

**Sculpted in time:  
Heterotopic space in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris*.**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**University of Manitoba**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts**

**By Richard Duffy**

**(c) April 2003**



National Library  
of Canada

Acquisitions and  
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Acquisitions et  
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file Votre référence*

*Our file Notre référence*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-79949-2

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
\*\*\*\*\*  
COPYRIGHT PERMISSION PAGE**

**SCULPTED IN TIME: HETEROTOPIC SPACE IN ANDREI TARKOVSKY'S *SOLARIS***

**BY**

**RICHARD DUFFY**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University**

**of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree**

**of**

**Master of Arts**

**RICHARD DUFFY © 2003**

Permission has been granted to the Library of The University of Manitoba to lend or sell copies of this thesis/practicum, to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and to University Microfilm Inc. to publish an abstract of this thesis/practicum.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither this thesis/practicum nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

## Abstract

In his paper "Of Other Spaces" Foucault states that within each society there exist "real and effective spaces which are outlined in the very institution of society, but which constitute a sort of counter-arrangement, an effectively realized utopia, in which all the real arrangements, all the other real arrangements that can be found within society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged and overturned: a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable (Foucault 1986 p. 24)". These spaces are what Foucault has called 'the Heterotopia' – a unique gap in the discursive plane in which the individual is afforded the opportunity to observe the elements which are active in the discourses which shape his/her life as an individual subject.

Gilles Deleuze's notion of the 'Time-Image' embodies what he describes as a "cinematic philosophy" in which the medium of cinema presents the viewer with new methods of looking at the world around us. A significant element in Deleuze's concept is the role of the "the seer" or the "observer" within the film, a departure from the role of "the actor".

Andre Tarkovsky's 1972 film *Solaris*, based on a novel by Stanislaw Lem, features an excellent example of how heterotopic spaces can exist in cinematic terms. In order for our individuality to flourish, individual consciousness depends on our ability to reject many of the discursive premises we are subjected to. Tarkovsky's film explores how the experiences gained within heterotopic space provide the individual with the ability to invert the panoptic gaze, and how these experiences can ultimately show us how we might reclaim, or restore, our existence as individual subjects

## Table of Contents

<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>i-v</b>
<b>1. Foucault and Heterotopic space.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Tarkovsky, <i>Solaris</i> and Reaction.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3. <i>Solaris</i> on Earth.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4. 'Outer' Space.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>5. The Library – The Zone within a Zone...</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>81</b>

## Preface.

I can still recall, with some degree of clarity, the undergraduate class in which I was introduced to the name Michel Foucault. The Professor stopped the class and announced that the warning he was about to give should preface all introductions to the works of Foucault, in much the same way the INTERPOL / FBI copyright and anti-piracy warnings precede all video / DVD presentations of theatrical releases.

“You are about to wade into the writings of Michel Foucault. The experience can be similar to that of wandering into a bog. When you become aware that you are in this bog and once you familiarize yourself with your surroundings, you will begin to realize that you might not be able to get out. Even if you do escape, your memory of the experience is bound to have a profound, if not scarring, influence on you”.

Warnings and such aside, I have, through my own course of study, taken a great deal of interest in Foucault's writings and the general discourse which developed surrounding his name. In part, the choice of using an idea developed by Foucault as the basis for this paper has arisen out of the fact that I have found a particular dissatisfaction in the manner in which Foucault has generally been ‘interpreted’ in a variety of academic circles. Indeed, many who have interpreted Foucault have, in my opinion, tended to dwell on many of the overtly negative connotations of his concepts with a zeal which I believe has obscured much of the discourse that has developed concerning his work. This observation is largely based on the notion that Foucault's writing points the way forward to the demise of the ‘subject’ and the end of individuality. I am inclined to agree with Gilles Deleuze's assertion that the way many embraced the notion of “the death of man [was] even worse than the fuss about ‘the subject’; misinterpretations of Foucault's thought really thrived on it” (*Negotiations* p.106).

I happened upon “Of Other Spaces” quite by accident. But upon reading this article, I was quite taken with the concept, which Foucault details, of a break or gap in the discursive network. And while I am quite aware that Foucault's idea of the heterotopia was/ is incomplete, I still believe that there is a purpose in exploring the concept. In a

sense the notion of the heterotopia serves as a counter argument, a challenge to those figures who champion the death of individuality, or at least the serious damage that the subject has suffered during the postmodern era. Rather than seeing the heterotopia as dark hidden corner where individuality is allowed the fleeting opportunity to exist, my belief is that heterotopic space has become something to be sought out and examined. For it is due to our participation in such spaces that our own self-actualization is enabled and the experience we receive from these spaces becomes invaluable.

Much of Foucault's work is tied to (I might argue limited by) the relationship of the individual to language. WJT Mitchell's *Picture Theory* puts forth the fairly simple notion that the 'linguistic turn' (which a great deal of Foucault's work is associated with) has been replaced by what he terms the "Pictorial Turn". In the Pictorial turn pictures and images have, thanks to a variety of technological shifts, replaced words and language as the dominant mode of representation or, perhaps, of questioning "reality". Indeed Mitchell's line of reasoning owes a great deal to Gilles Deleuze and his work on cinema. Deleuze has argued that cinematic representations since the Second World War have helped create a new method of "cinematic philosophy" which embodies a new way of thinking about the world around us. One of my concerns was how to further explore the concept of heterotopic space in a manner, which allows for both discussion, and a device for the examination of a particular project. Prof. Snyder advised me to view several of Andre Tarkovsky's films, in particular the film Solaris, suggesting that what I was describing was an endeavor similar to the one Tarkovsky was engaged in. I was familiar with Russian / Soviet filming in general from my days as a film student, yet not with Tarkovsky, other than by reputation. What comes across in the all too brief accounts of his career is that Tarkovsky was clearly a man of unrelenting passion. Passion can be, and often is, an impediment to talent, yet clearly this desire only enhanced his obvious expertise as a filmmaker. Far from being trapped by the rich history of the Soviet montage style of cinema, Tarkovsky was to create his own niche by turning his back on many of the tools and stylistic elements which had defined Soviet cinema prior to the 1970s.

Despite the fact that over a twenty five year career which yielded the modest total of seven full length feature films (*Ivan's Childhood* (1962), *Andrei Roublev* (1966), *Solaris* (1972), *The Mirror* (1974), *Stalker* (1979), *Nostalghia* (1983), *The Sacrifice* (1986)), Andrei Tarkovsky was beginning to emerge as the most significant figure to hail from the rich heritage of Soviet/ Russian filmmakers. Sadly, his untimely death due to cancer in 1986, while living in exile in Italy, has robbed the cinematic world of one of its most outspoken, visionary and misunderstood figures. While his less than prolific output can in part be attributed to what are now acknowledged as legendary battles with the bureaucratic leviathan that was the Soviet Film Industry, many critics have suggested that it was perhaps Tarkovsky's overriding sense of personal commitment, passion and perfectionism which ultimately limited his opportunity to add to his portfolio as a filmmaker. Authors Vida Johnson and Graham Petrie comment in their book *Andrei Tarkovsky : A Visual Fugue* that Tarkovsky "could be moody, authoritarian, frustrating, ruthless and endlessly demanding, yet, with very few exceptions, those who worked with him were happy to continue to do so, and those who did break with him – either by his choice or by their own – rarely lost their respect for him as a filmmaker of exceptional quality and moral integrity" (*Visual Fugue* p.41).

Andrei Arsenievich Tarkovsky was born on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1932. The son of a poet/ decorated soldier and a literary scholar; Tarkovsky grew up and received his primary education in Moscow, where he was described by some accounts according to Biographer Peter Green, as "not a conspicuously clever or industrious pupil" (Green p.2). With the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 Tarkovsky, his mother and younger sister were evacuated and moved to his grandparent's home in the Russian countryside. When he was 12 Tarkovsky's parents separated, leaving his mother to raise Andrei and his younger sister Marina, in the Moscow suburbs. Following his graduation from secondary school, Tarkovsky embarked on several esoteric adventures (including the better part of a year spent on a geological expedition to the largely uninhabited far-eastern regions of the Soviet Union) before finally being accepted at the prestigious G.I.K., the State run Moscow Film School. A number of critics have remarked that a type of 'personal investment' has become a hallmark of Tarkovsky's films. As Green notes "the place and



images of Tarkovsky's early years made an indelible impression on him and were to have a lasting impression on his work" (Green p.2). Whether the recreation of the actual house of his grandparents in which he was sequestered during the war (as depicted in *The Mirror*) or the sweeping panoramic shots of the vast Russian country side in *Andrei Roublev*, many of these experiences of his youth would be brought back to life throughout his career as a director, including a sense of separation and abandonment which we will see in the lives of the characters in *Solaris*.

*Solaris* was the next project Tarkovsky embarked upon, following his struggles with Soviet authorities over *Andrei Roublev*. His decision to film an adaptation of Stanislaw Lem's novel was seen as a departure, and was in fact not his first choice for his next project. Tarkovsky had wanted to make a film called *The Bright Day*, a highly autobiographical project, elements of which would later become a part of *The Mirror*<sup>1</sup>. Tarkovsky had completed a screenplay for a project titled *Bright, Bright Day* in 1968. Yet the director once again fell victim to the Soviet Film bureaucracy, which after the years of struggle concerning *Andre Roublev*, felt that Tarkovsky needed to be "reined in". His proposal was rejected quickly; but thriving on his legendary resourcefulness, Tarkovsky was able to make a second request and by the end of 1968 he had a screenplay in place for a proposed film version of Stanislaw Lem's novel *Solaris*. With its extra terrestrial backdrop, *Solaris* inevitably invited several somewhat misleading comparisons to Stanley Kubrick's epic *2001*. While audiences and critics worldwide marveled at the technical brilliance of the special effects displayed in *2001* (produced two years prior to *Solaris*), Tarkovsky's film accomplishes a great deal more with a lot less.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Tarkovsky had

---

<sup>1</sup> In his diarised accounts of the months leading up to *Solaris*' final "official" approval Tarkovsky constantly refers to his own need to film *The Bright Day* lamenting at one point "I think constantly about *The Bright Day*. It could be a beautiful picture. It will be an instance of film built in its entirety on personal experience. And for that reason, I am convinced it will be important to those who see it. If only I had finished *Solaris*, and it isn't even started. A whole year to go; and what a miserable year... there's no one to work with" (*Time Within Time* p. 13) The brutal and stark honesty of Tarkovsky's account in his published Diary *Time Within Time* only serves to underline the Director's own assertion that *Solaris* was his least favourite and least personally successful project. This sentiment runs contrary to the fact that the film was well received both inside the Soviet Union and outside where it had enjoyed a successful reception at the 1972 Cannes Film Festival, winning a Special Jury Prize.

<sup>2</sup> Tarkovsky's initial proposal for the funding of the *Solaris* project was ambitious, at 1, 850, 000 rubbles the film would have been the most expensive ever agreed to by the Soviet Film Agency, see Lefanu p.57.

neither the backing of a major Hollywood studio, nor a multi-million dollar budget at his disposal. Yet what attracted me to this film was the way the filmmaker was able to convey the struggles of a man who discovers that his own knowledge of the world around him is painfully inadequate when he is forced to observe the forces that have shaped who and what he is. We are allowed to participate in Kris Kelvin's remarkable transformation from man of science to a naïve, almost teenage, figure obsessed with what he ultimately cannot have, and finally to the repentant figure we see in the film's closing moments. All of this is performed without the array of special effects that Kubrick had at his disposal. In a time, and indeed a society, where individuality did not always flourish, Tarkovsky's films were able to engage in a questioning of the role of the individual within the larger framework of the societies in which they were ultimately a part of. Such is the case with *Solaris*, and this exploration formed my initial attraction to the film, especially in light of Foucault's notion of the heterotopia. What this paper will explore is how the primary location of the film, the space station which orbits the planet Solaris, provides an excellent example of Foucault's heterotopic space and allows Tarkovsky the liberty needed for an examination of the individual subject and the value of the experience we receive from our participation in this unique domain.

---

While the central funding committee did, after several months of debate, finally agree to fund Tarkovsky's studio's proposal for *Solaris*, they did severely hamper the filmmaker's ability to produce the film he didn't really want to make. Funding was eventually to be cut in half to from the initially budgeted 1.8 million rubles to 900,000 rubles, and further funding shortages would eventually lead to the elimination of Tarkovsky's request to re-shoot the city driving sequences in Japan (*Visual Fugue* p.98).

## 1. Foucault and Heterotopic Space

The mere mention of Michel Foucault's name automatically introduces such notions of 'normalization', 'objectification' and 'subjectification', but more than anything else his name has come to represent a distinct method of examining the nature of 'power' in its many forms and its many effects on the individual. Indeed as Paul Rainbow has noted, Foucault "is to be credited with emphasizing the linkage, indeed the inseparability of power and knowledge" (Rainbow 1984 p.14). But we must also acknowledge that, within what has been described as the "Foucauldian" discourse, is an account of the 'powerlessness' of the individual in contemporary society. Foucauldian logic suggests that the concept of individuality lies in the realm of the illusory – a by-product of the effect of a discursive network in which power is regulated and controlled within a given society. As Foucauldian literary critic Simon During has noted, Foucault's work is enabled by his "transgressive sense that being is empty, that deep and fundamental condition which seems to order our relations with the world, death, has no fixed meaning, is unknowable- and therefore provides no depth or final meaning to existence at all" (During p.236). During would seem to be one of the many who make up what James Faubion refers to as the large "section of international academia that contend to this day to assert that Foucault considered the truth to be no more than an effect of power, that his thought is a wholesale and nihilistic rejection of the values of the enlightenment, that he and

his work are incapable contributing to any form of rational and morally responsible action" (*Power* p. xvii).

While it would be difficult to argue that Foucault's work has an overall tone of optimism about it, there are some peculiar discrepancies in his writing that call into question the nihilism which has been attributed to him. Critics often point to one of Foucault's basic arguments: that within any given discourse the tools of resistance already exist, are accounted for, and are essentially eviscerated. Many see this circular argument as the prime example of the limiting nature of Foucault's vision of the individual subject. There are several critics, such as Stuart Hall, who have questioned this notion of 'resistance' in Foucauldian terms. Hall notes,

while I have learned a great deal from Foucault in this sense about the relation between knowledge and power, I don't see how you can retain the notion of 'resistance', as he does, without facing questions about the constitution of dominance in ideology. Foucault's evasion of the question is at the heart of his proto-anarchist position precisely because his resistance must be summoned up from nowhere. Nobody knows where it comes from.<sup>1</sup>

Yet there are places within his writing where Foucault leaves the door, ever so slightly, open for interpretation on the possibility of individual resistance outside of the discursive model. One curious statement is pointed out by Rainbow as he notes Foucault's assertion in an essay titled "The Subject and Power":

maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of a political 'double bind', which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures. The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try

---

<sup>1</sup> from "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An interview with Stuart Hall, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, from *Journal of Communication Inquiry* (1986), 10(2), 45-60).

and liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries (Foucault cited in Rainbow (1984) p.22).

The idea of liberation through rejection is not a concept that which is unique to Foucault. Indeed this sentiment may owe a great deal to Sartre and the remnants of the existentialist thought with which Foucault was well acquainted. The notion of a refusal to accept the discursive playing field may sound problematic, yet at the same time we cannot discount the notion that within such an environment the individual subject may not be as an illusory concept as Foucauldian scholars might have us believe. What we should recognize is that, within Foucault's writing, many of the elements that would suggest the possibility of resistance and alternate structures of power have always existed. Indeed we might take note of Foucault's oft-quoted assertion that

all of my books... are like little tool boxes... if people want to open them to use this sentence or that idea as a screwdriver or spanner to short circuit, discredit or smash systems of power, including eventually those from which my books have emerged... so much the better (Foucault, cited in Mills p.17).

One idea, which has largely gone unnoticed, is Foucault's concept of the heterotopia – a unique gap in the discursive plane in which the individual is afforded the opportunity to observe the elements which are active in the discourses which shape his/her life as an individual subject. Perhaps within the framework of the heterotopic model, another one of these 'curious discrepancies' in Foucault's writings can be seen. Shortly before his death in 1984 a series of previously unpublished documents, prepared by Foucault in 1967, as part of a

lecture he was invited to give as one of a series on the subject of architecture and "the study of space", were released to the public as part of a conference in Berlin. These documents, which might best be described as a series of lecture notes, were never reviewed by Foucault before their release and were not considered a part of his official body of work until they were subsequently published as the essay "Des Espaces Autres" in the French journal "Architecture – Movement – Continuïte".<sup>2</sup> The essay was subsequently translated into English and published in the American journal "Diacritics" under the title "Of Other Spaces". The concepts he outlines in this article present an interesting and largely unexplored addition to Foucault's vast writing on the nature of power and the relationship of individuals to the prevailing dominant discourse(s). Yet, in his book *ThirdSpace* (which contains the idea of the heterotopia at the core of its analysis of information age social conditions), sociologist Edward Soja cautions that we must consider that the article "was never published by Foucault and may be seen as just an early preliminary sketch that was forgotten and discarded as he moved on to other projects" (Soja p.154). Still, even in this preliminary form the concept presents an intriguing prospect that deserves to be considered with or, as the case may be, without Foucault's consent. Soja does further caution that "Foucault's heterotologies are frustratingly incomplete, inconsistent, incoherent. They seem narrowly focused on peculiar microgeographies, nearsighted and near sited, deviant and deviously apolitical" (Soja p.162). Soja's

---

<sup>2</sup> This discussion on the nature of the production of Foucault's original paper comes largely from E. Soja's *ThirdSpace* especially pp. 152-164, and the introduction to B.Genocchio's "Discourse, Discontinuity, Difference". Soja's discussion becomes a part of his argument that Foucault's heterotopia concept was incomplete and largely separate from other concepts attributed to Foucault.

warning aside, we might note that Foucault did speak of the concept of the Heterotopia in the introduction to *The Order of Things*. This reference would lead us to believe that Foucault did feel a degree of comfort in discussing the possibilities of an alternate arrangement to the nature of power relationships. Indeed, as Soja ultimately suggests, there is a 'value' in the examination of the idea of the heterotopia because such an endeavour may lead to the challenge of conventional wisdom regarding such spaces.

As to the slippery question of what constitutes a heterotopia, we must look closely at Foucault's essay. He states that within each society there exist

real and effective spaces which are outlined in the very institution of society, but which constitute a sort of counter-arrangement, an effectively realized utopia, in which all the real arrangements, all the other real arrangements that can be found within society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged and overturned: a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable (Foucault 1986 p. 24).

Foucault suggests that places such as libraries, cemeteries, hospitals, bedrooms and gardens are possible heterotopic sites. Foucault's idea has a manifest physicality to it. Heterotopic space exists in part because it is physically separated from the world it exists in. Yet at the same time this space occupies a place within the world from which it has been removed. There is an analogy we can draw between the individual experience in heterotopic space and the eye of the hurricane. The individual may stand in the calm center and observe the forces at work around him/ her. This subject is in a unique position, for he/she is, in a sense, in two worlds at once. Yet with this discovery of double space, the individual may realize that he/she is perhaps powerless to alter the course of the forces that have created this space.

In the preface to the English Language version of *The Order of Things* Foucault states that "heterotopias... desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences" (*The Order of Things* p. xvii). Within *The Order of Things* Foucault engages in a detailed analysis of the process of 'classification' at a scientific, biological, economic, political, moral and social level through his detailed examination of the study of human sciences. Debra Mills reminds us in her book *Discourse* that Foucault's writing is very much influenced by the belief that the "truth" exists as a distinctly human construct and not as a transcendental ideal. She cites Foucault's statement that

truth is of the world; it is produced there by virtue of multiple constraints... Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is the types of discourse it harbours and causes to function as true: the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish between true and false statements, the way in which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures which are valorized for obtaining truth: the status of those charged with saying what counts are true (Foucault, cited in Mills p.18).

Foucault presents the concept of heterotopia as a break from convention, or perhaps an anomaly, within a given system, beyond the control of the forces that would seek to diminish the capacity of such spaces through categorization. While being a part of the discursive network, heterotopic space exists apart from this process of control. Rather than an unattainable target, heterotopic space exists in a manner which calls into question the validity of the system which gave rise to the creation of the space in the first place. As Foucault notes

heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct



sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and opposite one another) to 'hold together' (*The Order of Things* p xvii).

The suggestion is that, within the domain of the heterotopia, there is a potential challenge to the existing discursive order; a challenge which defies the process of cohesion and categorization. The nature of such a challenge has led to Foucault's perception that there is a danger contained within the heterotopia. This challenge contests the very cohesiveness of society as a whole, and could, potentially, give rise to alternative models of structuring power. Foucault's belief is that the implied danger of the heterotopia is largely born out of the inconsistent and unpredictable nature of the idea (and the spaces which it applies to). With the idea of danger in mind, we might find significance in how the term 'heterotopia' has come to have a fixed use in contemporary medical practice. In medical terminology heterotopia refers to "the displacement or misplacement of an organ (or parts of an organ) from its normal position in the body; the presence of a tissue in an abnormal location...a type of functioning abnormality" (*Dorland's Medical Dictionary*). In general terms, the medical use of the term heterotopia includes the occurrence of a variety of tumors (both benign and malignant), which manifest themselves throughout the human body. The standard treatment for such events is the surgical removal, the cutting away of the excessive biological material, which is neither used nor needed by the body, but significantly, could become a site where disease or dysfunction could begin to take place.

The model of the utopia has long stood as a type of Platonic ideal which has been a conduit for examining questions regarding freedom and the role of the individual within a given society. Yet Foucault shows a particular disregard for the potential achievement of the utopian model. Foucault suggests that the very notion of the utopian society is flawed by the very tactile logistics which apply to the heterotopic model. In a 1982 interview he notes,

I think it is somewhat arbitrary to try to dissociate the effective practices of freedom by people, the practice of social relations, and the spatial distributions in which they find themselves. If they are separated [from each other], they become impossible to understand (Foucault cited in Rainbow 1984 p.246).

Foucault adds that "Unlike utopias, which are 'fundamentally unreal spaces', heterotopias are 'counter-sites', a kind of effectively enacted utopia" (Foucault 1986 p 24). As such many of the spaces Foucault identifies as heterotopic sites exist all around us and occupy functioning roles in society. We are not meant to see these spaces as the manifestations of theoretical ideals; instead we see a type of ordinariness, or banality, at the core of heterotopic spaces. But it is crucial to realize that the very concept of 'ordinariness' or familiarity that is ultimately challenged in these sites. In *The Order of Things* Foucault states that

"utopias afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road is chimerical." (p. xviii).

While the utopia remains an ideal that is never likely to be realized, the heterotopia exists as the, often unacknowledged, ontological middle ground in the discursive network between 'power' and 'powerlessness'. In such sites dominant discourses seem to lose their potency and alternative possibilities arise. Our interaction in such spaces opens up the 'syntax', the construction, if

you will, which forms the basis of the discourses which have created the heterotopic space in the first place. The building blocks might be similar but the final product has at least the potential to become quite different.

While physicality is an important element in the idea of the heterotopia, the notion requires several other significant conditions to be met before we can define a space as such. Soja notes "the power knowledge link is acknowledged by every Foucauldian scholar, but for Foucault himself the relationship was embedded in a trilectic of power, knowledge *and space*. The third term should never be forgotten" (Soja p.148). From Soja's interpretation we can acknowledge that, for the individual subject, 'the knowledge of the power of the space' becomes the significant heterotopic feature. Foucault claimed that each heterotopia has a

precise and determined function" that may shift over time. Cemeteries, for example, were generally located near the town's center next to the church until the end of the eighteenth century. Their migration to the suburbs during the 19th century marked a significant ideological shift from the "sacred and immortal heart of the city" to the 'other city,' where each family possesses its dark resting place (Foucault 1986 p.25).

Part of the exercise in examining heterotopic space involves an examination of the reasons we have to enter such sites and our reactions to what we experience once inside. From an exterior vantage point, our perceived knowledge of these spaces comes from the way we view these sites within the larger framework of the societies in which they exist. We may know of the existence of such places in our environment, but we may not have an awareness of their actual functions until we have cause to enter one. One of the conditions that becomes a significant feature of these spaces is the notion "that the heterotopic space is not

as freely accessible [as] a public place. Either the entry is compulsory as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications [to gain entry]" (Foucault 1986 p.26). Thus a type of inclusion / exclusion dichotomy becomes one of the significant defining factors of heterotopic space. Once we have gained entry we are allowed to become aware of the alternate power structures that exist within.

In his article "Discourse, Discontinuity, Difference" Benjamin Genocchio sees the major problem with the concept of the heterotopia to be the unstable boundaries which determine what exactly differentiates heterotopic space from non-heterotopic space. Genocchio notes that " 'Of Other Spaces' is invariably called up (within a simplistic 'for/against' model of conventional politics) to provide the basis for some 'alternative' strategy of special interpretation which *might* be applied to any 'real' place (Genocchio p.39). Genocchio's point is well taken in that while such physical spaces are seemingly all around us, dominant discourses seem more or less intact. While Soja is more supportive of investigating the term, both Soja and Genocchio can be accused of being too concerned with the spatial aspects of the idea, largely ignoring the temporal aspects of the concept. A key issue in Foucault's essay is the problematic notion of time and how time is perceived by individuals inside the heterotopic environment. Foucault states that "the heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with traditional time" (Foucault 1986 p.26). This 'break' from traditional time can be applied to a situation of immediacy, as the "crisis heterotopia" would suggest, or to the

discourse of historicizing, as suggested in the notion of "collected time". Indeed, we are not speaking of a transaction that takes place over a set period of time (such as a deadline or even an interruption). Within heterotopic space there is a fundamental change in how the individual begins to understand the passage of time. Whether the passage of time within the site is perceived as accelerated or slowed by the individual is not significant. The realisation that there is a difference between the passage of time within the site and how time 'exists' outside of the site becomes a significant step in the process of differentiating common physical space from the space which makes up the heterotopia. In this sense the heterotopia can exist as a window of opportunity, a break from traditional conventions that can arise due to a series of events or actions beyond control of the individual.

Foucault notes in the conclusion of his essay that one of the prominent characteristics of heterotopias

"is that they [heterotopias] have, in relation to the rest of space, a function that takes place between two opposite poles. On the one hand they [heterotopias] perform the task of creating a space of illusion that reveals how all of space is more illusory, [and reveal] all the locations within which life is fragmented. On the other [hand], they have the function of forming another space, another real space, as perfect, meticulous and well-arranged as ours is disordered, ill-conceived and in a sketchy state" (Foucault 1986 p.27)

Foucault describes the library as significant heterotopic arena: a space that is essentially made up of books and other products of language, but more significantly a space in which many ideas have been gathered and are shared with the individuals who enter the space. In many cases it is the systems of categorization and the organization that become the defining elements of the

library, rather than the ideas contained within its walls. The individual who enters the library carries with him or her the opportunity to participate in a space which combines the capacity for illusion and the functioning of a systemic order in a manner which has helped create the space in the first place. The suggestion contained in Foucault's example of the library is that the attempts to organize and classify the concepts contained within the materials housed in the library serve as a type of 'cloak' for the almost limitless ideas that could exist within the confines of this site. The library has an essential place within society: the process of limiting the flow of imaginative thought through organization; and this implied containment provides a false sense of security to the members of that society. The ideas contained within the library 'could' become the very tools used to dismantle the society that created the site. Without the watchful eye of the 'panoptic' discourse, the occurrence of alternate models of 'reality' could lead to destabilization of that society, revealing it as this 'sketchy state'.

One of the undercurrents which runs throughout the essay is the notion that the heterotopic model can be seen as an alternative model to the Panoptic model which Foucault would later become widely known for. In his seminal work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, Foucault addresses the notion of subject construction as the effect of power and the effect of the knowledge embedded within the discourses acting upon a given group of people. At the core of the Panoptic model is Bentham's infamous design for a prison in which a central guard tower watched over a ring of individual mirrored cells. The purpose of the Panopticon was not simply to incarcerate and house those who had

transgressed societal laws. Indeed the very design expresses the intention of being able to force individuals to change, or alter their patterns of behavior to fit into the portfolio of what the society of the time deemed acceptable. Foucault notes that

the Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle resistance or friction, must be represented as pure architectural and optical system: it is, in fact, a figure of pure political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use (*Discipline and Punish*, p.205).

Foucault certainly recognized and responded to something crucial in the Panopticon's design. In Bentham's plan the system would continue to operate even if there was no-one in the tower watching at a given point in time: the power of the guards was a function of their invisibility. While the inmates could see through to the central guard tower, they would have no idea whether the guards were watching their actions at any precise moment. After being punished a few times for breaking any rules, each prisoner would learn to assume that he was being watched at any given instant - or more accurately, potentially being watched. In the panoptic model the inmate is isolated and alone, deprived of contact with other individuals. Foucault wrote that this subject

is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication.... The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities.... Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power (*Discipline and Punish* p.200-1).

Individuality, we are told, lies below the threshold of description. The subject may still feel a sense of apparent individuality yet his/her behavior has been conditioned to comply with an abstract model of individuality to the point where

the very notion of "individuality" is under attack by being turned against itself. As Foucault notes, within the Panopticon there are "so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone perfectly individualized and constantly visible" (*Discipline and Punish* p.200). Foucault points out that this idea runs contradictory to the principle of the dungeon: darkness is replaced by light and visibility becomes a trap. Powerlessness becomes the burgeoning reality.

Foucault saw the next logical extension of Bentham's concept. With modifications, the Panoptic model could be understood so that the concept of the re-construction of the individual could be incorporated into institutional structures like factories, schools, military barracks, hospitals and 'madhouses'. Foucault is also quick to note that the Panopticon was more than just a prison. The structure was also a laboratory which could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behavior and ultimately train and correct individuals. In a broader sense, the mandate of the panoptic model has always been the recoding of the individual subject which would allow him/her to take his place within a society governed by the dominant discursive forces. But the Heterotopic Model represents an inversion of the panoptic model by inverting the process of surveillance. The individual subject within a particular heterotopic space gains a type of autonomy in that he/she is granted a unique perspective on the forces which are attempting to impose their discursive might on that individual. Within these spaces the process of "the gaze", is reversed, and 'the observed' become 'the observers'. In a metaphoric sense the individual in heterotopic space becomes aware that the guards in the panoptic tower, if even for just a brief



instance, are not watching. Instead of being rendered powerless by his/her individuality the individual in the heterotopic space gains the ability to make the choice of rejection, and the possibility of resistance comes about as a by-product of the interaction.

The promise that accompanies the heterotopia is that our interactions in such spaces will reveal things which we are unable or unwilling to acknowledge. Though this notion of revelation may bear some similarities to Jurgen Habermas' notion of the "Public Sphere", Foucault's idea is an altogether different concept. What Habermas envisions with his notion is based on a classical ideal of a physical space where individuals could freely enter and engage in public debate "in a realm of freedom and permanence". The Public Sphere exists as a separate space from the private sphere of the individual household and forms a common arena where, as Habermas notes, public opinion may be formed through the operations of coerced reason and free discussion removed from exterior influences. Indeed the concept of a public forum formed a vital function in Greco – Roman culture as a type of moral space such that "only in the light of the public sphere did that which existed become revealed, did everything become visible to all" (Habermas p.4). While the process of exposure and even enlightenment might be a common goal of both models, both differ in how they achieve these goals. Heterotopic space involves the role of the individual subject to a much greater extent than does the model of the public sphere. We might note that heterotopic space resembles something into which one might stumble, or find oneself in, without any real purpose or intent. Habermas' model implies a

type of directed search for meaning or an overt investigation of the circumstances at hand. We might also consider that Habermas' Public Sphere was seen almost as a necessity in a classically oriented culture. Not so the heterotopia. While many of the spaces are seen as a part of any given society as a whole, there are particular characteristics of each that are accepted or tolerated because the location in question does have a practical use. The more enlightening heterotopic characteristics are seen as a side effect brought on by a particular set of circumstances.

While the idea of the heterotopia has not been entirely ignored in academic literature, there are few practical applications of the model. As previously mentioned, Edward Soja's *ThirdSpace* provides a practical critique of Foucault's concept and despite some considerable reservations, Soja sees the heterotopic model as an attempt to view society by looking at a cross section of what is being represented, and not an overview of the society itself. Tapping into a vein opened by postcolonial critics such as the "thirdness" of Homi Bhabha and the plight of Guatri Spivak's "Subaltern", Soja has argued that the heterotopic model could ultimately be developed into a practical working method in the analysis of the "geohistories of otherness" as the concept relates to the individual contained within a particular special arrangement outside the dominant discursive network. In this context we might consider that Foucault had brought an early element of postcolonial thought to the fore when he stated that the space of the "heterotopia is not one of illusion but of compensation, and I wonder if it is not somewhat in this manner that certain colonies have functioned"

(Foucault 1986 p.27). What becomes the most significant aspect of these spaces is our attempt to identify them, but also how we might recreate and explore the effects that are produced by this curious combination of elements<sup>3</sup>. Recently there have been applications of the heterotopic model in works of fiction (including literary and cinematic models) that explore the plight of the individual subject in the discursive network in which he/she exists. In such cases the heterotopic model has worked well in instances where it is used to interpret works where the bulk of the narrative takes place either in a single location or within a small number of isolated settings.

One of the few instances where heterotopic concepts have been used as a device in literary analysis comes to us in the work of postmodern critic Brian McHale, who provides examples of how heterotopic space is used in a dystopic arena by science fiction writers who make up what he terms, the unfortunately named, 'cyberpunk' cannon. In his work *Constructing Postmodernism* McHale provides examples of how the heterotopic space exists in the works of writers

---

<sup>3</sup> We might note that in recent years use of the Heterotopic model has increased after largely laying somewhat dormant. Many of the models generated have struggle to fit into the parameters that Foucault set forth and many still ignore that primary notion to the individual's struggle within a distinctive physical space. One of the most distinctive voices is the field of Communication and Technological studies where the claim that the Internet (or parts of it) has become the contemporary embodiment of Foucault's original notion of heterotopic space. In their cyberpaper "Heterotopic Spaces On-Line" Jeffrey R. Galin and Joan Latchaw note that "Foucault could not have imagined in 1967 how the advent of cyberspace would disrupt his distinction between the space of contemporary technical work and lived space. Most descriptions and narratives of cyberspace foreground human interaction, not stored data. At the same time, the World Wide Web, with its universal graphic user interface, is the ultimate, storage medium--from a technical point of view. The key, then, to understanding how some components of cyberspace might be understood in heterotopic terms is to expand Foucault's original notion of 'site'" (Galin & Latchaw introduction). While lacking an obvious tactile representation, the apparent timelessness of internet communication has a certain attraction to based on the opportunity for individual self-discovery presented in the initial proliferation of internet 'chat' sites and what have commonly been referred to by Galin and Latchaw and a host of cyberspace critics a MUD and MOO's

such as Kathy Acker, Thomas Pynchon and William Gibson. The genre of Science Fiction has long dealt with the concept of the "utopia"; the almost surreal environment in which mankind's greatest challenges seem to have been met and defeated. 'Cyberpunk' represents a movement away from the traditional expectations of science fiction towards a new post-modern aesthetic. As McHale states these authors rely on the creation of allegorical "zones" which he notes "are instances of what Michel Foucault called "heterotopia", the impossible space in which fragments of disparative discursive orders (actualized in cyberpunk as disparate microworlds) are merely juxtaposed, without any attempt to reduce them into a common order" (McHale p.250). McHale offers the example of the "sprawl" as it exists in Gibson's *Neuromancer* as an example of what he describes as an Urban Zone<sup>4</sup>. McHale suggests that a zone of this magnitude is created / propped up by a vast array of what he describes as a series of smaller "zones within the zone". He states that "at the centre of this imploded multiple word space – though 'centre' is a rather infelicitous term for a space whose organizational principal is precisely centrelessness – one typically finds an even more compact zone of cultural heterogeneity and juxtaposition, a kind of dense node of collapsed microworlds" (McHale p.250). Ultimately McHale's interest in the heterotopic model as part of his analysis is directed towards his primary assertion that the individual subjects within the cyberpunk canon (and by allegorical extension their counterparts in contemporary society), are figures who

---

<sup>4</sup> Within Gibson's novel the Sprawl is essentially a vast continuous city which basically stretches from what was once Atlanta up to the New England states on the Eastern Seaboard of the United States moreover it forms the basis for much, but not all, of the narrative setting, in the novel. The implication of this example is slightly problematic though. If anything Gibson's Sprawl shows us what society as a whole has become whereas the heterotopia that Foucault suggests as smaller more intimate location which stands out against the larger world it is supposedly a part of.

are fragmented, incomplete and cursed by a series of crises of the self. The intricate and interwoven nature of the zones he describes provides writers with a forum to explore the notion of selfhood in a unique and direct manner<sup>5</sup>.

In his paper "Heroes and Heterotopia: Geopolitical Intrigue in the Warner Brother's *Casablanca*" Denis Linehan gives an effective, though somewhat limited, example of how an analysis of heterotopic space can enhance a reading of Michael Curtiz's Academy Award winning film. Linehan notes that

"as alternate sites of social ordering, heterotopias are inherently spatial and imaginary and very effective in restructuring social relationships because of their power to refract norms by subsuming differences in style, logic and narrative. Rick's Café American is precisely this. Space in *Casablanca* exists inside a series of boxes and is collapsed, expanded and distorted at the will of its creators" (Linehan p.8).

Within the narrative structure of the film the majority of *Casablanca* takes place in one primary location, Rick's Café American. As Linehan describes Rick's is

"at once and the same time a melting pot, a casino, a marketplace, a saloon, an embassy, a boarder zone, no-man's land, a battlefield, a café, a home, an office, a brothel, a trading post, a confessional, a negotiating table, a public demonstration, a place where social standing and status are overturned, and like the plot itself swiftly changing, shifting and unstable" (Linehan p.8).

What becomes the unique feature of this space is the manner in which social, political and economic discourses become distorted in this one localized setting, if only for a very brief period of time. Soja states one of the benefits of examining heterotopic space is that this examination shows us "how to interpret human

---

<sup>5</sup> The physical elements within *Neuromancer* exist side by side with a virtual plane known as the SitStim, a decidedly more complex three dimensional version of what we know as the internet, in which various individuals interact in a series of virtual locations by 'jacking in' or entering this virtual domain while their physical beings remain in the tactile world.

geographies as texts and contexts, how to see other spaces hidden in the more obvious and diverting multiplicity of real world sights and situations" (Soja p.162). In such a venue a variety of unlikely possibilities arise which could only exist in this space at this point in time. As the centre of attention, Rick's is "inhabited only by nomads, drifters, by rich and poor, young and old, by beauties and by monsters, by characters of all nationalities". Everyone, regardless of authority, rank or ideology, is welcomed at Rick's, as long as he/she leaves their various differences at the door. The setting and the supposed neutrality of the location may provide a limited form of autonomy to the individual subjects within its confines by providing them with an array of options not likely be available to them outside of this space (Linehan p.8). Rick and Elsa's problems might not amount to the proverbial 'hill of beans', but within this unique space they are allowed to exist and resolve their issues themselves. Yet, contrary to several of Linehan's assertions, while the film would certainly seem to employ the heterotopic device as the key element in its setting, within the film there is neither a comprehensive exploration of this space, nor anything other than an incidental questioning of the forces which have brought about its creation. While we are aware of the particular circumstances which have endowed this location with a unique set of characteristics, the various discursive fields at work in the creation of Rick's Café are accepted at an archetypal level and taken, more or less, at face value (Pro American, Anti- Nazi to be sure, but even the ambiguity of the French Resistance is largely left unexplored). Unfortunately the true value of what the heterotopia represents, or at the very least has the opportunity to become, is ultimately not realised in *Casablanca*.

Phillip Stokes has noted that, within the context of 'the linguistic turn', Foucault's writing is "preoccupied with the meanings of concepts rather than with the impact concepts have had upon the world" (Stokes p.107). Beyond the confines of linguistic analysis many of Foucault's concepts (heterotopia included) continue to deal with the plight of the subject in an ever-increasing discursive arena. In his work "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" Walter Benjamin wrote of the cinematic gaze that "the camera introduces us to unconscious optics" (Benjamin p.672). He was remarking on the intensely visual experience of industrial modernity and suggesting its attendant reorganization of subjectivity, one which potentially endowed the viewer with a new level of autonomy. His words, prophetic at the time, seem to have gained a new meaning at the end of the twentieth century. Indeed we are reminded of the proliferation of the new technologies of vision that have emerged at the end of the twentieth century, provoking interest in a visuality that questions the privileged relationship between viewer, vision and truth. Proceeding from this stance WJT Mitchell has distinguished himself in contemporary scholarship by suggesting that the visually oriented culture that exists at the end of the twentieth Century has developed because we are experiencing what he describes as "the pictorial turn" thus bringing to an end the era Richard Rorty described as the age of "the linguistic turn". In the collection of essays known as Picture Theory Mitchell defines the pictorial turn as "a postlinguistic, postsemiotic rediscovery of the picture as a complex interplay between visuality, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies and figurality (Mitchell 1994 p.16). Like Foucault, and before

him Marshall MacLuhan, Mitchell explores the notion that woven into the production of textual communication are the concepts of containment, which include matters of time, history, political action and the impositions of various forms of power. Far from suggesting that a world of images is devoid of these characteristics, Mitchell suggests the image "is the sign that pretends not to be a sign, masquerading as (or for the believer, actually achieving) natural immediacy and presence." (Mitchell 1987 p.43).

In *Uncommon Cultures* Jim Collins questions the idea of the individual subject being a "transitory and fragmented figure" in contemporary postmodern culture. Collins' primary assertion is that we have arrived at the point where, in our "discourse sensitive society", mass culture resembles an "arena" in which a wide variety of discourses are constantly acting and reacting with each other to the point of contradiction and denouncement in an on-going struggle for primacy, privilege and control over the "process of representation"<sup>6</sup>. Far from agreeing with critics such as McHale and even the Foucauldian factions who would claim that "the self" has been fragmented or even annihilated in the Postmodern world, Collins offers the point of view that the individual self is alive and well and

---

<sup>6</sup> In the opening section of *Uncommon Cultures*, titled "Cultural Fragmentation and the Rise of Discursive ideologies", the author makes the claim that we should see that "culture is no longer a unitary, fixed category, but a decentred fragmentary assemblage of conflicting voices and institutions" (Collins p.2). Essentially the individual, in attempting to make sense of the "semiotic glut" caused by a continual bombardment of signs, must engage in the process of "being interpolated" while simultaneously attempting to arrange these messages according to an individual hierarchy which can exist beyond conventional distinctions such as class, gender, and race. According to Collins, the contemporary subject has the potential to be defined by activity rather than passivity. As such Collins 'active subject' would seem to correspond the notion of individuality through by the choice of rejection which Foucault suggests as inherent to the possibility of the individual subject. Collins does caution that this struggle is not universal, but brought about by the power of the individual to "look back" at the very messages he/she is being asked to accept, but he does not deal with the specifics of how this might be accomplished.



existing with other 'distinct selves' "all being hailed by multiple competing messages all issued simultaneously" (Collins p.144). While he does not directly refer to Foucault's heterotopic model, Collins' line of reasoning is very similar to the notion of 'contestation' and the movement away from a 'linguistic' model within contemporary visually oriented media. What both Collins' and Mitchell's writing suggest is that, in a society and culture where the individual is continually bombarded by a series of messages and signs which seek to perpetuate established discursive models, the role of the heterotopia becomes even more significant to the role of individuality. Our ability to recognise such spaces and understand the experience that we gain through our participation in these sites becomes crucial in our attempts to comprehend the nature of the forces acting upon us. Through this recognition we can then begin the process of making the decisions and the choices on which individuality is predicated.

## **2. Tarkovsky, *Solaris* and Reaction**

Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 film Solaris, based on the novel by Stanislaw Lem, features an excellent cinematic example of what Foucault describes in his 1967 Article as a "Heterotopic space". While the filmmaker uses the heterotopic model, Tarkovsky's particular use of this device moves beyond Foucault's idea and stresses the psychological effects on the characters who exist within the heterotopic space created by the filmmaker. Through the experiences of the characters in the film we are invited by the director to observe many of the forces

and discourses, which have helped to create this space, from an exterior vantage point. Author Peter Green notes that Tarkovsky uses a similar situation in many of his films, "removing protagonists from their familiar everyday surroundings to an Alien ground – a battlefield, forbidden zone, exile or in this case a space station" (Green p. 14). Yet in the true heterotopic sense this supposedly alien ground is very much a product of a world we are familiar with. What Tarkovsky has done in *Solaris*, in a very direct way, is to explore, even improve upon, Foucault's idea of the heterotopia, by examining the very prospect of what might occur in such a space. Within the confines of the heterotopic experience, larger theoretical and ontological questions are explored through an examination of the psychological, emotional and spiritual demands on the individuals in this space.

Despite the fact that Tarkovsky holds a position of some reverence in the international film community, there has been very little written about him or his distinct style of filmmaking. Much of what has been written about Tarkovsky and his films tends to deal with the high ideal he saw as the purpose, or the mission of the filmmaker. In Peter Green's book *Andre Tarkovsky: The Winding Quest* the author explores what he describes as Tarkovsky's "ambition to raise the art of film to the level of the great works of poetry, painting or music, to that of Dostoevsky, Leonardo or Bach" (Green p.136). Through his readings of Tarkovsky's seven feature films, Green addresses the perception of Tarkovsky as some kind of "visual poet", largely based on what the author laments as "vague emotional or mystical qualities". Green concedes, that although the term poetic does have an attraction when discussing Tarkovsky, the "true poetry

[within his films] lies in the concentration of images, sometimes allusive or associative, sometimes reinforcing an idea, compressing further layers of meaning into a space without extending its length- the distillation of cinematographic expression" (Green p.10). Ultimately Green asserts that Tarkovsky, "despite his essentially Russian upbringing and temperament", can be linked to what the author describes as a "Classical European, humanist-Christian heritage", and it is this aspect of his work that has made Tarkovsky a fascinating and widely accessible figure (Green p.136). While Tarkovsky's films do include a number of the elements Green describes, ultimately, the films, rather than endorsing these concepts, reflect Tarkovsky's interest in engaging a discussion of this "Classical European, humanist-Christian heritage".

A more thorough insight into Tarkovsky's career comes to us from co-authors Vida Johnson and Graham Petrie. In their book *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, the authors note that Tarkovsky's films have "routinely been considered 'obscure', 'baffling' and 'impenetrable' especially by American critics who have compounded the very real difficulties by inadequate knowledge of the historical and cultural contexts that shaped them and by descriptions of their contents which are woefully inaccurate" (*Visual Fugue* p xiii). At the core of Johnson and Petrie's analysis is the notion of the "conflicted" subject often caught between two epochs. Citing the Hungarian critical tandem of Kovacs and Szilagyi, the authors of *Visual Fugue* contend that one of the overriding features of Tarkovsky's films is the inner conflict that exists when the subject is caught between two worlds "one external, materialistic, historical,

violent, destructive, "real"; the other internal, spiritual, atemporal, peaceful, hopeful and usually given a transcendent quality by means of dream, hallucination or inner vision" (*Visual Fugue* p.231). While the struggle of the figure caught between these two worlds is not a unique feature of Tarkovsky's films (we might also make the same claims for the films of Fellini, Renoir, Antonioni, Truffault and Kurosawa); what is somewhat different is Tarkovsky's interest in blurring or distorting the distinctions between these two worlds, the material and the spiritual. As Green more accurately notes "One of the qualities of Tarkovsky's films is their ability to discuss fundamental questions of human existence, not in the form of metaphysical tracts, but by means of striking, often simple parables that tread a narrow path between fairy tale and philosophy" (Green p. 67). This conflict is played out in all of his films (but particularly in both Solaris and Andre Roublev) in a rich interwoven, intertextual tapestry which involves a host of allusions and direct quotations from a wide variety of literature, painting, music, sculpture and architecture.

In Mark Lefanu's *The Cinema of Andre Tarkovsky*, the author also stresses that in Tarkovsky's films the inner, personal, psychological aspects become more important than the wider historical / political / cultural context. His position is drawn from Tarkovsky's own assertion that 'Nothing in cinema at the present is more neglected or superficial than psychology. I'm talking about understanding and revealing the underlying truth of characters' states of mind.' (*Sculpting in Time* p.75). Perhaps, not surprisingly, the most authoritative writing

on the subject of Tarkovsky's films comes from Tarkovsky himself. While he rejected the traditional 'montage' style of the legendary Soviet directors (directors such as Lev Kuleshov, Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Dziga Vertov), Tarkovsky was able to continue the tradition of the director/ theorist that these figures had established. In his own book *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*; Translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair, Tarkovsky engages in a thorough discussion on the topic of film theory. In his review of *Sculpting in Time*, critic Donato Totaro describes how Tarkovsky's book

served partly as a cathartic release of creative energy during his periods of inactivity, it is at once an impassioned defence of his uncompromising cinema, a treatise on the moral and spiritual function of art in modern society, and a theoretical exploration of encountered practical and aesthetic problems. The resulting work is a unique blend of classical realist aesthetic (long take, depth of field, moving camera, opposition to montage principles) with an infusion of Romanticist aesthetics and personal spiritualism (Tarkovsky is never very far away from a discussion on aesthetics, art, religion, and/or morality) (Totaro, "Art For All 'Time'").

Indeed what comes across in the book is Tarkovsky's overriding passion for the art of filmmaking. As the title of his book suggests Tarkovsky displays a keen awareness of temporal concepts not only within his own films, but in the process of filmmaking in general. Tarkovsky has noted his belief that the

"cinema is the only art that operates within the concept of temporality. Not because of its developing in time; there are also other art forms that do so: ballet, music, theatre. I mean 'time' in the literal sense of the word. What is a take, from the moment we say 'action' till the moment we say 'stop'? It is the fixing of reality, the essence of time, a way of preserving time which allow to roll and unroll it forever. No other form of art can do that. Therefore, cinema is a mosaic made of time" (Nostalghia.com).

Amongst the many concepts that Tarkovsky articulates in *Sculpting in Time* is the notion that he approached a film as a "block of time" in the same

manner that a sculptor would approach a block of raw material. The craft of the filmmaker as he saw it was to be able manipulate time in such away as to release the audience from its boundaries. The ability of the filmmaker to both distort time and represent, or replicate, distinct physical spaces, makes the study of Tarkovsky's films an attractive prospect when considering applications of the heterotopic model. Perhaps the most definitive statement from Tarkovsky is his belief that "cinema is an art which operates with reality' and not against it" (*Sculpting in Time* p.177). The reality of which he speaks involves the manipulation of time, but not in the "unnaturalistic" manner which the Soviet montage school dictated. For Tarkovsky, filmmaking was not based on "the science of editing" that had become the signifying element of the montage filmmakers. Tarkovsky denies that cinema is like a language working with units, even if these units are relative and of different orders: montage is not a unit of a higher order because it may exercise a power over different shots, imposing style, movement and pace where these elements did not exist. Instead Tarkovsky champions the power of the individual shot stating that any editing "should not add to the temporality already established in a shot" (*Sculpting in Time* p.9). The pressure of time in a shot should not be disrupted or juxtaposed by combining shots with differing temporal significance. He notes "The idea of 'montage cinema'—that editing brings together two concepts and thus engenders a new, third one—again seems to me to be incompatible with the nature of cinema" (*Sculpting in Time* p 43.) Not only is this choice the most deliberate rejection of Eisenstien's process of montage but the slow, deliberate pace of the

action with each of Tarkovsky's films forces the emotional content (or lack thereof) to the fore in each scene.

If we recall that infamous Hollywood adage that tells us that "film is like real life, with the boring bits edited out", what we can say is that *Solaris* thrives on these so called 'boring' bits. Many of the less glamorous, often disregarded moments, of Kris Kelvin's experience on the station, are given attention. Sequences such as conversations between Kelvin and the other scientists, and the significant conversation that takes place between Kelvin and the second reproduction of Hari where he discusses the fate of the original Hari, are filmed as one continuous long take, thus imposing a sense of "real time" on the action taking place before us. Torato notes that "Tarkovsky increasingly came to believe that the long take was the ultimate tool for communicating this rhythm (time-pressure), and to serve as an agent of aesthetic, dramatic and spiritual temporality" (Totaro p.6). There are several such sequences in the *Solaris*. In particular, the scene in the library on the space station, which features individual shots lasting 2 ½ to three minutes, a far cry from the frenetic fast pace of the traditional Soviet Montage school and almost unheard of in contemporary Hollywood films. But the result is a curious blend of ambiguity and heightened sensibility. In his paper "The Long Take that Kills" Benjamin Halligan notes that "such moments in Tarkovsky's films—and Tarkovsky's cinema is a cinema of moments of catharsis for those who watch his films—are situated within the "reality effect" of the long take, within the real-time that pulses through the frame" (Halligan p.3) For Tarkovsky the length of such takes endows his image not only

with a temporal significance but also an element of interpretive liberalization. Film critic John Marks has noted that with Tarkovsky's vision of cinema "it is possible that the spectator is reacting against the alienating conditions of modern existence and seeking to fill the gaps in experience, literally searching for lost time" (Marks p.150). As such we can take note of Tarkovsky's assertion that "Eisenstein makes thought into a despot: it leaves no "air," nothing of that unspoken elusiveness which is perhaps the most captivating quality of all art...". (*Time With in Time* p.67). Freedom of thought, both self reflexive and expressive, is at the heart of both *Solaris* and Tarkovsky's vision of what lies at the core of cinematic expression.

Of the idea's expressed in *Sculpting in Time* both Totaro and Marks have noted the connection that exists between Tarkovsky and French theoretician and film critic Gilles Deleuze who addresses a great many of the same concerns in his two volume analysis of cinema. In his two books about cinema, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, and *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, Gilles Deleuze provides an in depth introspection of the cinematographic image arguing a distinction between "movement image" in cinema as a narrative that employs strategies based on difference and integration, and "time image" where there is conceptual 're-linking by irrational or probabilistic' divisions. Drawing on a wide range of philosophical arguments, Deleuze is clearly interested in blending film theory and notions of cinema into the realm of a distinct "cinematic philosophy". This philosophy concerns itself specifically with how the individual audience members



might arrive at a new and different means of interpreting the images presented before them. Deleuze notes that the time-image "puts thought into contact with the unthought, the unsummonable, the inexplicable, the undecidable, the incommensurable" (*Cinema II* p.8). As critic John Marks states

"by placing his work within the wider philosophical question of 'a new image of thought' Deleuze implies that cinema might be able, under certain circumstances, to follow as such a new image. Cinema can function in this way because it can escape the constraints of representation. At their most innovative and powerful, the images created by the cinema cease to represent reality and constitute their own reality." (Marks p.141)

Marks points out the further connection between both Deleuze and Tarkovsky when he suggests that "just as Deleuze feels that a linguistic framework for film analysis is an insufficiently flexible tool for the potential richness of cinema's system of signs, so Tarkovsky claims that a real picture has a plural sense of time which flows beyond the frame" (Marks p.150). The idea has a direct connection with the ideas expressed by Tarkovsky in *Sculpting in Time*. Specifically the director states that

"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". (*Sculpting in Time* p.107).

Both Deleuze and Tarkovsky share the view that the cinema can exist as a unique space where imagination and reality have the opportunity to converge, not in the Baudrillardian sense of making the two concepts indistinguishable, but as a domain with the potential to show as a different 'reality', one that has been

created for us. Deleuze makes the claim that modern cinema is a composition of pre-linguistic images and pre-signifying signs, which constitute a "pre-verbal intelligible content" (*Cinema 2* p.ix). The cinema of the time-image is not a universal language, nor is it a primitive language, but is composed of images and signs that come before language. Deleuze goes so far as to say that the images and signs which make up cinema are like a presupposition or necessary correlate "through which language constructs its own signifying units and operations" (*Cinema 2* p.262). Indeed as WJT Mitchell argues in his "Pictorial Turn" theory, in which the medium of cinema is front and center,

"the differences between images and language are not merely formal matters: they are, in practice, linked to things like the difference between the (speaking) self and the (seen) other; between telling and showing; between "hearsay" and "eyewitness" testimony; between words (heard, quoted, inscribed) and objects or actions (seen, depicted, described) between sensory channels, traditions of representation and modes of experience." (Mitchell 1994).

In the opening section of *Iconology* Mitchell raises the very problematic matter of the differences between the mental image and the verbal image and textual representation. In the process of paving the way for his later development of the pictorial turn, Mitchell states that "consciousness itself is understood as an activity of pictorial production, reproduction and representation governed by mechanisms such as lenses receptive surfaces and agencies for printing impressing or leaving traces on these surfaces" (*Iconology* p.16).

In his analysis of the cinema Deleuze identifies the end of the Second World War as the period which ushers in the age of the 'time image'. Discussing the development of moments such as Italian Neorealism, the transformation of

American Studio cinema and the development of the French New Wave, Deleuze identifies the changing role of the cinema endowing it with the potential to act as "a kind of time machine". In describing the evolution of the movement image into the time image Deleuze comments that

"if the major break comes at the end of the war, with neorealism, it's precisely because neorealism registers the collapse of sensory motor schemes: the characters no longer "know" how to react to situations that are beyond them, too awful, or too beautiful, or insoluble... so a new type of character appears. But more important, the possibility appears of temporalizing the cinematic image: pure time, a little bit of time in its pure form rather than motion (*Negotiations* p.59).

In his analysis of the differences between the movement image and the time image Marks adds that, "in the cinema of the movement image the viewer identified to a greater or lesser extent with the characters options for action in any given sensory-motor situation. However in the cinema of the time image the characters themselves become the viewers [of their own world]" (Marks p.147). This transformation becomes an important distinction in the development of cinema, but it does not represent an all encompassing aspect of the medium. Not all films succeed in this regard. Yet we can certainly agree with Marks' interpretation of Deleuze that it is important that we observe "a new kind of character also appears, one who is a seer rather than an actor" (Marks p.143). In a statement which articulates the similarities between Deleuze, Tarkovsky and the Heterotopic model, Deleuze states

"the time image has the power to affect the way we think by cutting off the ordered flow of chronological time, the continuity upon which the unity and wholeness of the subject is founded. The time image fuels thought and pushes it to the limit where new concepts take shape, and new forms of subjectivity and ways of being in the world arise. (*Cinema 2* p.42).

In the same manner in which the heterotopia allows the subject the opportunity to exist in a place freed from discursive bonds, the role of "the seer" in the cinema of the time-image allows the filmmaker to (re) present images to the audience in a manner which questions the authority of the world they understand.

Frustratingly, Deleuze does not directly give a clear-cut definition of what exactly what the time-image is. Instead, while we are given a host of examples and definitions of the aspects that make up the time-image we are largely left to our own interpretations of these combinations. But he does acknowledge that the consistent production of the time image is something very few filmmakers have been able to achieve. However, one of the filmmakers Deleuze does mention as being not only able to achieve the time-image, but display some degree of mastery over it, is Andrei Tarkovsky, and one of the films Deleuze cites as an example in his book is *Solaris*. Mark's interpretation of the concept of 'the seer' is a significant consideration that links the time image and the notion of heterotopic space together in the cinema. A film like *Casablanca* may indeed use a heterotopic arena as its setting, but the film itself would seem to conform more to Deleuze's idea of the 'movement image'. The main narrative action in the film concerns its central character, Humphrey Bogart's Rick: Rick's initial decision not to act is replaced by his final decision to take a stand; he becomes active when confronted by his former lover. In short, he is the driving force behind the film's narrative progression; where Rick leads us the audience will follow. The film has little time to explore the confines of the unique heterotopic space in which it exists. None of the boundaries, limitations or ideologies that

allow Rick's Café American to exist as it does in the film are brought into question; they are merely accepted as they are presented. *Solaris* on the other hand, as Deleuze suggests, becomes a film where the characters do become the viewers and through them the filmmaker concerns himself with the exploration of the world they exist in.

Science fiction has long been regarded as an allegorical genre by its very nature and it has been suggested in many circles that *Solaris* was conceived of as a Soviet reply to Kubrick's achievements in *2001*. Those same critics could be forgiven for suggesting that this latest instalment of the "Space Race" had manifested itself on the silver screen, the Western Vs Soviet discourse playing itself out in a theatre near you. While comparisons between the two films seem almost inevitable, we might note that, aside from their extra terrestrial settings, the two films actually have very little in common. Indeed while he had seen Kubrick's film version of *2001* and read Clarke's book, Tarkovsky attempted to downplay the relationship between the two projects and his film. He saw both the book, and particularly the film version of *2001*, as "cold and sterile", lacking in a basic humanity, a humanness which Tarkovsky was determined to make dominant in his vision of *Solaris*. Speaking directly on Kubrick's film, Tarkovsky notes that "[*2001*] has made on me an impression of something artificial, it was as if I have found myself in a museum where they demonstrate the newest technological achievements. Kubrick is intoxicated with all this and he forgets about man, about his moral problems" (Kusmierczyk cited at Nostalghia.com). Perhaps Tarkovsky's further assertion that "I don't like science fiction, or rather

the genre that science fiction is based on... but I am interested in the problems I can extract from fantasy" should serve as an indication that his vision should not be grouped together with Kubrick's film for the sake of making a comparison between the two projects. (Kusmierczyk cited at Nostalghia.com)

Tarkovsky had intended *Solaris*, and indeed all his films, to be viewed by Soviet and non-Soviet audiences alike. Still we must acknowledge that, within this film specifically, Tarkovsky was tapping into two separate channels of internal Soviet angst. Here we are reminded of the obvious point that individuality was a problematic notion in the Soviet Union. Stuart Hancock has noted "the belief that individual memories are of inestimable value in the economy of existence was a revolutionary idea to Tarkovsky's audience in the Soviet Union, indoctrinated as they were to years of collectivist teaching that the individual must be subservient to the state" (Hancock p.141). In *Solaris* we can argue that individuality is very much forced on the film's characters as they become isolated in their attempts to make sense of their peculiar circumstances. We might note that in *Sculpting in Time* Tarkovsky had commented that "*Solaris* had been about people lost in the cosmos and obliged, whether they like it or not, to acquire and master one more piece of knowledge. (*Sculpting in Time* p.198). Perhaps the greatest piece of knowledge that they are asked to master is the knowledge of their own individuality. As such *Solaris* must be seen as a film which is very much aware of the plight of individuality, and how that plight manifests itself within a world that has seemingly no time or place for the individual subject. The second important consideration Tarkovsky shows an

awareness of was the growing scepticism within the Soviet Union surrounding the Soviet Government's economic policies regarding the funding of the Soviet Space Agency and the direction which the Agency was channelling these funds. We must recall that, during the time *Solaris* was made, the Soviet Government (in all likelihood in response to losing the "race" to put a man on the moon) was spending vast amounts of money on its own space program. A great deal of the time, energy and money that the Soviet Space Agency was spending was geared to the production of orbiting structures or space stations known as the 'Salyut' series. In addition, the Soviets were reaching out throughout the Solar System with programs designed to gather information from nearby planets. The United States may well have put a man on the moon, but the Soviet Space Agency was spending the equivalent of 10 –15 billion US dollars a year, often doubling the amounts (also in the of billions of dollars) that NASA was spending throughout the 1970's.<sup>7</sup> The western world is well aware of American successes; what are not commonly known are the Soviet achievements of the early 1970s. The Soviet's did successfully land unmanned spacecraft on Venus (July 1970, the Venera-7 lander) and Mars (the Mars 3 space craft reached the surface of Mars in Dec 1971) (Zak, [Russianspaceweb.com](http://Russianspaceweb.com))<sup>8</sup>. Billed as 'glorious achievements' these successes were touted as justification for the continued funding of a

---

<sup>7</sup> Mark Lefanu suggests that even as late as 1985 Soviet spending on their space program was in the range of 19 billion US dollars per year, more than double NASA's 8 billion US dollar budget (Lefanu p.54). He further suggests that the film plays against the notion that the west was seen as technologically superior during this period in time by showing a Soviet mastery of the devices needed for such a complex mission.

<sup>8</sup> Please see Anatonly Zak's very comprehensive web site [www.RussianSpaceWeb.com](http://www.RussianSpaceWeb.com) for a thorough analysis of Soviet and Russian achievement in space exploration. The web site shows the rich history that the Soviet / Russian state has had in the fields of rocket development, space station construction and the exploration of our solar system.

program that touted further technological triumphs. Much less successful, and indeed much less publicized, either inside the Soviet Union or outside the Soviet Bloc were the failures of these Salyut class orbiting space stations, launched throughout the early 1970's and 80's. Designed as observation and research posts (much like the Solaris Station itself) the intent of the Soviet Space Agency was to have such space stations in orbit around Venus and Mars before the end of the twentieth century. Indeed as cameras began rolling on Tarkovsky's vision of a life in the stars, the unsuccessful launch of Salyut 1, which claimed the lives of the three cosmonauts on the flight, was seen inside the Soviet Union by critics of the behemoth space program as yet another example of waste and excess.

### **3. *Solaris* on Earth**

"... we take off into the cosmos, ready for anything: for solitude, for hardship, for exhaustion, death. Modesty forbids us to say so, but there are times when we think pretty well of ourselves. And yet, if we examine it more closely, our enthusiasm turns out to be a sham. We don't want to conquer the cosmos, we simply want to extend the boundaries of the earth to the frontiers of the cosmos... we are humanitarian and chivalrous; we don't want to enslave other races, we simply want to bequeath them our values and take over their heritage in the exchange. We think of our selves as the Knights of the holy Contact. This is another lie. We are only seeking man. We have no need of other worlds. We don't know what to do with other worlds. A single world, our own, suffices us; but we can't accept it for what it is." (Lem, *Solaris*)

In his article entitled "Inner Space", critic Jonathon Rosenbaum prefaces his review of Tarkovsky's film with a selection from the preceding passage taken from the Stanislaw Lem novel upon which the film is based. Bearing in mind what he describes as the 'private and esoteric' elements of Tarkovsky's unique style of



filmmaking, Rosenbaum notes that "Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, unlike the Lem novel, qualifies more as anti-science fiction than science fiction" (Rosenbaum p.60). That there is a difference in the novel and its subsequent film version can hardly be described as unusual or significant. Book and film have been leading a tempestuous co-existence since the earliest days of the 'talkies'. As a matter of practice the book is acknowledged as the medium that is best suited for explorations of the inner workings of the mind of the individual subject, yet Tarkovsky is a filmmaker whose work refutes such a broad generalization. Rosenbaum suggests that Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, while denying us the archetypal voyage through space, concerns itself with the psychological investigation of its central character Kris Kelvin as he attempts to rediscover a humanity lost in the vacuum of technology and science. Tarkovsky has noted "'I am interested above all in the character who is capable of sacrificing himself and his way of life -- regardless of whether that sacrifice is made in the name of spiritual values, or for the sake of someone else, or of his own salvation, or of all these things together' (*Sculpting in Time* p.217). Through the course of the film we can clearly identify that, through his participation in the heterotopic environment Tarkovsky provides us with, Kelvin will undergo a significant transformation from a man with a strict sense of scientific rationality, to a man who not only regains a lost faith, but also his own humanity. We must also be aware of the notion put forward by Mark's reading of Deleuze that regards the importance of the role of "the seer" or "the observer" within the cinema of the 'time-image'. Unlike Humphrey Bogart's Rick,

Donatas Banionis' Kelvin will become this "seer" through whom we are granted a vision of the society he is both a product of and yet an exception to.<sup>9</sup>

In the process of bringing this adaptation to life Tarkovsky soon found himself in disagreement with Lem, the latter threatening to withdraw his support for the project. As Jay Hoberman indicated in his review of Tarkovsky's film "Solaris maintains Lem's wonderful premise (a planet consisting entirely of a single, apparently sentient ocean), but jettisons the Poles's characteristically sardonic metaphysics. Within Lem's complex framework one senses another movie struggling to be born" (Hoberman p.14). Yet when we examine the differences between the two visions of the *Solaris* they only serve to accentuate the psychological aspect of the film that Tarkovsky was trying to develop. Tarkovsky admits that his own vision was almost immediately

"at odds with Lem's original idea because I was interested in issues of inner life, spiritual issues so to speak, and he was interested in the collision between man and Cosmos, the Unknown with a capital "U". This is what interested him. In some ontological sense of the word, in the sense of the problem of cognizance and the limits of this cognizance — it's about that. He was even saying that humanity was in danger, that there was a crisis of cognizance when man does not feel... This crisis is on the increase, it snowballs, it takes shape of various human tragedies, also tragedies scientists experience" (Illg & Neuger p. 21).

The difference is also evident from Tarkovsky's account of the process of bringing *Solaris* to life. Tarkovsky commented that Lem's novel

---

<sup>9</sup> Though his performance ultimately comes across with a "dark and troubled integrity", Donatas Banionis was a veteran Soviet stage actor who according to Lefanu found the transition from stage to screen a difficult one, often infuriating Tarkovsky with a series of questions relating to the overall vision of the project (Lefanu 59-60). Johnson and Petrie note that Tarkovsky disliked Banionis on a personal level, citing the fact that the actor "could not accept that in cinema the actor must not have a picture of how the finished film is going to look". See Johnson and Petrie pp 43-46.

"attracted me only because for the first time I encountered a work about which I could say: atonement, this is a story of atonement. What is atonement? — Remorse. In a straightforward classical sense of the word — when our memory of past wrongdoings, sins, turns into reality. For me this was the reason I made such a film" (Illg & Neuger p. 21).<sup>10</sup>

The nature of how these errors of the past function in the present help to endow Tarkovsky's film with the temporal characteristics necessary to determine that the film takes place in a heterotopic environment. As such Tarkovsky's use of the extra-terrestrial setting serves to function as the catalyst for the film's exploration of various forms of the unknown as they primarily exist in human tragedy. In response to Tarkovsky's changes to his narrative Lem noted that he had

"fundamental reservations [about] this adaptation. First of all I would have liked to see the planet Solaris which the director unfortunately denied me as the film was to be a cinematically subdued work. And secondly — as I told Tarkovsky during one of our quarrels — he didn't make *Solaris* at all, he made *Crime and Punishment* ...what was just totally awful, Tarkovsky introduced Kelvin's parents in the film, and even some Auntie of his... This has made me already quite mad. At this moment we were like two horses pulling the carriage in opposite directions." (Kusmierczyk cited at Nostalghia.com).

In agreeing with Hoberman's suggestion, Johnson and Petrie note that "Tarkovsky alters the meaning of Lem's novel almost beyond recognition, and some consideration of the way in which this happens will illuminate what is particularly 'Tarkovskian' about the film. The book... is — like much of Lem's other work- essentially a critique of anthropocentric thinking, focusing on the limitations of human knowledge and the human intellect (*Visual Fugue* p. 101). The primary

---

<sup>10</sup> Part of Tarkovsky's personal disagreement with Lem concerns the manner in which the director felt the author viewed the medium of cinema. Tarkovsky notes of Lem "he could not comprehend cinema and he still does not to this day. He doesn't know what it is. There are many people like that, even very intelligent ones, who thoroughly know literature, poetry, music but they do not consider cinema an art. Either they think cinema hasn't been born yet or they do not feel it, they cannot see the trees in the forest — in the sense they cannot distinguish between true and commercial cinema. And apparently Lem does not seriously treat cinema as art. That's why he believed we should have followed his novel in the screenplay, should have simply illustrated it. This I could not do. In this case he should have approached not me but a director

difference between the two works is the optimism Tarkovsky infuses his film with that is largely lacking in Lem's novel. Lem's reference to *Crime and Punishment* only serves to underscore Tarkovsky's promise to engage in the more psychological aspects of the medium, rather than succumbing to the wishes of those, such as Lem, who had wanted him to produce a grandiose, cosmic epic to rival Kubrick's *2001*.

Unlike Lem's novel, which takes place in an extra-terrestrial setting, Tarkovsky's film opens with a series of shots of its protagonist Kris Kelvin on the grounds of an unspecified countryside home. Life in its various forms thrives in this environment. The film places abundant flora before us, showing us the rich colours of the surrounding woods. This setting resembles the archetypal 'Garden of Eden', a place where life is allowed to flourish with an untainted innocence that cannot exist outside of this setting. As the camera explores these woods we find Kelvin dressed in blue as he stands out against all the green around him. In this setting Kelvin displays all the confidence of a man who, not only knows where he is, but derives a great deal of comfort from his surroundings. We are also introduced to the one of the film's dominant images: the moving water which Tarkovsky will return to in a variety of different ways. In a very memorable shot we see reeds in a nearby stream as they struggle with a torrent of flowing water. The shot gains an extra significance because we will revisit these reeds in the film's closing moments. Even the sudden spring shower, which later washes through these woods, seems no more out of place than the sounds of nature

---

who was an "illustrator." (Illg & Neuger p. 21).

suggesting that we are viewing a place where the cycle of life exists largely uninterrupted by human intrusions.<sup>11</sup> Yet, almost inevitably, such intrusions are not far away. As the camera pans around these grounds, following Kelvin as he walks, the presence of a house or dacha - a Russian country dwelling, is revealed through its reflection in a pond. Immediately after we see Kelvin washing his hands in this pond, we see the road on which a car has just pulled up to the house. The road leads to the city that we will later see in all of its technological glory towards the end of the film's terrestrial chapter. Kelvin is no longer alone; instead he is now a part of the much larger discursive network which this society represents.<sup>12</sup>

With his solitude now broken, Kelvin has to deal with the arrival of a couple of guests, two adults and two children. While we see that Kelvin is initially more interested in dealing with the children, we will soon discover he is the real visitor to this home. The dacha belongs to his father, a man Kelvin seems to have little time or respect for. The Kelvin we see in these opening scenes is a solemn man; he would rather sit outside in the rain by himself than go inside and

---

<sup>11</sup> Tarkovsky has noted that within his own filmmaking practices that he is "an enemy of symbols. Symbol is too narrow a concept for me in the sense that symbols exist in order to be deciphered. An artistic image on the other hand is not to be deciphered, it is an equivalent of the world around us. Rain in *Solaris* is not a symbol, it is only rain which at certain moment has particular significance to the hero. But it does not symbolize anything. It only expresses. This rain is an artistic image. Symbol for me is something too complicated." (Podgórzec cited at Nostalghia.com).

<sup>12</sup> Several critics have suggested that symbolic nature of Tarkovsky's vision *Solaris* is an "unsettling portrait of man's inequitable, often destructive interaction with his environment" (Acquellero). Instead we can acknowledge that, within the confines of this 'representation', Tarkovsky's exploration concerns itself primarily with how the individual subject is able to interact with the forces which have shaped the world he chooses to present to us. Ultimately the plight of man's direct relationship with the environment is really a secondary feature of Tarkovsky's film.

make small talk with his father and his guest, a man named Berton. Tarkovsky's film will later expand upon this image of water and its connection with life and consciousness. The guest is no ordinary figure; indeed he is a former cosmonaut assigned to the exploration of the planet Solaris. Berton, who appears at the request of Kelvin's father, comes to warn Kelvin of what he can expect on his upcoming mission to this planet – a not so veiled attempt by his father to convince Kelvin not to go in the first place. Even here, in this seemingly remote family home, Tarkovsky reminds us that society has capacity to project its power through its established laws and its ability to cast judgement. Berton is not an unknown figure; he had gained a type of ignominious notoriety from the failure of his last mission. As a former cosmonaut and former commander on the Solaris Station, Berton had led a rescue mission that had ended in tragedy and resulted in the end of his interstellar career. When Kelvin, his father and Berton go inside, they watch a recording of the government investigation into this mission. The plush garden setting is quickly replaced by the cold sterility of the bureaucratic headquarters. At one point one of the committee members can be seen against a window featuring a raven landing on a leafless, or lifeless tree outside the government offices. The halls of this building are populated by a series of archetypal bureaucratic figures and several men in white lab coats. Truth may be sought here, but science is being used to qualify any such findings. In Foucauldian terms science is not an absolute declaration of a supposed truth; more accurately it is seen as little more than a supposedly 'informed' opinion. Indeed what Stokes describes as Foucault's "theme of knowledge usurped in the service of authority" is well played out in this investigation sequence (Stokes

p.187). The sequence which follows seems to be more of an interrogation, perhaps a 'witch hunt', rather than an objective investigation into the events of the tragedy. Here we see a much younger version of Berton and we need reminding that in the initial stages of space flight, as indeed today, the qualifications that govern(ed) the selections of those who ventured from earth into the cosmos was/is very selective. Only the very best, those possessing a combination of intelligence and physical attributes, were allowed to serve on such missions: in effect the best that mankind had to offer. Such a person is the Berton we see who is placed before a tribunal judging him on his actions on the fateful mission over the surface of Solaris Ocean. But we are then quickly reminded of what a combination of fate, time and guilt have done to this man as Tarkovsky cuts back to the present and we see Berton's haggard face.

Our vision of Berton in the present, the one who has come to visit the Kelvin house, is that of a broken man and a figure for whom Kelvin Jr. has little time. Berton at one point has to excuse himself from watching the recorded inquiry; seeing his personal failure played out once more proves to be too much for him, particularly the committee's ultimate denouncement that **"his data clearly has no grounds"**<sup>13</sup>. Berton's testimony would seem to support the unsubstantiated claim that the ocean planet being studied by the Solaris Station does indeed possess a type of intelligence and is attempting to communicate with the people sent to investigate it. The image of 'the garden' is once again recalled

---

<sup>13</sup> Note that quotations, hereafter represented in bold text, are taken directly from the subtitled 1972 version of Andre Tarkovsky's Solaris, a Mos Film Production, see Appendix A for production details.

in Berton's testimony, as he claims to have seen a replica of a garden emanating from the ocean. This garden, made from an artificial material similar to plaster which had, in Berton's words, "**oozed from the ocean**" forms the basis for his belief that the planet was in some way attempting to communicate with him. This claim and Berton's subsequent testimony, that he witnessed the appearance of a 4 meter child emanating from the ocean's watery surface, are both quickly dismissed by the committee interrogating him. The process of his condemnation is confirmed when none of Berton's accounts of the event's he witnessed can be backed up by the flight data-recorder. Indeed he has no answer when he is asked by the committee "**Why did you film only clouds?**" and we are left to wonder if perhaps the whole event had been a figment of his imagination.

By cutting between past and present, the investigation scenes perpetuate the illusion of a search for the truth. In *Picture Theory* Mitchell comments that in the panoptic realm "spectacle is the ideological form of pictorial "power"; surveillance is its bureaucratic, managerial, and disciplinary form...One way of describing the pictorial turn in contemporary visual culture is the convergence of spectacle and surveillance in television news, film, and forms of art that address a public sphere" (Mitchell 1994 p. 327)<sup>14</sup>. With the cameras on him for all to see, and with the recordings of his mission, Berton represents a figure from the panoptic world. As such he is trapped by his individuality and although his

---

<sup>14</sup> Part of Mitchell's analysis of the role of control mechanisms within the pictorial turn involves the restoration of the public spectacle that Foucault sees as being replaced in the panoptic model. One of the main differences is that, for Mitchell spectacles such as Berton's inquisition are consumed in individualized settings, and not as part of a crowd, as many of Foucault's examples in *Discipline and Punish* illustrate.



accusers have a face they have no names, only positions within a governing bureaucracy<sup>15</sup>. Much of the power in this sequence comes from the manner in which Tarkovsky has chosen to shoot the scene. In 7 of the 12 shots in which Berton's testimony is featured, he is depicted alone in the frame, in close and medium close-up shots. In one specific uninterrupted shot of Berton, which lasts almost two minutes, he stands between the pictures of two faces which seem to be watching his every word. In the shots where other figures are present, the intimidated figure of Berton is seemingly located in the center of a circle, surrounded on all sides by those judging him. The filmmaker's choice of black and white stock in this scene reinforces the fact that the tribunal, as a function of government, represents a type of either/ or mentality which sees things as right or wrong on the basis of scientific representation. Despite Rosenbaum's suggestion that, within *Solaris*, "few of these switches [from black and white to color] can be accounted for by any consistent thematic, formal or atmospheric strategy", the tactic does have the effect of adding to the unsettling circumstances that surround the investigation sequence (Rosenbaum p.62)<sup>16</sup>. What becomes evident is that Tarkovsky wants us to see is that this 'informed opinion' comes from minds who are unwilling or unable to explore possibilities

---

<sup>15</sup> We might note that in the film's credits only the committee chairman's part is identified. Other than Psychiatrist, Professor Messenger, none of the other actors involved in this scene are not even identified by a position, let alone a name for their characters.

<sup>16</sup> While the Interrogation sequence would seem to be a clear case of a "natural transition" from b/w from colour stock, Rosenbaum notes that "a joke used to circulate in Russia that Tarkovsky shifted from black and white whenever he ran out of money" (Rosenbaum p.62). While acknowledging that many of the transitions between b/w and colour occur in the middle of several shots throughout the film, which would seemingly negate any economic considerations, Rosenbaum asserts that in *Solaris* the inconsistent shifts in and out of b/w have the "effect of intensifying the private and esoteric elements of Tarkovsky's style" (ibid). The effect of subverting cinematic convention in this manner might be considered heterotopic in and of itself.

that their reductive, analytical processes of thinking cannot comprehend. Human interests might well be better served by another point of view.

On the walls of the room where this investigation is taking place are the lithographs of the faces of the heroic figures who had ventured in to space, those on the cutting edge of space exploration. Several Russian figures (Yuri Gagarin and German Titov) are clearly visible, yet so too are American figures John Glenn and Neil Armstrong, who can clearly be identified along with the NASA logo emblazoned on the sleeve of their space suits. Keeping in mind that this film was made in 1971, soon after the Soviets had been left in second place in the ideologically based "space race, the presence of these American astronauts holding such a revered position seems strikingly odd. Yet the world on Earth that Tarkovsky presents to us is full of such ambiguities. Ironically, one of the criticism's launched against Tarkovsky by the Goskino was that the political orientation of the world that Kelvin is from is unclear. But noticeably Tarkovsky, following Lem's example, has refused to engage in any of the clues which might lead one to say that this film represents any one political entity, one country or one ideology. Indeed the nationalism, which has been a distinct part of Soviet cinema since the days of Eisenstein, seems noticeably absent. While the dialogue in the film is Russian, Tarkovsky has attempted to impose a type of universality on the work: the several of the characters names are distinctly western (Kris Kelvin, Berton, Gibarian); the city scene in which Berton is shown driving through is that of Tokyo (widely regarded in the early 1970's as the most "futuristic" urban centre on the planet), yet it is specifically photographed in a

non-descript manner. Later, Tarkovsky will inject the project with a host of allusions to artists and philosophers. There is mention of "Pure Dostoevsky", of Tolstoy and "Anna Karenina", but there is also a place for non-Russian figures such as Luther, Cervantes, Faust, Brueghel and Plato. We are meant to see that the vision of society, which is in effect on trial within the film, is not distinctly Soviet, but a hybrid which shares a heritage with some of the greatest minds (artistic and philosophical) throughout mankind's history.

Before leaving the dacha, Berton requests an individual audience with Kelvin to discuss the plight of the Solaris mission. The two men meet by the edge of the pond and discussion between them becomes quite heated, particularly when Kelvin suggests to Berton that the failure of 'Solaristics' can be directly attributed to **"irresponsible indulgences in fantasy"**, referring to the notion that the planet is in someway 'alive' and attempting to communicate with mankind. The very possibility that there might be something to Berton's fantastic claims, so quickly dismissed by the tribunal, alerts us to the possibility that Tarkovsky wishes to interrogate. Part of Kelvin's dislike for Berton has to be seen as distaste for Berton's overtly emotional capacity for sentimentalism, a quality which seems lost on Kelvin. While Berton feels duty bound to attempt to explain his beliefs and his actions, Kelvin seems equally determined not to give any of his warnings the significance they deserve. Kelvin's arguments consistently fall back on the scientific mantra of objectivity, as he tells Berton in his analysis of the situation at the station, **"I can't let myself be guided by emotions. I'm not a poet, I have a specific objective"**. Kelvin sees that he

has two choices once he reaches the station: one, he can recommend that it be shut down permanently, or two, he can agree to continue the "extreme measures" that the scientists have been recently engaged in which has necessitated Kelvin's voyage in the first place. These extreme measures involve the bombardment of the ocean surface with radiation and x-rays, acts deemed harmful and illegal back on earth. The suggestion that the second option might be preferable seems abhorrent to Berton, especially given the casual manner in which Kelvin presents the idea. Instead Berton declares one of the dominant thematic statements in the film when he tells Kelvin: **"You want to destroy what we do not understand. I do not favour knowledge at any price. Knowledge is truthful only if it is based in morality"**. Against this declaration Kelvin's counterarguments seem suddenly hollow as he attempts to refute any connection between science and morality by claiming that **"its man who makes science"**, subsequently evoking the memory of Hiroshima.

As Berton walks away from his conversation with Kelvin Jr. in disgust, he comments to Kelvin's father that his coming to the house was a mistake, adding that he feels that Kelvin is not a scientist but a bookkeeper. The subsequent argument between father and son comes about in part as a result of the emotional tension that had been building between the two men. The tension in the Kelvin household is evident not only in Kelvin's overt brooding, but also in the desperation which Kelvin's father displays at the prospect that this is the last time he will see his son alive. In an act of pure frustration, Kelvin's father had previously criticized his wife for interrupting a conversation between himself and

his son with questions concerning the sleeping arrangements in the house. Kelvin had earlier questioned his father's logic in bringing Berton to the house on this, his last day before he was to embark on his mission. When Kelvin Sr. tells his son that it is **"dangerous to send men like you into space"** adding that **"earth has adapted itself to your kind, though at a heavy price"** he may be acting in an overtly emotional manner, nevertheless these words to his son strike a distinct chord. If Kelvin sr. indeed believes that his son is a danger to himself and society, he is agreeing with Berton's suggestion that Kelvin Jr's utilitarian outlook on life lacks both morality and an essential humanist approach. His suggestion that society has 'adapted' itself in some way to the thinking of men of this disposition is seen as a sense of loss and it is this loss that Tarkovsky wishes to explore. In the film's next sequence we see Berton delivering a message as he drives through the winding roads that make up the non-descript urban landscape that is 'the city'. While Berton's message follows up on his assertion that the planet's attempt to communicate involves a form of mimicry, indicating that the planet possess the ability to read human thought, his message seems to be quickly forgotten as the camera winds its way through the streets, tunnels, bridges, underpasses and freeways of the urban sprawl. Tarkovsky has taken us from the quiet backwoods to the centre of a thriving metropolis. What the opening section of the film shows us is that the foundation of the home, as one of the primary building blocks on which the society as a whole is based, is not always such a place of stability. The city is the centre of the world which is governed by the figures Kelvin Sr. condemns his son as being one of. The unrestricted growth of the city is visually linked to the overgrowth of the forest.

Both of these places are part of the same world, and as the director suggests, both have many of the same discourses swirling through their distinct landscapes.

Following the conversation with Berton via the video teleconferencing system we again see Kelvin on the grounds of his fathers home. In Kelvin's last moments on earth he is shown engaged in what seems to be an act of purification. The camera once again passes across the pond by the dacha. This time we discover Kelvin beside a fire to which he is adding personal items: a collection of notes, college physics papers, and other assorted memorabilia. Significantly, Tarkovsky again chooses to shoot this sequence in black and white, suggesting that, like the tribunal which passed judgement on Berton, Kelvin is a man who shares an either/ or vision of life which he has used his scientific rational to maintain. We might also note the camera's discovery of the pictures of two female figures in their mid to late twenties during the latter part film's opening sequence. One is found in the house as Kelvin allows his mind to wander away from a conversation with his father; the second picture we see by the fire apparently about to be destroyed. We will later learn that the first picture is of Kelvin's biological mother who died while he was a child (the woman we see at the Dacha is Kelvin's stepmother); the second is his late wife Hari, who had taken her own life. For a man who has experienced tragedy in his own life the Kelvin we are presented in the film's opening sequence is a man who would seem to cling to a detached scientific reason for strength. Sadly, he is openly dismissive of this home and the family he is about to leave and in some cases

never see again. Kelvin's hope is that this journey to the stars will be the final stage in this purge.

From the outset we might assume that Kelvin's apparent bitterness could either be accounted for by the fact that he is being removed from the setting of the Eden-like garden or because of the fact that he is being sent on a mission which must be seen as lacking real merit. A voyage to the decaying Solaris Station no longer carries the prestige that it once undoubtedly had. Kelvin is, in effect, being asked to judge the success or ultimate failure of the finest minds who had once made the field of "Solaristics", the most important endeavour mankind had known. In many ways we get the distinct impression that the fate of the station has already been decided at the committee level, an experience with which Tarkovsky was all too familiar. Yet, as we will discover, perhaps there is very different reason for Kelvin's initial dour, almost hopeless disposition. The truth about his failed marriage and his ex-wife's subsequent suicide become the real cause of his despair. In a very real way the voyage/ the mission becomes an escape from the responsibilities he has back on earth at this home, the responsibility of raising his young motherless daughter and the duty of looking after his aging father. What Tarkovsky really accomplishes in the opening of the film is to present us with the story of man with no hope, on a seemingly hopeless mission to confirm the failure of mankind's best intellectual minds; yet from this dour premise we are given an extraordinary story of hope and redemption.

The opening of the film serves as an obvious point of departure from Lem's novel. Significantly the novel follows a linear progression tracing Kelvin's journey from earth to the station, his quest to unravel the mysteries of the station, and eventually to the planet's surface where he seeks resolution. In Lem's novel the only vision we are allowed to see of earth comes to us by way of narrative interjections, which emanate from the inhabitants of the station almost as afterthoughts. Discussions on topics such as the transcripts of Berton's flight, previous 'Solaristitians', even Kelvin's recollections of the life he had previously lived with his late wife Rhyea (in Tarkovsky's film she is known as Hari) are really the only glimpses we see of the earth these men came from. Like the novel, the bulk of the narrative action in Tarkovsky's film takes place on the Solaris station, which orbits the planet Solaris several thousand meters above the surface of the planetary ocean. Unlike Lem's novel, Tarkovsky's film does give us an extended vision of the earth which remains free from the tinges of homesickness, longing and nostalgia that are never far from the surface of the terrestrial descriptions of the novel. The world Tarkovsky shows us on earth is made up of distinct spaces: the intimate details of the dacha; the dour, monolithic elements of the government offices; to the elaborate network of roads and buildings which make up the city Berton drives through. In each case the location and setting informs Tarkovsky's understanding of physical space and its impact on the lives of the characters inhabiting these spaces.



#### 4. 'Outer' Space

What is obvious on viewing *Solaris* for the first time is the fact that Tarkovsky largely excludes the viewer from any of the station's more explicit scientific activity. This exclusion can largely be explained by the director's distaste for the mechanized gadgetry which dominated the genre of Science fiction, both in literature and its emergence in the cinema. When Kelvin finally arrives at the Space Station there is, somewhat surprisingly, no one there to greet him. The obvious visual references show that the station is in complete disarray and that maintenance on this structure has almost ceased to exist. We can discern from the set design that the *Solaris* station was once an impressive structure built to house 85 of the greatest minds that the human race could produce, all with the common goal of studying the phenomenon below. Yet we are quickly brought to the realization that the failure to reach a breakthrough in the study of the ocean planet has brought about the decline of the station. The number of scientists who remain on the station has dwindled down to just three. The halls of this structure, once filled with the possibility of discovery, can now only echo the mechanized sound of the automatic 'life support' system.

We might recall that from Foucault's outline, that heterotopias are not the ideal spaces of social harmony (utopias) or the ordinary, everyday places (homes). Instead, they are the somewhat unusual or out-of-the-way spaces that still play an important function in societal order. Even in a fictional sense it would

be hard to describe a decaying space station located just above the surface of a living sentient planet that has seemingly attached itself to our solar system as an everyday place. But there can be no denying that while possessing a distinctly futuristic look, Tarkovsky's station has some familial elements about it. Our first vision of the station can be linked to the overgrowth and foliage of the forest we saw at the film's outset, but, here, outstretched vines and branches are replaced by unsecured electrical cables and displaced conduits. While the film's first section concerns itself with a depiction of society on back on earth, the second section of the film in outer space begins to focus solely on the experiences of Kelvin as a representative of that society. Ultimately we cannot ignore the fact that Kelvin's reason for going to the station could well be its death knell. More importantly, the station serves as the Heterotopic space from which Tarkovsky can project his incisive exploration of life, death and humanity in this remote setting. The station will become the facilitating element upon which the narrative becomes dependant. In addition the station forms a type ontological no-man's land in which elements, within the narrative and beyond, enter into the work as a whole and provide the audience the opportunity to view a variety of very different discourses at work.

While armed with the knowledge that he had been sent to the station to evaluate some unusual reports emanating from the scientists, Kelvin is clearly perplexed by his what he is experiencing. Rosenbaum notes that Kelvin's initial steps on the station seem "steeped in a haunted house atmosphere: squeaks and other off screen sounds, and barely perceptible movements at the edges of

the frame, along with the slow and suspenseful camera movements, all conjure a sense of the uncanny without spelling it out" (Rosenbaum p.58). Dr. Snaut is the first of the station's official residents that Kelvin encounters. Snaut is slightly older than Kelvin giving the suggestion that he is a veteran of this assignment. Yet his initial disposition comes across as a man disturbed. He seems agitated and surprised by Kelvin's presence despite the fact that he, and the rest of the station, should have been well aware of Kelvin's impending arrival. Snaut informs Kelvin that one of the three remaining scientists has just committed suicide, leaving only himself and Dr. Sartorius as the only two official residents of the station. Gibarian's suicide comes as a surprise to Kelvin, who had considered him a colleague back on earth and regarded him as a man rather unlikely to take his own life. Snaut's odd behaviour continues as he refuses Kelvin's request to be introduced to Sartorius, basically telling Kelvin that he should try later in the evening or perhaps tomorrow morning. Both Kelvin and the audience get the distinct impression that Snaut is hiding something (or perhaps someone). This bizarre introduction concludes when Snaut basically hustles Kelvin out of his living quarters and leaves him to his own devices, giving him the ominous advice **"if you see something unusual just keep calm"**.

Kelvin's first act in unravelling the mystery presented to him by the Solaris station is to visit Gibarian's room. Kelvin finds his quarters in disarray, with personal items scattered about in a haphazard manner. A child's painting on Gibarian's door, which includes the words **"A Man"**, seems to be a recent addition, and the disarray of the room suggests that a child has been living here.

Significantly Kelvin comes across a pre-recorded message from Gibarian. While Kelvin may be at a loss to explain the events he has encountered within the first hour of his arrival on the station, he appears to be willing to accept Gibarian's message. But if anything the message only serves to add to the ambiguity of the situation. Gibarian comes across as a figure of stability; his dialogue is coherent and thoughtful, particularly in comparison to Snaut's frantic disposition. Yet something on this station has driven this man to commit suicide. Surprisingly Gibarian surmises that the continuation of the bombardment of the planet with radiation, as recommended by the reclusive Sartorius, remains the best course of action. Kelvin's refusal to accept his friend's words is confirmed when Gibarian refers to the planet below as a "monster".

Kelvin's viewing of Gibarian's message is the second instance in the film where Tarkovsky has used a video recording/ playback to convey vital pieces of narrative information to the audience. Where we had previously seen the younger/older versions of Berton, we are now presented with the image of the deceased Gibarian who speaks to Kelvin as if he were still on the station. Kelvin will again return to the video message when he later retires to his own quarters. This technique employed by Tarkovsky is part of a deliberate course of action which allow the director to distort the temporal aspect of the film. Throughout the second half of the film such distortions will become more and more frequent: the memories of Kelvin's childhood which come flooding back to him when illness takes him to an hallucinatory state; the memories of his life on earth which he shared with his wife and the curious 'flight' through the Brueghal painting in the

library. We might well be reminded of Foucault's assertion regarding the function of the heterotopia and how both Deleuze (with reference to the time-image) and Tarkovsky discuss what cinema should strive to achieve. Each describes the fullest possibilities of these concepts existing at "a break from conventional perception of time". Set against these departures from the passage of 'normal time' within the film are the long, uninterrupted shots favoured by Tarkovsky. Johnson and Petrie note that, Tarkovsky develops a systematic pattern of using extended sequence shots to create a sense of "real time" (*Visual Fugue* p.109). These 'complications' to the flow of time within the film serve as a device which allow Tarkovsky to examine the place of the subject in the larger discursive field which exists as our perception of the film's "reality". Kelvin may be caught in these 'distortions', but they allow him to observe a different reality than if he was to exist in a temporally linear plane.

Of all the figures on the station, Sartorius will prove to be the individual who continues to operate as a 'scientist' in spite of all other distractions. As Snaut tells Kelvin, Sartorius "**never seems to leave his laboratory**". Neither Kelvin, nor the audience, is allowed a glimpse of what takes place inside this room. Sartorius, instead, comes to see Kelvin at the door. Dressed in his white lab coat, Sartorius gives us the distinct impression that he is being interrupted from continuing with his covert experiments, but he also serves as visual reference to those nameless individuals who could be seen scurrying about in the background of Berton's interrogation - an observation which is further recalled when Kelvin asks Sartorius if he was familiar with Berton and the

infamous rescue mission. With his sharp condemnations and obvious reluctance to engage in any kind of conversation with Kelvin, Sartorius comes across as the one figure on the station who is the most secure in his own actions. When he tells Kelvin to put aside any feelings that he might have regarding Gibarian's death, Sartorius reminds Kevin that he should **"think of our duty to the truth"**. Yet it is the method behind this "duty to the truth" which is immediately brought into question as the banging behind the door of the laboratory reveals a small human figure, a man-child if you will, who appears to be trying to escape. This figure becomes our confirmation that there are indeed more than just the three scientists on board the station. From a narrative perspective Tarkovsky uses this unusual interaction to introduce us to the primary mystery that exists on the station – the presence of the "guests". What they are, how they came to be and what they represent are questions not so easily answered.

When we consider that Sartorius is responsible for some of the film's most significant narrative developments, it is noteworthy that that we see so little of what Sartorius does. He is the one who garners the least amount of screen time. Yet Sartorius is largely responsible for the initial plan to blast the surface of the planet with radiation, flouting the concerns about this action back on earth. He is also the one who develops a course of action that will eventually rid the station of its elusive 'guests'. Though Tarkovsky suggests that much of Sartorius' work concerns isolating the regenerative properties that exist in these neutrino life-forms, Tarkovsky intentionally refuses to show us how this work is being accomplished. Sartorius might well be engaged in the age-old search for

a "fountain of youth", but as part of this research he expresses the point of view that he is free to experiment on the station's 'guests' in pursuit of this knowledge. His justification for these actions comes from his belief that he is not experimenting on real people, or even animals. But the appearance of the childlike figure attempting to escape from the laboratory instantly evokes Berton's statement regarding the value or morality in the pursuit of knowledge. Sartorius' warning to Kelvin, "**you'd better leave, you're too impressionable**" suggests that such considerations are not adhered to on this station.

Following a visit to the station's morgue, as if to confirm that Gibarian was indeed dead, Kelvin again returns to visit Snaut. This time we find Snaut in slightly more receptive mood; gone is the frantic disposition that he displayed earlier. Yet he still seems reluctant to discuss the unusual goings-on which Kelvin has seen on the station. When Kelvin questions Snaut about the unaccounted for figures Kelvin has encountered throughout the station, Snaut has no answer. We are reminded by Tarkovsky that "it's no accident the hero of my film is a psychologist, the hero of Lem's novel is a psychologist as well" (Illg & Neuger p. 22). The mission to judge the supposed sanity of those running the station seems suddenly misguided. Kelvin remarks to Snaut that he knows the scientist is not insane. Snaut's reply of "**Insane? ... that would be a relief**" speaks more to his desperation at not understanding what is happening to him than it does to any supposed lapse of sanity. Kelvin acknowledges that he will not find that answers he is looking for here and returns to his quarters to continue viewing Gibarian's message. The message from a familiar face would seem to

serve as focal point from which Kelvin could interpret the unexplainable activities he has seen. Yet the further unexplained appearance of a small child in the background Gibarian's quarters leaves Kelvin as perplexed as ever.

As Kelvin retires to his quarters he does not realise that he is about to participate in this very process by which the planet has been attempting to communicate with the human residents on the station. With an appreciation for his own safety Kelvin has placed several metal cases along the door, in effect sealing himself in the room. Yet he is awakened by a female figure whom we have seen before. The figure who appears before him in his room is the woman whose picture Kelvin was preparing to destroy by the fire in his last act on earth. The memory of his ex-wife Hari, which he had been seemingly so keen to rid himself of, now of leans of over and greets his waking eyes with the type of familiar affection that he had once cherished.<sup>17</sup> Like the picture, this Hari is a copy, a reproduction of the original. But we will notice that unlike the two versions we have seen of Berton and later the memories of his younger father contrasted with the man we saw at the dacha, this version of Hari does not display the decay brought about by of the passage of time. More importantly, Hari is not an apparition; she has a manifest physicality to her and an individual consciousness. She might be a mere copy but she is very real in that she effects Kelvin in ways

---

<sup>17</sup> Ultimately Tarkovsky was reportedly unhappy with the casting of Natalya Bondarchuk as Hari initially rejecting her for the part a year earlier, then having to 'settle' for her after an exhaustive search once Anderson pulled out. Though she gives a brave yet delicate performance, the two reportedly clashed constantly on set with Tarkovsky believing that her being cast by Mosfilm had little to do with her acting and everything to do with the fact that that her father, Sergi Bondarchuk, was a rival director in the Moscow Studio system. (see *Visual Fugue* p. 44-45)



he could never have anticipated. Considering Kelvin's mandate (a psychologist, sent to evaluate the supposed sanity of the crew) Hari's very presence is particularly disturbing to him. Hari (without any real comprehension of her own situation) displays calmness and an innate belief that this is where she belongs. With a flood of emotions suddenly forced on him, Kelvin is not only unsure of how to act, but he is almost certainly affected by the tinges of guilt which accompanied his role in her suicide back on earth. The reaction between the two figures could not be more opposite.

When we consider that Kelvin's last act on earth was the destruction of a photograph of Hari, we can feel little surprise that the sudden reappearance of this figure from his past should quickly overwhelm Kelvin. He is so disturbed by the appearance of the first Hari replicant that his first thought concerns how to remove this figure from his presence. He accomplishes this removal by playing on her trust, then tricking her into boarding a spacecraft and launching her into orbit around the planet. In an episode that leaves him literally burned, Kelvin is so eager to rid himself of this anomaly that he does not take the proper safety precautions and he is accidentally set fire by the exhaust of the rocket. His actions are representative of a culture of personal repression, and conforming to Berton's warning back at the dacha, he has shown himself more than willing to destroy what he does not understand. What Kelvin cannot initially comprehend is that the reappearance of Hari could represent the opportunity to, at the very least, try to make sense of the act which altered his life many years ago. As Lefanu notes "there is not even a question of forgiveness, for Hari comes to

Kelvin with the guilelessness and simplicity that is predicated by her amnesia." (LeFanu p.58). Yet this simple surgical procedure of physically removing the abnormality only creates further ambiguity. Despite Snaut's warnings Kelvin is, nevertheless, dumbfounded as Hari returns to him as he sleeps. This second copy of Hari comes without direct knowledge of the previous copy, but with a new twist. Instinctively, she will not allow Kelvin out of her sight, and she demonstrates the strength of her convictions by crashing through the door to Kelvin's quarters as he attempts to sneak away from her.

Though his relationship with this version of his wife may be initially coerced through Hari's insistence, Kelvin slowly begins to find a degree of comfort in his conversations with this being. Kelvin knows that she will not allow him out of her sight; his only real course of action is to interact with this figure. The new Hari also has a greater array of memories available to her, memories of a life with Kelvin back on earth. Kelvin comes to realise that this process of relating is as foreign to her as it is to him. Ever so slowly the fear which served to separate them, begins to fade. This Hari possess a greater capacity to learn and to grow than did the first version; as she will later inform Sartorius she might not be human but she is becoming **"more human all the time"**. But, as is the case with in many of Tarkovsky's films, such developments always come with a price. Tarkovsky explores the relationship between the two in a psychic flashback which opens up the vault of memories with which Hari comes equipped. Not only does Hari grow in her realisation that she is not the 'real' Hari, but she comes to fear that Kelvin will never be able to reciprocate her

feelings for him and that he will never be able to love her as he once loved the human Hari. We might wonder if her fears are not unfounded. Because the planet can read Kelvin's mind, these reproductions of Hari would seem to lack the autonomy that would allow us to believe that she is the same figure from the past; she exists for us now primarily as how she was remembered by Kelvin and not as an exact duplicate. Tarkovsky's interest lies in exposing the process of selfhood and identity. When a troubled Hari asks Kelvin **"Do you know yourself"**, his reply of **"As well as anyone"** can hardly be seen as a positive endorsement of his own self-belief. Yet at the same time Kelvin is attempting to reach out to this being in a way that he could not do to the original Hari, perhaps realising for the first time that his inability to do so previously may have led to her decision to take her own life. The reply speaks to an awareness of the process of subject construction that we are all subject to in the panoptic realm. Hari will come to represent this aspect of the human condition, and Kelvin, following her lead, will slowly begin to recognise this aspect of humanity. Unfortunately the director confirms that "...man has been given a conscience which means that he is tormented when his actions infringe moral law, and in that sense even conscience involves an element of tragedy" (*Sculpting in Time* p. 198). Tragedy for Kelvin will come from the realisation that the knowledge of how to act will arrive too late to succeed.

With the experience that has come from his own interaction with a 'guest' Snaut is able to pass along some advice to Kelvin. He tells Kelvin that the more time he spends with this incarnation of Hari, the more it will become difficult for

Kelvin to separate his **"current feelings from his memories of the past"**. His suggestion does not take into account the fact that Kelvin does not want to separate the past from what he see as his potential future. As time begins to pass on the station, and Hari continues the process of recovering memories of 'her' past life, Kelvin does sees his feelings grow. His initial revulsion at her resurrection has now been replaced by a longing to be with her, a longing to recapture the life together that had been denied by her suicide many years ago. The matter of their inseparability becomes less of a factor of Hari's insistence and more of an expression of Kelvin's desire to make up for "lost time". The two of them begin to move about the station as a married couple might do. Kelvin even goes so far as to introduce her to Snaut and Sartorius as "his wife". While Snaut can at least feign a greeting, Sartorius is much more condemnative in his denunciation of Kelvin's **"preoccupation"** with Hari. In a more tactful, yet equally penetrative remark, Snaut asks Kelvin **"which one do you love this one, or the one you put into orbit?"**. Sartorius is particularly harsh to Hari herself, as he will later tell her to her face **"You are only copy, you're not even human"**. But we might wonder if Sartorius actually knows what 'being human' really is, outside to the biological sense. Hiding behind his programmed ideas of 'life' and 'humanity', Sartorius maintains an unwavering belief in this vision of humanity. Sartorius gives no indication that his own experiences on the station have brought about a questioning of his preconceived notions. If anything his patterns of thinking resemble those of a racist, or an extremist, rather than those of a man open to the prospect of discovery

Tarkovsky has noted that "Man's unending quest for knowledge, given him gratuitously, is a source of great tension, for it brings with it constant anxiety, hardship, grief and disappointment" (*Sculpting in Time* p. 198). This disappointment manifests itself in different ways throughout the film, from the pained look on Berton's face, to the realisation of Gibarian's suicide. Yet the film's greatest disappointment is displayed in the circumstances of Kelvin and Hari's reconnection. As Lefanu notes "the film so to speak, dreams of a utopian reconciliation between Kelvin and Hari. But its power to move us (in fact its greatness, even its tragedy) lies in the way Tarkovsky simultaneously lets it be known that such healings are, in the world, unattainable" (Lefanu p.58). Unable to embrace the unique experiences that Solaris station, Sartorius has developed a course of action that he anticipates will put a halt to the appearance of these guests. The plan involves delivering an encephalogram (an encoded reading of a human subject's brainwave patterns, a copy of their thoughts) to the planet. If, as Sartorius believes (perhaps fears), the planet has a need to consume thought, then the encephalogram should provide the planet with what it needs causing it to cease the intrusive activity of reading the scientist's minds. As the newest, and least read of the three figures on the station, Sartorius suggests that Kelvin should supply the all important reading which would be sent to the planet. Kelvin is reluctant for several reasons, not the least of which is the uncertainty surrounding how this plan will affect Hari. Tarkovsky had stressed

"Kelvin who seemed at first to be a limited, run of the mill character, turns out to be possessed of deeply human 'taboos' which render him organically incapable of disobeying the voice of his own conscience and shirking the grave burden of responsibility for his for his own and others lives" (*Sculpting in Time* p.208).

At the same time while he fears what Sartorius' plan may do, Kelvin is equally aware that this plan is a lot less destructive than the continual bombardment of the planet with radiation, which seems to be the only other course of action that anyone has suggested. Despite his fears, Kelvin still possesses a strong sense of duty towards the mission of the Solaris station, if a new avenue of contact is possible through these means then he and the other scientists do have a duty to attempt Sartorius' plan. Reluctantly he agrees, but his greatest fear is that he may regret his actions.

## **5. The Library, the Zone within a Zone**

One of the more cinematic ways Tarkovsky achieves some of the more familiar aspects of his film is through the set design and in particular the contrast that exists between the rest of the station and the library where the three 'official' inhabitants of the station and Hari 'the guest' come together to celebrate Snaut's birthday. Tarkovsky had commented that he would

"like to film *Solaris* in such a way as to avoid inducing in the viewer a feeling of anything exotic. Exotic in the technological realm naturally. For example: if we filmed passengers getting on a tram and we knew nothing about trams — let's assume — because we had never seen them before, then we'd obtain the effect similar to what Kubrick did in the scene of the spaceship landing on the Moon. In other words, as long as we film cosmic scenery the way we would normally film a tram stop, everything will be fine. Thus we need to put the characters in real, not exotic, scenery because it is only through the perception of the former by the characters in the film that it will become comprehensible to the viewer" (Kusmierczyk, cited at Nostalgia.com).

In the middle of this orbiting structure, surrounded amidst the sterile, futuristic look and feel of the rest of the station, is the library. Instead of shining with a metallic tint, the library is dark with only candles to provide illumination. Metal has been replaced by wood in this space which bears a direct resemblance to the archetypal model of an old fashioned study. As a part of the station, the library not only allows Tarkovsky to present the audience with a setting which avoids the exotic, but it also affirms the use of the heterotopic model in the film. The library represents the alternative to the discourse of reductive scientific reasoning that governs the rest of the station. As a site which opens the discursive realm of imagination and alternate models of 'reality', the library is at the same time the focal point of contest between representations of 'the truth'. As noted by several critics the Library scene in the film is largely Tarkovsky's creation.<sup>18</sup> Lem's novel features similar conversations, but the choice of location and the subsequent moments between Kelvin and Hari are unique to Tarkovsky's film. We would seem to be in one of McHale's "zones within a zone- a place where distinctions blur and the lines which divide 'realities' become visible. We might also recall Foucault's claim that designates the 'library' as primary heterotopic site, for it is in this location that the discursive space that the film seeks to challenge truly begins to unravel.

All around the library are artefacts which link the station and its inhabitants to the humanist traditions of art, literature and philosophy: a bust of Aristotle (also

---

<sup>18</sup> Johnson and Petrie note "the library scene is a crucial element in this reworking and in the directing of the film toward a moral and intellectual statement that is diametrically opposed to that of the book" (*Visual Fugue* p.103).

prominent in Kelvin's father's study), a copy of the Venus de Milo, several paintings by the Flemish artist Brueghel (with which Hari will develop a particular fascination) and a variety of books, the most prominent of which is Cervantes. Upon his arrival into the library a distraught, perhaps drunk, Snaut engages in an impromptu reading of *Don Quixote*; even getting Kelvin to read from the work as well. This reference to Cervantes serves a dual purpose: first it further connects the film and its characters to the rich heritage of world literature; and second the Cervantes book also enables Tarkovsky to draw a connection between sleep and death, for during a period of sleep the subconscious takes over the individual. The time spent during sleep is also when the planet chooses to probe the mind, reading the subconscious mind of the individual. As we are told, "the guests" are a direct product of sleep, in effect a waking dream. Snaut had previously explained to Kelvin, right after he had expelled the first reincarnation of Hari into space, he should consider himself lucky that the planet chose to bring to life one of his unresolved memories instead of some unrealized fantasy or perhaps even a nightmare. We are allowed to consider the very fine line that the film walks between representations of fantasy and memory. The film speaks to a vision of consciousness as a field, an unhindered entity much like the Solaris ocean. For all intents and purposes the planet Solaris is a living brain (with all of the Jungian collective unconscious attributes well attached) which can extend itself into other brains. Yet we must consider the setting of the library in Tarkovsky's examination of the interaction between humanity and this alternative intelligence. As such we might also want to consider the notion that this interaction has perhaps "awakened" a different form of humanity (one represented by the artistic,



literary and philosophical figures in the library) which had been "put to sleep" by the discourse of reductive scientific reasoning.

The celebration of Snaut's birthday is short lived because the hostility that exists between Kelvin and Sartorius becomes very evident. While the two men trade pointed barbs over Hari's presence, in the setting of the library Sartorius is very much out of his element. Almost lost are the words of Snaut's, almost Shakespearean, soliloquy in the library as he address the film's main characters:

**"We don't want to conquer space, we want to extend earth endlessly, we don't want other worlds; we want a mirror. We seek contact and will never achieve it. We are in the foolish position of a man striving for a goal he fears and doesn't want. Man needs Man".**

Here these words underscore (with more than a hint of futility) what is really to be gained from the Solaris mission and what is directly at the heart of Tarkovsky's application of the heterotopic device. Cloaked in a shroud of scientific obscurity and trapped in the panoptic realm, interaction with the planetary life form below speaks to how mankind has become faithless, void of spirituality and lacking a basic "humanity". Within the confines of life on earth this observation is lost, yet the voyage to the Solaris station has allowed Kelvin, and by implication the audience, a different avenue of exploration. This exploration is at the heart of Tarkovsky's vision; as Lefanu confirms "Tarkovsky, of course, is intent on showing us the mirror – like the interdependence of earth and space – in the last resort one and the same location, filtered through the human imagination" (Lefanu p. 61). The opportunity to exist in heterotopic space provides us the ability to look back from a distance, the true inversion of the panoptic gaze. Green describes that "it is the planetary ocean that provides [us with] the looking

glass", the interaction with this planet has provided us with the device which will allow us to look directly at our own beliefs in humanity. The mandate of the heterotopic device is to provide this 'looking glass', or 'the mirror', which allows us to see that which is often obscured from our eyes by our inability to acknowledge the obvious. By looking in this mirror that we are, in a sense, allowed the freedom to make the choice of rejection that predicates our existence as individual subjects. Kelvin will discover this realisation; Snaut seems also to be aware of the possibility, yet chooses not to allow himself the opportunity to act upon his discoveries; while Sartorius, perhaps unable to break out of the trap of the discourse of scientific reason, chooses to ignore the possibilities, instead remaining true to his cherished principals.

As the party breaks up, Kelvin follows Snaut into the hallway. Here Snaut confirms the information that Kelvin had already feared, that by her very nature Hari cannot survive outside the planet's sphere of influence. With this knowledge comes the realisation that the possibility of the two of them returning to earth to complete Kelvin's 'utopian reconciliation' no longer exists. Following this conversation Kelvin returns to the library. Here Tarkovsky will further extend the notion of the mirror, showing us the primary heterotopic space of the library as a place where we are allowed to look back at 'humanity'. Kelvin finds Hari staring very intently at one of the paintings on the wall. Kelvin has ostensibly rushed back to the library concerned about Hari's well being as the station is about to revert to zero gravity for a period of time. Instead he joins her in an introspective gaze across the world depicted in Brueghels's "The Hunters in the Snow".

Tarkovsky fills the screen with extreme close ups of the painting as we join along with Hari and Kris as the camera pans across the landscape. Both Lefanu and Green suggest that the sequence which follows, were the camera moves in and out of the painting revealing Kris and Hari and placing them within the frame, becomes the emphatic realization of the journey of which Lem had accused Tarkovsky of neglecting. Instead of making a journey through outer space, the camera guides us through the human perception of the painting. We are watching this couple, who have been reunited in the most unlikely and unimaginable circumstances, now attempting to rediscover their lost past through the process of viewing the artwork which hangs in the library. Hyman suggests that when Hari turns her gaze from the painting towards Kris

“magically, she is in the landscape, and for some moments we explore it with her; the skaters, and the homesteads below, the birds and trees silhouetted against the sky, the men and their dogs as they move across the brow of the hill. When she turns to Kris, we realize that through Brueghel she has been able to apprehend what it is to be a human being on earth” (Hyman p.56).

What this episode shows us is the film's belief in the power of imagination. The opportunity Hari is provided through the investigation of the painting is the same opportunity that the planet gives to Kelvin. Hari discovers that this belief is possibly the most important 'human' attribute. Sadly this revelation serves as a painful reminder to Kelvin, and the audience, that the woman he has fallen in love with again is indeed a duplicate of the woman he knew back on earth. At the same time, Hari becomes painfully aware that, like the painting and the passage from Cervantes, she too is a reproduction of something else- with one very important difference. Notwithstanding the fact that the painting is an inanimate object and a copy of a copy of what it represents, the painting and

indeed the copy of *Don Quixote*, can go (or be transported) anywhere. The same cannot be said of Hari.

In Lem's book nothing remains of the first reproduction of Hari (the one Kelvin had launched into orbit) but a pile of metallic dust, as the scientists discover when they recover the spacecraft. In Tarkovsky's film we get no such confirmation of this fate. But it is a fate that Hari knows even in the presence of her growing awareness of Kelvin's increasing love for her. He has already committed himself to remaining on the station, remaining with her. His words **"you mean more to me than any scientific discovery"** indicate just how far his transformation has progressed. He is willing to turn his back on lifetime of being a scientist, in a sense completing the purge he began back at the dacha. His training as a psychologist and his scientific rationale seem to be powerless to protect him from his own infatuation. The terrestrial Hari had ended her life because Kelvin had put his career ahead of her; the second reproduction of Hari tries to end her existence because Kelvin would have given up everything to stay with her. Though Hari chooses a familiar point of departure, her attempted suicide takes on a very different meaning. Her choice here is based on helping Kelvin, not on ending her own suffering. Yet ending her life is an act that she cannot complete on her own, and she soon recovers following the attempt to kill herself by drinking liquid Oxygen. While Snaut comments that he **"never gets used to these resurrections"**, we are left to wonder if this relationship represents the most pure form of love or the bitter consequences of obsession.

Despite Tarkovsky's general dislike for science fiction, the notion of the 'non-human' figure exposing, or revealing, a form of humanity in the face of human figures who lack the ability to see what they are, is the one aspect of the genre Tarkovsky has allowed himself the room to explore.<sup>19</sup> Rosenbaum makes the comparison between the death of Hari and the disconnection of the HAL computer in *2001* as being similarly ambiguous. He asserts that like Hal "Hari doesn't qualify as 'human' to the same degree as the other characters. But this doesn't prevent her repeated deaths and resurrections from being highly affecting – tragic, disturbing, appalling- as much as Hal's death in *2001* winds up moving one more than anyone of the 'human' deaths in the film" (Rosenbaum p. 63). While Hari does not present a direct physical threat to any of the members of the station, her very existence becomes the threatening element to the terrestrial minds who cannot understand what she represents. What should trouble us more is the less than hospitable treatment she receives from Snaut and Sartorius. Hari's growth alone serves as an indication that perhaps Sartorius' scientific dogma is misplaced in this context. We might wonder if he has designs on carrying out his 'inhuman' experiments on Hari, the prospect frightens us more than any fear Hari endures. If anything, with her understanding and willingness to sacrifice herself for Kelvin's benefit, Hari appears to have

---

<sup>19</sup> While he does not address *Solaris* as belonging to the cyberpunk genre, the film (more so than the book) would seem to conform to McHale's description of 'Bio-punk'- a subset of cyberpunk. 'Biopunk' "grows new human individuals in vats, or clones identical multiplies of the same individual, literally pluralising the self" (McHale p257). McHale sees this genre as a postmodern fusion of the Gothic Horror motif and traditional science fiction, which frightens us into questioning the role of self. Yet we can acknowledge that *Solaris* doesn't resort to fear tactics, it chooses to question the very fear or threat which McHale describes.

greater courage in her convictions than Snaut, and a much better overall grasp of humanity than Sartorius.

One of the most interesting attributes of *Solaris* is that many the film's more significant moments take place off screen. We do not see the conversation that takes place between Hari and Sartorius in which he reveals biographic information concerning the 'original' Hari, nor do we get to see Hari's final 'suicide', only a letter given to Kelvin by Snaut confirms her departure. We do not get to see Hari's final 'living' moments, or even her corpse, yet the validity of her suicide is never really questioned by Kelvin. Granted she seems doomed to repeat her actions. Her final suicide would be her third. Still, given the growth and development she seems to undergo as she interacts with Kelvin, her timing does seem somewhat strange in that she chooses to commit suicide while Kelvin is incapacitated by illness. Her ability to adapt and her growing capacity to love Kelvin is shown to its fullest potential in her choice to end her own existence, thus removing Kelvin from the clutches of his own fixations. Though Hari's death touches us, the film does not absolve itself from the possibility that her sacrifice has been part of an experiment, but one conducted by the planet in attempt to not only communicate, but also to learn about humanity. With the final image of the House alone on the island in the middle of the sea, one thing Tarkovsky leaves us with is a tempered hope that given the right circumstances all wounds can be healed and that further resurrections can not be ruled out.

Considering the depth of emotional attachment that clearly exists between Kelvin and Hari, Kelvin seems to be aware that her actions were almost inevitable. Yet it is clear to see that the episode with this incarnation of his ex-wife has affected him profoundly. Gone is the detached scientific reason that masked the bitterness that he displayed at the film's outset. Snaut informs Kelvin that Sartorius' plan to deliver the encephalogram has worked and the station no longer has any of its 'guests'. He also tells Kelvin the planet below has responded in an unusual manner: islands have begun to form on the ocean surface. As such Kelvin's mission would appear to be over and the station can return to its mandate of studying the planet below. We now see a more philosophical Kelvin who is willing to view his experience not in a negative light (as in an opportunity for happiness that once again alluded him) but as one which will enhance his own existence. His discussions with Snaut show us how much his humanity has grown. As Lefanu observes "in a speech of amazing independence the scientist Kelvin muses that if there is one reason for going into space it is to look back on Earth with renewed tenderness" (Lefanu. p54). In his final moments on the station Kelvin looks out the window of the observation deck, and we are once again reminded of the role of the station as the middle ground between these two very different worlds. For like the ship or even the colony that Foucault envisioned, the important action is the very act of looking back from the heterotopic space. Being able to see the difference between what is so easily obscured and what is accepted back at the 'metropolitan centre' of the panoptic world becomes the all-important act for the individual subject.

One of Lem's main criticisms of Tarkovsky concerns Kelvin's motivation at the conclusion of the film. He notes that

"My Kelvin decides to stay on the planet without any hope whatsoever while Tarkovsky created an image where some kind of an island appears, and on that island a hut. And when I hear about the hut and the island I'm beside myself with irritation... This is just some emotional sauce into which Tarkovsky has submerged his heroes, not to mention that he has completely amputated the scientific landscape and in its place introduced so much of the weirdness I cannot stand". (Kusmierczyk cited at Nostalgia.com)<sup>20</sup>.

In the last moments we see Kelvin on the station he and Snaut discuss what he might do now that his mission is over. He explains that he might as well return to earth, that the planet offers him little hope of rediscovering what he has lost. But there are clearly other elements in his life that Kelvin needs to address and it comes as no surprise to us when we see that he has returned home to his father's house. Of course we recognise the relation of the recurring shot of the undulating river as a connection with Kris Kelvin's spiritual home. In a symbolic sense Kelvin has returned home, to familiar surroundings, with all of the connotations of the "Return of the Prodigal Son" intact. Yet as Johnson and Petrie suggest the film's ending, which involves Kelvin's return to his father's dacha, is "extremely enigmatic and open to multiple interpretations", (*Visual*

---

<sup>20</sup> Lem further bemoans the fact that "what we get in the film is only how this abominable Kelvin has driven poor Hari to suicide and then he has pangs of conscience which are amplified by her appearance; a strange and incomprehensible appearance. This phenomenistics [sic] of Harey's subsequent appearances was for me an exemplification of certain concept which can be derived almost from Kant himself. Because there exists the *Ding an sich*, the Unreachable, the Thing in Itself, the Other Side which cannot be penetrated. But in my prose this was made apparent and orchestrated completely differently..." Many of Lem's complaints, though not lacking validity, do seem excessive especially considering that, aside from the film's opening on earth, Tarkovsky does stay fairly true to Lem's plot structure throughout the sequences in the Solaris Station. Perhaps his complains might have been more subdued if he had allowed Tarkovsky's vision the courtesy of at the very least a complete viewing. Lem did admit that he never saw the completed film saying that "I have to make it clear, however, that I haven't seen the whole film except for 20 minutes of the second part although I know the screenplay very well because Russians have a custom of making an extra copy for the author". (Kusmierczyk, cited at Nostalgia.com)



*Fugue* p.103).<sup>21</sup> Kelvin's supposed return to earth has been revealed as a fiction. As the camera pulls back from the shot in which Kelvin falls at his father's feet in an act of repentance, we see a representation of the house, every bit as powerful as the original, which now exists surrounded by the ocean on the surface of the alien planet. As Lefanu notes "Solaris doesn't talk about heaven, it talks about immortality in human terms, linking it to memory and desire" (*LeFanu* p.57). With the memory of Kelvin's father's admonishment of his son that he would be jealous of Berton (who will there to bury him rather than his son, who has chosen a mission to the stars rather over any loyalty to his family), we can see the planet has provided Kelvin with another opportunity for a different form of a 'utopian reconciliation'. Kelvin seems to have learned the value of repentance and the knowledge that such opportunities need to be grasped rather than wasted or reasoned away with logic or scientific rationale. Kelvin has embraced the prospect of this world of the imaginary, and, ultimately what is important is that we recognise the transformation that Kelvin has undergone because of his experiences on the Solaris station.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Johnson and Petire raise the problematic notion that Kelvin's journey to the stars was indeed a fiction in and of itself. The authors note that "picking up on the burning fire the dangling balloon, and the metal box (seen in the last scene on Solaris and then already within the house as Kris supposedly returns) and on the existence of the edition of Don Quixote and the Greek bust both on the station and in the dacha – is to see his whole journey as purely subjective and interior. Things on Earth are almost exactly as he left them because he never did leave; no time has passed because no physical journey took place" (*Visual Fugue* p.106).

<sup>22</sup> We might want to consider Green's suggestion that "like the legend of the Chinese painter who disappeared into his own picture when it was completed, Kris Kelvin's human identity is merged with the universe – an image of death and resurrection, in which time ceases to exist" (Green p.77). The notion here links the process of imagination to the heterotopic model, by suggesting that the two elements deal primarily with the prospect of limitless opportunity. What we might wonder is the permanence of the heterotopic space. Can such spaces permanently exist, or are they just temporary anomalies?

The nature of this transformation is what signifies the underlying optimism which shows Tarkovsky's belief in the individual subject and his hope that such personal revelations are not only possible, but perhaps the most 'human' element of all. Instead of being able to take his training as a scientist and apply his skills to de-mystify the inexplicable elements of the universe, Kris Kelvin is faced with the very 'real' prospect of a lifetime of regret coming into being right before his very eyes. We might take note of Tarkovsky's description of Kelvin. The director notes that it is important that we recognise that Kelvin

"is an ordinary city dweller, a philistine; he looks just so, ordinarily. For me it was important that he would be just like that. He should be a man of a rather limited spiritual range, average — just in order to be able to experience this spiritual battle, fear, not like an animal which is in pain and does not comprehend what is happening to it. What was important to me was precisely that human being unconsciously forces himself to be human, unconsciously and as far as his spiritual abilities would allow he opposes the brutality, he opposes all that is inhuman while he remains human. And it turns out that despite him being — so it would seem — a thoroughly average guy, he stands at a high level spiritually. It's as if he convicted himself, he went right inside this problem and he saw himself in a mirror". (Illg & Neuger p.22).

The 'mirror' Tarkovsky speaks about will encompass more than Kelvin's vision of himself. Indeed his spiritual battle exposes the divide between rational thought, scientific knowledge and raw human emotion in a way which brings our understanding of all three of these elements in to question before a jury made up of the film's audience. The notion of the mirror is the significant element in Tarkovsky's use of the heterotopic model. What becomes apparent is that Kelvin, and by association the audience, is afforded this opportunity to look through "the mirror" because we are on this space station at this time and place. In this space Kelvin's perspective is altered because he has been given the opportunity to, in a sense, step away from his world and his life, and look back at

how he has lived it in association with the forces which have help to shape what he has become. What he sees looking back at him is not what he had expected. Kelvin is a character who conforms to Collin's notion of the active subject, an individual who must make choices and reject many of the discourses, ideas, images, memories and even his own thoughts (the ones he arrived at the Solaris station with) to clearly see what has been presented before him in this environment. Far from falling into McHale's trap of becoming a fragmented, tortured soul, Kris Kelvin is able to put the pieces of his life back together as his past appears before him. But perhaps more significantly we might once again return to the idea that Kelvin becomes what Marks has described as a character who is a 'seer' rather than an 'actor'. For it is Kelvin as a representative, if not the very judge, of humanity's greatest minds who is afforded the opportunity to look through the mirror back at humanity. Through our experience in watching the film we too have gained a different perspective and we must decide to accept, or reject, that many of the questions Tarkovsky asks have no simple answers.

## **Conclusion**

Speaking directly to the vision of humanity that Tarkovsky offers us in *Solaris* Gilles Deleuze asks the question

"are we to believe that the soft planet Solaris gives a reply, and that it will reconcile the ocean and thought, the environment and we see at once designating the transparent face of the crystal (the rediscovered woman)

and the crystallisable form of the universe (the rediscovered dwelling)?" (*Cinema 2* p.75).

The unfortunate part of the equation, as Deleuze recognizes, is the suggestion in Tarkovsky's film that humanity has lost touch with itself, with its own spirituality and many of elements that bind it together. His conclusion is that *Solaris*, though exposing to us many of these elements it seeks to question, is ultimately unable to reconcile the rediscovery of Kris Kelvin's individual humanity within the film by suggesting "*Solaris* does not open up to this optimism... and [it contains] the seed of morbidity of something aborting, a closed door" (ibid p.75). Yet the notion of the closed door is largely 'open' to debate as the film provokes a great many more questions than it is willing to answer. Perhaps it is fitting that in a film as complex as *Solaris* the challenges and negotiations are so prevalent that we are not sure just where the film stands on an array of issues. What we can say is that Tarkovsky's *Solaris* is very much a film that begins as a search for answers and ends up providing these answers with a series of decidedly different questions.

What the film suggests is that fiction is as powerful as 'reality' and that imagination is the only foundation on which 'reality' is based. We are allowed to observe the process whereby life seeks to connect itself to other life. Human attempts to categorize and contain this form of interaction will always be doomed to failure, and reflect a major fault in the panoptic world in which we live. The heterotopia is a space where such categories, classifications and containments do not apply. In such spaces we can identify that existence is best understood as an unsubstantiated field of imagination, where possibilities are endless and

restrictive boundaries are rendered ineffective. The search, in which *Solaris* engages, does not deal with the "unknown", the various mysteries which the universe keeps from us. Instead we are led to the equally unfamiliar prospect of an examination of what it means to be human. Tarkovsky's point is not that we should not explore outer space, but with the burden of what has become our humanity we are unable to appreciate and apprehend not only what we will enviably encounter but our own relationship to what ever that may be. That the individual subject (Kelvin) can recognise this premise and choose to reject all that is associated with it should provide us with the conclusion that other such realisations are not beyond our reach.

In conclusion, we can return to Derrida's statement on Foucault noting the "transgressive" sense that being is empty, that deep and fundamental condition which seems to order our relations with the world, death, has no fixed meaning, is unknowable- and therefore provides no depth or final meaning to existence at all. (Derrida p.236). The statement might serve as a method of describing *Solaris*, but in a very different manner from the one Derrida had intended. With this idea in mind we can see the true value of Heterotopic space within Lem's novel, but more specifically, in Tarkovsky's film. Perhaps there should be no surprise to us that while the film begins in a domestic space it also ends in one, albeit one which connects two very different worlds. The haunting memory of a time and place in which possibilities seemed limitless stands in opposition to the restrictive worlds that the surviving characters have returned to. In this sense the use of Foucault's concept of the heterotopia has allowed us an opportunity to examine

the discursive realm of the world presented to us. We might wonder if this is indeed a cruel exercise, allowing uncommon possibilities to exist, and then having them vanquished without reason. But we might also acknowledge that with the mirror, generated by our participation in this space, comes the possibility for changing what it is that we see staring back at us. This is the transformation Kris Kelvin has undergone. Through his exploits in heterotopic space Kelvin has had the chance to replay some of the past mistakes of his life and in doing so he is re-discover his own humanity and confirm his place as an individual subject free to make his own choices. Surely this experience must be seen with at least a degree of optimism.

## **Bibliography**

### Books

Collins, Jim (1991) ***Uncommon Cultures: Popular Culture and Post-Modernism***. Routledge, New York.

Deleuze, Gilles (1983) ***Cinéma I: l'Image-Mouvement*** (Paris: Minuit); trans. as ***Cinema I: The Movement-Image***, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: U Minnesota Press, 1986).

Deleuze, Gilles (1985) ***Cinéma II: l'Image-temps*** (Paris: Minuit); trans. as ***Cinema II: The Time-Image***, by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: U Minnesota Press, 1989).

Deleuze, Gilles (1995). ***Negotiations 1972-1990***. Columbia University Press, New York

Dorland, W A Newman, ed. (1994) ***Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary***, 28th Ed. Saunders, Philadelphia, PA

During, Simon (1992) ***Foucault and Literature : Towards a Genealogy of Writing***. Routledge, London.

Foucault, Michel. (1979) ***Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison***. Vintage/Random House, New York.

Foucault, Michel (1970) ***The Order of Things : An Archaeology of the Human Sciences***. Routledge, London

Green, Peter (1993). ***Andre Tarkovsky : The Winding Quest***. MacMillan Press Ltd, London.

Habermas, Jürgen. (1991) ***The structural transformation of the public sphere : an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society***. Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press

Johnson, Vida and Petrie, Graham. (1994) ***The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky : A Visual Fugue***. Indiana Univ Press, Bloomington.

Kaufman & Heller (1998) eds, ***Deleuze & Guattari: New Mappings in Philosophy, Politics and Culture***. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.

- Le Fanu, Mark (1987) *The Cinema of Andre Tarkovsky*. BFI, London
- Lem, Stanislaw (1970) *Solaris* trans. by Joanna Kilmartin and Steve Cox, Raduga, Moscow
- McHale, Brian (1992) *Constructing Postmodernism*. Routledge, London.
- Marks, John (1998) *Gilles Deleuze : Vitalism and Multiplicity* Pluto Press, New York.
- Mills, Sara. (1997) *Discourse*. Routledge, London.
- Mitchell, WJT (1987) *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago II
- Mitchell, WJT (1994). *Picture Theory*. Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago II
- Rodowick, D.N.(1997) *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*. Duke University Press, Durham and London.
- Rainbow Paul (series Editor), *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984*. The New Press, New York.  
     Vol 1. *Ethics* (1996) Edited by Paul Rainbow  
     Vol 2. *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology* (1998) Edited by James Faubion  
     Vol 3. *Power* (2000) Edited by James Faubion.
- Rainbow, Paul.(ed) (1984) *The Foucault Reader*, London: Penguin Books.
- Soja, Edward W (1996), *ThirdSpace*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Strozier, Robert M (2002) *Foucault, Subjectivity and Identity*. Wayne State Univ. Press, Detroit.
- Tarkovsky, Andrei (1972) *Solaris* (feature film) See Apendix A
- Tarkovsky, Andrei (1991) *Time Within Time: The Diaries 1970-1986*, Seagull Books Private Limited, Calcutta, 1991. English translation by Kitty Hunter-Blair.
- Tarkovsky Andrei (1996) *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*- Translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair, University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Watson, Sophie and Gibson, Katherine (eds.) *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*. Blackwell, Oxford (1995)



Articles and Internet sources.

Acquarello (2000) "Solaris: Exploring the Frontier of the Subconscious". **Senses of Cinema.com**. <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/4/solaris.html>

Balcerzan, Edward. (1975) "Seeking only Man : Language and Ethics in Solaris" trans by Konrad Brodzinski. **Science Fiction Studies**. No.6 Vol 2, Part 2, July. [www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/6/balcerzan6art.htm](http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/6/balcerzan6art.htm)

Bridgett, Robert (2001) "Non-Diegetic Sound and Aural Imagery in the Films of Andrei Tarkovsky". [www.sound-design.org.uk/tark.htm](http://www.sound-design.org.uk/tark.htm)

Benjamin, Walter (1936) "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". **Film Theory and Criticism**. Mast, Brady & Cohen (eds) 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Oxford University Press, London, pp 658-672.

Bielawski, Jan and Trondsen, Trond S (2001) **Nostalghia.com – Devoted to the life and works of Andrei Tarkovsky**, University of Calgary. <http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/>

Delcheva, Roumiana and Valasov, Eduard (1997) "Back to the House II : On the Chronotopic and Ideological Reinterpretation of Lem's *Solaris* in Tarkovsky's film" **Russian Review** Vol 54, No. 4 Oct. pp.532-49.

Deleuze, Gilles (1990), "Postscript to the societies of Control". **L'Autre Journal**, no. 1 (May). [http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Watson\\_Institute/programs/gv/VirtualY2K/deleuze-societies.html](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Watson_Institute/programs/gv/VirtualY2K/deleuze-societies.html)

Foucault, Michel (1986). "Of Other Spaces" **Diacritics** (spring) pp. 22-27

Frampton, Daniel (1991) "On Deleuze's Cinema" **Filmosphy.com**. North London Polytechnic, London. [www.filmosphy.org/articles/deleuze](http://www.filmosphy.org/articles/deleuze).

Genocchio, Benjamin (1995) "Discourse, Discontinuity, Difference." **Postmodern Cities and Spaces**. Watson & Gibson Eds. Blackwell, Cambridge pp 35-46.

Grossberg, Lawrence (ed) (1986) "An interview with Stuart Hall" from **Journal of Communication Inquiry**, 10(2), 45-60).

Halligan, Benjamin. (2000) "The Long Take That Kills : Tarkovsky's rejection of montage". **Central European Review**. Vol 2, No 39 [http://www.ce-review.org/00/39/kinoeye39\\_halligan.html](http://www.ce-review.org/00/39/kinoeye39_halligan.html)

Hancock, Stuart (1996) "Andrei Tarkovsky – Master of the Cinematic Image" **Mars Hill Review 4** – Winter/ Spring pp 136-146. [www.marshillforum.com](http://www.marshillforum.com)

Hoberman, Jay. (1983) "Between Two Worlds" **American Film** 9, No.2

Hyman, Timothy (1976) "Solaris : Review" **Film Quarterly**, March 1976 pp.53-58

Illg, Jerzy and Neuger, Leonard (1985) "I'm interested in the problem of inner freedom..."  
Interview w/Andrei Tarkovsky. **Nostalghia.com**.  
[www.acs.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/interview.html](http://www.acs.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/interview.html)

Kusmierczyk, Seweryn (2002) (Exerpts from) "The Tolstoy Complex" Warsaw University,  
reproduced with permission of the Author. **Nostalghia.com**  
[http://www.acs.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/On\\_Solaris.html](http://www.acs.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/On_Solaris.html)

Linehan, Denis (1999). "Heros and Heterotopia : Geopolitical Intrigue in the Warner  
Brother's Casablanca" **Chimera**, 2, 14, 11-21, University College, Cork Ire.  
<http://www.ucc.ie/ucc/depts/geography/stafhome/denis/casablanca.htm>

Podgóórzec, Zbigniew (1973) "An interview With Andrie Tarkovsky". **Nostalghia.com**  
[http://www.acs.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/On\\_Solaris\\_2.html](http://www.acs.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/On_Solaris_2.html)

Rodowick, D. N. (1997) "A Short History of Cinema".  
[www.rochester.edu/College/FS/Publications/TimeMachine/ShortHistory.html](http://www.rochester.edu/College/FS/Publications/TimeMachine/ShortHistory.html)

Montague, Ivor (1973) "Man and Experience: Tarkovsky's World" **Sight and Sound**  
pp.89-94

Peary, Gerald (1991) "Found in Space" **Technology Review** vol 94, no. 5 July pp. 69-71

Rosenbaum, Jonathon (1990) "Inner Space" **Film Comment** Vol 26 No. 4 pp. 57-60

Simonetta, Salvestroni.(1987) "The Science Fiction Films of Andre Tarkovsky" **Science  
Fiction Studies**. Vol. 14 No.43 pp 294-306

Totaro, Donato (2000) 'Art For All 'Time' **FilmPhilosophy.com** Vol. 4 No. 4, February  
2000, <http://www.film-philosophy.com/vol4-2000/n4totaro>

Young, Sherman (1998). "Of Cyber Spaces: The Internet & Heterotopias." **M/C: A  
Journal of Media and Culture** 1.4 [www.uq.edu.au/mc/9811/hetero.html](http://www.uq.edu.au/mc/9811/hetero.html).

## Appendix A

Credits of the feature film **Solaris** aka "*Солярис*" (1972)

A MOSfilm / Unit 4 Production

Producer: Viacheslav Tarasov

Directed by : Andrei Tarkovsky

Written By : Stanislav Lem (novel)  
Andrei Tarkovsky (screenplay)  
Fridrikh Gorenshtein (screenplay)

Director of: Vadim Yusov  
Photography

Edited by: Lyudmila Feiginova  
Nina Marcus

Art Direction: Mikhail Romadin

Costumes : Yelena Formina.

### The Cast

#### Cast overview:

Natalya Bondarchuk ....	Hari
Donatas Banionis ....	Kris Kelvin
Jüri Järvet ....	Dr. Snaut
Vladislav Dvorzhetsky ....	Berton
Nikolai Grinko ....	Kelvin's father
Anatoli Solonitsyn ....	Dr. Sartorius
Sos Sarkisyan ....	Dr. Gibaryan
Olga Barnet ....	Mother

rest of cast listed alphabetically

Vitalik Kerdimun	-
Olga Kizilova	-
Tatyana Malykh	-
Aleksandr Misharin	-
Bagrat Oganessian	-
Tamara Ogorodnikova ....	Aunt Anna

Yulian Semyonov ....	Chairman at scientific conference)
V. Statsinsky	-
Valentina Sumenova	-
Georgi Tejkh	-

Runtime: Argentina:166 / Soviet Union:165 / Sweden:167 / USA:132  
Country: Soviet Union  
Language: Russian  
Color: Black and White / Color  
Sound Mix: Mono  
Certification: Argentina:13 / Australia:PG / Finland:S / Sweden:15 / UK:PG /  
USA:PG

IMDB Listing <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0069293>