privileged view. The logical consequence of Bergson's cinema/intellect analogy is not good for cinema. Cinema can not be art. Cinema can not communicate reality.

This position is made implicit elsewhere. In the essay "The Perception of Change" Bergson claims that the art best suited for representation is painting: "...nowhere is the function of the artist shown as clearly as in the art which gives the most important place to imitation, I mean painting" (*The Creative Mind*, 159). What about film? Does he purposively neglect film because it "spatializes" reality? This is an important point for film realism.

Does Bergson believe that film, because of its mechanical nature, can not be human enough, in the tradition of the great painters, to give its audience a privileged view of reality? With painting Bergson believes he is selecting the art that achieves the best balance of artistic intervention and mimetic capability. From the same text as above, Bergson says: "The great painters are men who possess a certain vision of

things which has or will become the vision of all men" (159).

Tarkovsky takes this same impression of the artist achieving a deeper, inner sense of reality, but replaces painting with film. Bazin also placed film at the summit of representational arts. Both Tarkovsky and Bazin accord an intangible element to the mechanical agency of the camera but do not rest there. Tarkovsky reiterates this:

> "The director must have a clear idea of his objectives and work through with his camera team to achieve their total, precise realisation....However, all this is no more than technical expertise. Although it involves many of the conditions necessary to art, in itself it is not sufficient to earn for the director the name of artist" (60).

Arnold Hauser makes a similar point in *The Sociology of Art*: “A process which is photographed and projected onto a screen is still not a "film," for an artistic form is not the product of a mere medium....” (621). Tarkovsky believes, as do Schopenhauer and Bergson, in the ability of the artist to achieve a higher vision. The difference is that he does not place restrictions or create a hierarchy according to the nature of the artistic tool.

Scores of theorists and critics have taken Bazin's notion of the ontology of the photographic image to task. The camera is not an impartial, neutral observer they say. Years earlier critics were using the same argument to disprove cinema's claim to being art. It is interesting that Bergson, who predates these early critics, employs an argument against film (or his use of film as an analogy for the way our mind takes "snapshots" of reality) similar to the early criticism stating that cinema can not be an art because it is only a mechanical representation of the world.[25] What makes

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[25] The consequences of this for realist film theory has been important. I will not delve into this much travelled theoretical debate but will merely raise a few points. If we accept the phenomenological apologies that have been made for Bazin, the seminal realist film theorist, then we can believe that Bazin never meant, in the strict cause and effect fashion, that the camera automatically and neutrally records reality. If we follow the evolution of film theory on this question we can see a 180 degree change from the camera as mere mechanical reproducer to the camera as anything but a neutral observer. The truth is probably somewhere in between and depends on the context, the sensibility of the artist and the definitions used (of objectivity, subjectivity, reality). Speaking from today's vantage, however, cinema is no longer (or rarely) castigated for its technical/mechanical genesis.

Bergson's critique unique is that he goes beyond the camera apparatus as a machine. He says that film functions like the intellect, taking "snapshots of reality." (Munsterberg would use a similar point to demonstrate that film was an art.)

Can Bergson's appraisal of film be discounted as easily as that of the critics who doubted film as art? There is a slight difference in their respective intents. The film critics were lobbying against film as art. Depending on your sensibility, Bergson's project is more damaging to the core: since film spatializes on the same level as the intellect it is incapable of representing real time, (duration) and hence reality. (Especially if you consider that, for Bergson, mechanistic implies "anti-spiritual" and "anti-creative.")

The resulting damage is the same. If film is not art then there can be no "disengaged" artist to render a privileged view of reality. If this analogy is accepted, then a filmmaker can not effect an audience, can not intuit, at the level of a painter or composer. Bergson's comments on film can not, I believe, be countered in the same way that Munsterberg, Arnheim, and company countered the early critics of film as art. They must be met on their own terms.

Before beginning my rebuttal, a deeper understanding of Bergson's use of the cinematographic mechanism is necessary. In the following lengthy quote Bergson is again using film as a metaphor for the "unreality" of spatialized movement:

> For that is what our habitual representations of movement and change hinders us from seeing. If movement is a series of positions and change a series of states, time is made up of distinct parts immediately adjacent to one another. No doubt we still say that they follow one another, but in that case this succession is similar to that of the images on a cinematographic film: the film could be run off ten, a hundred, even a thousand times faster without the slightest modification in what was being shown; if its speed were increased to infinity, if the unrolling (this time, away from the apparatus) became instantaneous, the pictures would still be the same. Succession thus understood, therefore, adds nothing; on the contrary, it takes something

> away; it marks a deficit; it reveals a weakness in our perception, which is forced by this weakness to divide up the film image by image instead of grasping it in the aggregate (*The Creative Mind* 17-18).

The context of this quote, taken from an essay entitled "Growth of Truth: Retrograde Movement of the True," is a discussion of the inadequacy of understanding time and reality in a deterministic line that eliminates freedom of the will and deprives evolution of any creativity. At first glance the passage appears baffling. Does Bergson mean that running a projector at one hundred times the proper speed (16, 18, or 24 frames per second) would not effect the projected image?

A passage from the final chapter of *Creative Evolution*, partially titled "The Cinematographical Mechanism of Thought and the Mechanistic Illusion," throws light on this passage. Bergson states that, theoretically, it does not take a boy any time to reconstruct a picture puzzle because the picture is already conceived before opening the box. It may take X amount of minutes on the first try but less on subsequent occasions. Even if the process were accelerated, to the point of it being instantaneous, it would not effect the outcome of the picture because it is already given. This parallels the line in the earlier quote stating that the speed at which the film is run does not effect what is being shown.

Bergson is using these examples as microcosms of the mechanistic, teleological, or Platonic conception of reality. In this schema the only quality that time has is length. Bergson then compares the boy with his picture puzzle to the artist with his/her blank canvas. Bergson says that "to the artist who creates...time is no longer an accessory... it is not an interval that may be lengthened or shortened without the content being altered" (369-370). Duration, understood as consciousness, plays an integral part in the outcome of the art work. The distinction that Bergson makes throughout this final chapter comes down to "time-length" versus "time-invention" (372).

Now that we fully understand how Bergson is employing the cinematographical method we can summarize his critique of it in the following way:
1) A film, once made, is already given, therefore time does not play a "creative" role. Film is similar to the mechanistic conception of reality, like the pre-determined picture puzzle.
2) The cinematographic process is like the intellect. It takes "snapshots" of a passing reality. The movement is only an illusion generated by the projector. Movement

does not exist in the images but is thrown back into them. Film is a spatialization of time/reality.
3) Duration, the essence of reality, does not play a part in the cinematographic process because the process involves a "succession" and not "interpenetration" of static images.

Before beginning my counter-argument I should stress that Bergson's use of cinema is always as an analogy for what he really wants to critique, the intellect. It never goes beyond the "cinematographic process." As I will later demonstrate, this provides a means to salvage cinema from the anti-spiritual/poetic/intuitive/temporal label that Bergson attaches to the pure intellect. Since, for his purposes, Bergson only employs part of the cinematographic apparatus (camera and projector) he overlooks many elements which, when brought into the picture, weaken his argument.

I'll begin with the first stated critique. There are two points that Bergson omits to note in this argument: the creative process involved in filmmaking and the incompatibility of using the picture-puzzle and cinematographic method as interchangeable analogies. The point of the analogy between the picture-puzzle and the painting is that time plays a role in the latter but not in the former. Regardless of the time it takes to reconstruct the puzzle, the picture is unaffected. Bergson uses the same logic with film, but time plays much more of a determining role in the film process. Whether it takes the boy one second or one day to reconstruct the puzzle bears no consequence on the picture.

With the cinematographic process, however, time does not have such an arbitrary value. The time in which the film is "recreated" (projected) must match the time (speed) at which it was filmed. Running it ten times faster will not effect the property of the film strip (which is part of Bergson's point), but will play havoc with the screen image. The role that time plays at this stage is purely technical rather than creative, but, nonetheless, more of a determinant than that played in the picture-puzzle.

Even if we allow Bergson this point, we can not disregard the incompatibility on which the analogy rests. The interchangeability of film and the picture-puzzle rests on unequal terms. In the analogy between the picture-puzzle and the artist/canvas Bergson commences at the start of the process. The picture is in its many pieces and the canvas blank. With film, however, he begins with it already made. He completely neglects the role that time plays in the creative filmmaking process. Isn't there as much uncertainty and creativity on the filmmaker's part as on the painter's? By beginning with the film as given, Bergson has automatically

relegated film to the "negative" side of the analogy, rather than placing it on the "positive" side of art.

I will address the second critique by way of Bergson's own diffusion of Zeno's paradoxes. Thinkers have explained Zeno's paradoxes in different ways. Bergson's attempt can be used to question his appraisal of the cinematographic mechanism. By applying uncompromising common sense and logic Zeno attempted to reveal the contradictory and paradoxical nature of change and movement. In this metaphysical arena he sided with Parmenides (reality is fixed and unchanging) over Heraclitus (reality is flux and change). In one of his paradoxes Zeno offers the logical deduction that the tortoise, once with a lead, could never be surpassed by the faster Achilles because each point along the way is infinitely divisible. Each advance Achilles makes is matched by the tortoise's, with the space remaining between them infinitely divisible, ad infinitum.

Bergson claims that this is a paradox only if the movement, the race, is treated like space and divided into an infinite series of movements. If it is accepted as an indivisible movement then the paradox vanishes. Bergson anticipates how Achilles would explain away the paradox: Achilles would simply describe the race as taking one step followed by a second, a third, and so on until he surpasses the slower stepping tortoise. The paradox is removed if both movements are treated as indivisible wholes. (Zeno's paradox of the arrow is solved likewise by Bergson. You can not treat the object moving with the act of movement itself.)

Bergson's explanation of Zeno's paradoxes can be applied against his analogy of film as a spatializing mechanism. Bergson claims that film, because it is only an illusion of movement, is not an indicator of reality; it is not a true movement. But isn't this only the case when the projector stops and we see the individual frozen frames? Isn't this similar to what Zeno did with the race between Achilles and the tortoise? If a film plays uninterrupted from the starting line (the first frame) to the end, it is an indivisible movement and as "real" as the race.

The statement "succession adds nothing" does not bear truth in film. The filmic illusion of space, movement, and time comes alive, in the end, out of a finely tuned, precise ordered succession of static images. The movement is whole and complete, not unlike the outcome of a carefully worked out musical composition. A movement that is broken down (spatialized) through mathematics or logic, like Zeno's paradox, is not a spatialization of the same order as a properly running film. If a film is stopped, slowed down or accelerated beyond its original order, then a

claim for spatialization can be made. Left to run its proper course, film remains on the same level of metaphysical art as any other.

For Bergson the key to reality is that change (time and movement) be treated as indivisible. Broken down, time becomes spatialized. True time and true reality does not consist in states, since states imply immobility at some point. Film is only an illusion of movement, but for film to exist there can be no immobility. If there is, the illusion is shattered. Once this is done you have forced spatialization onto film in the same manner as when a whole movement is broken down into several. I will now proceed to Bergson's third reservation: the inability of film to appropriate duration. This dictum has the most intriguing consequences for film theory.

A still photograph spatializes time by freezing the present; a photograph becomes what is not possible in reality: the present as a razor's edge. Cinema, based on photography, completes the process by returning the movement to the image. On the screen objects move, people move, and the image (camera) moves. To think of film as a series of individual static frames is no different than thinking of a Bach concerto as a series of notes strung together.

In her article "What Bergson Means by Interpenetration" Costelloe says that when duration, life, movement, or consciousness are abstracted (as the intellect does), they become falsified. They are taken out of their natural state. It is like treating something that is indivisible as divisible. When Bergson treats the cinematographical process as static frames independently aligned in succession he is doing just that. The frames of a film interpenetrate much the same way as musical notes.[26] Seeing that interpenetration plays such a pivotal role in duration, film can not be excluded from its realm.

There is yet another way that film may be salvaged from Bergson's critique (in his terms) and brought into the realm of duration. In the same article Costelloe discusses the experience of a man listening to the same musical piece twice. Although the piece remains the same, the second listening is different on the basis of it containing the first hearing. Bergson's theory of change and duration is in fierce evidence here. Subsequent hearings of the same musical piece will be different

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[26]In *Time and Free Will* Bergson uses music as an analogy for duration: "...as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another" (100).

because the state of the person has evolved. The musical piece, now familiar, may be attended to with indifference, boredom, disinterestedness, or perhaps a heightened interest. The past hearings are not forgotten but have merely "gnawed" into the person's consciousness and "left their mark."

Why can't this same process apply to film? If the indicator of duration and change rests on the individual consciousness perceiving the art work then film, regardless of its mechanical process, will still "grow" and "gnaw" into a person's consciousness. Like the repeated musical piece, the film is merely an interpenetrating part of the whole process, that being consciousness.

Bergson omits the important interaction between a film and the consciousness that perceives it. The time within a film remains unchanging and "uninventive" only when film is stripped of all human interaction, if both the filmmaker and film spectator are canceled. Any art, thus alienated, will also be "lifeless" and "unchanging." Tarkovsky relates this personally: "I have seen Bergman's *Persona* a great many times, and on each occasion it has given me something new. As a true work of art it allows one to relate personally with the world of the film, interpreting it differently every time" (166).

Bergson's comparison of the cinema mechanism to the intellect may work fine as an analogy but weakens when pushed. A film remains relatively unchanging once made, but this does not detract from the creative filmmaking process or the time anew that each viewing may give. By the same reasoning, the speed at which a record is played does not alter the song. It will distort the sound, in the same way that an improperly projected image will alter what is seen, but the record in its sleeve and the film in its tin can remain unchanged. Any art work once completed becomes fixed and unchanging. The "time-invention" takes place during the creative process and again when experienced by a consciousness. Bergson neutralizes both the content of a film and film's unique aesthetic potential for dealing with time.

Why then does Bergson prematurely discount film as art? Granted it provides him a pleasant and topical analogy for the intellect (in his context), but he remains blind to the potential cinema as an art has towards areas that are dear to him: memory, consciousness, flux, movement, and time. Considering that the quotes referred to covered the years 1907 to 1934 we can exclude the thought that Bergson did not live long enough to witness the maturity of film. (He died in 1941, the year *Citizen Kane* was made.) The answer rests in and can not be separated from

Bergson's philosophical prejudice.

As stated at the opening of his introduction, Bergson stood as a fierce antithesis to deterministic philosophies such as mechanism and finalism. The nineteenth century onslaught of socialized machinery and technology was part of Bergson's attack. Bergson states that we are all social animals. As typified by Jacques Tati's Bergsonian vision, an individual stops being a healthy member of society once "the mechanical becomes encrusted upon the living." It is only natural that Bergson would be unflattering and indifferent to the first art that "did not develop...from a popular art, but from an experimentation with a technical discovery which was completely alien to art" (Arnold Hauser, 621).

By "philosophical prejudice" I mean that Bergson's philosophy, so tied to his moral temperament, can not accept the unquestioned equation of technology with progress. However, Bergson is far from being a Luddite. In his final book, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, he thinks the answer to our technological malaise is to revert to a simpler style of living. It is not technology that is at fault, but the "spirit of invention." We must then ask ourselves, would film, one of the most complex, expensive arts, be a part of that "simpler" time?

Bergson's resistance to mechanism and distrust of technological progress blinded him to the artistic potential of film. He fell prey to the genetic fallacy. He fiercely believed that art gave humanity a reprieve from the pragmatic reality we live with; unfortunately his vision of art did not include film. However, where Bergson's vision falters, other's take over. Tarkovsky, equally opposed to mechanism and technology, carries the Bergsonian vision over to film:

> For the work of art carries within it an integral aesthetic and philosophical unity; it is an organism, living and developing according to its own laws (97).

Even Lewis Mumford, one of the more intelligent technological critics, realizes the Bergsonian potential of film:

> ...the motion picture synthesizes movement through both time and space...it contributes something to our picture of the world not given completely in direct experience....Without any conscious notion of its destination, the motion picture presents us with a world of interpenetrating, counter-influencing organisms: and it

> enables us to think about that world with a greater degree of concreteness (342-43).

Bergson distinguished matter, body, and brain (the inorganic) from spirit, consciousness, and mind (the organic). However, through his study of memory, he believed to have proven their intersection (*Matter and Memory* 325-332). This is why he felt the need to oscillate between realism and idealism. Bergson was "blind" to film's unique potential. Film is obviously matter and inorganic, but its immediacy, vibrancy and mimetic strength bestow it an organic and "alive" quality. In a sense film is an simultaneous oscillation between matter and life, realism and idealism.

Appendix Two

A Closer Look at Intuition

With all this exposition, intuition as a method of acquiring knowledge still remains a delicate proposition. Perhaps bringing in an outside source will help us to better understand intuition. Monroe C. Beardsley and Elizabeth L. Beardsley in *Philosophical Thinking: An Introduction* distinguish between five types of intuition: mystical, intellectual, rational, sensuous, and emotional; certain characteristics of intuition: particularity, immediacy, certainty, emotionality and internality; and five areas of knowledge that intuitionist make special claims toward: ethics, religion, understanding of other's, art, and metaphysics (298-303).

Bergson, who along with Schopenhauer the authors refer to as "two of the greatest of intuitionist metaphysicians" (303) does not fall neatly into the above categories. Undoubtedly Bergson's intuition is metaphysical, but it has made its strongest inroads in the area of art. Regarding the types of intuition, I would stress intellectual, emotional, and, for the later Bergson, perhaps mystical.

The authors admit to the difficulty in qualitatively comparing knowledge acquired by intuition with that acquired by other methods (science, rationalism, empiricism), ultimately leaving it up to the readers. The difficulty rests in the incompatibility of the respective languages employed by science and art. The language of art can not be completely reduced to that of science or everyday life because there will always remain a meaning lost in the translation or that is non-translatable; and, as the authors write, "It is that untranslatable residue that embodies the poem's intuitive knowledge" (321). This position, that intuition (art) and the intellect (science) employ different languages, is essentially Bergson's, and one that most people would agree with. However, Bergson adds that one method, the intellect, is limited to studying inert objects and immobility (principally matter). This latter point is what most people would not consent to.

Critics still complain because intuition is ineffable and incommunicable. One can teach the method but not the step by step procedure as in science. The rationalists and Bergsonians seem to be at an inseparable crossroad. But is this the case? Perhaps Arthur Koestler's *The Act of Creation* holds a key to the debate between the scientists (or rationalists) and the intuitionists. Koestler's

central idea will be curtly summarized as it applies to the problem. Koestler explains creativity as a universal process whose outcome is shaped by the emotional spectrum. He visualizes this idea with a triptych consisting of a Jester (humour), Sage (discovery), and Artist (art). The act of creation remains the same, but the result differs according to the emotional climate. For example, a pun for the jester becomes a word-puzzle for the philosopher or a rhyme for the artist. He states this on the first page of the book:

> Each horizontal line across the triptych stands for a pattern of creative activity which is represented on all three panels....The logical pattern of the creative process is the same in all three cases; it consists in the discovery of hidden similarities. But the emotional climate is different in the three panels: the comic simile has a touch of aggressiveness; the scientist's reasoning by analogy is emotionally detached, i.e. neutral; the poetic image is sympathetic or admiring, inspired by a positive kind of emotion (27).

It is not necessary to go into more detail with Koestler's argument. The point remains: from a psychological and physiological standpoint the creative process of an artist, philosopher, or humorist is the same. If one expands the definition of creative process to include knowledge and reality, then the debate between rationalists and Bergsonians can be seen in a different light. They will be forever debating because they are arguing for the same thing: knowledge and creativity. The Bergsonian swears by intuition and the rationalist clings to his intellect, but both also employ the enemies "weapon."

This is evident in Bergson's own definition of intuition (intellectual sympathy) and the scores of scientists who have made mention of the role intuition plays in their work. The fight will continue because both combatants are intoxicated by their emotional blinders. As Koestler says, the scientist also has an unconscious that plays a large part in the creative process:

> The moment of truth, the sudden emergence of a new insight, is an act of intuition. Such intuitions give the appearance of miraculous flashes, or short-circuits of reasoning. In fact they may be likened to an immersed chain, of which only the beginning and the end are visible above the surface of consciousness. The diver vanishes at one end of the chain and comes up at the other end, guided by invisible links (211)

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