REDEEMED WORLDS:

BRESSEN'S PICKPOCKET AND TARKOVSKY'S THE SACRIFICE

A THESIS

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EPGRAPH

I was not interested in the development of the plot, in the chain of events—with each film I feel less and less need for them. I have always been interested in a person’s inner world, and for me it was far more natural to make a journey into the psychology that informed the hero’s attitude to life, into the literary and cultural traditions that are the foundation of his spiritual world. I am well aware that from a commercial point of view it would be far more advantageous to move from place to place, to introduce shots from one ingenious angle after another, to use exotic landscapes and impressive interiors. But for what I am essentially trying to do, outward effects simply distance and blur the goal which I am pursuing. I am interested in man, for he contains a
universe within himself; and in order to find expression for the idea, for the meaning of human life, there is no need to spread behind it, as it were, a canvas crowded with happenings.

Andrey Tarkovsky

Sculpting in Time
INTRODUCTION

Bresson and Tarkovsky are directors of greatest importance for film studies, since they consider their multi-faceted art a platform for creating a simile of life through a variety of themes and levels. For them the world is a realm objectively constituted in relation to the inner world which in contrast, consists of human conscience, alienation, disharmony, and existential crisis. Thematically both directors tend to elaborate on the themes of fall, sacrifice, redemption, and release. *Pickpocket* and *The Sacrifice* present a picture of the role of the individual in the world, the possibility of the unpredictable occurrences effecting the psyche. They also depict the world of the unconscious, the interrogation of existing relationships, and the capability
of people to take a moral attitude. In *Pickpocket*, which falls into the so-called prison-cycle films of Robert Bresson regarding spiritual release with *Le Journal d'un Cure de Compagne* (*Diary of a Country Priest*) (1950), *Un Condamné a Mort s'est Echappe* (*A Man Escaped*) (1956), and *Le Proces de Jeanne d'Arc* (*The Trial of Joan of Arc*) (1961)\(^1\), I can see human life as an adventure that includes the fall of the human condition, empathy for a negative act, and deliverance by an unexpected, mysterious occurrence, and by the initiation of a woman. In *The Sacrifice*, which is in search of spiritual harmony in the same fashion as Andrey Tarkovsky's two previous films *Stalker* (1979) and *Nostalgia* (1983), I witness the experience of disillusionment with one's own being and one's relation to nature, the necessity of holding back and sacrificing one's own power to create a balance between human physical existence and the earth. Both works of art lead to the construction of a regenerative stance that is constituted by the capability for self-discipline, that is, the ability to break with relationships to former modes of existence.
Redemption is treated as one of the central focuses in both directors' work. Bresson reckons redemption to be a spiritual act initiated by a woman through presentation of romantic love to a fallen man in Pickpocket; Tarkovsky illustrates it as an outcome of sacrifice (the assumed prevention of war in The Sacrifice as a result of Alexander's materially realized sacrificial act).

Bresson and Tarkovsky relate the problematic confronted in real life to their films, and make statements based on traditional ideas. These problematic originate from confused states in human existence, and reach out to human existence again in a renewed fashion; for although there have been variations in being, human standards are the same. Bresson disowns psychological elements; he presents emotional reactions in a rather simplistic way. Tarkovsky, on the other hand, stresses psychology with greater intentionality; the dramatic affect is outwardly declared as a transliteration of the inner world. Given this focus, a psychoanalytic criticism becomes more relevant to the interpretation of The Sacrifice than to Pickpocket. As Maya Turovskaya puts it, "Theoretically, the nearest [filmmaker] to his [Tarkovsky's]
ideal is probably Bresson, though in practice his work is very different." ² Neither make any concessions for the material benefits of life. Tarkovsky states in that context:

As far as I'm concerned, cinema is a moral rather than professional category. It is essential for me to maintain my perception of art as something very serious, stretching beyond the framework of such concepts as, say, theme, genre, form, etc. The mission of art is not only to reflect reality but also to arm man and enable him to face life.³

Bresson, in the same manner, places himself in opposition to the material advantages which might end up with the death of the human soul:

I think in the whole world things are going very badly. People are becoming more and more materialistic and cruel, but cruel in another way than in the middle ages. Cruel by laziness, by indifference, egotism, because they think only about themselves and not at all about what is happening around them, so that they let everything grow ugly, stupid. They are all interested in money only. Money is becoming their God. God doesn’t exist anymore for many. Money is
becoming something you must live for. [...] Silence doesn't exist anymore. That, for me, would make it impossible to live.⁴

Both directors move within the dialectic of predestination and free will. Free will is interwoven with predestination in such a way that everyone has a choice to act in a certain manner, but free will nevertheless will eventually be a component of everyone's destiny. Alexander, in The Sacrifice, is already aware what would happen in terms of his and the world's destiny ("I've waited for this all my life."), but still makes an attempt to shape that destiny. Michel, in Pickpocket, is also aware of his destiny, and he chooses to act in his habitual manner despite that awareness. We notice a design of affairs and framework surrounding Michel's daily life: everything (from his involvement in pickpocketing to his mother's death, to his departure for foreign lands) seems to be molded in a designer's hands, like Michel's accomplice designs certain ways of pickpocketing, like the director (Bresson) designs his film in minute craftsmanship without leaving room for chance.
Pickpocket is made in a first-person narrative; it is introduced by a diary with a voice-over of first-person: this is an outstanding clue pointing to the rather personalized aura of the film. It unfolds more on the individual level, visualizing an existential stand related to a theistic approach, whereas The Sacrifice more broadly encompasses the entire scope of humanity, making statements that interweave the problem of faith, the eternal, the philosophical import of daily life, and the mundane. Romantic love is treated as more of a central concern in Bresson; for Tarkovsky, it is usually subordinated to other determining forces in life, such as the status of faith, the unconscious, the deterioration of ties between human beings and their relationship to the earth.

The medium itself is also dealt with differently by each of the directors: Tarkovsky weaves his narration through the real, the conscious and through their opposites including the imaginary. The imaginary manifests itself in The Sacrifice as the ambiguous scenes depicting the outbreak of war, and Alexander's attempts to stop it by praying and by visiting an enigmatic woman, Maria. Bresson tends to subscribe to the
real, but he also gives emphasis to that which lies beyond reality, that is, mystery. Mystery is illustrated in *Pickpocket* as the unforeseen occurrences that face Michel such as Jeanne’s interest in him, or the inspector’s awareness of what Michel goes through. Both Tarkovsky and Bresson are concerned with the individual condition, both integrate it with the human condition on a wider scale. These artists, in reaching for revelation, both on the level of story and form dedicate their films to hope and faith in the human essence which will ultimately achieve spiritual transcendence through authentic, existential transformation. We can notice Tarkovsky’s double-edged intention when he writes:

> To me, man is essentially a spiritual being and the meaning of his life consists of developing this. If he fails to do so, society deteriorates... I try to speak of what is most important, to show things that are not necessarily linked logically. I am seeking a way of showing subjective logic—thoughts, dreams, memory.⁵
Bresson and Tarkovsky are both thinker/artist auteurs. The primary impetus I had in choosing their work was that I wanted to research how they behold their own individual existence in the world, and how they assume responsibility for their own being as well as for humanity. They attempt to create a world in their films from personal manifestations, in which they either reflect their own mood or weave a net of relations which ultimately appear to be their acknowledgement of human condition. They are interested in creating a moral for the works of art not unlike those found in a parable. The portrayal of the individual in *Pickpocket* and *The Sacrifice* coincides with the depiction of the individual in personal films whom George Linden describes as "the perpetual beginner who may end in tragedy and yet develops a new and stronger posture in his stance."\(^6\) Linden argues that the personal director is "on a voyage of self-discovery,"\(^7\) and this odyssey can be an experience to disclose the self of the perceptive spectator; eventually a film can be revelation to the spectator. "The personal film," he says, "with its phases of situation, articulation and revelation is an analogue of
permeable behavior." Bresson and Tarkovsky, as milestones in the European cinema, follow a track similar to that of Dreyer and Bergman, who, too, are in pursuit of the meaning of existence and are on a spiritual quest.
CHAPTER I

PICKPOCKET

The primary reason for my choice of Pickpocket of all of films within Bresson's film career is its revelatory effect concerning the deliverance of the protagonist, after his inevitable fall, through the redemption that a woman provides by presenting her love. This film creates another angle from which to view human relationships—the possibility of liberation from any destructive act in one's life--, and the perspective from which to evaluate the human condition in the context of material existence with an indispensable input of spirituality. I want to survey how the film's director conveys this through his cinematic method and his use of setting, and how the film creates its own world in relation
to its creator and the spectator.

Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket* (1959) is a parable for modern daily life, somewhat inspired by Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. Dostoevsky's setting takes place in a prominent nineteenth century metropolitan center in Russia, Petersburg, whereas the setting for Bresson is twentieth century Paris. The film tells an experience of a young man (Michel) who starts to make a living by pickpocketing until he is arrested. His spiritual release is realized through involvement in romantic love (with Jeanne) while in prison. Though *Pickpocket* is a loose adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel, we can clearly see the differences in the narrative structures of both media at two different levels. On the first level, while Dostoevsky prefers to give minute details about existing conditions through conversations, Bresson tends to minimalize the discursive aspect: the spoken word is less emphasized; characters and objects communicate with each other more through rhythm and feeling. The contemplative aura of Bresson's imagery is of significance in his work, where the pauses and gazes are as important as dialogue. There is a very limited time given to spoken words; conversations that
take place between Michel, Jeanne, Jacques, or the inspector are very concise. The concealed, the unshown, that is, the unseen flow of mystery which is not revealed but which is rather left to the perception of the viewer on the first hand, and the material surroundings, that is, the inanimate things (the objects, the motives behind the acts of characters, the looks, acts of self-expression such as the language of gestures, the degree of emphatic movement in the legs while walking, the thoughtfulness of a mind) are underlined. For Bresson the inner world is superior to the outer:

It is the interior that commands. I know this could seem paradoxical in an art which is all exterior. But I have seen films in which everyone runs, which are slow. And others in which the characters don't move, which are fast. I have ascertained that the rhythm of the images is powerless to correct any interior slowness. Only the knots which tie and untie in the interior of characters give a film its movement, its real movement. It is the movement which I strive to portray through some thing—or some combination of things—which may not only be dialogue...
Dostoevsky underlines the significance of verbal exchange, while Bresson chooses to use shortcuts, and undertakes implicit and evocative conveyances instead. This distinction is not to point out the superiority of the language of one sort of medium over the other, but rather to indicate the differing craftsmanship of two outstanding creative artists of their time.

Paul Schrader remarked that "...Bresson is not neurotic or eccentric, but a self-conscious artist who has assigned himself a near-impossible task: to update an older aesthetic into contemporary form."\(^{10}\) If Schrader talks of Bresson as one who modernizes the older aesthetic, we can make a further step to name him a person who updates the older ethos. Ethics and aesthetics have always been a concern among thinkers and artists who claim to comment or to reflect on their own times. Artists and thinkers have become the analysts of defects in the society either on the individual or social level, and they have usually appeared to be the conscience of the society to which they belong. Compared to Bresson's work, Dostoevsky's work is not out of date, since history reveals a slight variation of social norms and relations that take
place between a previous era and contemporary times: the network of relationships is formed by a variety of older standards adapted to new forms. Bresson is our contemporary, viewing and reflecting the individual's strife in a social context, which consists of a combination of theory (in the sense of outlook), and practice (love, crime, and vocation). Michel's crime and its aftermath as his rescue corresponds to the spiritually constituted meaning of life. Crime presents a certain stage of Michel's progress in the cycle of life; love works as a device to take him out of his fallen state; his commitment to a renewed way of life appears to be his vocation. He has to undertake a new style of life that is primarily based on love, which did not exist in the past, and he has to strive to preserve it in an everlasting effort.

While Schrader points out that the prison-cycle films of Bresson are about free will and predestination in theological terms, Susan Sontag declares that they have a common theme, the meaning of confinement and liberty; she also adds that religious vocation and crime have a common basis, since both end in the cell. In fact, Bresson's duality in his
narration is very clear: he considers mundane affairs in the form of terrestrial mechanisms which stand in for free will, but without disregarding the celestial element or predestination. This dual character is the basis of a universal quality which he addresses to human nature in a classical manner without ever falling into an outmoded milieu. In the course of the process of Michel’s pickpocketing, his arrest and predicted release (the film ends while Michel is still behind bars), Bresson prefers to show the bilateral nature of things: the material and the spiritual are observed in Michel’s future release from prison, but also are expressed as the release from interior imprisonment into love. By being put into prison Michel has won his freedom; in fact his illegal act is a shackle from which he cannot remove himself, since imprisonment is a proper condition in which to encounter in a fallen state. Thus Schrader uses this predicament of freedom and restriction in a reversed fashion as a metaphor: Michel’s crime becomes a prison and he only attains freedom in jail.\textsuperscript{13} Therefore a dialectical relationship is the libidinal force of life or rather the essence of vitality in Bresson’s style:
opposites are always in polarity or in contradiction with each other, and only later is a synthesis or a compromise achieved. Where *Pickpocket* is concerned, love is employed as a catalyst in bringing two poles together: imprisonment and future freedom are merged through love. Schrader also shows that the prison metaphor is an indispensable aspect of Western philosophy.\(^\text{14}\) He states that this metaphor is related especially to the dichotomy of body and soul in Western theology such as that in Plato and the Scriptures. The body might be taken as a prison of the soul, and death can be a passage to free it from the prison. Thus in Bresson’s film, the metaphor of death, denial of the body—that is imprisonment—leads to liberation of the soul.

The director’s approach to the visual style of the film is very ascetic, which puts it in harmony with the life of the protagonist. The shots do not tend to present elaborate techniques: the shots exist in accordance with necessity, never tending toward special effects or overpunctuation. Michel’s life is one of uniformity, sparsity, almost monasticism: he wears the same plain suit all the time, talks with the same tone, carries out more or less the same routine
in everyday life, lives in a simple room like a hermit in the midst of an abundant economy; his study, living area, and bedroom are all in one space. He is one of the lonely in the society, and his relationships with his social environment are homogenic; though we witness him in interaction with his mother or his friends, he is aloof, and there is no evidence of sharing in an emotional relationship. All is prosaic and almost formal. His mother is fatally ill, and he feels a distant love for her. His relationship with his friend Jacques is somewhat isolated, fraught with a latent tension. This points to a lack of communication between Michel and his "close" friends and relatives. From the perspective of Sontag's statement of parallelism between religious vocation and crime, this alienation of Michel becomes more sensible; nonetheless alienation, normally, does not necessarily entail distance from a close relative like one's mother. Sontag acknowledges that Michel's solitariness, (that is, his incapability to socialize and to love; his taking refuge in repetitive acts of theft\textsuperscript{15}) evolves to the elegance of a ballet. The cost of non-socialization or not venturing a love relationship reveals itself as repression, and, therefore,
deviation. Here Bresson’s direction comes into play once again: Michel leads a life devoid of human values; his values are parasitic and animalistic, they are composed of eating, drinking, and sleeping. He has been caught by the addiction of thievery. Like any other addiction, he is trapped by his continual engagement in an antisocial act. His looks are dull and far from passionate; they are full of implicit guilt. It is very unlikely that we can catch a glimpse of an expression in Michel’s face. It is Bresson’s preference to evade portraying any psychological impression in his characters in order to present them only as automata. According to him, his characters serve a certain goal, and everything has to appear or function in terms of necessity; this is another version of Bresson’s “economy.” In the case of human emotional reactions, Roy Armes’s interpretation is that his characters obey a superior will.\(^{16}\) Sontag calls Bresson’s art a reflective mode\(^ {17}\) which aims to evoke a thinking process in the viewer’s mind. Bresson directs the spectator to think in a definite way without emotional involvement which may function to break down the power of his imagery. Michel, from
the beginning to the end, exhibits an inexpressive mood even while crying after his mother's death, causing the revolt of Jeanne in the amusement park while three of them (including Jacques) sit at a table: "You are not interested in anything. You are not in this world." Certainly Michel has been living in his own world, "possessed," as if there is always something in his mind, a fixed idea, which, in apathy to his very surroundings, is reinforced by empathy toward his own endeavor. He is an asocial personality who actualizes his self in his evil career. In effect it is not an evil act, even though it is against the law and abusive of other people's rights and privacy; it is rather an addiction, a slavery of the self and the soul. While a physical imprisonment is a matter of fact in Bresson's previous film, _Un Condamné à Mort s'est Échappé (A Man Escaped)_ (1956), in _Pickpocket_ Michel is a prisoner of his soul in daily life and a physical prisoner after his arrest.

Michel's general mood is nihilistic and apathetic in the same way as Raskolnikov's:
He [Raskolnikov] made an involuntary gesture with his hand, and became aware of the twenty-copeck piece squeezed in his fist. He unclasped his hand and stared at the money, then flung it into the water and walked homewards. He felt that he had in that moment cut himself from everybody and everything, as if with a knife.  

Michel thinks that clever people should break the law so that the society will benefit from it. Raskolnikov sides with the law-breakers, claiming that they aim at the destruction of the existing order for the purpose of creating better conditions. Hence they both come to terms with the Nietzschean idea of the ubermensch who rejects the conventions of commonplace mentality and fights against them at the cost of opposing existing regulations in a quasi-anarchic manner. Bresson, in an interview, asserts that Dostoevsky took the idea of Crime and Punishment from Max Stirner’s The Ego and His Own. Stirner’s book is one of the early proponents of the merits and fulfillment of individualistic action that is impervious to social standards, which later becomes a source of anarchism, and
also embodies the roots for Nietzsche's conception of
\textit{ubermensch}. While talking about the French version of
Stirner's book, Bresson says that it contains sentences like
"My rights, so far as I'm concerned, extend as far as I can
extend my arm." and adds that this may be an encouragement to
pickpocketing.\textsuperscript{21} The director takes a stand here against an
egoistic type of individualism which defends the idea of
living only for oneself. He actually supports another
individualism which is spiritually consolidated and which
still embraces fallen acts like pickpocketing, and there is
always a possibility for salvation through repentance or
redemption.

Again, setting out from the analogy between religiosity
and pickpocketing, Sontag expresses that the process of
Michel's profession demands difficult gestures and a
necessity of repetition and routine.\textsuperscript{22} Yvette Biro asserts a
likeness between pickpocketing and Bresson's craftsmanship in
terms of repetition: "emphasis is achieved by the oppressive
regularity of recurrences: to face again and again the dreary
and unembellished details. This repetition, of course, is
rich in connotations evoking, first of all, the power of the rituals." 23 At this instance, we doubtlessly recall Alexander in The Sacrifice, who mentions the virtuous aspect of repetition in life. Even if repetition is not a spiritual act, it could be a vehicle to train one's very existential being. Once more, matching the profane factor with celestial elements appears to be reversed in the sense that a seemingly negative worldly act (crime) can become synonymous with religiosity so far as structural affinities are concerned.

Bresson's characters are like imprints on celluloid. They do not give a feeling that they really are alive, an effect of Bresson's highly successful efforts which avoid psychological manifestations; therefore we perceive his characters as "animated" or "duplicated" by an outer force in a rather artificial fashion. His avoidance of naturalistic acting has a parallel in the Platonic explanation of ideas: the animate or inanimate objects are actually replicas of the real objects that exist in an ideal sphere, that is, outside the world of human perception. Therefore these objects are only the imitations of the real-ideal objects. This might coincide with the idea of Bresson's religiosity and its
relationship to the temporality of this world, and to the perpetuity of the real world, to the truth about the existence of God while that truth resembles the position of the artist/director as creator. We cannot perceive anything substantial: in order to have that perception, one has to provide an emotional link between oneself and the object. Since Bresson neutralizes the psychological life of his characters we are unable to feel their substance; therefore we can hardly know anything of them as psychological realities. It is another form of ambiguity, and part of Bresson's superb statement about the presence and experience of this world. Ambiguity of the reality in the film is apparent through the confrontations of Michel and the Inspector in which we see that Michel cannot easily keep his actions secret, that he is being watched without his knowledge. The Inspector, according to Mirella Affron, appears as an interrogator, a confessor and instrument of the law and of the Divine being\(^{24}\) who is perceived as if he knows Michel’s end before Michel does himself. Amedee Ayfree finds eternity in Pickpocket "through the inexpressiveness of faces
and through death."²⁵ He remarks that death lies behind inexpressive faces, which parallels my understanding of apathy illustrated visually, in the almost zombie-like depiction of the living. Bresson thus makes another radical and difficult statement by visually reminding us that the opposite side of life exists within itself.

On realism Bresson comments that, "...I end up with a final realism that is not simply 'realism'."²⁶ In fact his overall view of realism is different from social or neo-realism. While the latter bases the reasons for social ills primarily on outer factors, such as economic inequalities or exploitation, Bresson implies that the fundamental problem in understanding the foundations of social ills is the understanding of the real existence of evil in every individual, regardless of class stratification, and that every individual is capable of committing evil. Therefore it is one's own responsibility to deal with his/her own inner complications rather than looking to the external world for reasons. This also applies to what Alberto Moravia brings forward on his commentary on Dostoevsky and Marx: "...for the
Marxists evil does not really exist, since it is solely a matter of social evil which can be eliminated by the revolution. But for Dostoevsky evil exists as an individual fact, in each man's heart, and expresses itself precisely in the violent means used by the revolution." As Crime and Punishment is a partial inspiration for Pickpocket, Michel's rationalization for breaking the law remains weaker than Raskolnikov's. Raskolnikov's crime makes a strong social statement, whereas Michel's thievery is almost a mere ordinary crime. While Dostoevsky intends to make a social diagnosis out of his novel, Bresson stays more at an individual level: he does not tend to embrace the whole structure of the society. What he is really interested in is the dictation of destiny on each individual's life, which operates through the mystery of unpredictable effects, like Jeanne's involvement with Jacques and having a baby, and Michel's travel abroad, resulting in Jeanne's final union with Michel. Bresson's characters do not talk of social matters with the same intensity that Dostoevsky's do. Neither does Bresson visualize social conflicts through imagery; his style of imagery is distanced and abstracted from social
context.

Michel's and Raskolnikov's imprisonments both lead to their inner freedom through redemption by the expression of love. Their beloved ones persist in staying near them after the denouement, and Michel expresses himself behind the bars in a manner which Schrader would call a "miraculous" event: 28 "In order to reach you, what a strange way I had to take..."

After Michel left Paris for two years to gamble and spend money with women in London, Jacques and Jeanne have gotten involved and then broken up. Jeanne being left with a child, supposedly by Jacques. Schrader describes Michel's pathos as "the expression of love by an unfeeling man within an unfeeling environment, the transference of his passion from pickpocketing to Jeanne." 29 The love that Jeanne (who, at the same time, took care of Michel's mother compassionately) feels for Michel manifests itself as revelation when any emotional rescue seems impossible for Michel. Raskolnikov declares that it is one arduous path to reach the aesthetic: "Suffering and pain are always obligatory on those of wide intellect and profound feeling. Truly great men must, I
think, experience great sorrow on the earth." Michel deserves to attain this maturity because the path he has taken is an inner path, an adventure of soul, as Bresson puts in an interview with Doniol-Valcroze and Godard. 31
CHAPTER II

THE SACRIFICE

My preference for The Sacrifice in Tarkovsky's overall work lies on the director's depiction of a particular individual's settling accounts with his own life. The protagonist goes through a radical change by opposing the existing forms of relationships, which enables me to view the realms of the real, the unconscious, and the material through contrasts with their opposites. It also conveys to me the necessity of sacrifice in my daily life, the responsibility that one is supposed to assume for oneself, for the understanding of the meaning of life, and for the nature to which one is tied in all ways. I want to explore in this film Tarkovsky's unique illustration of different scopes of the
cinematic language: the real, the ambiguous, and the unreal; and how the film achieves narration of the themes that the director finds most important.

*Offret* (*The Sacrifice*) (1986) is Andrey Tarkovsky’s last film which has summed up most of his themes and illuminations in his film career, including his mental and spiritual reflection on the world from personal and historical perspectives. It is a prolongation of a visual tradition starting with *Stalker* (1979) and *Nostalgia* (1983) in which he philosophizes, focusing on human existence in a framework of visual images in combination with the collision of reality, the unreal, dreams; and on human soul in relation to itself, to others, and to the world. The protagonist of the film is Alexander, a person undergoing a disillusionment with his own life in the midst of a crisis related to the meaning of his existence, to the meaning of life dictated by the world, and concerning the world’s treatment of mankind. In a “verbal” prologue at the beginning, he talks to his son, ‘Little Man’, in a monologue about humanity being on the wrong road, a dangerous road. The ‘wrong turn’ is a recurring condition in Tarkovsky’s work, which he elaborates in *Nostalgia* also.
There Domenico, a former professor of mathematics, who is generally accepted as a madman due to his beliefs about the devastation of human existence on earth, ends his life by stating that humanity has come to the point where it has long lost harmony with nature. Tarkovsky, referring to this, remarks: "These fragments of a civilisation at once universal and alien, are like an epitaph to the futility of human endeavour, a sign that mankind has taken a path that can only lead to destruction." 32 He discusses the same condition at another occasion focusing on conscience:

Our world has seen a disruption of all that should bind the individual to society that it has become supremely important to restore man’s participation in his own future. This requires that man should go back to believing in his soul and its suffering, and link his own actions with his conscience. He has to accept that his conscience will never be at rest as long as what he does is at variance with what he believes; and recognise this through the pain of his soul as it demands he acknowledge his responsibility and his fault. 33
With the 'wrong turn' Tarkovsky refers to an historical era when humanity was relatively more in unison with nature and with the spiritual world, specifically the Mediaeval ages when art also was in the service of and in harmony with the spiritual renewal of the human soul (cf., the last colored sequence of Tarkovsky's 1966 film *Andrei Rublev*, in which paintings are viewed on the white walls of a church; also Alexander's appreciation of paintings focusing on saintly adoration in a gift book in *The Sacrifice* ). Tarkovsky sympathizes with the epoch of the Middle Ages in the Western world which Thomas Szasz, a prominent figure in anti-psychiatry, explains in the introduction to *The Age of Madness*:

The universe and everything in it were God's property: in particular, the world was regarded His pasture, man His flock, and the ecclesiastic and secular rulers as His shepherds. The aim of the Church was to insure adherence to the Divine Law, keeping God in a "happy" and thus "loving" frame of mind toward his fallen creation, man. Hence, in the theological societies of the Age of Faith, the Church was the dominant institution; the pope was God's representative on earth; kings ruled by divine right; cathedrals and religious icons and festivities were the leading
social symbols; [...] and sin, redemption, and salvation, Hell and Heaven, were the images and rhetoric that filled popular imagination. To be truly human meant to worship God (Jesus), to be virtuous meant to be an undeviantly faithful Christian (saint), and to be evil meant to be a heretic (witch). 34

Emmanuel Mounier, one of the founders of the Personalist movement in France in the 1930s, depicts the Middle Ages as the last era where the material and spiritual worlds were united:

That time [Middle Ages] too had its evils: it was the age of serfdom, of feudalism, of war, and where money was coined, it developed the first symptoms of capitalism. But the principle of an ordered relation between the spirit and the flesh dominated its barbarian tumult even as the steeple towered over the village. And the free households together with the feudal manors formed a united neighborhood. Ideas were put into service of prayer which formed the common bond of workshop, guild, and daily bread. Matter was then living substance; people never thought of it except in its intimate relation to man. 35
It follows, then, that the heretic of the Middle Ages that Szasz refers to is different in aspect than the heretic in our modern age: Domenico sacrifices himself for the cause of the lost peace between human beings and their souls. Only a few lunatics "pay attention" to him in Nostalgia; Alexander, at the end of The Sacrifice, is assumed insane, and taken away in an ambulance. Tarkovsky also puts himself into the characterization of his protagonists—Andrei is the name of the Soviet musicologist in Nostalgia who does research in modern-day Italy on a Russian composer of the eighteenth century who had spent a part of his life in Italy like Tarkovsky, who undertook the making of Nostalgia abroad, in Italy. During his stay, Andrei faces his own raison d'être, going through a range of questions and encounters with his own existence, such as the meaning of home and country as an expression of inner unity, and the relationship between the sexes: "The protagonist virtually becomes my alter ego, embodying all my emotions, psychology, and nature. He's a mirror image of me. I have never made a film which mirrors my own states of mind with so much violence, and liberates my inner world in such depth." Domenico, who sacrifices his
life, is Andrei’s alter ego symbolically, being the other person with whom Andrei feels intimate and in admiration, and can share all his experiences. Hence we witness a double-layered personification of Tarkovsky’s alter ego through Domenico’s symbolic (Domenico’s wish for Andrei to walk ritualistically in the baths with a candle) and real (Domenico’s termination of his life) sacrificial act.

Alexander (on behalf of Tarkovsky), refers to the origins of the ‘wrong turn’, telling the Little Man: “He [man] constantly violated Nature. The result is a civilization built on force, power, fear, dependence.” He also anticipates what is foreseen: “As soon as we make a scientific breakthrough, we put it to use in the service of evil...We acquired a dreadful disharmony, an imbalance, if you will, between our material and spiritual development...If only someone would stop talking and DO something instead! Or at least, try to.” That time comes: it is at the threshold of a nuclear war which is to ruin the whole world. At this moment, Alexander prays to God, vowing a sacrifice of his possessions in return for the deliverance of humanity from that fatal end: “Deliver us from evil. Lord!...Don’t let my
children die, nor my friends...my wife...all those who love Thee and believe in Thee...All those who do not believe in Thee, because they are blind...simply because they haven't been yet truly miserable. I will give Thee all that I have. I'll give up my family, whom I love. I'll destroy my home, and give up Little Man. I'll be mute, and never speak another word to anyone...If Thou dost restore everything as it was before..."

We first confront the term 'sacrifice' in the film in connection with a gift presented by an eccentric postman for Alexander's birthday (a huge historical map of Europe). Otto, the postman, after Alexander declares that a gift cannot be accepted as a sacrifice, says that every gift must involve a sacrifice. Jung, in his article, "The Psychological Meaning of Sacrifice," believes that the act of sacrifice means giving up something which belongs to one, that is, which has an identity with one's ego. He further states: "It only becomes a sacrifice if I give up the implied intention of receiving something in return. If it is to be a true sacrifice, the gift must be given as if it were being destroyed. (The parallel to this is total destruction of the
sacrificial gift by burning, or by throwing it into water or into a pit.) Only then it is possible for the egoistic claim to be given up." He also adds that if one gives up a gift (given that one's life is a gift from the Creator to him/her), it is a destruction of one's self without any expectation in a manner of self-sacrifice, which is intentionally a loss, but at the same time, a gain, since it is proof of one possessing oneself, a presupposition of being able to give oneself away. He continues his article by interpreting the etymology of the word 'sacrifice' and maintains that it is a derivative of sacrificare which means "to make sacred," "to consecrate." The very idea, as one might think, is the actualization of unity which Tarkovsky expounds in relation to Nostalgia (and we can deduce one of several meanings from 'nostalgia' here):

Ultimately I wanted Nostalgia to be free of anything irrelevant or incidental that would stand in the way of my principal objective: the portrayal of someone in a state of profound alienation from the world and himself, unable to find a balance between reality and the harmony for which he longs, in a state of nostalgia provoked not only by his remoteness from
home but also by a global yearning for the wholeness of existence. 40

Mark Le Fanu describes the sacrificial act of Alexander as a "moment of crisis in a man's or woman's personal life, the moment of clarification which issues in irrevocable decision." 41 This crisis is recognized as spiritual by Tarkovsky in his thoughts on Stalker, and it may be a complete recovery in terms of existential health in which he comes to terms with Nietzschean "voluntary death." Voluntary death asserts a radical action: getting rid of, or exterminating formationally—that is, educationally, familially, or conventionally—imposed defects, at the expense of existential pain, to become a renewed being:

I believe that it is always through spiritual crisis that healing occurs. A spiritual crisis is an attempt to find oneself, to acquire new faith. It is the apportioned lot of everyone whose objectives are on the spiritual plane. The soul yearns for harmony, and life is full of discordance. This dichotomy is the stimulus for movement, the source at once of our pain
and of our hope: confirmation of our spiritual depths and potential. 42

Peter Green, in his thorough article, calls Alexander’s sacrifice "the opportunity of becoming an instrument of human redemption." 43 Therefore the redemptive act of Jeanne in Pickpocket is, on a one to one level, that of the individual world being transcended, compared to the same act of Alexander’s for the sake of humanity. In fact, the concept of redemption has another significance in The Sacrifice that might be likened to its function in Pickpocket: Alexander’s deliverance through intercourse with a ‘witch’, Maria. Maria, just as Jeanne gives herself to Michel, finally offers herself to Alexander.

The male characters of The Sacrifice are reminiscent of the three main personalities in Stalker. Alexander is a literary critic and a lecturer on aesthetics at the university; Victor is a doctor; Otto, is an enigmatic, semi-holy figure. These three correspond respectively to the writer, the scientist, and the stalker (a spiritual figure)
of *Stalker*. Thus the director returns to basic human characteristics: the body or physical, the mind or mental, and the soul or spiritual. This construction is the ultimate form of a human being according to Tarkovsky, who is capable of processing an individuation through the aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual stages that Kierkegaard theorizes as individual destiny. The first stage is the aesthetic, when one is preoccupied mostly with one's emotional world focusing on the physical senses; the second stage is the time when a moral attitude is intended to take shape and effect one's ethical condition by developing mental faculties; and finally the time of one's maturing spirit, the embroidering of life and the world with deeper meaning. This is one of the layers of the film which Tarkovsky calls a parable. 44

We can continue our analysis of the creator's personality from this point, stating that he might be fragmented in these three separate realms. Tarkovsky cannot be equated with Alexander, a leading figure, the one who actualizes the act of sacrifice, since Otto also appears as his alter ego with ambiguous qualities. Peter Green presents a picture of Otto as "a Puck-like, mercurial, ambivalent
figure,\textsuperscript{45} similar to the figure that is conceptualized by Jung as a trickster. Trickster motifs, says Jung, can be found in the alchemical figure of Mercurius and "his fondness for sly jokes and malicious pranks, his powers as a shape-shifter, his dual-nature, half animal, half divine, [...] his approximation to the figure of saviour" all of which are some of the trickster's peculiarities.\textsuperscript{46} Jung further illustrates that "[the trickster] is both subhuman and superhuman [...] whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness."\textsuperscript{47} He also adds that the trickster can be viewed as a personal shadow, that is, the counterpart of ego, having mostly negative qualities that the ego does not wish to recognize. It is Otto who is able to be funny, as he entertains Little Man, and at the same time mentions Nietzsche, telling a story about a photograph which is 'inexplicable,' telling Alexander to spend the night with Maria in order to stop the destructive war. Tarkovsky doubtlessly favors the supernatural and does not hesitate to weave his setting into the realm of mystery along with reality. We cannot take Otto as an exaggerator when he claims
so many events as part of his knowledge, knowledge which contains mysterious occurrences.

As Otto is a trickster, Maria is labeled as a witch by Otto. The witch here denotes one imbued with curing powers, originating from the witch-doctor of ancient times, one who has magical powers that are emanations of the unconscious. Throughout the film, we cannot help witnessing Tarkovsky’s repulsion by the material mechanization of the world with its destructive effects on mankind, and his trials in building connections with the spiritual and harmonious state of the archaic human being within the realm of the unconscious. Tarkovsky felt that the archaic people lived in accord with the balance acquired between the physical world and spiritual existence, and therefore had a relatively more harmonious interaction with nature too. He mentions, in relation to The Sacrifice:

The issue I raise in this film is one that to my mind is most crucial: the absence in our culture of room for spiritual existence. We have extended the scope of our material assets and conducted materialistic experiments without taking into account the threat posed by depriving man of his spiritual dimension. Man is suffering, but he doesn’t know why.
I wanted to show that a man can renew his ties to life by renewing his covenant with himself and with the source of his soul. 48

Alexander’s night with Maria involves another level of his sacrifice since she is a woman who is from Iceland and living alone; their intercourse would be a type of gift offered to both sides (Maria promises to give love to him afterwards because he is not on affectionate terms with his wife). The director explains their coming together from Alexander’s point of view: “And what I hope is that Alexander [...] is healed in a more significant sense; it is not only a question of being cured of a physical (and, moreover, fatal) disease, it is also a spiritual regeneration expressed in the image of a woman.” 49 Therefore their companionship comes to form a subtle sacrifice by rewarding a lonely person through making love, on the one hand, and by blessing Alexander without reservation, on the other. Tarkovsky rationalizes this situation as:

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 his own salvation, or of all these things together. Such behaviour precludes, by its very nature, all of those selfish interests that make up a 'normal' rationale for action; it refutes the laws of a materialistic world view. It is often absurd and unpractical. And yet—or indeed for that very reason—the man who acts in that way brings about fundamental changes to people's lives and to the course of history.  

One of the aspects of normal life that Alexander's act destroys is the family style he used to live in. By burning the house at the end, he gives a concrete end to his rather Chekovian family life (in Chekov's plays, the life style also reaches an end but only by implication). Alexander and Adelaide are an estranged couple; amorous ties between them have already been degenerating. Adelaide has loved him during his acting career, but he has given up acting due to his conviction that an actor's identity dissolves in his roles, and that he feels a kind of danger in being behind a mask. Jung would elaborate on the mask as a 'persona' which is a label that one owns in social relationships, a reflection of one's assumed being which conceals one's integral person when
its status is overvalued. Alexander's attitude towards his past is resentful, which is evident in his conversation with Victor, a doctor and a family friend: "But there is something in all this that I resent. I prepared myself for a life, a higher life, so to speak. I studied philosophy, the history of religion, aesthetics. And ended up putting myself in chains, of my own free will." But this free, voluntary will, again, tries to intervene in the historical scheme. In this we witness the intermingling of free will with faith in the correlation of an individual act with that which is theological. The elements of mystery strike us here as opposition to the rational and positivist aspects, since these elements of mystery reveal themselves as unpredictable happenings beyond our reach.

The figure of the tree is a persisting image in the film. It turns into an emblem in the narrative proper, according to Le Fanu. It is portrayed as a tree of life on a mythological level; the opening frames of the film are covered with detailed scenes from Leonardo's Adoration of the Magi, a tree standing in the middleground. Then we see Alexander planting a tree with the help of his son and
telling a parable of an old monk who asked his novice to water a tree everyday until it turns green. The tree eventually blossomed after three years. The parable is in accord with Biro’s observation about repetition that evokes the power of rituals. Alexander talks about the merits of a repetitive act while sitting with Little Man in the woods: “Sometimes I say to myself, if every single one were to perform the same single act, like a ritual, unchanging, systematic, everyday at the same time, the world would be changed.” We finally see the tree at the end of the film with all its attendant meanings, with Little Man lying under it. Here we feel the blossoming effect of the tree, and hear the little boy talking for the first time, after a throat operation. This ending points to hope, and hope in Little Man’s own self, as well as for Alexander and humanity, the last resident of Pandora’s box.

Tarkovsky’s film is one of ambiguous imagery that posits the nature of the unreal versus the real, the unconscious versus the conscious, the spiritual versus the material, dream versus reality. Given the antagonism between dream and reality, we are faced with no clear depiction of whether the
war, or Alexander’s visit to Maria, is a dream (after he drank, made his prayer, and passed out), or whether it is a reality. From his talk on the phone the next day, which does not mention anything about the outbreak of war, we can discern that all he experienced was a dream, but we also witness him limping, because he has fallen off the bicycle during his visit to Maria. The nature of reality is challenged and interrogated in the viewer’s mind: Tarkovsky suggests that we may not always want to take for real that which may appear as real to our senses. There is also the possibility of mystery, of a realm beyond reality that may enrich the definition of reality or may contribute to our understanding of the state of things. The depiction of visual imagery in The Sacrifice is, in fact, three-layered: the real, the ambiguous, and the unreal. The real is shown as the actual setting, even though tenaciously overlapped with that which is ambiguous, mentioned above. The unreal is given in sepia and shown as catastrophe. These visual changes tell us that there are several levels of reality and that any one of them may or may not be entirely trustworthy.
The sense of destiny all through the film manifests itself dialectically. While an inevitable occurrence is taking place, an individual act is committed to avoid it, as if interfering with the flow of history. Alexander is a man who is aware of a fate for mankind, but his humanness does not let him be fatalistic. Rollo May defines destiny as "the pattern of limits and talents that constitutes the 'givens' in life." May says destiny is archetypal and ontological, and it illustrates momentary experiences in one's life; the word derives from destine meaning "to ordain," "to devote," "to consecrate," and points to the term destination, an aim to be reached at a certain point.

How far is one a formation of her/his destiny, and how far is one able to shape it? The relationship to one's destiny occurs, May remarks, in five ways: cooperation with it; becoming aware of, and acknowledging it; engaging it; confronting and challenging it; encountering and rebelling against it. Therefore we can infer that the process of destiny is intertwined in a way shaped both from within and without. Alexander makes an attempt to stop the destined end
of the globe by world war: he tries to crush the inevitability of the direction that the world takes, that is, he revolts against a higher level of destiny, the destiny of the world, but at the same time affirms the demand of his personal destiny. This sort of contrast becomes a ground for a third category of insight which is a synthesis embracing deliverance. Alexander is not in denial of the fact of destiny; he repeats that we are waiting for something to happen. In this way he assumes responsibility in individual consciousness and wants to respond to the condition as an aware individual whose actions arise from disillusionment. There is a gradual disclosure in the narrative of an existing imbalance that is leading to holocaust. If we take up the concept of fate, which connotes a broader meaning than destiny, and yet actually involves destiny, we can see the narrative working in a rather more deterministic fashion, like an unavoidable end of life itself, and like the mechanism of causality. Alexander’s sacrifice is decisive and faithful and should be thought of within such a scope, according to Tarkovsky:
He [Alexander] nevertheless takes a crucial step, thereby infringing the rules of normal behaviour and laying himself open to the charge of folly, because he is conscious of his link with ultimate reality, with what could be termed world destiny. In all this he is merely obeying his vocation as he feels it in his heart—he is not master of his fate but its servant; and it may well be that through individual exertions such as his, which nobody notices or understands, world harmony is preserved. 54

One of the film’s persistent themes is that of the human being’s dealing with the condition of faith. Tarkovsky discusses it with considerable seriousness, indicating his own contemporary stand:

Today, civilised society, the great mass of which has no faith, is entirely positivist in outlook [...] Contemporary man is unable to hope for the unexpected, for anomalous events that don’t correspond with ‘normal’ logic: still less is he prepared to allow even the thought of unprogrammed phenomena, let alone believe in their supernatural significance. [...] One of the greatest tragedies of the modern world is the fact that moral problems and ethical interrelationships are not in fashion; they have receded into the background and command little attention. 55
Tarkovsky relates the phenomenon of faith to the power of belief, of conviction in the existence of a transcendent being who can create occurrences that might come out miraculously at the end. He describes the moral in the parable of the monk as the monk's belief in god, which ultimately brings him a miracle:

The monk, step by step and bucket by bucket, carried water up the hill to water the dry tree, believing implicitly that his act was necessary, and never for an instant wavering in his belief in the miraculous power of his own faith in God. He lived to the Miracle: one morning the tree burst into life, its branches covered with young leaves. And that 'miracle' is surely no more than the truth.⁵⁶

The "truth" here refers to the fact that a "miracle" is above being a mere supernatural happening for the monk, that miracles can become true by means of the power of belief. The supernatural element in The Sacrifice is Tarkovsky's reaction to positivist and pragmatist mentality of today's world. The trickster, the witch, Otto's story about a wondrous photograph, the elevation of Alexander and Maria over the bed
where they slept together take us to the imaginative world which is beyond everyday reality:

For Alexander's little son, as for the witch, Maria, the world is filled with unfathomable wonders, for they both move in a world of the imagination, not that of 'reality.' Unlike empiricists and pragmatists, they do not believe merely in what they can touch; but with the mind's eye they perceive the truth. Nothing that they do complies with the 'normal' criteria of behaviour.\(^5\)

Tarkovsky is saying that the "truth" that the mind's eye can perceive, in his opinion, is the mind's own understanding of standards of what constitutes a "true" fact for a particular case. Truth is subjective. Little Man and Maria have their own conception of the reality beyond the perception of the generally accepted reality; their apprehension of the "truth" springs from that perception.

Peter Christensen finds relevant connections between Alexander's act and the knight of faith's discourse in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*.\(^6\) He says Kierkegaard
depicts the knight of faith as a believer who makes a sacrifice for the sake of something superior to him/herself and who is marked by silence, like Abraham, but unlike a tragic hero. In Andrei Rublev, Andrei, a monk and a painter in fourteenth century Russia, makes a vow of silence by internalizing the oppression imposed by the ruling authority. The vow of Alexander, on the other hand, is to oppose the loss of the value in the words which he expresses in his monologue at the beginning of the film ("If only someone would stop talking and DO something instead! Or at least try to.") and to take responsibility for actualizing his prayer. Alexander "wakes up" from a nightmare and keeps his word by burning his house and giving up talking. He is believed to have lost his mental faculties, and an ambulance immediately shows up. Nietzsche interprets an "unhealthy" person (one who does not conform with the mediocre social structure of the contemporary world) as, in fact, healthy. Tarkovsky makes a similar point while explaining why he made The Sacrifice:

The more I was crushed under the pressure of materialism marked by the West, and the more I saw the dimensions of sufferings—like psychoses which are expressions of not comprehending
why life has lost its attraction for modern
human beings, and why they find this life more
and more dry, meaningless, and suffocatingly
narrow—which this portion of humanity that has
been exposed to an education of the materialist
thought, has been forced to bear, I felt
a strong necessity to start this film. 59*

Scrutinizing the human soul, Tarkovsky thinks that the
potential for evil is at the disposal of the psyche. The
psyche is also capable of putting scientific advancement to
the service of evil, as mentioned by Alexander in his
monologue. As Alexander reflects upon himself, he realizes
that he is capable of evil that issues from within, rather
than evil that originates from external reality. When he
situates evil within, it is clear that he is in the same mode
of thought as Dostoevsky and Bresson:

I am drawn to the man who is ready to serve a higher
cause, unwilling—or even unable—to subscribe to the
generally accepted tenets of a worldly ‘morality’; the

*Translated from the Turkish by myself.
man who recognises that the meaning of existence lies above all in the fight against the evil within ourselves, so that in the course of a lifetime he may take at least one step toward spiritual perfection. 60

The director also underlines the prevailing struggle of the unconscious against the conscious mind, which he feels is mostly under the influence of the material. The personal unconscious is illustrated by dreams and the ambiguous adventure of Alexander, and the collective unconscious is depicted by the archetypes of the trickster, the witch, and the tree of life. The director ties them to the subjective logic which is quoted in my introduction— the logic of interior thoughts, dreams, and memory. Whether there was a threat of war or not, Alexander directly carries out his act without concessions; hence we witness his setting fire to the house, his individual resolution, and his capability to sacrifice or to give of himself in a radical way. Tarkovsky’s ultimate concern is related to the same as the current criticism of materialism of both Marxism and the West:
I am of course aware how the idea of 'sacrifice' is unpleasant for people today. Nobody wants to sacrifice him/herself for the sake of another person or thing anymore. However, what the determining factor is is the ruthless results of this attitude: the loss of individuality through overemphasis on egocentrism, which already determines numerous relationships between human beings, and which also determines the rules for living together in social groups, with neighbors; more important is the loss of the last possibility to make way for spiritual development instead of material 'progress' and thus to actualize an honorable existence.  

By this, Tarkovsky makes a distinction in the framework of individuality concerning the contrast between the ego and the self. Jung's conceptualization of the ego is that it is the center of consciousness, a "complex factor to which all conscious contents are related." The self, he remarks, is the total personality which cannot be fully known, and "the ego, is, by definition, subordinate to the self and is related to it like a part to the whole." As a total personality, or psychic wholeness, the self is a rather

*Translated from the Turkish by myself.
complete expression of one's individuality. Therefore the accentuation of ego that Tarkovsky puts forward causes an inflation in the demands of the ego that may have destructive effects on individuality in the larger sense.
CONCLUSION

Treatments of the individuality in the idea of the soul are not much in favor in western cinema, unlike some eastern directors like Ozu and Kurosawa, though some contemporary artists like Bresson and Tarkovsky have given tremendous emphasis to this approach. Their film world is a world composed of the problematic stature of an individual in relation to his/her personal world, the social world, and the world of nature. They are concerned with examining the human being from an existential and moral point of view, but only to explore the questions they ask themselves about the meaning of existence, of being in the world. Both directors, making films about spiritual redemption and individual destiny, are transformed into the conscience of society
representing artists who suffer because of social vice. Their films are a confession both on the personal and artistic level. The way they communicate with the viewers is in the mode of reflection; one is supposed to become enriched by these works of art by both questioning the status of the filmic individual in his/her environment, and by examining one’s own spiritual being.

*Pickpocket* and *The Sacrifice* narrate the fall of a human being and humanity, respectively, only to show the resurrection which follows the mechanization of the forces of soul. In *Pickpocket*, a woman’s love is galvanized to cleanse a man who has to suffer physical restraint. In *The Sacrifice*, the protagonist must fulfill an act of sacrifice in order to establish his individual posture and to relate to his sense of humanity in a harmonious way. The former puts forth a modern version of an ancient human behavior, and allows us to infer an existential statement out of a framework of alienation, fall, and spiritual rescue, whereas the latter depicts the repositioning of an individual’s consciousness by the activation of basic human values, like responsibility, commitment, and sacrifice, to reshape his being and to reach
a harmony with nature. These two films also deal with the
concept of destiny: Pickpocket stresses the destiny of an
individual and how he can govern it by his free will; The
Sacrifice presents individual destiny in a similar manner and
extends the concept to include the destiny of global
humanity. I take these works as a platform to discuss the
dialectical natures of reality and mystery, fall and
redemption, sacrifice and rescue, darkness and hope,
alienation and commitment, and indifference and
responsibility. I find them to be not only aesthetically
coherent, but revelatory in their constructive conclusions
about these deep issues of contemporary life. They represent
a larger body of work that is concerned with such issues, and
that body of work needs more critical recognition in the
scope of cinema studies and across the diversity of cultures.
NOTES


7. ibid., 277.

8. ibid, 129.


11. ibid., 59.


14. ibid., 88-89.


19. ibid., 221.

21. ibid.


29. ibid.


33. ibid., 235.


38. ibid., 256-57.

39. ibid., 257.


43. Peter Green, “Apocalypse and Sacrifice,” *Sight and Sound* 56, no. 2 (Spring 1987), 111.

45. Peter Green, op. cit., 116.


47. ibid., 263.


49. Andrey Tarkovsky, Sculpting in Time, op. cit., 220.

50. ibid., 217.

51. Mark Le Fanu, op. cit., 134.


53. ibid., 90.


55. ibid., 228.

56. ibid., 229.

57. ibid., 228.

58. Peter G. Christensen, “Kierkegaardian Motifs in Tarkovsky’s The Sacrifice,” Soviet and East-European Drama, Theatre, and Film 7, nos. 2-3 (December 1987), 32.

59. Andrey Tarkovsky, “Filmm Kurban Uzerine (On My Film The


63. ibid., 5.
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