



# MOVING IMAGES OF HOME

tracing an architectural phenomenography  
through the films of  
**Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman**

PhD Candidate  
ruxandra berinde





The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

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PhD Candidate

**Ruxandra Berinde**

Supervisors

**dr. Renata Tyszczyk, dr. Stephen Walker**

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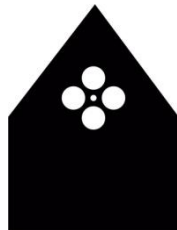
*Even the sparrow has found a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may have her young –  
a place near your altar,  
Lord Almighty, my King and my God.  
Blessed are those who dwell in your house.*



*Că pasărea și-a aflat casă  
și turtureaua cuib,  
unde-și va pune puii săi:  
Altarele Tale, Doamne al puterilor,  
Împăratul meu și Dumnezeuul meu.  
Fericțiți sunt cei ce locuiesc în casa Ta.*

*(Psalm 83/ 84)*

*To the bright memory of my grandparents,  
whose homes I often miss...*



*...and to you, our first child,  
with joy and luminous expectation*

## PREAMBLE: "Standing at the door of a room"

A vast number of publications written about Andrei Tarkovsky<sup>1</sup> are adorned by one and the same quotation from Ingmar Bergman<sup>2</sup>: "*My first discovery of Tarkovsky's films was like a miracle. Suddenly, I found myself standing at the door of a room the keys of which had, until then, never been given to me. It was a room I had always wanted to enter and where he was moving freely and fully at ease.*"<sup>3</sup> It has always intrigued me why authors constantly choose to open their readings of Tarkovsky's work with these lines. Was it because the mention of the Swede's widely acclaimed name and his seemingly comprehensible style would somehow reinforce the position of the cryptic Russian, which many admire, but few dare claim to understand? Or was it due to the astounding inherent feeling of spatiality which these words emanate, having the potential to turn the front page of any book into a threshold?

Because I cannot help but look at things from an architect's viewpoint, I am inclined to believe the latter. And perhaps this way of looking at things was also the reason why my very first encounter with a Tarkovsky film was not at all miraculous, but quite a painful attempt to wash away dust from weary eyes and dare contemplate the world in its raw, uncomfortable beauty. The miracle came later, and still dwells within me, closely curled upon an ongoing quest I've had for long, to find the medium through which architecture could be told in its lived, inhabited form. The classical modes of representation have constantly failed in this, since, as brilliantly noticed by the Finnish architect and theoretician Juhani Pallasmaa, "*the phenomenology of architecture is based on verbs rather than nouns. The approaching of the house, not the facade, the act of entering, not the door, the act of looking out the window, not the window itself, seem to trigger our strongest emotions.*"<sup>4</sup> While architectural textbooks refer to nouns, to the *window* as a construction element, the mental image generated by the verb *looking out the window* is a piercing fragment of cinematic expression, a distinction which renders film its permeability to ineffable concepts of lived space. Thus able to communicate experiential qualities of architecture, film operates with intensity within the territory of metaphors and here is where I eventually met with lingering wonder the films of Tarkovsky. It is within this room that the miracle occurred, when I eventually realized that the tantalizing spatial metaphors contain within themselves not merely the image of a space, but also an hypostasis of it in which perception is interwoven, codified as poetic montage of vague sensations and memories, forming a strong testimony to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's statement that cinema is, more than anything, a phenomenological art<sup>5</sup>. But the essence of these spatial metaphors lurks far beneath their visual surface, at times visible in the

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<sup>1</sup> **Andrei Arsenyevich Tarkovsky** (Андрей Арсеньевич Тарковский); 4 April 1932 Zavrazhe, USSR – 29 December 1986 Paris, France; was a Russian film-maker, writer, film editor, film theorist, theatre and opera director.

<sup>2</sup> **Ernst Ingmar Bergman**; 14 July 1918 Uppsala, Sweden – 30 July 2007 Fårö, Sweden, was a Swedish director, writer and producer for film, theatre and television. He is recognized as one of the most accomplished and influential film directors of all time

<sup>3</sup> unaccredited fragment, quoted mainly in online articles, giving as source the Andrei Tarkovsky online scholarly archive [nostalghia.com](http://nostalghia.com), in the section Ingmar Bergman on Andrei Tarkovsky; the quote is without given source on [nostalghia.com](http://nostalghia.com): [people.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/IB\\_On\\_AT.html](http://people.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/IB_On_AT.html) (Last accessed June 2015)

<sup>4</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (1992) Identity, Intimacy and Domicile: Notes on the Phenomenology of Home, article published online: [http://www2.uih.fi/opintoasiat/history2/e\\_ident.htm](http://www2.uih.fi/opintoasiat/history2/e_ident.htm) (last accessed June 2015)

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964). *The Film and the New Psychology*, pp. 48-49, in *Sense and Non-Sense*. Translated by Hubert L. Dreyfus & Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Evanston: Northwestern University Press

overlooked poetics of screenplays, emerging as sudden glimpses in the fragile written texture of autobiographical texts; and sometimes as a persistent presence in the space itself.

One late evening during the first months of my PhD I first found *Time within Time*<sup>6</sup>, Tarkovsky's published diary, in one of the libraries I was visiting. The book was placed on the bottom shelf, so, without being really aware of it, by the time I started reading I was already kneeling, as if halting with reverence on the threshold of this precious room I had discovered. My quest has later unfolded from *that* precise place: if I was to understand how Tarkovsky's imagery acts as a narration of spatial metaphors, I had to unveil that essential element which constructs the ability of a moving image to perform the role of language, to communicate meaning. And Bergman's words, previously quoted as an awe-bearing encounter with meaning, seemed to be the right ground to start from.

Right there, at the door of a room.

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<sup>6</sup> Tarkovsky, A. (1991) *Time within Time: the Diaries* (Written 1970-1986), Translated by K. Hunter-Blair, Calcutta: Seagull

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these documents, I am truly thankful to architect Adrian Hallam and his wife, Evalena, who have also pinpointed to me the exquisite nature of the language implemented by Bergman even in such prosaic affairs as real-estate correspondence. A great opportunity was given to me when the Ingmar Bergman Foundation and the Bergman Estate on Fårö approved my application for an artist residency on the island. I am thus very thankful to them, especially to Mrs. Elisabet Edlund, who is, probably, the only person I have met who had directly known both Bergman and Tarkovsky. I feel a fond appreciation and gratefulness to Mrs. Kerstin Kalström, from the Bergman Estate, who has so far welcomed me two times on Fårö, first as a host, second as the administrator of the Estate. Many thanks to Mrs. Yvonne, from the Bergmancenter Fårö, for letting me use the library facilities out of hours and for giving us a much needed car ride during the annual feast of the island - the Fårönatta. Despite the beauty of the places, the seclusion of the life on the island would have made the artistic residency unbearable without the liveliness and warm-heartedness of my dear friends Rodica and Raveca, who happily agreed to share this "wilderness" with me for one month.

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Coming to the closing of what was such an important chapter of my life, I would like to thank those that have made it possible for me to pass through the tougher times of the PhD with unhindered joy. My initial adaptation to the environment of England was made smoother by the members of Monastery St. John the Baptist, from Tolleshunt Knights, Essex, through their affectionate assistance, familial hospitality and sometimes even bibliographical support for the thesis. Also, I am deeply grateful to Fr. Edwin Hunt, his family and the members of St. Cuthbert Orthodox parish of Sheffield and Chesterfield, close friends who, apart from being constantly ready to help, never tired to ask me how the thesis is going. Particular thanks to my dear friend Alice Cobeanu, with whom we shared many portions of

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I am glad I finally came to the moment when I can thank my parents from the depths of my heart, not only for their constant support of very many kinds during these PhD years, but also for having given me a wonderful and loving childhood, that built in me a profound appreciation for the importance of home, thus equipping me with cherished memories that can nourish lyrical and creative thinking for a lifetime. I am also extremely grateful to my sister, Mădălina, for her continuous therapeutic humour and tireless encouragement, her epistolary companionship during my solitary travels, and the many beautiful memories we can flick through together. My dearest nephews, Ștefan and Vasile, have been a constant source of inspiration these years, showing me ever new definitions on the fascinating relationship that children have with space and with their dream houses.

I started the PhD with a lot of researcher's enthusiasm, leaving on my own to a faraway place, seeking to pursue my solitary endeavour and obtain an adequate piece of research about "home". Little did I know that during these years I was to meet someone that steadily became my very best friend and, not long after, my husband. He has shared with me two of the most difficult years of PhD, having seen the first lines of this thesis laid on paper, and watching its slow growth up to these very last moments of wrapping it up. It has not been an easy time, but through all the difficult moments when I was ceasing to believe in the relevance of my research, he has found the best ways to make me continue with even greater courage. And, what was maybe more important than all, with him I continuously find new meanings about what home is and should be. I dedicated the first written lines of the thesis to Dimitris, and I am glad I can express my loving gratitude to him in the last lines I'm adding to it now.

Спасибо, Андрей!

Tack så mycket, Ingmar!



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## ANNEX BOOKLET CONTENTS:

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## ABSTRACT

The research started by asking the question: "How is the meaning and memory of home communicated through the films of Ingmar Bergman and Andrei Tarkovsky?" The meaning this question was seeking entailed elements such as architectural experience, perception, memories and dreams, and the research thus enquired film's mechanisms for rendering legible such ineffable concepts, with a focus on the two particular case studies of Tarkovsky and Bergman.

Building upon claims<sup>1</sup> that film has the ability to communicate direct experiences of lived space, the thesis peruses theoretical intersecting findings that encircle the research quest: architecture and film, phenomenology, as well as other adjacent fields. The aim is to draw creative splices that outline an original view on the architectural experience of home, as read throughout the work and life of these two artists. Therefore, among the main outputs of the thesis was to rewrite the biographies of Bergman and Tarkovsky based on their spatial element, a recreated life-writing in which place gains a central role of life journeys and choices. From these reconsidered biographies, new understandings about home, dwelling and place attachment are drawn.

The methodological aim of the study is to propose an *architectural phenomenography* (literally a writing of phenomena), a redefined view on architectural phenomenology that uses autobiographical film as a research tool to allow explorations on the concept of home. The established routes of phenomenological inquiry make use of linguistic material in order to read and write descriptions and in such a manner to reach the essence of phenomena. By replacing the majority of the linguistic research data with audiovisual material provided by the films, the novelty of the present approach lies in considering moving images as portent of inscribed phenomenological descriptions, legible through film viewing. The essential factors for selecting Bergman and Tarkovsky as the case-study filmmakers was the strength of their works to communicate the space of home in its lived form. Due to this peculiar quality, the present study looked at these works attempting to trace a method of writing spatial experience on the imponderable surface of film. Throughout the thesis, this method was termed as *architectural phenomenography*, and it was defined as a communicative medium through which, once spatial experiences have been written on film, they silently await a proper deciphering.

This study therefore strives to answer the silent call of these experiential moving images and to disclose them as categories of architectural experiences.



**Image 0.1** - The biography written by the Tarkovsky's wife, Tarkovski, L. (1998) *Andrei Tarkovski*, Paris: Calmann-Levy, lying open on the windowsill of Ingmar Bergman's house in Fårö, Sweden (the book belongs to Bergman's personal library kept in the house); photograph ©RB, September 2013

<sup>1</sup> particularly on the views expressed in the writings of film scholars Viviane Sobchack and Siegfried Kracauer (later detailed in the thesis): Sobchack, V. (1991) *The Address of the Eye. A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press; Kracauer, S. (1960) *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. Oxford University Press

## GLOSSARY of FILM TERMS (used in the thesis)<sup>1</sup>

**camera angle** The angle of view created by the position of the camera in relation to the subject. According to the camera angle chosen, the composition acquires particular characteristics.

**close-up shot** A close shot of a person's head and shoulders. A subcategory of this are the **extreme close-ups** which include only part of the face or a hand, for example. Alternatively, there can be also close-up shots and extreme close-ups to objects and details of a mise-en-scene.

**continuity editing** A method of joining together shots, in order to to create the illusion of a continuous and clear narrative action. When a scene is broken up into a sequence of shots, for instance - varying angles on the same flow of action, these shots are reconnected smoothly so that viewers do not notice the cut or lose their orientation in screen space.

**depth of field** Distance between the nearest and farthest points from the camera at which the subject is acceptably sharp; this can depend on both the camera lens and on the structure of the screen space

**dissolve** A gradual merging of the end of one shot into the beginning of the next, produced by the superimposition of a fade-out onto a fade-in of equal length.

**dolly** A wheeled device on which the camera can be moved while taking a tracking or panning shot.

**elliptical editing** A style of editing in which fragments of time or space are left out from the depiction of an action, condensing both time and space.

**eyeline match** A type of match-editing in which the gaze of characters in two separate shots seem to meet. The basic rule of achieving this is that when one character on the left looks in the direction of screen right, the character on the right should look in the direction of screen left.

**eye level shot** A shot in which the camera is situated at the same height as the action.

**establishing shot** The introductory shot used at the beginning of the scene, intended for establishing the visual and spatial relationships between characters and their space, in order for later details and close-ups to cohere.

**frame** The borders delimiting the visual composition of s scene; the still image extracted from a film.

**hand-held shot** A shot made with the camera held directly by the operator; may involve tremble and bodily movements readable in the film image.

**high angle shot** A shot where the camera is situated at a higher position than the action, looking down on it; the effect created suggest humbleness or threat on the part of the subject.

**jump cut** A cut breaking the spatio-temporal continuity, to a shot clearly separated from the previous ones. An element of discontinuity, it does not preserve the rules of matching. Such jump cuts often point out to the viewer details of the surroundings, or increase perception of space.

**long shot** A wide, long-distance shot, generally of a scene with an increased depth of field.

**low angle shot** A shot wherein the camera is situated at a lower position than the action, and thus points up to it; the effect created suggest power and significance placed on the subject.

**match cut** A cut in which the end of one shot leads logically and visually to the beginning of the second shot. The basic example is cutting from a character exiting frame to entering frame left.



**medium close shot** A shot fairly more distant than a close-shot. If a character is portrayed, the distance of a medium close shot would allow for everything from the waist up to be visible. For inert objects, it implies a detail of the environment taken from a certain distance. While in close-ups a tactile effect of the objects' textures is achieved, the medium close shot mostly operates on visual perception.

**mise en scène** The combination of: space, position of the characters in space, set design, props and objects composing it, choreography and movements of the characters, lighting.

**montage** A combination of images joined together in the editing, often giving rise to a new set of meaning, through their juxtaposition.

**off-screen space** The world existing or implied to exist outside the frame delimiting the film at any point.

**pan/ panning shot** A shot in which the camera moves around a vertical axis, describing a horizontal circling (panoramic) motion.

**point-of-view/ eye-line shot:** a point of view shot is the shot that immediately follows a shot in which we see a character looking at something off-screen or beyond the borders of the frame. The camera is then positioned where we assume the character's eyes would be, for the effect of the viewers mentally constructing the shot as if we'd be viewing it from the point of view of the character.

**scene** A combination of shots defining an action taking place in the same location, in one single time frame, corresponding to one narrative episode.

**sequence** A combination of scenes, logically interrelated.

**shot** An uninterrupted run of the camera, also called **take**.

**shot/reverse shot** A technique usually used to portray two characters conversing, but can be also used instead of point-of-view shot, depicting the interaction between a character and the environment. The basic rule is that we first see one character and then we see the second character from the reverse angle.

**splice** A physical joining in film or tape. Editing point.

**slow motion** A movement in a shot, taking place in a more slowly pace than it would in reality.

**tilt** To move the camera on a vertical axis: from up to down or from down to up.

**tracking/ dolly shot** A shot in which the camera itself moves, either parallel or perpendicularly to the scene depicted. Technically, this is achieved through the construction of rails on which the dolly with the camera is moved allowing a smooth progression.

**traveling shot** A shot in which the camera moves bodily in relation to its subject.

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<sup>1</sup> For a better comprehension of terms useful in analyzing the films involved in this study, I consulted a series of books, the most relevant being the following ones (on which the Glossary is mainly based): Murch, W. (1992) *In the Blink of an Eye. A Perspective on Film Editing*. Los Angeles: Silman-James Press ; Thomson, R. (1998) *Grammar of the Shot*. Waltham, MA: Focal Press; Thomson, R. (2003) *Grammar of the Edit*. Waltham, MA: Focal Press; Fabe, M. (2004) *Closely Watched Films. An Introduction to the Art of Narrative Film Technique*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Crittenden, R. (2006) *Fine Cuts: The Art of European Film Editing*. Oxford: Focal Press; Dancyger, K. (2007) *The Technique of Film and Video Editing*. Oxford: Focal Press. For more comprehensive glossaries and additional explanations, one may also consult the online publications of Film Departments in Columbia University: [ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/filmglossary/web/filmterms.html](http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/filmglossary/web/filmterms.html); Penn State University: [www.psu.edu/dept/inart10\\_110/inart10/film.html](http://www.psu.edu/dept/inart10_110/inart10/film.html) (Last accessed June 2015); and Rice University: [www.owl.net.rice.edu/~eng377/film.html](http://www.owl.net.rice.edu/~eng377/film.html) (all three websites last accessed July 2015).



## INTRODUCTION

The main question of this research, "*How is the meaning and memory of home communicated through the films of Ingmar Bergman and Andrei Tarkovsky?*" was facing, since the incipient stages of the study, an immense amount of available research material, of the most diverse nature: autobiographies; work notes and sketches for film sets; lectures on cinema, screenplays, short stories and poems authored by the two filmmakers; diaries, interviews, letters; their films, photographs with or by them, documentaries, making-of films, biographies, memoirs and recollections of working techniques from fellow film crew members. Apart from this available biographical data, the study maintained a constant effort to anchor the research and its findings on phenomenological grounds and to thus explore the phenomenological aspects of the material at hand. Additionally, readings from film theory and compendia of film techniques and practice ensured the endeavour possesses the proper language. In order to structure this wide range of available sources, expressions of the experience of space/place/landscape/home remained the leitmotif of the attempt.

The endeavour was then to read through all the available biographical sources, while, in parallel, studying guiding literature on phenomenology, space, place and home, in order to theoretically frame the findings. Observing that both case studies display abundant particularities of understanding and feeling home, particularities that did not fully fit into the categories of place experience as described in available literature, the first part of the thesis attempts to use these case studies in order to outline new potential findings and understandings about place attachment and home. Proposed concepts, sprung directly from following the artists' biographies, are disclosed in *First Conversation about Home*.

The following attempt in the endeavour was to move from biography to the filmography and literary works of the artists. In the preparation of a methodology suitable to analyze material of the most diverse range - visual, literary, data from visits to places - an effort of systemizing phenomenological research methods, from phenomenology to humanities and place studies, was performed. Out of this effort, another field emerged: *phenomenography*, a method so far applied in educational studies. This method, a writing of phenomena, focuses on the variation of experiences recorded of a certain phenomenon, and seemed to respond best to the requirements of the given research material. Moreover, the method promises that, through careful labelling and categorization, one can end up with a narrowed-down set of "categories of description" of the studied phenomenon. In my case, applying the *phenomenographical method* to audio-visual material provided by the films, could yield a set of categories describing the phenomenon of home, as cinematically conveyed. In short, this method would promise to answer my initial question: "*How is the meaning and memory of home communicated through the films of Ingmar Bergman and Andrei Tarkovsky?*" The only obstacle in directly applying it was that *phenomenography* had so far been devised and used only on written or spoken, language-based research data. It was needed, thus, to adapt and update the method in order for it to be applicable to audio-visual material.

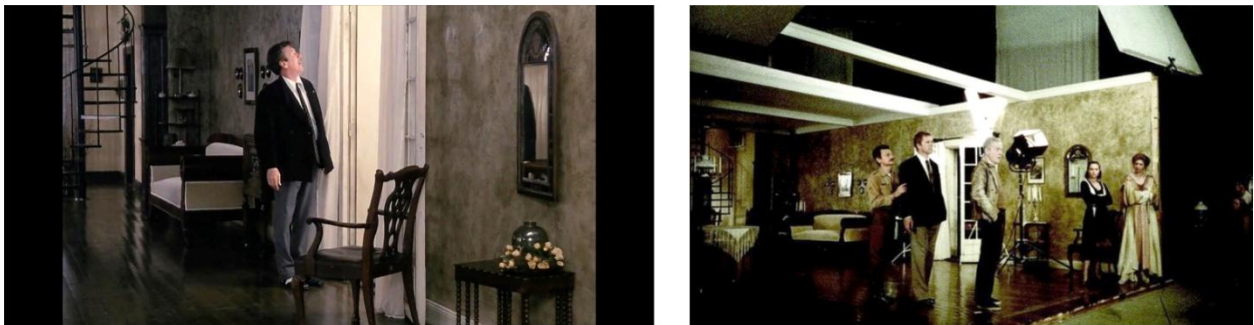
Once adapted, the method and its analytical steps were applied on Tarkovsky's full filmography, leading to a list of categories describing the spatial experience of home in Tarkovsky's films. Some exemplifying categories were exposed at length. The section *Staging a Conversation between Bergman and Tarkovsky* makes dialogical use of some other categories.

## WHY FILM?

I have been warned on a few occasions during the course of this research that the space which appears in films cannot be called architecture. This is a legitimate assumption. Not only once was I disappointed when, viewing photos from the set of various films whose sense of place had charmed me, I only saw a skeleton, a fragment of a house, lost within an immense empty studio and flanked by an army of equipment that helped bring to life that illusion of dwelling. However, it is precisely its quasi-real nature that makes the space of film a ground so rich for exploring concepts of experience of place, memory of place, and phenomenology of place.

Memory of place because, as noted by artists, writers and scientists alike, memory functions as a continuous reconstruction of fragments. A corner of a house illuminated within an expanse of dark forgetting. A sudden noise, a word, the voice of someone dear. And then this fragment ephemerally neighbours a sunlit corridor, maybe at the other edge of that same house, maybe in a complete different location. Memory acts as a vibrant and continuous act of cinematic montage. In the case of the cinema studio, all the technical equipment and material ballast which supports that one fragment of space, does not appear on film. Likewise, residual supporting memories are left out of mnemonic cues when one remembers, and the memory path is based on emotional associations, rather than topical mind reconstructions<sup>1</sup>.

The architecture of a film set, although rightfully accused that it may not formally and structurally resemble real architecture, since it is often a fragmentary pop-up construction, with a temporary role that avoids real function<sup>2</sup>, is nevertheless arguably a pure visual and spatial expression of a phenomenology of architecture. Yes, in the case of purposefully-built sets, the internal tectonic and functional logics of a real building are overlooked. But the spatiality of the set itself, the *mise-èn-scène*, the lighting [even if in many cases the daylight is in reality artificially produced], the textures, materials and movements of the camera and of the actors within the set, but not least, the way scenes from a set are stitched together with images of other places and, through careful editing, create a continuous flowing new and illusory architectural configuration... all of these artificial mechanisms serve at the same time two purposes.



**Image 0.2** - (left) scene from Andrei Tarkovsky's *Sacrifice* (1985); (right) photo from the film set built inside the studio

<sup>1</sup> As glimpsed throughout books such as Casey, E. (2000) *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Yates, F. (1966) *The Art of Memory*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul or Bartlett, F. (1995) *Remembering*. Cambridge University Press; "remembering is an imaginative reconstruction of past experiences, rather than an exact replica" (Bartlett, F. *op. cit.*)

<sup>2</sup> for example the house in Tarkovsky's 1985 *Sacrifice*, when reconstructed after it initially burnt, was built out of cheap plywood that not only could not sustain habitation, but could not even endure prolonged Baltic winds

On the one hand, they construct an imaginary building that can be delivered in an inhabitable form to the viewer, who, through the synesthetic experience triggered by the act of watching the film, is transposed in the position of walking from room to room, looks outside its windows, hears sounding floors and feels the light falling on the table... touches the rugged surface of walls and is caressed by curtains slowly moving in the wind. The filmmaker is not a builder of functional architecture, but a builder of architectural experience, thus providing shelter not for the physical needs of the viewer, but for the emotional and ontological need for dwelling, in almost Heideggerian terms<sup>3</sup>.

On the other hand, these fragments of architecture built as part of film sets, and the way they are combined together to form a whole, are in fact direct expressions of the filmmaker's spatial understandings, spatial memories and emotions, phenomenological experiences of architecture, and therefore offer direct insight into the way spaces are perceived, experienced, remembered and conceived in their represented form. If the psychiatrist Jan van der Berg<sup>4</sup> was right and all artists and poets are, in fact, phenomenologists, then film as an art form is an exposed and opened expression of phenomenological experience of space.

Aiming to explore this issue in more depth, the determination to choose these precise filmmakers, Bergman and Tarkovsky, was not arbitrary. Their films constitute direct research material, having spatial qualities of notable architectural interest. But from this point of view, numerous other films with relevant spatial qualities had already been identified in other architectural studies.

What was unique concerning the nature of Bergman's and Tarkovsky's works, was the substantial connection it had with place memory and phenomenology of place. Both artists shared an almost obsessive interest in retracing memory: the memory of childhood, the multisensory remembrance of places once inhabited; but they also displayed a vivid and creative empathy with the newfound locations wherein films were set. This interest is visible and nearly palpable in their films and, as will be showed, in their biographies.

Another characteristic aspect is that both directors were also prolific writers, who, beside seeking to achieve meaningful artistic expression in films, also poetically and methodically wrote themselves in autobiographies and carefully kept daily notes. These autobiographical writings, infused with long and detailed descriptions of the places of their past, as directly experienced by them, are closely comparable with passages by architects writing phenomenologically. However, in the case of writings by Bergman and Tarkovsky, we are not faced with a fictitious anonymous user or visitor of a building, as in most of the writings on architectural phenomenology. Here, the words contain a luminous gateway to the required phenomenological first person experience, a "first person" whose biography we can access, whose architectural and geographical journeys we can track and even dwell within. Enhancing this, the images of remembered lived spaces narrated in written form have, with scrupulous method and abiding poetry, been translated into moving images, becoming a cinematic experience which we can inhabit ourselves, because "*cinema transposes*

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<sup>3</sup> "...Poetically man dwells...", the title of Heidegger's last essay in the English volume *Poetry, Language, Thought* (1971), quoting a verse by the Romantic German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843)

<sup>4</sup> van der Berg, J.V. (1995) *The Phenomenological Approach in Psychology*, Charles. C. Thomas, Springfield Illinois, p.61

*what would otherwise be invisible, individual, and intrasubjective privacy of direct experience, into the visible, public and intersubjective sociality of a language that not only refers to direct experience, but also uses direct experience as its mode of reference.*"<sup>5</sup>

Seen from this perspective, these films constituted an open and highly abundant research material, which, if studied in depth, and in close connection with biographical information and with the poetically spatial descriptions from the autobiographical writings, could become a reliable and unexplored means of entrance "into the world of the other's experience", for a systematic and more comprehensive understanding of how a place becomes identifiable as a home, how architecture is meaningfully dwelled in, and how it lingers in the memory of those who once lived in it.

### **JOURNEYS with and into the RESEARCH MATERIAL:**

To frame and methodologically approach this quest, the study began by tracing the extended theoretical domain into which the experience of home could be placed; this meant identifying the confluences between a multitude of sources: philosophy, phenomenology, phenomenology of architecture, environmental psychology, film theory and practice, memory studies, spatial studies on perception and representation, neuropsychology, narrative theories<sup>6</sup>. Moving between such disparate territories with contrastive points of view that often lacked a common language despite treating very similar topics, the approach constantly dwelled upon intersections. The relevant summary of all these intersections will gradually unfold in the first chapters, to set the context and to acquire the vocabulary with which afterwards the breadth of the case studies will be explored and presented.

The key output of this theoretical exploration was to delineate an enveloping methodology, which can incorporate and make use of inputs from disparate contexts and of different nature (written, audio-visual, archival, etc.), in order to appropriately tackle the complex issues which are involved in the act of perceiving, inhabiting, remembering and representing space. Adapting and adding on to frameworks previously developed in phenomenological research, educational studies and, at points, anthropology and ethnography, the method reclaimed the term *phenomenography*, and thus considered the imponderable surface of moving images to be a medium onto which experiences have been written, and, once written, await proper deciphering.

The research material itself was also diverse, and therefore implied a diverse range of approaches. To start with, the method for working with the films required numerous viewings, readings of details, pausing or listening, freezing of frames, resuming. To enable a tactile grasp on the elusive nature of moving images, the selected film stills were printed, cut out and grouped into piles - initially according to the respective film, afterwards according

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<sup>5</sup> Sobchack, V. (1991) *The Address of the Eye. A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 11

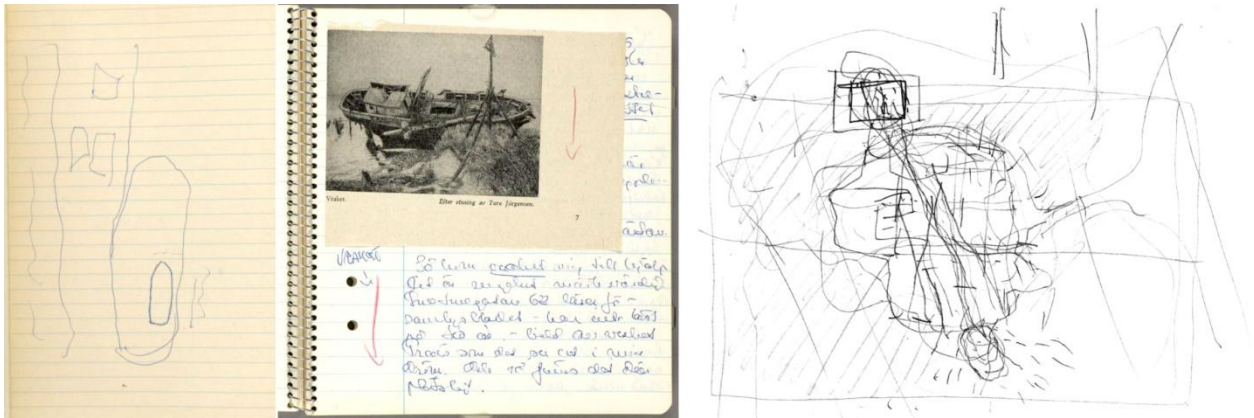
<sup>6</sup> literature reviews on these areas will be given throughout chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5

to the relevant spatial category identified as mostly defining. Screenplays were available for most of the films and added a meaningful layer to the understanding of film composition and of the parts unseen in the final picture, but relevant to the experiential understanding of it. Then, each film was once more filtered through the written and sketched or drawn information found in the directors' working notebooks, diaries, interviews given, chapters of the autobiographical writings. These were paired with information available from professionals who had taken part in the film production and with photos or videos from the film set.

In some of the cases, it was possible to travel to filming locations, in Italy, Sweden and Estonia, although these travels might have been the most adventurous I had ever taken on my own. Beside flights, train- and bus-rides, these journeys included, because of the remote nature of some of the locations, over 200 km of cycling along the forested coastline of an extremely scarcely populated part of a Nordic island; 100 km of walking among fields of wheat, pine forests, and no human presence; and 20 km of hitchhiking on unlit country roads, one dark winter night. The approach to visiting these locations was to specifically avoid seeing the films shot there right before my travel, in order to achieve a more genuine, direct experience of the place - with only a faded memory of the film to shadow my spatial apprehension of it. I then tried to track and record the meeting with these locations through written notes, photographs and film. These visits also served to inscribe the immediate location of a film set into its larger architectural, urban, geographical and cultural context.



**Image 0.3** - the remote country road leading to "the Zone" - the mysterious location from Tarkovsky's 1978 film *Stalker*; located at around 25km outside of Tallinn, Estonia; photograph ©RB, taken in July 2013 - see [ANNEX Booklet](#), pp. 58-61



**Image 0.4** - Bergman's sketch for the position of the shipwreck featuring in his 1961 film *Through a Glass Darkly*, image ©IBF (left); page from the notebook developing the film script with a photograph for inspiration (middle); Tarkovsky's sketch for movement of people in an unusual urban place in Stockholm, for the "crowd scene" in his 1985 *Sacrifice*, image ©Kerstin Eriksdotter (right)

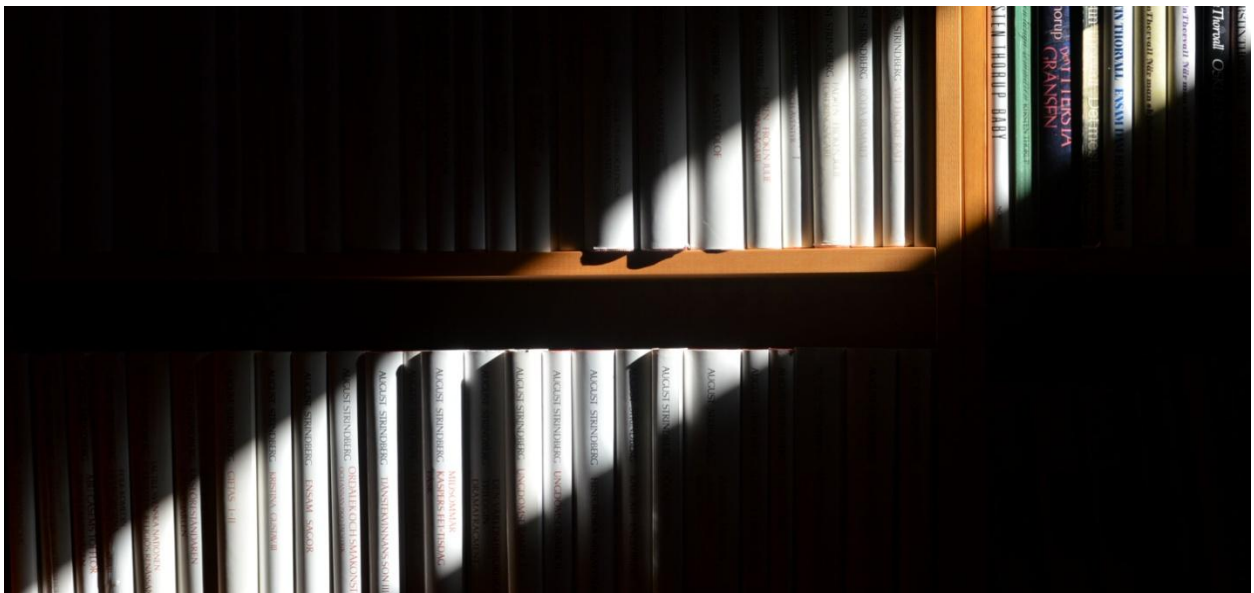
The written and sketched material which I explored was initially formed of the main published books signed by Bergman and Tarkovsky, or the published interviews with them or with people who knew them closely. Later on, while in Stockholm, I had the chance to flip with white gloves and shyness through the archives of Ingmar Bergman, where electricity bills neatly arranged and letters to collaborators stood beside correspondence with real estate agents and beside screenplay drafts, filming plans and sketches for mise-èn-scene. There were also rich sets of film set and family photos, but also unexpected details, such as a drawing of a duck standing in a puddle and holding an umbrella, sketched in the corner of a letter. Another important archival meeting happened in Florence, where drawings of houses had been taken out of the archives of Andrei Tarkovsky and now filled the space of a warmly sunlit top floor room of a building eloquently named "House of the Window". These images ranged from sketches for film sets to detailed and architecturally accurate plans, sections and facades for the houses dreamed by Tarkovsky. These dream architectures migrated, along with their dreamer, from Russia to Italy, and their images discretely transmit a spatial transition from the vernacular forms of the wooden hut to the elegance of villas from Tuscany, where Tarkovsky was planning to build a house just months before his untimely death.

Apart from the filming locations previously mentioned, I visited, phenomenologically analyzed and filmed also some of the places where Bergman and Tarkovsky had lived, but for each of them, temporalities of perception and appropriation were different. In the case of Tarkovsky, this meant a day-long boat trip along the waters of Volga, to see and rapidly pass through one of the dachas where he was spending his summers as a child, in Yourevets, a house now converted into a museum. The visit was so short that my first walking through its rooms coincides entirely with the time of filming it; so far I had no chance to go back and retake this film, but it is nevertheless a precious document of spatial exploration. My encounter with Tarkovsky's house in Florence was a bit longer, as long as the interview with its current inhabitant, Tarkovsky's son, lasted. Beside audio recording our conversation about the essence of home in his father's films and life, I



also captured some of the voices of the house, for instance, a cracking of a door, and the floor sounding under the paws of a cat.

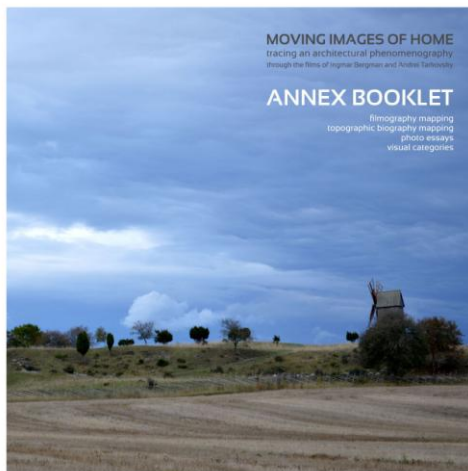
However, most abundant in experiential terms was the one autumn month spent on Ingmar Bergman's secluded island of Fårö, out in the Baltic sea, "*halfway between Sweden and Russia*."<sup>7</sup> While on the island, I lived in a house that was part of a 19th century farming estate, restored by the filmmaker, who sometimes remained there after his daily afternoon visits to watch films in the nearby barn, which he had converted into a cinema. The only neighbours of this settlement were sheep and birds. During this time, I was cycling daily through the poetically empty island, to reach Bergman's very own house, hidden far deep in a pine forest. The house stood at the border between the forest and the stony shore, along a magnificently lit sea, to which it gazed all along its 56 metres. Bergman had chosen this spot, and designed almost every bit of the house, from windows diversely shaped according to the function of the room and mostly to the exterior light condition - with view to the forest or towards the sea - in very close collaboration with the architect. The only place he identified as a home throughout his entire life, this house is a quintessence of the artist's memories and feelings of home and thus provided a significant key to understanding the spatial metaphors of his films. The hours passing inside it were never the same: the lights and shadows were changing, filtered through the pines, reflecting from the shifting waves of the sea. Silence was sometimes heavy, sometimes of radiant lightness, and sometimes wiped by the sound of wooden floors, sea waves, wind in the pines or music from Bergman's collection. Inhabiting room after room of this house, from kitchen to library, from the warm nook of the stove to the film room, trying to record it and write it, aiming to remember it in its full liveness, proved to be a task almost as complex as designing a house, and a direct exercise in dwelling through film.



**Image 0.5** - autumn light patterns inside Bergman's house on Fårö island; photo ©RB, taken during September 2013

<sup>7</sup> the phrase is assumed to have been said by Liv Ullmann, one of Bergman's main actresses, who also lived with him on Fårö island, until 1969

**THESIS FORMAT: Book (Main Body of Text) + Annex Booklet (Visual) + DVD (Moving Images)**



One of the immediate consequences of these varied and seemingly disjointed "journeys with and into the research material" was the polyphony embedded in the research text itself, which had to incorporate methodological rigour from theoretical musings and archival research with poetic instances directly derived from the visual poetry of the films and with autobiographical reflections resulted from phenomenological explorations of specific locations. Apart from a polyphony recorded in the academic attitude towards the subject of thought, the thesis had to accommodate another polyphony, of representational modes that frame a topic situated on intermedial vicinities.

Considering all of these conditions, the voices of the research discourse at times take the form of scholarly text, at other times the narrative tone of lyrical biography and film synopsis, both completed by personal autobiographical prose. On the level of representation modes, while for long sections the written text takes the leading voice within this polyphony, situating theoretically and methodologically the research endeavour, its exposition would not be comprehensive without pauses of visual narrative emerging from biographical/topographical/filmographical images and visual artefacts constructed from the encounter with locations or from the architectural reading of certain films. Moreover, apart from this bi-dimensional visual addition to the written text, the unseen character that pervades the discourse is, all throughout the thesis, the moving image - the films discussed, theorized or deconstructed, or the videos recorded as research exploration upon the meeting with the physical places.

The format of the thesis responds to this variation in voices and modes of representation by three types of outputs. The main output could be considered the formal A4 book, where the text follows a rather standard academic logic and inner structure of a PhD. The accompanying Annex Booklet is different through both content and layout, containing visual material and prose of a more personal nature, that supports and informs the reading of the academic text. An attached DVD cinematically completes the reading.

The rationale for producing the printed output in two different formats is partially disclosed by the choice of the term *Annex*<sup>8</sup> booklet. The Annex Booklet is conceived as a separate room. The reader, located in the main house of the academic body of text, is invited to step into this adjoining room at certain intervals, to peak through its open door, or to fully cross its threshold and from therein to look back at the written theoretical discourse, understanding and scrutinizing the methodological endeavour of the thesis from within the flowing interiority of these images.

Thus, rather than curating a mixed-media unitary format that would encompass all the different voices, a priori defining the experience the reader would have of the text, the separation of these two modes of writing leaves the reader in charge of navigating in between image, text, methodology, prose and moving image. Metaphorically speaking, this separation is a shadowing of the term introduced by the thesis - *phenomenography* - where the written main text is the *phenomenon*; the visual and narrative presented in the Annex Booklet is the *-graphiein*; and the adjoining of the two, by choice of each reader's way of stitching them together, is the *phenomenography*. The act of deciphering the thesis output by constructing experience mimics a crossing of thresholds from room to room and, in this context, introduces a sense of architectural experience.

The approach inscribes itself within the recent paradigms of architectural research that is creatively informed by adjacent arts and practices, a context portent of much innovation, as well as much complexity, that cannot respond to the consecrated paths and formats of a PhD research. "*Architecture relies on its media of representation and fabrication in order to communicate its agency on multiple levels of reality. [...] Certainly, architects should be able to write / draw / build a PhD, - but it is in the application of multiple media and varied methods that architectural research best demonstrates its integrative and generative potential and consequently its value to society*"<sup>9</sup>. Recognizing the potential of this methodological variation, reading architecturally relevant themes as they are represented or understood in other fields, such as film theory, film practice or phenomenology, - in this case - introduces a requirement for flexibility of the representation and dissemination modes, that challenge the classical discourse of architectural research. It has been generally admitted that "*the precise working of the interplay of text and project in architectural design research remains a much debated and relatively unformed issue, and this is of course symptomatic of the conditions facing any newly emerging subject area*"<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the present thesis, with its rooms built out of text, image and flowing filmic material, is one other way of responding to these emergent realities.

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<sup>8</sup> annex: (*noun*) a building that is attached to or near a larger building and usually used as part of it; (*verb*) to attach as a quality, consequence, or condition; to join together materially (from Merriam-Webster dictionary entry for *annex*)

<sup>9</sup> Sattrup, P. A. (2012) *Architectural Research Paradigms: an overview and a research example*, Technical University of Denmark: [orbit.dtu.dk/files/54007887/Peter\\_Andreas\\_Sattrup\\_Architectural\\_Research\\_Paradigms\\_rev.pdf](http://orbit.dtu.dk/files/54007887/Peter_Andreas_Sattrup_Architectural_Research_Paradigms_rev.pdf) (Last Accessed January 2016)

<sup>10</sup> from the description of *Design Research in Architecture Series*, published by Ashgate Publishers, from November 2013 - ongoing, edited Murray Fraser, Jonathan Hill and Jane Rendell (Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, UK) and Teddy Cruz (Department of Architecture, University of California, San Diego, USA)

**FIELD of RELATED STUDIES:**

Broadly speaking, the thesis situates itself in a recently burgeoning field of interdisciplinary research in Humanities, addressing architecturally phenomenological concerns through a close implementation of the intermedial turn that is now gaining momentum in Cinema Studies. Thus, a growing number of cinema scholars seek to unearth the essence of spatiality and temporality that is common in film and architecture, developing as "lived experience" along an axis of memory. Equally, in recent years, phenomenologists and human geographers tend to address more and more aptly issues such as "place" - the same place from which architectural experiences are kneaded, and they do so by exploring various intermedial sources, not in the least the vast territory of filmic art. From the point of view of architecture, the experience of place has been for a long time a core interest: how to understand, communicate and construct such ineffable and poetic feelings as belonging, as the atmosphere of home, through material, palpable and prosaic means? The present study, therefore, does not seek to present an innovative concept. On the contrary, it deals with one of the most basic and humanly fundamental needs: the feeling and experience of home.

What the thesis proposes as original for the field of architecture, however, is the path towards achieving this renewed understanding of such universal values as place and home. The discourse takes ample detours through relevant literature from philosophy, film studies, social sciences, and picks up key definitions and findings regarding place and home, that can be successfully transferred back into the field of architecture. Furthermore, the thesis delves in the precise and carefully chosen case studies, filtering the respective autobiographies and filmographies through the clearly defined lens of visual place phenomenology/ architectural phenomenography. For this undertaking, the choice has been considered very apt by scholars interested in film intermediality: "*Ingmar Bergman and Andrei Tarkovsky, both concerned with time and memory, light and space, inner and outer 'rooms', all deeply entrenched in autobiography*"<sup>11</sup>. Both artists have been discussed to a great extent, in growing bodies of literature fields ranging from social, theological, artistic, feminist, literary.

In what regards Andrei Tarkovsky, the significance that understanding his works brings in architectural research has been initially signalled by architect Juhani Pallasmaa, as early as 1994<sup>12</sup>. Since then, Pallasmaa wrote several works on the topic of Tarkovsky's spaces<sup>13</sup>, which have nevertheless maintained a blossoming potential. A strong argument in favour of their continued relevance are the titles that continue to see the light of print up to this day, more or less tangentially addressing the issue of place<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, Tarkovsky films

<sup>11</sup> written Review of the Research plan for the present thesis, given by Maaret Koskinen, Professor of Cinema Studies in Stockholm University, Sweden and Board Member of the Swedish Film Academy

<sup>12</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (1994) Space and Image in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia*: Notes on a Phenomenology of Architecture, pp. 143-166, in A. Perez-Gomez and S. Parcell (Eds.), *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press

<sup>13</sup> presented to a greater length in following chapters

<sup>14</sup> to name a few: Skakov, N. (2012) *The Cinema of Tarkovsky: Labyrinths of Space and Time*. London: I.B.Tauris; Devidts, P. (2012) *Andrei Tarkovski: Spatialité et habitation* (Andrei Tarkovsky: Spatiality and dwelling, French language), Paris: Editions L'Harmattan; Ringo, E. (2013) *Dreams of Home in the Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, pp. 12-23, in *International Scientific Journal*, vol. 1/2013; Kreider, K. and O'Leary, J. (2013) *Time, place and empathy: the poetics and phenomenology of Andrei Tarkovsky's film image*, pp. 1-15, in *Visual Studies*, 28:1; a more comprehensive list is given in the section of Bibliography *Secondary Sources: Scholarship on Ingmar Bergman and Andrei Tarkovsky*, pp. 254-257

are constantly included in Architecture/Film events, while every year architecture schools across the world organize Tarkovsky retrospectives. The present thesis thus enters this current of architectural fascination for a certain filmography and seeks to address its contents methodically, biographically, imaginatively. The main difference the current study has from the titles previously mentioned is an explicit desire to approach Tarkovsky's oeuvre not as fragmentary observations, but as a whole, rigorously maintaining a strong tie between filmic representation, biographical data and autobiographical writings. Moreover, the visual key of place phenomenology, termed architectural phenomenography, defines the entire endeavour and channels the findings from film and biography towards the experience of home.

In what concerns Ingmar Bergman, despite recent studies have been masterfully treating various experiential aspects of his films, such as light, silence and music, there hasn't been to this day an openly spatial/architectural parallel study of his films and his biographic journeys. In order to ensure the originality of this quest, at the beginning of the research I contacted the film scholar which had the closest grasp on Bergman-related material, Professor Maaret Koskinen, who concluded that "*the Ingmar Bergman Foundation Archive holds a mass of research materials, which hitherto have not been looked into*", adding "*I personally can vouch for this, having inaugurated, together with Ingmar Bergman himself, the initial stages of what later became formalized as the Ingmar Bergman Foundation*"<sup>15</sup>. Prof. Koskinen's advice turned into what constitutes a massive part of the present thesis, the reading of these Archives from an architectural point of view. Moreover, the development of this section allows setting the scene for a "dialogue" between Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman, based on geographical confluences, spiritual and interior spatialities and place affinities.

From an architectural point of view, this "dialogue" is essential in proving the embedded communicative capacities of cinematic phenomenologies of home found in Tarkovsky and Bergman.

The study thus steps along the path opened by Juhani Pallasmaa in 1994, abides in its environs, but builds new virtual rooms, by allowing the experiential dimension of moving images to inform a renewed, more comprehensive understanding of architectural experience, home-ness, phenomenology of place. Or rather, the complex autobiographical, spatial and representational intertwinings that the thesis calls "architectural phenomenographies".

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<sup>15</sup> written Review of the Research plan for the present thesis, given by Prof. Maaret Koskinen



**Image 0.6** - the view from my work room in Bergman's house, during the one month artistic residency spent on Fårö island, Gotland, Sweden; photo ©RB, taken during September 2013, see [ANNEX booklet](#), pp. 63-77

I sit down at the working table, for the first time since I am here. Right in front of me there's the sea, from which I'm separated by a stony beach, with waves of golden grass and some scattered pines. Sitting like this, in front of the keyboard, I would like to "type in" the sea, as if it were some kind of handwritten text. But what a text...  
(translation from my diary during the residency; 5 September 2013, Hammars - Bergman's house, Fårö)

In front of me the pines, tossing about, beyond them the sea weltering... and translucent clouds drifting smoothly above them all. Inside there's silence, only the wind rhymes with the roof and the wooden walls of the house, which crack at times. At my right, shivering amidst books, coming dimmed through the long slender windows, a ray of light pleated out of two: that of the morning sun, still fresh, and that of the sea which now glows like snow. I watch the vapour of autumn and the shadows of the fleeing summer, as they cross my desk, like a smoke...]

And here I am, living this house, minute after minute, listening how its floors are sounding, how its windows are creaking, how the pine scent creeps inside my coffee cup, how the pages I flip through are singing along with the breath of the sea. Sometimes, I huddle in the wool-clothed corner of the stove - big as a day on the island or as a warm childhood morning. There, on this stove, the pine branches from outside are chasing each other, driven by the same light, reflected from both the blue and the waves. And again, a cloud, whiter than the others' whiteness, crosses my desk, passes over my hand, playfully shadows my ring and hides behind a pine tree. Then quickly slides away, falling into the sea.  
(translation from my diary during the residency; 23 September 2013, Hammars - Bergman's house, Fårö)

## NOTES

### TRANSLITERATION

For the Romanization of Russian Cyrillic alphabet names involved in this study, I used the system<sup>16</sup> employed by Natasha Synessios, the translator of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Collected Screenplays* (see CS below), a combination of the Library of Congress (LC) system, with several exceptions. The exceptions from LC system are applied: when names have an English version or an accepted English spelling (Synessios gives the example of writing Maria, instead of the LC-accepted Mariia); when names have a German origin (Eisenstein instead of the LC-accepted Eizenshtein); and when a Russian name ends in -ii or -iy, a case particularly important for this thesis, (such a name would then be transliterated as Tarkovsky, instead of the LC-accepted Tarkovskii). However, since scholarship on Tarkovsky has employed several Romanization systems, such as Tarkovskii or Tarkovski in French or Tarkovskij in Italian, when French or Italian sources will be quoted, the transliteration of the original text will be kept.

### ABBREVIATIONS

**ATII** - Andrei Tarkovsky International Institute, Florence-Paris-Moscow

**IBF** - Ingmar Bergman Foundation, holder of the Ingmar Bergman Archives, Stockholm

**BC** - Bergman Center, Fårö island, Gotland, Sweden

**RB** - Ruxandra Berinde (for crediting photographs, interviews and translations from French, Russian and Swedish)

**BoB** - Bjorkman, S. (1993) *Bergman on Bergman: Interviews with Ingmar Bergman*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, p. 18

**LM** - Bergman I. (1989) *The Magic Lantern: An Autobiography*, London: Penguin Books, p.207

**ST** - Tarkovsky, A. (1987) *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on Cinema*. Translated by K. Hunter-Blair. New York: Knopf

**CS** - Tarkovsky, A. (1999) *Collected Screenplays*. Translated by W. Powell and N. Synessios. London: Faber and Faber

### TARKOVSKY'S DIARY ENTRIES:

Andrei Tarkovsky's diary entries are quoted mentioning only the date and, sometimes, the place where they were noted down. All entries are taken from:

Tarkovsky, A. (1991) *Time within Time: the Diaries*, Translated by K. Hunter-Blair. Calcutta: Seagull

except the diary entry for 13 February 1986, taken from the more comprehensive French Edition of the published diaries:

Tarkovski, A. (1993) *Journal 1970-1986* (my translation from French language), Paris: Diff. Seuil

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<sup>16</sup> explained in Synessios, N. (2001) *Mirror*, London: I.B. Tauris&Co.

## SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

### CHAPTER 1 THEORETICAL INTERSECTIONS: Architecture, Film, Phenomenology

The relationship between architecture and film is followed chronologically, recording the main threads of thought along which architects have generally employed cinematic tools in architectural thinking, teaching or designing. An increased attention is given to theorists that have come closest to bridging between architectural phenomenology and film theory - by emphasizing the experiential qualities through which architecture is cinematically written - a field which has so far remained underexplored by architects. The section continues by presenting some distinct contemporary filmmakers who display a meticulous interest in communicating spatial experience, thus broadening the discussion from the particular cases of Bergman and Tarkovsky, and already suggesting a potential empirical development of the theoretical discourses on film and architecture.

More controversial and widely forsaken by contemporary architectural thinking, phenomenology's vast expanses have nevertheless remained too little scrutinized and too superficially applied in architectural thinking. Thus, in order to provide a renewed image of the relationship between architecture and phenomenology, the second section of the chapter begins by reviewing the foundations and the becoming of the phenomenological movement. The essential themes of phenomenology as enounced by its founding philosophers are briefly presented, recontextualized according to their relevance for architecture and film. The section moves on to depict the fundamental phenomenological ideas embraced by architectural thinkers, the variety of architectural phenomenologies which have developed over time and the major gaps along these disparate discourses, as signalled by scholars.

The chapter ends by drawing conclusions that mediate between the first two sections, sketching possible crossings to animate research in each field. Film is therefore proposed as a study tool which bypasses shortcomings identified in the critical review of previously formulated architectural phenomenologies. Potential directions of development are laid out through direct exemplifications of particular features in the filmic universe of Bergman and Tarkovsky, motivating why the chosen case studies are pertinent in tracing a new research approach to architectural phenomenology.

### CHAPTER 2 REACHING HOME: Place, Phenomenology and Dwelling

Chapter two is dedicated to defining and delineating the terms used almost interchangeably throughout the thesis: dwelling, inhabiting and home, terms which are generally vaguely understood and ambiguously defined.

The discussion starts from space and place as a perceptual phenomenon, summarizing some of the views coming from the fields such as neuropsychology, human geography, anthropology, philosophy. With philosophy, the discussion moves forward considering space and place as a phenomenological concept, and reviews some of the most influential ideas of leading phenomenologists who have written about dwelling. The discussion strives to define its own position in the present debate and in reference to the consecrated understandings, by embracing, challenging or contradicting some of the established meanings.

The final part of the study looks at the words and modes of inhabiting in the two main cultures studied hereby: Swedish and Russian, and develops a potential new term, "*placefying*", as an imaginative translation from the Romanian word designating dwelling, thereby tracing the researcher's own position within the study.



### CHAPTER 3 HOME: in the Case Studies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman

Chapter three sets out to introduce the two figures explored as case studies. The chapter maps out their biographical trajectories, placing them in reference to cultural, geographical and architectural contexts. Construed as a required step for understanding the spatial universe created through their largely autobiographical film oeuvre, the biographies contained in this chapter are stitched together from the places inhabited by the artists, unlike the conventional event-based narratives. Presented in parallel, the two case studies display interesting similarities and differences. Tarkovsky's biographical path begins in Russia, traverses Europe and eventually lands on the same Swedish shores as Bergman's own path. Throughout the architectural wanderings of Tarkovsky, there is an increased loss of an actual, physical home, while an interior mode of dwelling grows clearer and stronger. Bergman's tumultuous path unsettlingly revolves around the Swedish mainland, and eventually comes to a rest on a remote and nostalgically picturesque island: Gotland. Since both filmmakers have a profound awareness of place in their works and writings, the dialogical exposition of their paths achieves relevance from this precise projection of two diverging spatial and artistic legacies against the background of the same landscape of Gotland.

The chapter is divided in three sections. In the first one, the case study of Andrei Tarkovsky's biography is presented in three episodes: first, an objective biographical topography briefly lists the places where the filmmaker had lived during his life. Second episode presents a collection of subjective topographies - the places inhabited by Tarkovsky as narrated by his close family and friends. Third episode exposes an autobiographical topography - the same places presented in the first two episodes are now presented as they had been filtered through the writings, thoughts, works and images of Tarkovsky himself.

The second section of the chapter is shorter and briefly introduces the history, geological and cultural context of the island.

The third section exposes the case study of Ingmar Bergman's biographical trajectory, starting from his discovery of the island of Fårö, in northern Gotland, a place he identified as a home and where he eventually settled for the last 40 years of his life. Seeking to unearth the mechanisms of this identification of a foreign place as a home, the section develops as a compilation of tracing the types of spatial memories expressed by Bergman in his writings and films, his search for a house by the sea, the requirements and peculiarities of the house he built on the island and his subsequent life and work as a Fårö resident. The section uses reviews of available literature, recent interviews, but also unpublished archival research and field work.

### CHAPTER 4 FIRST CONVERSATION ABOUT HOME

Having already read through the topographical biographies of the two artists, chapter four strives to highlight some of the innovative conclusions which could be brought through a closer look on these two particular case studies. The chapter is designed as a conversation between chapter two and three, the actual biographical data of Bergman and Tarkovsky informing some of the theoretical topics already outlined in chapter three. In order to emphasize on the importance of re-reading these two case studies from the point of view of home, the chapter begins by reviewing advances and methods from the field of Home Studies.

Having defined the context of the search, the chapter further moves on to reframe some of the concepts from Place Attachment and Home Studies, particularly the notion of *place elasticity* in the context of Andrei Tarkovsky's topographical biography taken as a case study. Likewise, the final section is dedicated to outlining another notion, of *place affinity*, as read through the case study of Ingmar Bergman, and further reframes Tarkovsky's *inner dwelling*. Chapter four, thus, makes use of the re-contextualized biographies presented in chapter three, in order to respond to some essential concerns about home-ness, and, through this, to potentially formulate new understandings.

## CHAPTER 5 LOOKING FOR A METHOD: Phenomenology to Phenomenography

After the previous chapters, that have focused on the biography of the artists, the thesis now seeks a methodological way to approach the cinematic material. Phenomenology is considered from the outset a suitable methodology, due to its focus on experience and sensitivity to issues of place. However, classical paths of phenomenological investigation take first person direct experience to be essential for any phenomenological attempt, a condition which cannot be fulfilled when one seeks to understand a building as experienced by others. Due to this difficulty, which has historically also been one of the main sources of criticism to architectural phenomenology, the present study adopts a different research method, developed and applied in social sciences, which has become known as phenomenography, a qualitative approach that studies the variation in the experience of a phenomenon, as experienced by others. In the present case, essential in making this shift from first person experience to other person's experience were the film theories that assert the inherent intersubjectivity of the cinematic experience. This constitutes the basis for a redefined phenomenographic method, which throughout this study will be adapted to the specific field of lived space, the experience of home, and to film images as main research material.

In order to introduce the adaptation of this methodology, chapter 5 begins with a review of the essential characteristics of phenomenological enquiry in philosophy, followed by a review of the features of phenomenology developed as qualitative research method in environmental studies and ending with some innovative applications of phenomenological concerns and visual methods in anthropology and ethnography.

Once the components of classical phenomenological enquiry are listed, the chapter moves on to the second section, which engages in the quest of how another person's experience can be phenomenologically understood. After tracing the history of philosophers' attempts to grasp this, the section introduces phenomenography as it has been developed in social and educational studies, the origins and the beginnings of the method, its main features and the way it can be applied. Blending components of phenomenological enquiry and phenomenography, the concluding section provides an overview of how this study redefines phenomenography as a visual research tool that writes and decodes spatial experience. The section ends by briefly summarizing the phenomenographic steps that were applied on the research material provided by the case studies.

## CHAPTER 6 ARCHITECTURAL PHENOMENOGRAPHY

With the working method explained in the previous chapter and connected to the biographical and architectural contexts disclosed in chapter three, the study begins to perform the phenomenographic analyses on the films of Tarkovsky. The results of the analysis, which take the shape of larger or smaller categories, are exemplified in chapter six. After repeated viewings of the films and iterative filtering of spatially relevant categories of descriptions, a mosaic of architectural fragments with experiential weight build up the moving image of home for this filmmaker.

The phenomenographic reading has been wholly performed only for the case-study of Andrei Tarkovsky, since his entire filmic oeuvre consists of only seven films, a number which allowed a thorough methodological analysis corresponding to the timeframe of this PhD research. The iterative selection was performed on the audiovisual material itself, but the results are illustrated textually, with excerpts from the screenplays, the diaries, archival material, selected biographies and memoirs, as well as insertions of personal accounts from visits to some of the film locations. Due to space and time limitations, only some selected categories are described, the others will be illustrated visually (with film stills) in the attached Annex Booklet.

## CHAPTER 7 SECOND CONVERSATION ABOUT HOME

Concluding the thesis, chapter seven begins by making use of some of the "categories" identified in chapter 6 in order to stage a potential conversation between Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman. The two of them had never met in person, despite their geographical and artistic paths having come very close. However, they both confess a mutual admiration expressed in spatial metaphors of profound experiential qualities. This section, therefore, uses the spatial metaphors of "door", "room", "threshold" and "walls" to create the setting for a meeting between them. The text - constructed gradually, as a room, is not entirely fictional, as it is based on interview fragments and diary entries in which Bergman mentions Tarkovsky, and vice versa.

The following sections are dedicated to listing the key findings, contributions and limitations of the study, as well as disclosing some of the potential future directions for the research.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THEORETICAL INTERSECTIONS: Architecture, Film, Phenomenology

ARCHITECTURE AND FILM: an open door that leaves us guessing

ARCHITECTURE AND PHENOMENOLOGY: opening an open door

ARCHITECTURE AND FILM: AN OPEN DOOR THAT LEAVES US GUESSING<sup>1</sup>

The present study situates itself within the phenomenological outposts of a wider debate concerning the relationship between architecture and film. The affinity between the two art fields has been frequently quoted in academic or practice-based discourse, as shall be detailed below, but the voices are nevertheless fragmented, characterized by an underlining ambiguity. There seem to be two commonplace arguments mentioned in favour of a mutual resemblance: firstly, the idea of montage in/of space - which defines film editing and architecture designing alike; secondly, a recognition of the embedded movement and tactility which characterize the perception of a building and the viewing of a film.

Employed up to this day, the aforementioned arguments are but expanding some assertions formulated as far back as the 1930s. The first argument was initially theorized by Walter Benjamin<sup>2</sup> in 1936<sup>3</sup>. For him, film's nature is essentially tactile and imprints movement to the optics of spectatorship, being "*based on changes of place and focus which periodically assail the spectator*", resembling the way in which architecture is perceived through movement and "tactile appropriation". Film's peculiar modes of movement in time and space, through close-ups and slow-motions, open up a different nature of surrounding spaces. Giuliana Bruno historically tracks the emergence of this need for mobility in the work of art: "*by changing the relation between spatial perception and bodily motion, the architectures of transit prepared the ground for the invention of the moving image - an outcome of the age of travel culture and the very epitome of modernity.*"<sup>4</sup> From this perspective, cinema enhances architectural perception, providing that which is known to architects as *parallax*: "*the dynamic change of spatial volumes due to the moving position of the body as it experiences space. [...] The change in the arrangement of surfaces defining space due to the change in position of a viewer is the essence of parallax. Spatial definition is ordered by angles of perception. The idea of a facade is too limiting. [...] Even in a small house we can experience an exhilaration of overlapping perspectives while interlocked in a web of relationships with movement, parallax, and light.*"<sup>5</sup>

The second frequent argument supporting the interconnection between architecture and film was formulated shortly afterwards, by Sergei Eisenstein<sup>6</sup>, a Russian director and film theorist, with an architect's formation and an unending fascination for the mechanisms of cinematic montage. He theorizes the shift of movement in the act perception, from the viewer into the work of art – the moving image. "*In the past [...] the spectator moved between a series of carefully disposed phenomena that he absorbed sequentially*", along a clear path; but since the advent of cinema and of its inherent practice of montage, "*it may also be the path followed by the mind across a multiplicity of phenomena, far apart in time and space, gathered in a certain sequence into a single meaningful concept; and these diverse impressions pass in front of an immobile*

<sup>1</sup> paraphrasing the metaphor used by filmmaker Pedro Costa in *A closed door that leaves us guessing*, an essay on the nature of ambiguity and truthfulness in cinema (talk given at the Sendai Mediatheque, Japan, in 2005, and published in *Rouge* online magazine, vol.10/2007)

<sup>2</sup> Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), German philosopher and cultural critic, of major influence in the field of visual studies

<sup>3</sup> *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, written in 1936 and first published in English as part of the volume *Illuminations* (Hannah Arendt, ed.), 1968, London: Fontana, pp. 214-218

<sup>4</sup> Bruno, G. (1997) *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture and Film*, New York: Verso, p.11

<sup>5</sup> Holl, S. (2007) *HOUSE: Black Swan Theory*, Princeton Architectural Press, p.16

<sup>6</sup> Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948), Russian film director and theorist, pioneer of the theory and practice of montage

spectator."<sup>7</sup> It was therefore the task of the filmmaker now to compose complex phenomena into meaningful sequences by means of montage, just as the architects of the past have assembled spaces and views: "Only the film camera has solved the problem of doing this [representing a phenomenon in its full visual multidimensionality] on a flat surface, but its undoubted ancestor in this capability is – architecture. The Greeks have left us the most perfect examples of shot design, change of shot, and shot length."<sup>8</sup>

These two positions, both encircling the idea of film as a more loyal mode of grasping and representing the time-space complexities involved in architectural perception, were thus the most referred to and developed in later architectural theory and practice, as shall be noted shortly, below. However, film makers, film theorists and, later, philosophers, perhaps mostly because of their position freed from the tectonically-bounding professional preconceptions, have also made important contributions in the converging field of architecture and film, and creatively explored and perfected the modes, techniques and mechanisms to construct imaginary spaces, through light, sounds, silences, words, atmospheres. Transcending material or structural limitations, their findings represent a thesaurus of brisk experiential understandings of architecture. At the same time, the two case-studies which lie at the core of this research will disclose in methodical detail two particular ways of pursuing this thinking of architecture from outside itself.

### Architects and Film

In 1994, the academic journal *Architectural Design* dedicated a special issue to the subject of *Architecture and Film*<sup>9</sup>, due to the growing interest that architects were showing in borrowing cinematic concepts or expressing their ideas by means of film. This was a first lucid attempt to centralize theorizations and interconnections between the two fields. Within the total of 7 written essays, (and an additional few architectural projects), artists, architects and scholars painted a fragmentary portrait that was aptly opening up a multitude of possibilities for linking the two fields.

At the moment of this publication, architectural discourse was already saturated by this comparison to film, this being by then "one of the highest forms of critical praise. Architectural schools are awash with transmedia units full of reference, scenography, tracking and lighting; an exploration of space and time and sequence. [...] Belief in the film-architecture analogy, which originally seemed confined to a narrow sector of ambitious architects, has now spread into the field of cultural studies."<sup>10</sup>

Apart from the very particular samples of cinema and exhibition design, or the exposition of some studio teaching done using film, the broader themes present in this issue, which had a more general character and could also be traced in later relevant literature, were:

1) social influence of film: its capacity to express a critique to architecture, by means of the narrations which inhabit the spaces, and, likewise, a means of propaganda for modern architecture (notable to this end is the fact that in the early years of cinema, set designers –

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<sup>7</sup> Montage and Architecture (ca. 1938), published in *Assemblage 10, dec. 1989, pp. 111-131*

<sup>8</sup> Eisenstein's preferences are the Athenian Acropolis, the Gothic cathedrals or the interiors of Hagia Sophia

<sup>9</sup> *Architectural Design*, vol.64 11-12/ 1994 - Profile 112 (ed. Maggie Toy), St Martin's Press, New York

<sup>10</sup> Rattenbury K. (1994) *Echo and Narcissus*, in AD Profile vol. 112, pp.35-37

and sometimes directors themselves—were either trained architects or were closely collaborating with architectural studios);

2) representational qualities of film: regarding architecture, in a discussion where they are both seen as the only "spatial arts" which contain time flow through physical material, while topically they act on various scales, from landscape to building to interiors;

3) infusion of dramatic meaning: architectural forms that would otherwise be "empty" of meaning, are infused with "heroic" narratives; this leads to the temptation of filming architectural utopias and dystopias, amplifying a taste for the spatially sensational, in the detriment of the seemingly banal everyday; this appetite for something architecturally fascinating was so overwhelming that "urban/ architectural reality seems uninspiring as filmic material"<sup>11</sup>;

4) analogy and metaphoric cinematic language: the most inspiring for architects, however, remain the analogies which cinematic language opens up for either the design process or the perception of architecture, by terms such as: frame, perspective, shot, sequence, cut, montage, point of view, movement of camera, depth of field. Such notions "have a dialectical relationship to the tectonics of building"<sup>12</sup>, therefore Bernard Tschumi describes his cinematic promenade: "*La Villette... substitutes an idea comparable to montage... In film, each frame is placed in continuous movement... The park is a precise set of architectonic, spatial or programmatic transformations. Contiguity and superimpositions of cinegrams are two aspects of montage.*"<sup>13</sup> Jean Nouvel describes his approach in purely filmic terms: "*in the continuous shot/sequence that a building is, the architect works with cuts and edits, framings and openings. I like to work with a depth of field, reading space in terms of its thickness.*"<sup>14</sup> Another architect famously quoted for his involvement with film, Rem Koolhaas, uses his past of script writing to create analogies with architecture: "*there is a surprisingly little difference between one activity and the other... I think the art of the scriptwriter is to conceive sequences of episodes which build suspense and a chain of events... the largest part of my work is montage... spatial montage.*"<sup>15</sup>

Overall, the mosaic of views presented in this journal was extremely diverse. Some articles, and even the Editorial, claimed, following Walter Benjamin, that "*at their most basic level, architecture and cinema have natural inbuilt affinities*"<sup>16</sup>, and that "*the actual experience of architectural space by an observer within that space has many similarities to the viewer's perception of a chosen sequence within a film.*"<sup>17</sup> At the same time, others would boldly assert that pairing architecture with film "*is a rich analogy which has generated wonderful ideas and deepened some forms of architectural criticism. And it is profoundly mistaken. [...] Film observes architecture's existence. It is the difference between architecture and film which makes film treat architecture so well.*"<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Georgiadis N. (1994) *Architectural Experience as Discourse of the (Un)filmed*, AD Profile vol. 112, pp.26-33

<sup>12</sup> O'Herily, L. (1994) *Architecture and Film*, AD Profile vol. 112, pp.91-95

<sup>13</sup> idem.

<sup>14</sup> Rattenbury K. *op cit*, p.35

<sup>15</sup> Toy, M. (1994) *Editorial*, AD Profile vol. 112, p. 7

<sup>16</sup> Gregor, M. (1994) *Space in Time. Filming Architecture*, AD Profile vol. 112, p. 17

<sup>17</sup> Toy, M. *op cit*

<sup>18</sup> Rattenbury K. *op cit*

Since 1994, film has changed from a cinema-based affair to an affordable home/travel companion, while digital visual tools used in architecture design and education have developed enormously; therefore, the discussions around the common nature of architecture and cinema were, at the beginning of '90s, circling around a set of conditions which now can only be regarded as historical. Digital cameras are now embedded in the very act of storing memories, while the proliferation of pervasive media devices and urban screens make the virtual projected image a part of the perception of space itself. There is now also a massive amount of research and theory in the territory where film meets the city<sup>19</sup>, while media workshops have become an essential part of architectural education and a prolific method of design experimentation. In these redefined circumstances, the relationship between architecture and film also needs to be redefined. Twenty years after the previous similar attempt initiated by AD, *Architecture and Culture* now sets out to bring a new light upon the old ambiguity, by recently publishing the *Architecture Film* special issue<sup>20</sup>. As the call for papers had said, the ambiguity has now become even more confusing, due to the amount of work that has been produced meanwhile in the area: "*while architecture and film have clearly distinct disciplinary outputs, the possible intersection between them is less defined even though there is considerable extant literature and research on this topic.*"<sup>21</sup>

### Everydayness and the experiential margins of architecture and film

While the previous discussion is instrumental in understanding the overall context and relevant means of bridging between architecture and cinema, the present research takes as a guiding light a different position, situated at the margins of this main discussion. This position still follows on the words once written by Walter Benjamin, but on one detail which has often been overlooked. Benjamin says: "*Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception – or rather, by touch and sight*"; when Giuliana Bruno cites *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, she leaves out this detail and writes: "*Buildings are appropriated [...] by touch and sight.*"<sup>22</sup> While the discussion around the inherent tactility of architecture perception and of film viewing is undoubtedly a relevant and very important one, the other part seems to be left out not only from Bruno's work, but also from most of the writings on architecture and film. These discussions seem to forget that, besides being designed, filmed and mediatised, buildings are also dwelled in, lived, in the most quiet

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<sup>19</sup> to name a small selection from the titles treating this topic: Clarke, D. (Ed.) (1997) *The Cinematic City*. London: Routledge; Shiel, M. and Fitzmaurice, T. (Eds.) (2001) *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*. Wiley-Blackwell; Barber, S. (2004) *Projected Cities: Cinema and Urban Space*. London: Reaktion Books; Alsayyad, N. (2006) *Cinematic Urbanism: A History of the Modern from Reel to Real*. London: Routledge; Webber, A. and Wilson, E. (Eds.) (2007) *Cities in Transition: The Moving Image and the Modern Metropolis*. New York: Wallflower Press; Penz, F. and Lu, A. (Eds.) (2011) *Urban Cinematics: Understanding Urban Phenomena through the Moving Image*. London: Intellect; Koeck, R. (2012) *Cine-scapes: Cinematic spaces in Architecture and Cities*. London: Routledge. In 2013, a conference organized by Cambridge University's Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, entitled *Cinematic Urban Geographies*, has tried to gather the most recent studies and research projects in the field, "*to explore the different facets by which cinema and the moving image contribute to our understanding of cities*" (from the conference's call for papers)

<sup>20</sup> *Architecture and Culture*, vol.2, no. 3/ 2014, Bloomsbury

<sup>21</sup> from the *Architecture and Culture* 2014 special issue's call for papers.

<sup>22</sup> Bruno G. (1997) *op cit*, p.66



everydayness. And, while architects focus on drawing parallels between filmmaking and how they design buildings, or how they think their buildings should be perceived, the moving images that form a film - and especially auteur films - are born out of an experience which the director himself had previously had. Whether dwelling phenomena are or are not a part of the cinematic narrative, space is intrinsically linked with the very nature of film. This renders film capable of grasping and representing on a simple flat surface those architectural experiences "poetically" stirred through dwelling, experiences which architects may sometimes overlook.



Image 1.1 - scene from Andrei Tarkovsky's 1975 *Mirror* (Zerkalo)

*The architecture of cinema utilizes the entire range of emotions, and the touching architecture of Tarkovsky's films, for instance, could encourage architects to expand the emotional contents of their spaces, designed to be actually dwelled and lived in<sup>23</sup>.*

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<sup>23</sup> Pallasmaa J. (2001) *The Architecture of Image. Existential space in cinema*, Helsinki: Rakennustieto, p. 35

This approach to understanding cinema experientially in relation to architecture was proposed and elaborated by the architect and theoretician Juhani Pallasmaa mainly in his 2001 work *The Architecture of Image. Existential space in cinema*<sup>24</sup>. He says: "I realized that experiential images of space and place are contained in practically all films, and that the most powerful cinematic architecture is usually concealed in the representation of normal events, not in the specific exposition of buildings and spaces of exceptional architectural merit."<sup>25</sup> Pallasmaa's interpretation implies that emotions, memory and dreams are an essential part of the process of constructing the transient architectures of cinema: "I am interested in the ways cinema constructs spaces in the mind, creates mind-spaces, thus reflecting the ephemeral architecture of the human mind, thought and emotion. The mental task of buildings and cities is to structure our being-in-the-world and to articulate the surface between the experiencing self and the world. But doesn't the film director do exactly the same with his projected images?"<sup>26</sup> Understood experientially, film's relationship to the architecture it portrays becomes phenomenological: "all artists, including film directors, are phenomenologists in the sense that they present things as if they were objects of human observation for the first time."<sup>27</sup> In line with the phenomenological notions, even the most common settings can become the object of wonder, and in thinking thus, Pallasmaa comes close to notable film theorists<sup>28</sup>, in whose views, film, rather than architecture, "is equipped to sensitise us, by way of big close-ups, to the possibilities that lie dormant [in inanimate objects]: a hat, a chair, a hand."<sup>29</sup> These theorists, as opposed to the architects of spectacular movie sets of early modernist years, considered everyday surroundings and objects to be the most abundant in meanings to be explored, whereas according to Siegfried Kracauer, "films in which the inanimate merely serves as a background to self-contained dialogue and the closed circuit of human relationships are essentially uncinematic."<sup>30</sup> And, as Pallasmaa states, it is precisely the experiential quality engrained within the cinematic image of architecture which articulates and gives significance to the language of everyday objects. "All filmmakers can, if they choose, make you look at buildings and spaces for so long that you begin to understand them in a different way."<sup>31</sup>

Tarkovsky and Bergman, the two directors which stand at the core of this research, are part of a category of filmmakers who do indeed follow this approach, and who, apart from using long takes and a certain slowness in the overall unfolding of the film, seem to have an acute sensitivity to architecture in its "experiential reality"<sup>32</sup>. Among other prominent directors of this particular category, Wim Wenders, Patrick Keiller and Michelangelo Frammartino are relevant to this discussion as contemporary filmmakers whose experiential understanding of architecture pervades their moving images. Wim Wenders (b. 1945), well known German filmmaker and author of books bearing titles such as

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<sup>24</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (2001) *op cit*, p. 35

<sup>25</sup> *idem*, p. 7

<sup>26</sup> *idem*, p. 17

<sup>27</sup> *idem*, p.21

<sup>28</sup> mainly Siegfried Kracauer (1889-1977), who was educated in Architecture and practiced architecture for several years before starting work as journalist and then turning to writing influential theories on memory and film; and André Bazin (1918-1958), one of the most prominent early film theorists and co-founder of the magazine *Cahiers du cinéma*

<sup>29</sup> Fernand Léger, quoted in Kracauer, S. (1960) *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, Oxford Univ. Press, p. 45

<sup>30</sup> Kracauer, S. *op cit*, p. 46

<sup>31</sup> Rattenbury, K. (1994) *op cit*, p. 36

<sup>32</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (2001), *op cit*, p. 21

*The Act of Seeing* or *The Logic of Images*, speaks of the two essentially different approaches which can be at work in filmmaking: telling a story, or else, telling a place<sup>33</sup>, and elaborates on the hardships to acquire the latter. Recently, maybe in a radical attempt to grasp this sense of place, he co-authored, together with other 5 directors, *Cathedrals of Culture* (2014), a movie described by him as "a 3D film project about the soul of the buildings". Whether the project succeeded or not in voicing this "soul", it constitutes a telling example of filmmakers experiencing and mentally inhabiting architecture. Patrick Keiller (b. 1950), British filmmaker with a background in architecture, films as if writing an eulogy to everydayness, capturing its spatio-temporal decay. For him, film gives "permanence to subjectivity", but at the same time it can be a form of spatial critique: "*I would like to suggest that film space can offer an implicit critique of actual space, so that looking at and researching films can constitute a kind of architectural criticism. I would also suggest that one can make films (and I suppose I would claim to have done so) that set out to criticise architectural space rather than simply depict it (which, given the marked differences between film space and actual architecture, is much more difficult).*"<sup>34</sup> For Michelangelo Frammartino (b. 1968), an Italian architect who turned to film art through the reinvented spatiality of video installations, film is also a manifestation of criticism: "*I feel the loss of the bond between man and the world so profoundly that finding it again has become my daily obsession: an urgency I see more clearly in interactive exhibitions than movies. So, you may consider my work as an effort towards this aim. Obviously, this 'bond' is what I try to evoke in each spectator's mind and attitude, because I want to affect this merger with 'the thing-in-itself', the world.*"<sup>35</sup> His movies portray the life of Calabrian countryside, explored experientially with the clarity and simplicity of a gaze that unveils ever new realities, by just looking with rediscovered freshness at built and natural elements.



Image 1.2 - stills from Michelangelo Frammartino's 2010 film *The Four Times* (Le Quattro Volte)

To conclude, the fact that architecture and film mutually influence each other is in itself a door open to a multitude of approaches and debates, an open door that leaves us guessing. Seeking to fully resume these debates within an overarching definition would not be a solution, but a closing of this door. In the present study, this door will open with an experiential, phenomenological key, as stated by Sobchack: "*the film experience uniquely opens up and exposes the inhabited space of direct experience as a condition of singular embodiment and makes it accessible and visible to more than a single consciousness who lives it.*"<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Wim Wenders, *A Sense of Place*, a talk at Princeton University, 2001

<sup>34</sup> Keiller, P. (2013) *The View from the Train: Cities and Other Landscapes*, London: Verso

<sup>35</sup> Pulsoni, G. (2011) *To Believe in this world, an interview with Michelangelo Frammartino*, *Experimental Conversations*, issue nr. 8

<sup>36</sup> Sobchack, V. (1991) *The Address of the Eye. A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton University Press, p.9



**Image 1.3** - stills from Ingmar Bergman's 1961 film *Through a Glass Darkly* (*Såsom i en Spegel*), his first film shot on Fårö

## ARCHITECTURE AND PHENOMENOLOGY: OPENING AN OPEN DOOR

The enquiry field of this current thesis is the phenomenology of home, as revealed through filmic art. The attempt to "read" a film in terms of appearing experiences of home-ness is an operation worthy of phenomenological enquiry, since phenomenology is a return to *phenomena*. As will be detailed later, at the beginning of the phenomenological movement, these *phenomena* were defined as "what appears *as such*": everything that appears, in the *manner* of its appearing, in the *how* of its appearance.

The understanding this study gives to the term *phenomenology*, situates itself on the fragile contours delineated as *architectural phenomenology*, in the areas of sensing/ experiencing, remembering/ distorting, communicating/ imagining the space of home. The study explores phenomenology by dwelling upon the virtual territories of film as a means of visually decoding these ineffable conceptual categories termed as the "*moving images of home*". What this thesis calls "*moving images of home*" are not mere depictions of familiar spaces, but hypostases of these images in which sensorial perception is interwoven with memories and emotional associations. Taking into account film's capacity of making visible the invisible - "*the motion picture camera has a way of disintegrating familiar objects and bringing to the fore – often just in moving about – previously invisible interrelationships between parts of them*"<sup>37</sup> - the study considers cinematic representations as a transparent medium through which the sense of home is rendered legible, in an experiential/ associative unity. Or, as comprehensively phrased by Ingmar Bergman:

*I can still roam through the landscape of my childhood and again experience lights, smells, people, rooms, moments, gestures, tones of voice and objects. These memories seldom have any particular meaning, but are like short or longer films with no point, shot at random*<sup>38</sup>.

In this context, the space of the childhood home is seen as a spatial experiential matrix, to which all later understandings of places relate. Viewed through the lens of autobiographical film, this sense of home, of the familiar, traces a movement from body to space, with all its intricate nuances, a movement reflecting the fundamentals of architectural phenomenology.

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<sup>37</sup> Kracauer, S. *op cit*, p. 54

<sup>38</sup> LM, p. 17; see page 124 for biographical context

*Thus, we need a "phenomenology from within",  
a phenomenology that opens the door and enters inside<sup>39</sup>.*



**Image 1.3** - scene from Andrei Tarkovsky's 1975 *Mirror* (Zerkalo)

The possibility that film can open up and expose "the inhabited space of direct experience" is an attribute worth exploring from an architectural perspective. In this context, instead of offering a comprehensive literature review of the scholarship, theory and concepts of architectural phenomenology (an effort brilliantly attempted in various books<sup>40</sup> and journals<sup>41</sup>), this thesis section will aim to concisely deliver a review of the main phenomenological concepts which have an echo in architectural research; the advances in phenomenology as a spatial research method; and the positions registered by developments in architectural phenomenology over the years, highlighting those which mostly concern the present discussion and revealing those dead ends in the discourse where autobiographical film as a research tool could breathe new life into.

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<sup>39</sup> Reza-Shirazi, M. (2014) *Towards an Articulated Phenomenological Interpretation of Architecture: Phenomenal Phenomenology*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 65

<sup>40</sup> Reza-Shirazi's 2014 book, *Towards an Articulated Phenomenological Interpretation of Architecture*, proves to be, to this date, the best asserted compendium on the topic, reviewing the advances, the potential and the shortcomings of architectural phenomenology as developed over almost half a century, including suggestions for future developments

<sup>41</sup> edited by David Seamon, the journal *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter* has, since 1990, recorded the development of phenomenological research in space/place/architecture scholarship, periodically publishing up-to-date overviews of advances in theory

To start with, the very task of framing and defining architecture's involvement with phenomenology is particularly difficult, due to the alterations which the meaning of the term has suffered when being employed by theorists. It has now become commonplace to consider it as phenomenological approach whenever one architect mentions the slightest interest in how a place is experienced and sensorially perceived, a view incomparably more simplistic than the profoundly spatial foundations of philosophical phenomenology. This section of the chapter will attempt to review some of the core concepts of phenomenology, in light of their potential connection with the experience of home and with the versatilities of film as a representational medium. Therefore, after a brief outline of the movement's emergence and initial aims, the section will continue by presenting these spatially-relevant concepts, belonging to leading exponents of philosophy such as Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1976), Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1996) and Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005). Architectural phenomenology has already consecrated Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty as influential; however, the present study claims that re-contextualized, ideas of Husserl, Levinas and Ricoeur display strengths that render them equally applicable in the domain of spatial experience and visual representation. Phenomenology as philosophical movement has evolved and flourished over the decades, and as such, critical readings and updated reinterpretations have constantly appeared, aiming to clarify or rectify some concepts which had previously been left ambiguous. Such a restoration would therefore be equally purposeful for notions of architectural phenomenology.

*Fundamentally, phenomenology is born as soon as we treat  
the manner of appearing of things as a separate problem<sup>42</sup>*  
(Paul Ricoeur)

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<sup>42</sup>Ricoeur, P. (1987) *Esprit XXI*, Paris: Seuil, p. 82, quoted and translated into English by Herbert Spiegelberg in *The Phenomenological Movement*



Image 1.4 - scene from Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 *Solaris* (Solyaris)

### Looking into Phenomenology

The word *phenomenology* was first used in the 1764 *Novus Organon* by Johann Heinrich Lambert<sup>43</sup>. The term is based on the word *phenomenon*, originating from the Ancient Greek φαίνόμενον, which was defined as either "to appear luminously" or as any "aspect of the natural world"; in time, *phenomenon* has most commonly been accepted and used as "appearance". Lambert had published *Photometria* in 1760, a book in which he discusses problems of optics resulted from a series of originally devised experiments. From these studies of light reflected on the surface of things, Lambert proceeds to transfer his findings from physics into philosophy, in *Novus Organon*. It is not a mere coincidence that Lambert, who had been persistently contemplating things in order to unveil something of the nature of light and of sight, later introduced a term as *phenomenology* to be a doctrine of appearances, which allows us to proceed from appearances to truth, just as optics studies perspective in order to deduce true features of the object seen. Therefore, almost 150 years before Husserl defined phenomenology as a "viewing of essences", Lambert had already announced the profound interconnectedness between this particular philosophy and the sense of sight, of appearances. Later on, in 1889, Franz Brentano<sup>44</sup> made use of the term *phenomenology*, inspired by a physicist friend, Ernst Mach<sup>45</sup>, who proposed "a general physical phenomenology", a description of our experiences of physical phenomena. Brentano's work and understanding of phenomenology set the premises for what Husserl later defined as *intentionality*, "the doctrine that every mental act is related to some object"<sup>46</sup>, which, in turn, becomes an in-dwelling, mentally immanent object. Brentano's contribution to the becoming of this term takes on from Lambert's previous work, coming closer to the present understanding of *phenomenology*, rather than to the way that, previously, Hegel<sup>47</sup> had

<sup>43</sup> Johann Heinrich Lambert (1728 –1777), Swiss scientist, who had particularly important contributions in mathematics, optics studies in physics, philosophy, astronomy and map projections

<sup>44</sup> Franz Clemens Honoratus Hermann Brentano (1838 -1917), influential German philosopher and psychologist

<sup>45</sup> Ernst Waldfried Josef Wenzel Mach (1838 - 1916), Austrian physicist and philosopher of science

<sup>46</sup> Moran, D. (2002) *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London: Routledge, p. 41

<sup>47</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 - 1831), German philosopher, founder of *Idealism* current of thought



employed it in his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where it referred to the realm of metaphysics and absolute idealism, not to the immediate world "as we see it".

It was only in the beginning of 20th century that Edmund Husserl<sup>48</sup> adopted the term once again and formally announced this new form of philosophy to be a "*set of infinite tasks*"<sup>49</sup>, setting the guiding principles and concepts that later developed into phenomenology as known and, more or less, understood today. Instrumental to the present study, and to the very relevance for architecture of this system of thinking is the fact that phenomenology is grounded in the immediate world, in the meeting between consciousness and the surrounding phenomena in pure acts of perception, thus being intrinsically spatial.

*WHAT is phenomenology?*

*It may seem strange that this question has still to be asked  
half a century after the first works of Husserl.*

*The fact remains that it has by no means been answered. [...]*

*It is the search for a philosophy which shall be a rigorous science,  
but it also offers an account of space, time and the world as we 'live' them<sup>50</sup>.*

(Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1945)

Since its incipient phase, phenomenology has seldom claimed an overarching definition for itself. It is therefore widely accepted that the meaning of phenomenology does not correspond to merely one static definition, but rather to a fluctuating framework within which approaches to inquiry can be fittingly carved. In fact, since Husserl himself introduced the new philosophical approach as "a set of infinite tasks", all encompassed by the aim of studying the "*structures of consciousness, as experienced from the first-person point of view*"<sup>51</sup>, the object of the philosophical current has been to constantly unfold and apply these infinite tasks<sup>52</sup>. If this condition is valid for the philosophical discourse, the application of phenomenological enquiry in architecture has also the potential to continuously develop and tackle the changing conditions of spatiality, virtuality and representation, as they have evolved in time and to embrace the redefined territories of place dynamics in an increasingly visual era. It has been argued that phenomenology has in recent years become restricted to a description of sensory qualities of perceptual fields, but the core of phenomenological tradition has viewed experience as wider in meaning, comprising emotion, cultural context, significance of objects, events, spaces and persons<sup>53</sup> and has termed this construct as the *life-world* of the experiencing self. Husserl formulated this concept toward the end of his lifetime involvement with phenomenology: *life-world* pairs the experience of a phenomenon with the horizon of expectations associated with it and to its perceptual surroundings. This was also

<sup>48</sup> Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl (1859 - 1938) German philosopher, founder of the phenomenological movement and leading figure of the "school of phenomenology" in the Universities of Göttingen and Freiburg

<sup>49</sup> Husserl, E. (2001) *Logical Investigations (1900-01)*. Translated by J.N.Findlay, London:Routledge

<sup>50</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (2005) *Phenomenology of Perception (1st ed. 1945)*, London: Routledge, pg. vii

<sup>51</sup> Smith, D. W. (2013) "Phenomenology", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/phenomenology (accessed October 2014)

<sup>52</sup> "*Though there are a number of themes which characterize phenomenology in general, it never developed a set of dogmas or sedimented into a system; it claims, first and foremost, to be a radical way of doing philosophy, a practice rather than a system*" - Moran, D. (2000), *Introduction to Phenomenology*, London: Routledge, pg.4

<sup>53</sup> Smith, D. W. (2013), *op cit*

the ground for Heidegger's later concept of *being-in-the-world*; arguably, the life-world is also one of the most spatial and architecturally-relevant aspects of phenomenology, and one apt for constant update and redefinition. It was also from this perspective that Christian Norberg-Schulz, the notable architectural theorist, first noticed phenomenology's potential to grasp complexities of architectural experience<sup>54</sup>: "*phenomenology appeared to me as a method well suited to penetrate the world of everyday existence, since architecture is in fact at the service of totality, which the term life-world implies, a totality that eludes scientific procedure.*"<sup>55</sup>

### Phenomenological concepts and their reading in a spatially-visual context

It is not the ambition of this chapter to provide valid definitions for phenomenology, in either philosophy or architectural theory, but rather to list some of the spatially relevant concepts developed by Edmund Husserl at the beginning of the phenomenological movement, and to trace their potential if applied on the terrain of architectural experience and its representation in film - *phenomenography*, as understood in this thesis. Rereading Husserl's initial ideas in this context does not therefore cement these terms as exclusive definitions, but merely sets out the framework for practicing phenomenological enquiry in this domain.

To start with, the charm of phenomenology was that, after an era of philosophy abstractly based on either sciences or on idealism, it promised "*reviving our living contact with reality. [...] In particular, the program of phenomenology thought to reinvigorate philosophy by returning it to the life of the living human subject.*"<sup>56</sup> As such, an increasing focus was put on the encounter of the living consciousness with the surrounding world: through experience, perception and appearances of phenomena.

*Juxtaposing a person with an environment that is boundless,  
[...] relating a person to the whole world:  
that is the meaning of cinema*<sup>57</sup>.

**APPEARANCE** The Greek word φαινόμενον/*phenomenon* has been translated either as "that which appears" or "appearance". This duplicity has given rise to lengthy debates, since from phenomenology's point of view there is an inherent contradiction between these two terms, a distinction between depth (the essence, that which appears) and surface (the appearance itself). For Husserl, the appearance as such was not something consistent, but was considered as a gateway to the truth of that which appears: "*These appearances neither are nor*

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<sup>54</sup> Norberg-Schulz had already written about the ontological dimensions of architecture in his previous books, such as *Existence, Space and Architecture* (1971), before becoming more acquainted with the writings of phenomenologists, and especially of Martin Heidegger's writings on architecture gathered as essays in *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* (1951) and *Poetically Man Dwells* (1951)

<sup>55</sup> Norberg-Schulz, C. (2000) *Architecture: Presence, Language, Space*, Milan: Akira, pg. 15

<sup>56</sup> Moran, D. *op cit*, p. 5

<sup>57</sup> ST, p. 66

*genuinely contain the objects themselves. Rather in their shifting and remarkable structure they create objects in a certain way.*"<sup>58</sup>



**Image 1.5** - The trace of familiarity in Sune Jonsson's "environmental studies" photographs; Hunneberg 1961 (see pp.91-93 for more on Jonsson)

The debate around the nature of appearance and that which appears gains further weight when considering the visual representation of inhabited place. Thus, the implications are manifold concerning the depth of the relationship between image, moving image and the lived architecture represented as such. In the case of static images of architecture, theories tend to focus on the lack of ability to inhabit these slices of time and of space contained in the representation, which thus fail to contain within themselves the very essence of place that can be dwelled in. Other theories<sup>59</sup> pertain to the idea that the experience of a place can be communicated through simple images, either filmed, painted, photographed, drawn, spoken or written<sup>60</sup>, if the act of having lived within that precise space persists within the image as a familiarity, a nearness, a trace of lived space. This familiarity,

nearness, or trace, is thus the appearance of the phenomenon

represented. *"The trace is the appearance of a nearness, however far removed the thing that left it behind may be"*.<sup>61</sup> Likewise, if we consider that *"familiarity and intimacy are produced as a gentleness that spreads over the face of things"*<sup>62</sup>, images could become a medium for transmitting this gentleness, a direct imprinted appearance of the familiarity of lived space. In such cases, the appearance - the visual image, in the present discussion - turns from a thin surface into a thickness which contains the experience of place.

<sup>58</sup> Husserl, E. (1990) *The Idea of Phenomenology*. Translated by W. P. Alston and G. Nakhnikian. Husserliana 1958. Dordrecht/ Boston/ London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, p. 56

<sup>59</sup> Pink, S. (2009) *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, London: SAGE; MacDougall, D. (2011) Anthropological Filmmaking: An Empirical Art, pp. 99-114, in Margolis, E. and Pauwels L. (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook Visual Research Methods*, London: SAGE

<sup>60</sup> similarly, metaphors are linguistic condensations of what lingers in the mind after directly experiencing a phenomenon

<sup>61</sup> Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project* (1927) Edited by R. Tiedemann, Harvard University Press, p. 447

<sup>62</sup> Levinas, E. (1979) *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 155

**MODES OF GIVENNESS** Closely related to the ambiguous notion of appearance is the understanding that one single phenomenon may appear in a multitude of ways, or rather "modes of givenness". Paired with this variety of forms of appearing which a unique phenomenon might have, is an equally diverse range of "modes of seeing/apprehending". This diversification in both the ways in which a phenomenon appears and those in which it is grasped and apprehended by the consciousness signals once more the inherent separation between the appearance and the phenomenon itself. Drawing on Husserl's simile of the tree, which appears at times motionless, at other times stirred by the wind, Heidegger points out that "[originally phenomenon meant] to show itself, to become manifest, [therefore] an entity can show itself in many ways, depending in each case on the kind of access we have to it"<sup>63</sup>, the importance of the position in which the experiencing subject situates itself in regard to the appearance of the phenomenon experienced, and the openness towards possibility, as a precondition of phenomenological understanding.

In the case of film depicting lived space, despite the quintessential difference between the appearance (the film) and the phenomenon (the experience of place), between surface and essence, the modes of givenness, as well as modes of apprehending, coincide to a high degree. A house appears to us in a variety of angles and views as we move through it and perceive it through our senses. In film, we can see the light moving within space, cold or warm, we can ourselves move from room to room, we hear the floors squeaking, the noises from the outside coming in, defining distances and depths. Synaesthetic and sensory theories of film claim that the full range of senses can be activated through the simple act of viewing<sup>64</sup>, as the audio-visual depiction of place has the capacity to trigger senses of touch that had been previously experienced and have remained associated in the memory. "Through the address of our own vision, we speak back to the cinematic expression before us, using a visual language that is also tactile, that takes hold of and actively grasps the perceptual expression."<sup>65</sup>

*When the screen brings the real world to the audience, the world as it actually is, so that it can be seen in depth and from all sides, evoking its very smell, allowing audiences to feel on their skin its moisture or its dryness - it seems that the cinema-goer has so lost the capacity simply to surrender to an immediate, emotional aesthetic impression, that he instantly has to check himself, and ask: "Why? What for? What's the point?" The answer is that I want to create my own world on the screen, in its ideal and most perfect form, as I myself feel it and see it<sup>66</sup>.*

**PERCEPTION** The discussion is already drawing near the question of perception, which stands at the very core of phenomenological enquiry, understood varyingly as either cognitive or as bodily perception. A clear distinction was made in phenomenology between "presentation" - referring to what is given in direct perception, and "representation" - that which is given indirectly, through memory, imagination, or through any works of art. The

<sup>63</sup> Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time* (1927) Translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, p. 51

<sup>64</sup> Marks, L. (2000) *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*. Durham, US: Duke University Press; Marker, J. (2009) *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*. Oakland: University of California Press

<sup>65</sup> Sobchack, V. (1991) *op cit*, p. 9

<sup>66</sup> ST, pp. 212-213

question of image in perception, memory, imagination and painting holds an important place in Husserl's university lectures from 1905-1906, just at the time when he was perfecting the framework for his later elaborate discourses on phenomenology. Later on, the problematic of perception was lengthily exposed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in his 1945 important work *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Ponty succeeds in elaborating Husserl's previous thoughts and developing a meaningful construct in which presentation and representation, perception and memory, are coherently interconnected: "*the real problem of memory in perception arises in association with the general problem of perceptual consciousness. We want to know how, by its own vitality and without carrying complementary material into a mythical unconscious, consciousness can, in course of time, modify the structure of its surroundings; how, at every moment, its former experience is present to it in the form of a horizon which it can reopen [...] in an act of recollection, but which it can equally leave on the fringe of experience, and which then immediately provides the perceived with a present atmosphere and significance. A field which is always at the disposal of consciousness and one which, for that very reason, surrounds and envelops its perceptions, an atmosphere, a horizon or, if you will, given 'sets' which provide it with a temporal situation, such is the way in which the past is present, making distinct acts of perception and recollection possible.*"<sup>67</sup>

Merleau-Ponty's understanding of memory as lingering "sets" which envelop consciousness and allow it to retrace perceptions of the past bridges smoothly the discussion back to the cinematic representations of lived places. What he used as a metaphor to describe processes happening within consciousness itself is actually the very basis for considering cinema apt to trigger those mechanisms that "reopen the horizon" of lived space, as remembered. Moving from film set to film set and stitching them together through careful editing, the film making process constructs a certain association of perception which may evoke varying memories, reopen varying horizons, in those who watch it. One mere detail of the film set achieves so strongly a sense of atmosphere, that viewers might unknowingly associate that atmosphere with spaces they had themselves previously felt in their sensorial fullness. Despite operating with audio-visual cues, "*the film experience is a system of communication based on bodily perception as a vehicle of conscious expression. It entails the visible, audible, kinetic aspects of sensible experience to make sense visibly, audibly, and haptically. The film experience not only represents and reflects upon the prior direct perceptual experience of the filmmaker by means of the modes and structures of direct and reflective perceptual experience, but also presents the direct and reflective experience of a perceptual and expressive existence as a film.*"<sup>68</sup>

*Of course memory has to be worked upon before it can become the basis of an artistic reconstruction of the past; and here it is important not to lose the particular emotional atmosphere without which a memory evoked in every detail merely gives rise to a bitter feeling of disappointment*<sup>69</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (2005) *op cit*, pp. 25-26

<sup>68</sup> Sobchack, V. (1991) *op cit*, p. 9

<sup>69</sup> ST, p. 29

**HORIZON** Already mentioned in Merleau-Ponty's account of the interconnectedness between perception, surroundings and the persistence of memory, the idea of a perceptual "horizon" had first been noticed by Husserl, who defined it as containing "*those aspects not given in perception, but possibilities which can be given in further acts of perception and reflection. [...] The horizon maps out a set of expectations and seeks confirmations consistent with the original given in the experience.*"<sup>70</sup> For Husserl, the horizon of expectations and possibilities, overlapped onto the perceptual surroundings, constructed that which he called *Lebenswelt*, the "life-world", a notion which Merleau-Ponty considered to be the main theme of phenomenology. As proposed by Husserl, the "life-world" was a development of the earlier concept of "intentionality", a term brought forth by Franz Brentano and a precursor of phenomenology. In views of Brentano - and later of Husserl - intentionality comprises of intending acts and intending objects, or rather, of the experiencing person and the experienced world. Through the notion of intentionality, phenomenology applied in human sciences, for instance, would face a double task: that of knowing the person as the centre of his own world, and that of knowing the world of which he is the focal centre.<sup>71</sup>

After Husserl, the term has been broadly reclaimed and particularities were introduced, expressing each thinker's ever new ways of situating oneself in respect to the "life-world". Merleau-Ponty considered the perceptual horizon to be made out of so-called "horizontal layers", perceptual axes which intersect in the point which was central to his philosophical approach: corporeality. For him, "*everything I see is in principle within my reach, at least within reach of my sight, and is marked upon the map of the I can.*"<sup>72</sup> The lines of possibility constructing the horizon irradiate, for Ponty, from the body itself. In a different perspective, starting from the same "life-world", Heidegger developed his own concept of "being-in-the-world", ontologically grounded not in the corporeal map of "what I can", but in a rather intellectual map of "how I am"; thus, his "in-worldliness" is not etched upon a perceptual horizon, but rather it is a "horizon of meanings" built upon language.

In its essence, this point, differing from both Merleau-Ponty's ideas and from how Husserl initially understood the "horizon" of the life-world, had stood at the basis of how phenomenology was initially embraced in postmodernist architecture, and probably also one of the reasons for its failure as a theory. Among philosophy circles, such striking differences resulted in some of Heidegger's writings to be considered phenomenology only with considerable reluctance<sup>73</sup>; a review of what phenomenology has come to mean in architecture, and whether this influence was in fact phenomenological or not, would be equally required. However, considering the horizon in the way in which Merleau-Ponty conceived it, as centred on the perceiving body, the artistic image contained in a cinematic representation of place is always an embodied perception - either we see the character

<sup>70</sup> Moran, D. (2000) *op cit*, pp. 161-162

<sup>71</sup> in the present thesis, the alternation between biographical and filmographical references allows for a constant act of balancing intentionality: viewed from a biographical perspective, the study seeks to understand the figure of Andrei Tarkovsky, or that of Ingmar Bergman, as the centre of the spatial worlds around them, or those worlds which they have carried within them. This approach is at work in **Chapter 3**. However, when the discussion shifts focus and looks at the phenomenon of home and the objects therein, as represented throughout the filmography of the two filmmakers, the study is oriented on the world inhabited or created by them. This direction of intentional approach is applied in **Chapter 6**.

<sup>72</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (2007) *Eye and Mind* (1964), pp. 351-378, in T. Toadvine and L. Lawlor (Eds.) *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, St Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, p.354

<sup>73</sup> Spiegelberg, H. (1994) *The Phenomenological Movement*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers

seeing the space, or we see the space directly, through the lens of the camera. In both manners of representation, the body is central in perceiving the space - represented or recalled. Film viewing is not made of the simple direct perception, but coheres in the possibilities which pertain to the act of seeing, by constantly prompting possibilities of perception outside the immediate sphere of the audio-visual image: the mind continuously makes sense of the viewed architecture through how the body could inhabit it. Invisible, but always present, the off-screen space also appears as a latent topological possibility.

*And so there opens up before us the possibility of interaction with infinity, for the great function of the artistic image is to be a kind of detector of infinity ... towards which our reason and our feelings go soaring, with joyful, thrilling haste<sup>74</sup>.*



**Image 1.5** - off-screen space as a latent topological possibility; scenes from Andrei Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia* (1982)

**EPOCHÉ** Epoché<sup>75</sup> - otherwise known as "reduction", "bracketing" - was Husserl's concept proposed as an essential "phenomenological tool". For him, this term meant the suspension of the natural attitude, characterized as a dislocation from the world, an unplugging. The characteristic feature of phenomenological reduction is to constantly move away from naturalistic assumptions about the realities, those assumptions embedded deeply in our everyday behaviour towards objects. Husserl gave much credit to the potential of imaginative explorations in such cases, considering that within an imagined positing of this kind, stripping bare the "perceived thing" from all the characteristics we assume to know about it, one can completely suspend the attitude towards everyday realities and thus, transcending the direct perception, one can gain access to the essence of what is perceived.

A central tool of most phenomenological explorations after Husserl, the process of reduction could be seen to resemble in certain degree the artistic technique proposed by Victor Shklovsky<sup>76</sup> at the beginning of 20th century<sup>77</sup>, and known as "defamiliarization" or "estrangement", a process aimed at delivering not only the work of art to the viewer, but also

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<sup>74</sup> ST, p. 109

<sup>75</sup> *epoché* is a philosophical term, coming from the ancient Greek ἐποχή/ epokhē, literally meaning "suspension"; it was initially employed in skepticism as a theoretical exercise to suspend in one's conscience any belief in the existence of the external world; the term was later consecrated by Husserl as an essentially phenomenological principle

<sup>76</sup> Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), Russian screenwriter, literary and film theorist

<sup>77</sup> in the 1917 essay *Art as Technique*, which spoke about the characteristics of poetry and prose, inspired from Aristotle's views that poetic language must appear "*strange and wonderful*"

a renewed way of perceiving it, by presenting the everyday surroundings of the work of art as unknown. Similar to Husserl's attempt to suspend the natural attitude based on assumptions about the world around us, in order to grasp what is given through perception, Shklovsky states that "*the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.*"<sup>78</sup> Tarkovsky's long takes, the persisting camera gaze and his slow-paced films aim precisely towards a renewal of our blinded sense of perception: "*the channels of our perception have been smoothed out to the point where we are no longer aware.*"<sup>79</sup> Film theorists have insisted precisely on this quality of cinema, to expose the familiar in new, estranged ways, which render them legible to a perception blinded by habit. "*We don't perceive the familiar [...] we just take it for granted, without giving it a thought. Intimate faces, streets we walk day by day, the house we live in, all these things are part of us like a skin and, because we know them by heart, we do not know them with the eye. Once integrated into our existence, they cease to be objects of perceptions. [...] Films make us undergo similar experiences a thousand times. They alienate our environment in exposing it. [...] As the camera pans, curtains become eloquent and eyes tell a story of their own. The way leads toward the unfamiliar in the familiar.*"<sup>80</sup>

Another topic in which phenomenological reduction intersects the present debate is that of displacement and place memory. The two filmmakers taken into consideration often operate on an immaterial spatial territory situated at the edge of nostalgia; in more than a few cases, the artistic impulse to create a film having been stirred precisely by the loss of place, the inability to visit physically a previously known location. In such circumstances, the lost place - the childhood home, in the cases of Bergman and Tarkovsky - is usually undergoing an automatic process of phenomenological reduction in the creative mind of the autobiographical filmmaker. In memories, as direct, blinded perception is no longer available, the debris of natural assumptions about the object of the house are fading one by one, while there is a growing clarity in perceiving the essence of what made that house a home and what constitutes the phenomenon of dwelling therein. As the biographies of both filmmakers will reveal, the sense of loss, of nostalgia, of homesickness, acted as a sort of inner refinement of that spatial recollection, leading to a conclusive, "epochéd" cinematic image of home. Moreover, film theorists would argue that such ineffable states as longing for home, or the essence of an absent place, can be coherently communicated through cinema, a language system which "*maintains the presentness of the world by accepting our absence from it*"<sup>81</sup>, incorporating absence as a pre-condition of communication.

The phenomenological concepts of Appearance, Modes of Givenness, Perception, Horizon, Life-World, Reduction will pervade indirectly throughout the subsequent writings.

<sup>78</sup> Shklovskij, V. (1998) "Art as Technique" (published 1917), in J. Rivkin and M. Ryan (Eds.) *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, p. 16

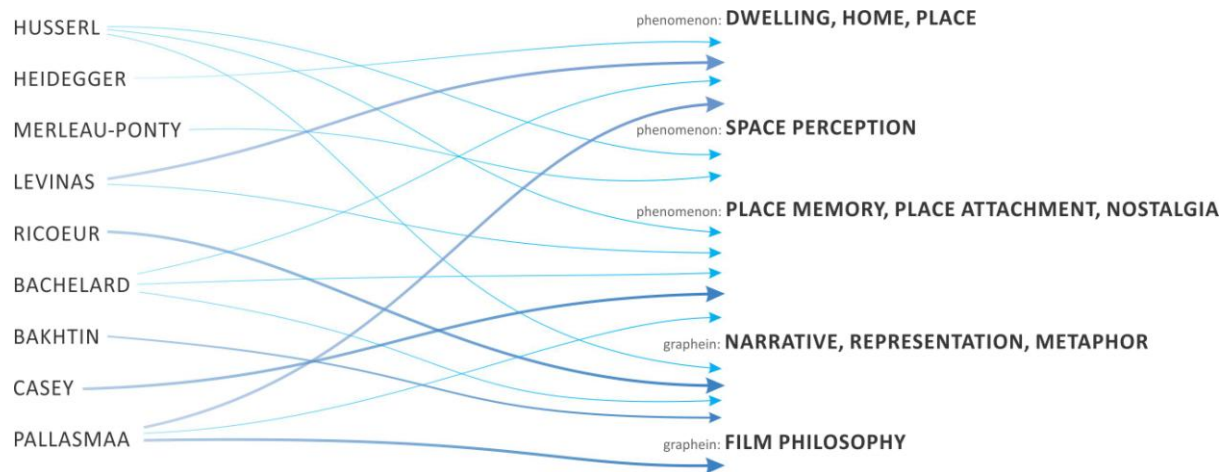
<sup>79</sup> Tarkovsky's diary entry for 1 September 1970, quoting the words of a certain Mathematics professor, Manin, in a debate about why Tarkovsky's 1966 film *Rublev* had to have the unbearable length of three hours

<sup>80</sup> Kracauer, S. (1960) *op cit*, pp. 54-55

<sup>81</sup> Cavell, S. (1979) *The world viewed: Reflections on the ontology of film*, Harvard University Press, p. 23



Chapter 2 and 4 aim to capture some of the main spatially-relevant phenomenological concepts put forth from Husserl until Pallasmaa, as summarized in **Image 1.6**, where these ideas will be organized according to the major themes explored by this present thesis, as phenomenological grains from which further phenomenographic themes will stem<sup>82</sup>.



**Image 1.6** - Mapping out the domain of spatially-relevant phenomenological contributions, as expanded in Chapter 2 and 4

### Architects and Phenomenology<sup>83</sup>

As mentioned, a strong aim of this thesis is to propose an alternative to architectural phenomenology, a method redefined as *phenomenography*, that captures the way in which spatial experiences are written, in this case through film. A crucial step towards achieving this is to first review some of the main currents and ideas that have shaped architectural phenomenology so far. Phenomenology found its way into architectural theory through the writings of Christian Norberg-Schulz. Enthralled by Heidegger's interpretations of dwelling, place, space and being-in-the world which point towards an ontological meaning of architecture, Norberg-Schulz admittedly found in Heidegger a catalyst for his own thinking and for the elaboration of his notion of *genius loci*. Resulted from previous explorations of places understood as a sum of their meanings to people<sup>84</sup>, his *genius loci* came to be described as "representing the sense people have of a place, understood as the sum of all physical as well as symbolic values in nature and the human environment"<sup>85</sup>, with strong influences from Heidegger's *Stimmung*, the atmosphere that defines places. Despite the ambition, *genius loci* as treated by Norberg-Schulz through numerous pertinent case studies remained at the level of territory and of the cityscape.

One of the points that lie at the core of how architecture theory, through Norberg-Schulz, initially embraced phenomenology was that "the etymological study of the world

<sup>82</sup> some of these thinkers have substantial contributions in other areas of philosophy; however, this thesis singles out their involvement with issues relevant to the topic of spatiality, perception, representation, home-ness

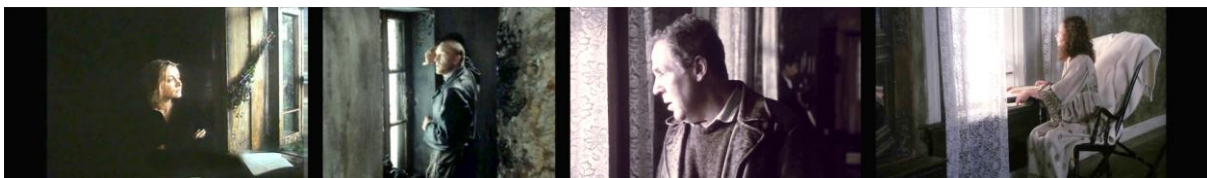
<sup>83</sup> this section is mainly adapted on a review of Reza-Shirazi, M (2014) *op cit*

<sup>84</sup> in this way, Norberg-Schulz neglects the perceptual horizon of the Husserlian life-world and leans more towards the horizon of meanings developed by Heidegger; architecturally, the gap in his theory could be filled if a reconsidered definition of the life-world, as understood by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, would be introduced as ingredient of *genius loci*

<sup>85</sup> Jiven, G. and Larkham P. (2003) *Sense of Place, Authenticity and Character: A commentary*, pp. 67-81, Journal of Urban Design, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 70

<dwelling>, as Heidegger remarks, shows that <dwelling means to gather the world as a concrete building or <thing>."<sup>86</sup> In this regard, the main opposition which the present thesis brings is based on the fact that, referring to an etymological study and focusing on language-based interpretations of dwelling notions, there is an embedded error, by considering the characteristics which pertain to dwelling in a language and to a culture to be universally applicable to other languages and other cultures as well. Since the present thesis is focused on two artists belonging to two cultures different from the German one, the exploration started from enquiring, just as Heidegger did, what lies beneath the words "space", "place", "to dwell", but this time in Swedish and Russian, afterwards expanding the language palette. These conclusions will be given in chapters 2 and 4. Despite the frequently signalled gaps in his theory, Norberg-Schulz's major contribution was to bring a phenomenological perspective in architectural theory, as well as to bring architectural notions in the spotlight of phenomenological enquiry: "so far, phenomenologists have been concerned with ontology, psychology, ethics and to some extent aesthetics, and have given relatively little attention to the phenomenology of daily environment"<sup>87</sup>, an observation with fruitful effects since the time it was uttered, in 1980, as space-place phenomenological studies have significantly flourished, becoming an independent field. After Norberg-Schulz, architects have strived to attune the phenomenological approaches to a more comprehensive notion of architectural experience, building on Merleau-Ponty's concepts and shifting from the hegemony of ocular vision to bodily perception, such as expressed in the phenomenologies of Steven Holl and Juhani Pallasmaa, or through embedding the case of the phenomenologically explored building in its socio-cultural context, such as the phenomenology of Kenneth Frampton. Closest to the viewpoint of this thesis are the writings of Juhani Pallasmaa, both with theories about dwelling and his views on the multisensory perception of architecture. Other essential features of his phenomenology are the attention given to the existential space of cinema (briefly presented earlier in this chapter) and to the verbal experiencing of space, as opposed to the noun experience, both of which constituted strong motivations for pursuing this research into the features of an architectural phenomenography.

*Authentic architectural experiences consist, then, for instance, of approaching or confronting a building, rather than the formal apprehension of the facade; of the act of entering, and not simply the frame of the door; of looking through the window, rather than the window itself; or occupying the sphere of warmth, rather than the fireplace as a visual object*<sup>88</sup>.



**Image 1.7** - The act of looking through the window, a selection of frames from several Tarkovsky films (from left to right): 1. *Mirror* (1975), 2. *Stalker* (1978), 3. and 4. *Sacrifice* (1985)

<sup>86</sup> Norberg-Schulz, C. (1980), *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, New York: Rizzoli, p. 23

<sup>87</sup> idem, p. 8

<sup>88</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (1996) *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, London: Academy Editions, p. 45

## Shortcomings in Architectural Phenomenology<sup>89</sup> and cinematic response

After compiling the review of advances in architectural phenomenology up to the present state, Reza-Shirazi moves on to summarize the localized failures which the movement has so far recorded, stating that *"any new development in this discourse should undoubtedly take as a departure point its considerable attributes, while at the same time bearing in mind its various shortcomings, with the aim of improving them."*<sup>90</sup>

1) Analyzing Norberg-Schulz's phenomenology and concept of *genius loci*, M. Reza Shirazi characterizes them as *"a kind of phenomenology from without. They rarely knock on the door and enter inside. [...] Genius loci is mostly aerial. To use cinematic terminology, it uses long shots, not close-ups. It understands architecture from above, and seldom takes to the ground."*<sup>91</sup> However, he acknowledges the strength of the concept and critiques not the validity of the *genius loci*, but only the application which remains external: *"the concept of the genius loci does indeed possess a capacity to go inside buildings and analyse their interior. All the themes and concerns considered as constituent elements of genius loci can also be applied to what goes on within the buildings, to their interior spaces, materials, walls, roofs."*<sup>92</sup> The external phenomenological approach to architecture was not just a feature restricted to the writings of Norberg-Schulz, but constituted a pattern recurring in later analyses, and it is thus noticed by Reza-Shirazi as one of the five major shortcomings he identifies in architectural phenomenology: *"phenomenological readings remain readings from a distance, from the gaze of an observer who stands outside the building and takes a selective view. This "long shot" interpretation lacks any intimacy, seldom touches upon individual elements, and does not concern itself with details. It does not experience the interior and the interior-exterior relationship remains unexplored."*<sup>93</sup> The measure he proposes in order to overcome this shortcoming is that when a phenomenologist conceptually approaches the mental concept of a house, he should *"knock on the door, enter into the interior, traverse its different spaces, give attention to its elements and details, and consider the work as a whole."*<sup>94</sup>

**Cinematic response:** The cinematic terminology employed by Shirazi brings the debate in the position from where this thesis wishes to tackle some of the shortcomings existing in architectural phenomenology. As such, from the very beginning of this study, the phenomenological quest on notions of dwelling and home are based on the familiarity which the filmmakers already have with the interior of the cinematically represented houses. On the autobiographical grounds of this a-priori familiarity, the exploration of the house's interiority as expressed in the film image, through the close-ups that linger through rooms and crosses internal thresholds from space to space, encounters the descriptive presence of colours, textures, lights, materialities, attentively designed and arranged to correspond the author's sense of home. The visual descriptive presence is verbally doubled

<sup>89</sup> as the previous sections, the shortcomings and the proposed measures presented here are based on a review of M. Reza-Shirazi's book; they constitute the ground on which the cinematic re-conceptualizations are proposed, as areas in which the present study to situate itself

<sup>90</sup> Reza-Shirazi, M. (2014) *op cit*, p. 113

<sup>91</sup> *idem*, p. 58

<sup>92</sup> *idem*, p. 64

<sup>93</sup> *idem*, p. 114

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*

in the autobiographical writings where interiors are described in their detailed experiential reality, with accounts of sounds coming from the outside, movements of light on the objects in the room, doors squeaking, etc.

2) Reza-Shirazi brings to the fore one problem which persists throughout many phenomenological analyses, a fragmentary interpretation, ambitiously discussing a multitude of case studies, without properly inhabiting and describing any one building fully: "*not a comprehensive interpretation of a given work, but fragmentary interpretations of different works in order to show and illustrate a preformulated theme.*"<sup>95</sup> His proposed measure is to devise a "*phenomenology that considers the work as a whole and leads to a comprehensive interpretation in which - as far as possible - all phenomenological concerns are questioned and engaged with.*"<sup>96</sup>

**Cinematic response:** In the case of the present study, each house descriptively represented through film can be explored as whole: from location to architectural elements and layout to the verbal accounts of perceptions and memories of the artist who had experienced it or of the fictional character that inhabits it within the film. This peculiar situation is due to the autobiographical nature of the works taken into consideration, to the biographical information available about both authors and to the fact that the places are within physical reach. Moreover, the particular contexts of Bergman and Tarkovsky allow for a comprehensive exploration of home as a generic phenomenon throughout their works.

3) One of the crucial improvements brought to architectural phenomenology after Norberg-Schulz was to include the embodied perspective as the centre of perceiving space, a theory directly developed from Merleau-Ponty's writings. However, Reza-Shirazi observes that while most of the post-Norberg-Schulz phenomenologists emphasize the role of the body in perceiving space, when they set to elaborate their phenomenological interpretations of particular works of architecture, the role of the body is reduced to a "static body" that is frozen in particular privileged positions within the work, rather than a "mobile body" which traverses it. His proposed measure is to devise a phenomenology incorporating movement in its treatment of space perception. "*A work of architecture is perceived through our existential body in motion; it walks through the various spaces and presents a lived experience. Our moving body links perception to time and leads to a comprehensive lived perception.*"<sup>97</sup>

**Cinematic response:** The title of this study, *Moving images of Home* points to having this very thought as an aim. One of the various possible interpretations of this play of words is also that the image of home is not perceived as a static photograph or a frozen architectural plan, but as a dynamic and flowing representation of the home, as rendered through film. The films taken into discussion often contain long takes in which the viewer is literally taken through the spaces of the house in travelling shots, to explore one room after the other in all details, while the filmmaker directs the viewer's gaze to create certain experiences. The viewer traverses and inhabits dynamically the rooms of these houses, which unfold as non-verbal descriptive phenomenological explorations of home.

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<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *idem*, p. 115

4) Completing the plethora of shortcomings, Reza-Shirazi draws attention to an interesting fact initially observed by Karsten Harris. While struggling to demonstrate the importance of the body in perceiving space, through "*orientation, directionality, multisensory perception*", phenomenologists seem to have constantly overlooked the fact that "*there are some aspects which cannot be captured by the axes of Euclidean space. It is not only our body that places us within a space. We can also speak of the spiritual situation that connects a person to a place. A specific history has provided every one of us with an orientation that orders our possibilities, and this spiritual history and inner life of the person experiencing a place has been neglected by the phenomenologists of architecture so far.*"<sup>98</sup> A comprehensive phenomenological approach on architecture, according to Reza-Shirazi's study, should present a doubled effort of contextualization, taking into account the spiritual and cultural context of the observer, just as it discusses the geographical surroundings of the object of architecture.

**Cinematic response:** In the present research, the aimed phenomenological exploration and description of houses does not come from a remote anonymous observer who examines their architectural qualities, but starts by observing the way in which Tarkovsky and Bergman have themselves observed, perceived and later represented them. Therefore, the account of architectural experiences is presented intertwined with the personal biographies of the two filmmakers, interconnected with their geographic or spiritual changes occurring throughout their lives (such as the growing feeling of estrangement or nostalgia, the search for a home, the experiences of foreign countries) Moreover, the approach of both Tarkovsky and Bergman is presented within the wider national and cultural context, either in terms of the architectural history wherein they were formed, or in terms of culture, the literary expressions of nostalgia as essential element of Russian culture, but not least, the contrasting Orthodox and Protestant backgrounds, from life-views to spatial characteristics, are presented to the extent that they pervade their writings.

The start of this quest will be to objectively and subjectively frame the architectural and topographical biographies of Bergman and Tarkovsky, together with the cultural and architectural contexts which have formed them. These issues will be explored at length in Chapter 3, which is dedicated to the study of home in the lives and works of the two artists.

Chapter 2 will thus precede this exploration of biographical topographies by taking a necessary plunge into the theoretical concepts of place, dwelling, at-homeness, ensuring a flowing transition from the general considerations on phenomenology expressed in Chapter 1 to the actual cases of dwelling that populate Chapter 3.

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<sup>98</sup> Harries, K. (2006) Space as Construct: An Antinomy, in P. MacKeith (Ed.), *Archipelago: Essays on Architecture*, Helsinki: Rakennustieto, pp. 84-5

# CHAPTER TWO

## REACHING HOME: Place, Phenomenology and Dwelling

PLACE between space perception and phenomenological concept

PLACE and DWELLING: phenomenological approaches

*TO PLACEFY*, or finding a place for home

## PLACE between space perception and phenomenological concept

The main converging and almost interchangeable terms used throughout this thesis are those concerning: home, home-ness, experience of architecture, spatial experience, dwelling, inhabiting, lived space, place. Each of these terms would deserve an entire dedicated section, while a thorough discussion should be given to rigorously define and separate these notions from each other, outlining differences and particularities. The scope of this present chapter, however, is to situate the present study within the broader field of home studies, and to delineate the understandings of place, lived space, dwelling, home, as used in this text. Upon a closer look, there is an intriguing similarity and between views coming from different fields of research concerned with the experience of space and place, which opens a path towards parallel explorations. A thorough comparative review of recent theories made in neuropsychology, human geography, anthropology, home studies and phenomenology would undoubtedly broaden significantly architects' understanding of how users of buildings and neighbourhoods respond in time, by lived experience, to their designs. The aim of this study remains limited at the grounds of home, the house and a little extension outwards, in the surrounding landscape. However, as topologically limited as this realm seems to be, its territory gains unfathomable depth and weight as zooms in unto it. As such, when theorists speak about place and space, they would assuredly touch upon the concept of dwelling and "at-homeness", as a pinnacle in the process of identification with a place; *"the home and its surroundings can become a centre of experiential space, a place of security and comfort, a place of concern, care and commitment, and a place in which to develop the individual's conception of self."*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in order to reach the notion of home and dwelling as understood throughout this thesis, the following section will begin from some of the most compelling positions regarding space and place perception, as read in different fields of scientific enquiry.

**Neuropsychologists** define "place" as *"a location that is identifiable from any direction of approach"*<sup>2</sup>, which *"represents an invariant, independent of the observer's own movements in space and the contingent perceptual changes."*<sup>3</sup> To find this one location, uniquely identifiable as "place", people navigate through space, orientate themselves among spaces, remember them, perceive them as bodily perceptions and thus experience their external qualities. From psychology's perspective, people have two ways of relating to spaces, prior to identifying any of such spaces as a "place". These two ways of relating are: *egocentric space*, determined in reference to the body's position in space and *allocentric space*, in reference to external spatial cues. The *egocentric space* includes *"the region of central space to which our sensory processes (e.g., vision) are most sensitively directed"*<sup>4</sup> and allows an independence of viewpoint in spatial memory. That is to say, when memories of a space are retrieved, the viewpoint can be changed and moved around the space, freely, based purely on the remembered sensory

<sup>1</sup> Walmsley D.J. and Lewis G. J. (1993, 2nd Ed.) *People and environment: behavioral approaches in human geography*, Harlow, Essex: Longman House, p. 227

<sup>2</sup> Thinus-Blanc, C. (1996) *Animal spatial cognition*. London: World Scientific

<sup>3</sup> Foreman N. and Gillet R. (1997) *Handbook of Spatial Research Paradigms and Methodologies, Vol. 1*, Hove, Essex: Psychology Press, p. 10

<sup>4</sup> *idem*, p. 8

perceptions. This type of relation to a space refers "to the sensory array as it exists at any one point in time, but it is not a static entity."<sup>5</sup> Centred on bodily perceptions, egocentric space works in spatial memory by recomposing the various viewpoints in space, retrieving the movement that had been made. "Spatial processing and encoding becomes more complex (and more interesting) once the organism begins to move around the space."<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, allocentric space is at work in navigational skills, in daily movements through the most familiar environments. "The individual is constantly within a spatial environment, making judgements about where objects are located, how to get from room to room."<sup>7</sup> Since it involves a recalling of so many features present in the environment, "compared to egocentric space, allocentric space is likely to involve a much greater memory component, and utilise a wide range of both perceived and non-visible multisensory cues."<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, when remembering this allocentric space, built up from the features of the environment, it seems the mind operates differently with spatial information and with object information, having "separate neural networks subserving each of them."<sup>9</sup> In fact, the hegemony of spatiality in the hierarchy of perceptual information has been shown by the speed with which different perceptions are processed by the brain "[l]ocations, for instance, are perceived before colour, which in turn is perceived before form, motion (as much as 80 milliseconds before) and orientation."<sup>10</sup> It results, therefore, that we perceive spaces initially in their innate spatiality, allocentric or egocentric, and only afterwards do we perceive varying characteristics of their interior and of objects situated therein. Despite the different neural channels and networks that perceive and decode these different perceptions, the conclusion in neuropsychology is that when processing and storing information about spatial locations, the number of stimuli contributes greatly to the overall mental image: "the same network architecture and the same laws of internal plasticity therefore give rise to very different topological maps, depending on the type and number of the sensory modalities involved and on the exploration behaviour".<sup>11</sup>

For **Arts**, this argument is of extreme importance, as it verifies what poets and artists achieve through their works, rendering artistic images of pure perceptual experience with so much force, undoubtedly springing from truthful and varying sensory perception of phenomena. A condensed account of multisensory observations of life stands in the form of the Japanese haikku, a style highly revered by Andrei Tarkovsky: "What attracts me in haikku is its observation of life, pure, subtle, one with its subject; a kind of distillation: As it passes by/ the dew has fallen./ The full moon barely touches/ On all the spikes of blackthorn/ Fishhooks in the waves./ There hang little drops. This is pure observation. Its aptness and precision will make anyone, however crude his receptivity, feel the power of poetry and recognize – forgive the banality – the living image which the author has caught."<sup>12</sup> Observing and exploring space through a multitude of

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<sup>5</sup> *idem*, p. 9

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Ungerleider, L.G. and Mishkin, M. (1982) Two cortical visual systems, pp. 549-586 in D.J. Ingle, M.A. Goodale and R.J. W. Mansfield, *The Analysis of Visual Behaviour*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

<sup>10</sup> Mallgrave, H.F. (2009) *The Architect's Brain*, Wiley-Blackwell, p. 143

<sup>11</sup> Gillhodes, J.C., Coiton Y., Velay J.L. (1991) Sensorimotor space representation: a neuromimetic model, pp. 433-445 in J.I. Paillard (Ed.) *Brain and Space*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 444

<sup>12</sup> ST, pp. 66-67



sensory modalities, therefore, renders a different, perhaps more complex, perhaps more enduring internal image, that remains in memory better than a space experienced through vision alone, which at a later time might be artistically employed. It is therefore not unthinkable that spaces of childhood, experienced in the most curious, genuine and multisensory way, from alternated viewpoints - as the child begins to walk and grows taller - are remembered in the most experiential detail. Another important aspect determining the lingering sensations of space gained in childhood are the durations of the perceptual act, which, unlike similar spatial experiences later in life, develop gradually in time, at a slow pace. "*Brain processes may be measured in msec, but perceptual experience involves experienced time.*"<sup>13</sup> But of even greater importance is the fact that "[w]e are, in good part, the specific neural circuits or maps that we build over the course of a lifetime. Much of this synaptic growth takes place in the earlier stages of life"<sup>14</sup> and the perceptual patterns formed at that time would act as a frame through which spatial experiences later in life would be decoded.

**Philosophy** has recorded a centuries-lengthy debate on the use of notions of *space* or *place*, and thus it must be mentioned that, unlike the classical distinction where *space* was considered as purely metrical and *place*, according to Aristotle, was the container of distinct potencies, throughout this thesis both terms will come to define the latter, mainly because of the constant overlapping of the two notions in recent literature. Thus, *space* as used in this thesis is not the abstract Euclidian notion, but its lived, inhabited hypostasis. In April 1960, philosopher O. Bollnow introduced the concept of *lived space*<sup>15</sup>, paraphrasing an earlier concept coined by E. Minkowsky<sup>16</sup>. The distinction is made, however, between *space/ place* and *site* - where *site* is seen as an essentially empty locus which cannot be inhabited and resists familiarisation, not possessing an interiority. "*For familiarity to begin to set in, we must project a state of already having inhabited it.*"<sup>17</sup> Space, contrary to site, envelops and sustains inhabitation, as a condition for a phenomenological understanding of the world, or, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty stated, for the very definition of our existence in the world: "*we must avoid saying say that our body is in space or in time. It inhabits space and time. [...] I am not in space and time, nor do I conceive space and time; I belong to them, my body combines with them and includes them. [...] The space and time which I inhabit are always in their different ways indeterminate horizons which contain other points of view.*"<sup>18</sup> Inhabiting space and time means being a shifting flux of situated-ness therein: "*situations are ways human beings are in the world.*"<sup>19</sup> Merleau-Ponty also introduced the important idea that perception is at the very root of being able to remember. In turn, when remembering a place, one does not see it as a static picture fixed in the memory, struggling to bring back into mind the sensations experienced at that time. Rather, remembering means to re-enter the spatio-temporal

<sup>13</sup> Gallagher, S. (2005) *How the Body shapes the Mind*, New York: Oxford University Press, p.223

<sup>14</sup> Mallgrave, H.F. *op cit*, p. 134

<sup>15</sup> Bollnow, O.F. (1961) *Lived-space* (Translated by D. Gerlach), in *Philosophy Today* 5, Nr. 1/4, pp. 31-39

<sup>16</sup> Minkowski, E. (1933) (first published in French) *Le Temps Vécu. Étude phénoménologique et psychopathologique*, Paris: D'Atrey; (translated in English by N. Metzler) in 1970, *Lived Time: Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press

<sup>17</sup> Casey, E. (2000) *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 190

<sup>18</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002) *Phenomenology of Perception* Transl. by Colin Smith [1958- re-edited], London: Routledge, [first edition 1945, Paris: Gallimard], pp. 161-162

<sup>19</sup> Alexander, T. M. (1987) *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience & Nature: The Horizons of Feeling*, New York: State University of New York Press, p. 106

horizon of the space and time which is called to mind, and thus to gradually rediscover sensations, one by one, coming to us as if unfolding from that recovered experience. Thus, although spatially they might be significantly different, the experiential reality of perception and memory tends to be significantly similar. *"To perceive is not to experience a host of impressions accompanied by memories capable of clinching them; it is to see, standing forth from a cluster of data, an immanent significance without which no appeal to memory is possible. To remember is not to bring into the focus of consciousness a self-subsistent picture of the past; it is to thrust deeply into the horizon of the past and take apart step by step the interlocked perspectives until the experiences which it epitomizes are as if relived in their temporal setting."*<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, the spatio-temporal horizon of perceptions - in direct phenomenological experience -, or recollections - in indirect, memory experience - is viewed as an interiority which the person enters and, through this act of being enclosed within a certain perceptual horizon, acquires an experience of inhabitation, of dwelling. Interiority is therefore a required quality for spaces, places or memories to reach the meaning of home, both through its opposition to an exterior and through the intimacy of being within. As summarized by Emmanuel Levinas: *"simultaneously without and within, [man] goes forth from an inwardness. Yet this inwardness opens up in a home which is situated in that outside - for the home, as a building, belongs to a world of objects"*;<sup>21</sup> he goes on to equate this condition of inwardness, crucial for the home-bound recollection, with the idea of the human presence, a human welcome: *"To dwell is not the simple fact of the anonymous being cast into existence as a stone one casts behind oneself; it is a recollection, a coming to oneself, a retreat home with oneself as in a land of refuge, which answers to a hospitality, an expectancy, a human welcome"*.<sup>22</sup> But, for Levinas, this human presence that renders spaces familiar, is quintessentially connected with the feminine presence: *"The interiority of recollection is a solitude in a world already human. [...] The woman is the condition for recollection, the interiority of the Home, and inhabitation"*.<sup>23</sup>

Tarkovsky's films, as broadly discussed in dedicated literature<sup>24</sup>, are permeated by the image of the Mother/wife/ sister/ daughter. But relevant to the current topic is the fact that the woman image is, as if mirroring the views of Levinas, intrinsically connected to the interiority of dwelling. The houses portrayed all across the seven films of Tarkovsky bear the strong trace of a feminine presence, *"a gentleness spread over the face of things"*<sup>25</sup> which speaks in a familiar and intimate tone. This trace pervades even through the few houses inhabited by solitary male figures, such as Domenico, the mad mathematician from *Nostalgia*, who lives alone in the house he had once shared with his wife and children, and which now crumbles under rains and open windows. His daily routes through this dwelling are pleated at every footstep with vivid recollections of his wife and children, from the day they had last walked out the door. Moreover, the dog, his only companion, is called Zoe<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (2005) *Phenomenology of Perception*. Transl. by Colin Smith [1958- re-edited], London: Taylor and Francis [first edition 1945, Paris: Gallimard], p. 26

<sup>21</sup> Levinas, E. (1979) *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 152

<sup>22</sup> idem, p. 156

<sup>23</sup> idem, p. 155

<sup>24</sup> For instance: Martin, S. (2011) *Andrei Tarkovsky*. Harpenden: Oldcastle Books; Synessios, N. (2001) *Mirror*, London: I.B. Tauris&Co; McCormick, M. (2006) *Model of a house: An Essay on Andrei Tarkovsky's "Sacrifice"*, Raleigh: Lulu Publishing; Gavin, A. (2007) *The Word of the Father/ The Body of the Mother: Dimensions of Gender in Tarkovsky's Mirror*, pp. 1-6, UCL Opticon, 1826 (2)

<sup>25</sup> Levinas, E. (1979) *op cit*, p. 155; see page 55 in the present chapter

<sup>26</sup> **Zoe**, from Greek the ζωή-zoi (*life*); in correspondence with **Eva**, derived from the Hebrew הוּוּחַ-hawwah (*life*)

Chapter 2 REACHING HOME



**Image 2.1** (above) scene from Tarkovsky's 1962 film, *Ivan's Childhood* - the remains of the old man's house, in the village ruined by war; (below) scene from Tarkovsky's 1982 film, *Nostalgia* - the empty decrepit house of Domenico

Another relevant example is the old man whom Ivan encounters as the only survivor of a war-burnt village, in *Ivan's Childhood*. His wife had recently been killed by German soldiers, but the old man restlessly moves around the remains of their dwelling, nervously mumbling as to himself that he has to get the house ready, because "*Pelaghia will be home soon*". The house, however, both for Domenico and for the old widower of Pelaghia, lacks any sense of interiority. In Domenico's house, the ceiling, windows and doors cease to fulfil a role of protection against the elements, or against the emptiness of life, for that matter. In *Ivan's Childhood*, even more strikingly, the house, a relic and symbol of war's cruelty, has been reduced to the chimney of the stove and a door, which stands in the middle of an empty field, and which the old man closes behind himself with much attention. Failing to separate inside and outside, the door stands as merely a painful reminder of a place that ceased to be an interior, a place where, due to the scars of war, recollections do not produce a feeling of belonging, but a bittersweet mixture of dream and reality. "*Circulating between visibility and invisibility, one is always bound for the interior of which one's home, one's corner, one's tent, or one's cave is the vestibule. The primordial function of the home does not consist in orienting being by the architecture of the building and in discovering a site, but in breaking the plenum of the element, in opening in it the utopia in which the <I> recollects itself in dwelling at home with itself*".<sup>27</sup>

From this point of view, Tarkovsky's films are particularly illustrative, as the houses where feminine figures are irreversibly absent do not possess even a basic spatial interiority, while the intimacy and the familiarity of dwelling are irrevocably harmed. This seems to subtly portray cinematically and architecturally the current of thought which equates the feminine with inwardness, spiritually and spatially alike. Luce Irigaray sees in this capacity of the feminine to enclose and to equally open up towards alterity, a potential for cultivating interiority, a meaningful, transformative interiority: "*the contemplation of the universe, as well as the contemplation of the other, the respect for that which exists outside of oneself, is often more appropriate to [women's] becoming spiritual, to a culture of interiority adequate to them*",<sup>28</sup> and this "*spiritual interiority*" specific to the woman enables the existence of "*an inner dwelling place that would be not only physical, but also spiritual*".<sup>29</sup> The following chapters will reflect on the existence of such an "*inner dwelling*", be it physical or spiritual, in the biographies and works of the two artists considered in this study; it could well be argued that this existence was indeed enabled by the strong and bright presence of the Mother and grandmother in the early part of their lives, together with the gentleness (or lack of it) in the wife's image, in later life. However, for Tarkovsky, yet another feminine figure appears with luminous persistence in his personal diaries and in all the seven films, as central motif, sometimes as key towards the understanding of the film, but always as an image of the brightest form of interiority, of inner dwelling.

This topic brings the discussion in the field of **Theology**. In the Tradition to which Tarkovsky belonged - the Orthodox Christian Church - the Mother of God, also called Theotokos<sup>30</sup>, is the "*dwelling-place of the Spirit*"<sup>31</sup>, personifying "*the Church itself, because she*

<sup>27</sup> Levinas, E. *op cit*, p. 156

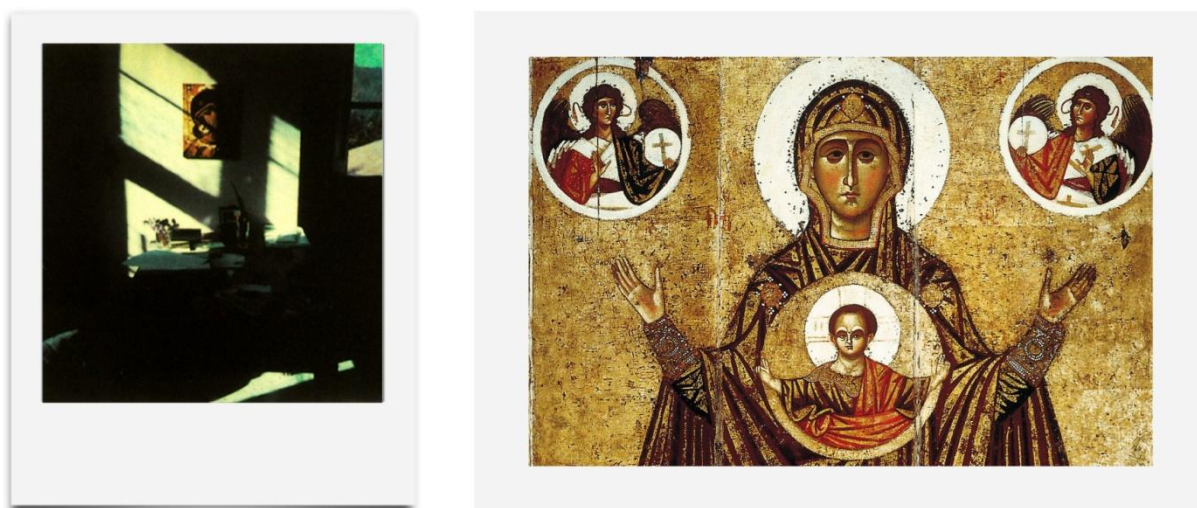
<sup>28</sup> Irigaray, L. (2004) *Luce Irigaray: Key Writings*, London: Continuum, p. 170

<sup>29</sup> Irigaray, L. (1996) *I Love to You: Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History*, London: Routledge, pp. 204-205

<sup>30</sup> from Greek Θεοτοκος (*God-bearer, Birth-giver-of-God*)

<sup>31</sup> Saint Ephraim the Syrian, 4th century

contained in herself the Creator of the world whom the whole world cannot contain"<sup>32</sup>. One precise type of icons depicting the Mother of God is that known as *Orans/ Oranta*, in which She holds her hands in prayer, interceding for the world, while the child Christ is depicted in a circular medallion, in front of her chest, symbolically representing the moment of Christ's Incarnation. By depicting the one who contains Him "whom the world cannot contain", thus being, metaphorically, "more spacious than the Heavens", this type of icon has also been called *πλατυτέρα-Platytera*, a Greek term signifying literally "wider, more spacious". In the Orthodox Church, there is also a direct spatial translation of this peculiar dialectics of containment and enclosure. This particular depiction of the Mother of God is painted on the vaulted ceiling of the altar aisle, the image becoming a spatial receptacle of the Divine sacraments which take place within. "This representation of the Virgin praying in the very place where the sacrifice is fulfilled reflects a very special meaning. The uplifted hands are a gesture which completes the sacrifice. This is why the priest also makes this same gesture during the Liturgy, [...] and is the image of prayer itself"<sup>33</sup>.



**Image 2.1** (left) Tarkovsky's room in San Gregorio, Italy, 1983, featuring the Russian icon known as "the Vladimir Mother of God", Polaroid taken by Tarkovsky himself ©ATII; (right) detail of icon Mother of God Orans, Yaroslav, Russia, 13th century

The humbleness and spiritual beauty which enabled Virgin Mary to become God-bearer is thus reflected, metaphorically, through paradoxes of interiority/ exteriority, in-dwelling and wide openness, as poetically captured by Church hymnography, who calls the Mother of God "royal dwelling-place that has been made beautiful", "sacredly-built palace", "bridal chamber", "celestial house", "spacious place for God who is nowhere contained, but who was contained in you alone!"<sup>34</sup>

Tarkovsky must have been aware of this particular painted and verbal iconography, as his filmographic depictions of the Mother of God operate on the interval of containment, interiority. For instance, in *Ivan's Childhood*, the military outpost, the closest space to an idea of a domestic refuge in this film, is constructed within a ruined church building. Nothing of

<sup>32</sup> Ouspensky, L. (1992) *Theology of the Icon. Vol. 1*, Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, p. 28

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> all extracts taken from Andrew of Crete's *Oration on the Annunciation of the Supremely Holy Lady, Our Theotokos*, published in Cunningham, M. (Ed and translator) (2009) *Wider than heaven: eighth-century homilies on the Mother of God*, Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, pp. 197-219

the spatiality of a church remains legible, apart from a solitary fragment of a wall, that bears a mural painting of the Mother of God, with her hands raised in prayer and her figure leaning slightly, in a protective gesture, towards the interior of the military outpost.

The imagery of Tarkovsky's films, therefore, but also the gradual spiritual course of his biography - as shall be detailed in Chapter 3, stand to depict an idea of *inner dwelling* which mirrors the conditions of an outer dwelling, but grows increasingly forceful in its inward reality: "*He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit*". (John 15:4-5)

**Human geographers** strive as well to avoid the confusion of this socio-cultural situated-ness in space and time and a sedimentation of place into a static, non changeable presence in our lives. Rather, contemporary theories view place as active, rather than passive, infusing its own "*simultaneity of stories-so-far*"<sup>35</sup> upon everyday narratives, rendering itself a sense of flux. "*We do not see the world in terms of single images, but as a continuum of movement and sensory change*"<sup>36</sup>; the narrative and the temporal, albeit invisible, are thus considered key elements in grasping and representing space. Such an understanding of representations of space as a flux of situations, rather than a fixed image, is being increasingly sought in ethnographic and anthropological studies, which criticize classical representations for being mere "*static time-slices*", that even "*multiplied to infinity cannot produce becoming*".<sup>37</sup> The understanding of space/place as elaborated throughout this research therefore follows this line of thought, as containing the deeper layers of place related to experience, attachment and identity, whose representation involves a simultaneity of flows and situations transcending spatial fixedness. Such an understanding is in tone with contemporary architectural theoreticians who claim that "*the future of the discipline, as it now appears, depends on the conditions and circumstances of situational embodiment which have been left behind or ignored*"<sup>38</sup>, while others pinpoint the necessity of searching elsewhere for these circumstances: "*What is more revealing, an now required, is a discourse on spatial change and space-place characteristics as discovered through other stories and spatial representations*".<sup>39</sup> Geographer Anne Buttimer said "*to discuss place, we have to freeze the dynamic process at an imaginary moment in order to take the still picture. The observer who explores places speaks of housing, whereas the resident of the place lives the process of dwelling. The observer measures and maps activity systems and social networks and infers something of the native's world within reach, whereas the resident's experience reaching may be so fundamental a movement of everyday existence that it is not usually reflected upon. One of the first steps to be taken in trying to straddle the divide between insider and outsider worlds, then, is to stretch our conventional <noun> or <picture> language so as to accommodate the <verbs> and <process> languages of lived experience.*"<sup>40</sup> Her eloquent observation seems to closely echo those made by phenomenologists of architecture, as already mentioned in the ending of Chapter1, again pointing towards a renewed, fresh and fluctuating representation of our encounter with places.

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<sup>35</sup> Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*, London: Sage Publications, p. 12

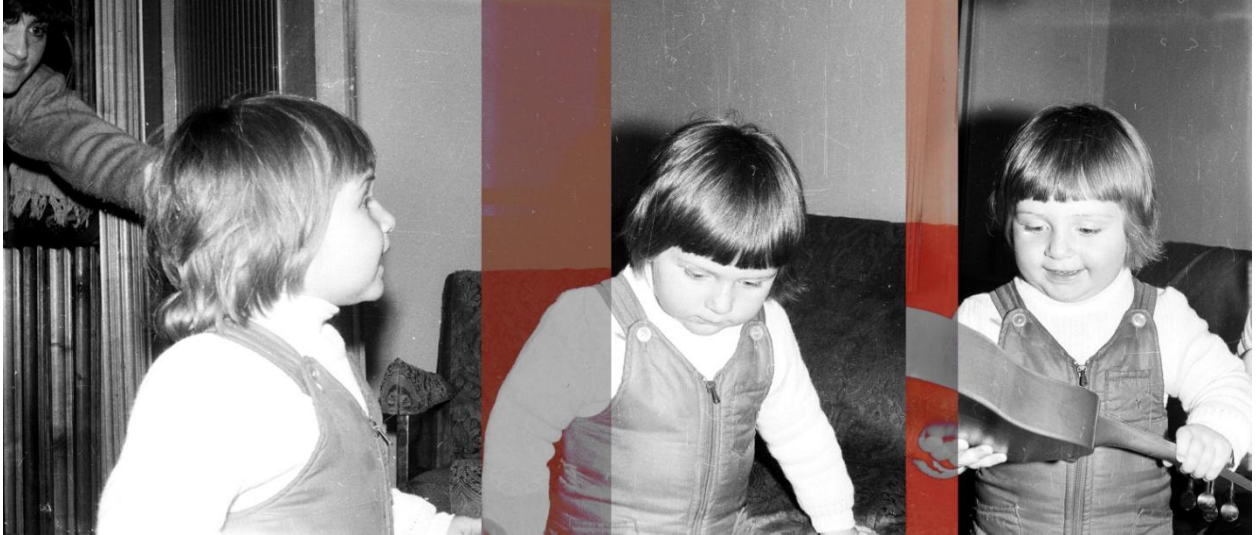
<sup>36</sup> Mallgrave, H.F. *op cit*, p. 143

<sup>37</sup> Massey, D. *op cit*, p. 23

<sup>38</sup> Vesely, D. (1993) *Architecture, Simulation and Reality*, in Scroope, Cambridge Architecture Journal, no. 5, pp. 26-28

<sup>39</sup> Tewdwr-Jones, M. (2011) *Urban Reflections: narratives of place, planning and change*, Bristol: The Policy Press, p. 25

<sup>40</sup> Buttimer A. (1980) Home, Reach and the Sense of Place, pp. 166-174 in A. Buttimer and D. Seamon (Eds.) *The Human Experience of Space and Place*, New York: St Martin's Press, p. 171



**Image 2.2** Me, opening the door, entering the room and finding the presents on Christmas morning; photograph dated around winter 1990, taken by my father, in the home of my childhood, from the town of Baia Mare, Maramureş, Romania

*"architectural experiences have a verb form, rather than being nouns"<sup>41</sup>*

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<sup>41</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (2012) *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the senses*, New Jersey: Wiley, p. 68

*"Tarkovsky's films are about the perpetual search for home,  
the lost home of childhood.  
The tension between the notions of house and home  
is a central motif in the life's work of Andrei Tarkovsky"<sup>42</sup>*

## PLACE and DWELLING phenomenological approaches

The present research is an attempt to unveil some of the space-place characteristics with the aid of cinematic spatial representation. In order to capture the essence of places, film is equipped to represent the immaterial stories of an emplaced living and memories of a spatial experience. The renowned memory scholar Henri Bergson once stated that film, by the very nature of its virtuality, is fit to depict the immateriality of memory; Tarkovsky adds to this thought that *"the virtue of cinema is that it appropriates time, complete with that material reality to which it is indissolubly bound, and which surrounds us day by day and hour by hour"*.<sup>43</sup> Cinema's fluctuating representations of the material, by *"disintegrating familiar objects and bringing to the fore previously invisible interrelationships between parts of them"*<sup>44</sup>, could thus be an alternative method of exploration in space, since, as Vesely has argued, *"the communication of experience and its embodiment was never adequately represented in explicit terms.[...] It would be an illusion to think that the reality of architecture could be measured by criteria of explicit representation and that implicit experience and its possible representations are inevitably subjective and irrelevant"*.<sup>45</sup> In his discussion of how to represent subjectivities of space experience, Tewdwr-Jones suggests that *"one of the most ideal formats through which this understanding can be developed is cinema. Film often provides a unique sense of place that is unavailable to other media. [...] We may consider the use of how evocative filming of physical places deepens audience's impressions of the subjective experience, while providing a good spatial sense of environmental change and development, by allowing reflection and a perspective on the interpretation and representation of places"*.<sup>46</sup>

A difference should nevertheless be made at this point between spatial experience in general, and the lived space of home. While *"the experience of a building or environment as architecture, that is to say something meaningful and significant, is not a characteristic of the built object, it is a subjective experience dependant on the person experiencing"*<sup>47</sup>, and genuine spatial experiences may happen in unknown, foreign environments, the notion of *lived space* implies an idea of lived duration and prolonged interaction, bringing forth terms such as dwelling, inhabiting and home. In his *Lived Space*, Bollnow outlines the coordinates for the phenomenon of lived space, as the meaningful relationship between man and environment. At the core of this spatiality defining man's interaction with the surroundings lies the house:

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<sup>42</sup> Pallasmaa J. (2001) *The Architecture of Image. Existential space in cinema*, Helsinki: Rakennustieto, p. 92

<sup>43</sup> ST, p.63

<sup>44</sup> Kracauer, S. (1960) *Nature of Film: the Redemption of Physical Reality*, Oxford University Press, p. 54

<sup>45</sup> Vesely, D. (1993) *op cit*

<sup>46</sup> Tewdwr-Jones, M. *op cit*, p. 26

<sup>47</sup> Fellingham, K. (2011) *Architecture as Medium, Environment as Object, User as Subject*, Scroope, Cambridge Architecture Journal, no. 20, pp. 164-175



"for although it is part of a larger whole, it remains the spatial centre of the individual [...] by means of walls man carves out of universal space a special and to some extent private space and thus separates an inner space from an outer space".<sup>48</sup>

This differentiation between the inner space of the dwelling and the abstract "universal" space was phrased differently by other phenomenologists. Thus, for Christian Norberg-Schulz, the experience of genuine dwelling appears as a result of an identification with the immediate location, which he defines as *existential space*, the basis for a stable image of the environment, which "plays an important role in the process of perception".<sup>49</sup> The tension between the immediate situated-ness and one's existential space is resolved "[w]hen our immediate location coincides with the centre of our existential space, we experience being at home. If not, we are either on our way, somewhere else, or we are lost".<sup>50</sup> It is interesting to note the differentiation which Norberg-Schulz makes between the existential space and the location, as if clearly delimiting from the physicality of the location and the immaterial, immeasurable nature of existential space. For Emmanuel Levinas<sup>51</sup>, to be in the open space of the wide world implies an innate need of retreating to a protected interior: "the subject contemplating a world presupposes the event of dwelling, the withdrawal from the elements, the recollection in the intimacy of the home".<sup>52</sup> From this need to have a sphere of intimacy wherein to retreat springs the act of building as well: "[t]he movement by which a being builds a home, opens and ensures interiority to itself, is constituted in a movement by which the separated being recollects itself. With the dwelling, the latent birth of the world is produced".<sup>53</sup> For architect Juhani Pallasmaa, an additional temporal factor is added in the identification of home: "if there is to be genuine dwelling, we must be able to defeat the terror of time, to genuinely situate ourselves in time: that is, we must discover our home, not just in space, but in time".<sup>54</sup>

Summarized, from the views of these scholars of phenomenology, the experience of genuine dwelling occurs as an awareness of inhabiting one's existential space, a location found in the very centre of one's experiential existence, carved out spatially and temporally as a uniquely intimate interiority, wherein one can withdraw from the vast space.

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<sup>48</sup> Bollnow, O.F. (1961) *op cit*, p. 33

<sup>49</sup> Reza-Shirazi, M. (2014) *Towards an Articulated Phenomenological Interpretation of Architecture: Phenomenal Phenomenology*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 46

<sup>50</sup> Norberg-Schulz, C. (1971) *Existence, Space and Architecture*, London: Studio Vista, p. 34

<sup>51</sup> Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), Lithuanian philosopher of Hebrew ancestry, who was mainly active in France; after studying with Husserl and Heidegger, his writings shifted to an original incorporation of "responsibility" in existential phenomenology

<sup>52</sup> Levinas, E. (1979) *op cit*, p. 153

<sup>53</sup> *idem*, p. 158

<sup>54</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (2001) *The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema*, Helsinki: Building Information Ltd., p. 226

## TO PLACEFY, or finding a place for home

Speaking of *lived space* and, respectively, *existential space*, Bollnow and Norberg-Schulz make extensive references to Heidegger's earlier writings on place and dwelling which, as exposed in the preceding chapter, had been influential for the development of architectural phenomenology. In his essays *Art and Space* and *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*<sup>55</sup>, Heidegger employed old German etymology to elaborate his understandings of place and dwelling. Thus, the heideggerian place is indissolubly related to the idea of "clearing away": "*Let us try to listen to language. Whereof does it speak in the word space? Clearing-away (Räumen) is uttered therein. This means: to clear out (roden), to free from wilderness. Clearing-away brings forth the free, the openness for man's settling and dwelling. When thought in its own special character, clearing-away is the release of places toward which the fate of dwelling man turns in the preserve of the home*".<sup>56</sup>

However relevant Heidegger's views might be, this approach of utilizing language as a source of understanding dwelling, could bring significantly different findings regarding the nature of dwelling, by simply changing the language of reference: "*the fact that in one language <I dwell> and <I am> may have been used indistinguishably is a sure indication of the extent to which dwelling is coextensive with the essence of human being [...] The Greek verbs designating dwelling: oikein, naiein, demein, etc... communicate through the idea of duration/stability, the fact of existing, and it is interesting to see that in Greek they are the only verbs entirely interchangeable with the verb <to be>, with which they are genuinely synonymous*".<sup>57</sup> Prompted by such conceptions, the following section aims to explore what may lie beneath the words for *dwelling*, *inhabiting*, *home* in the languages mostly relevant to this present study, namely: **Russian** (in order to linguistically inscribe Andrei Tarkovsky's sense of dwelling), **Swedish** (for framing the experience of home in the case of Ingmar Bergman) and **Romanian** (for describing what lies at the roots of my own appreciation of home and dwelling, the very point of reference from where I began this study). The conclusions of these - more or less - volatile linguistic explorations are not intended to redefine the concept of dwelling as generally acceptable in architectural thinking. However, it may perhaps open up potential new paths of understanding, or rather, descend and sketch on the ground the major contour chalk lines within which the home of this thesis will be built.

*Our concept of home is founded in language;  
our first home is in the domicile of our mother tongue.  
And language is strongly tied up with our bodily existence;  
the unconscious geometry of our language articulates our being in the world.*<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> both essays were written in the 1950s and published in German in 1954 in a volume first translated into English as Heidegger, M. (1971) *Poetry, Language, Thought, "The Origin of the Work of Art"* (translated by A. Hofstadter), New York: Harper and Row

<sup>56</sup> from the essay *Art and Space*, included in Heidegger, M. (1971) *op cit*

<sup>57</sup> Liiceanu, G. (1983) *Reperes pour une herméneutique de l'habitation*. pp. 105-116, in C. Tacou (Ed.), *Les symboles du lieu. L'habitation de l'homme*. Paris: L'Herne, pp.105-106, quoted translated by Korosec-Serfaty, K. (1985) *Experience and Use of Dwelling*, pp. 65-68, in I. Altman and C. M. Werner (Eds.) *Home Environments*, New York & London: Plenum Press

<sup>58</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (1992) *Identity, Intimacy and Domicile: Notes on the Phenomenology of Home*, article published online: [http://www2.uiah.fi/opintoasiat/history2/e\\_ident.htm](http://www2.uiah.fi/opintoasiat/history2/e_ident.htm) (last accessed June 2015)

An ongoing exertion in this present study has been to find the appropriate term - *dwelling* or *inhabiting* - to define that which pervades the text: the experience of complete at-homeness, the process of making oneself at home in a place, the self-identification with a home, the lingering presence of a lost home, the strength and endurance of place experience. Although both terms - *dwelling* and *inhabiting* are employed throughout the entire thesis, in what follows I will attempt to delimit what they both mean in the present context, and particularly what they do not mean within the frame of these pages.

### to inhabit

The etymological roots of the English verb *to inhabit* are the same as those of the French verb *inhabiter*, used in Merleau-Ponty's writings. Both verbs come from the Latin word *inhabere*, a derivative from *habere* (meaning "to have", "to possess"). Deciphered in this way, *inhabere/inhabiter/to inhabit* would mean "to take *into possession*", "to be *in* that which I already *possess*", an assumption very close to some of Merleau-Ponty's views of visibility, perception and inhabitation: "to look at an object is to inhabit it, and from this habitation to grasp all things in terms of the aspect which they present to it"<sup>59</sup>; and some of Heidegger's thoughts: "[w]e always go through spaces in such a way that we already experience them by staying constantly with near and remote locations and things. When I go toward the door of the lecture hall, I am already there, and I could not go to it at all if I were not such that I am there. I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather, I am there, that is, I already pervade the room, and only thus can I go through it".<sup>60</sup> In both views, the "possession" involved is not so much a sense of proprietorship, as it is an embodiment of potentialities that lie in the place experience itself: "[e]verything I see is on principle within my reach, at least within reach of my sight, and is marked upon the map of the I can".<sup>61</sup> The emphasis on the network of potentialities existing, latent or not, within a phenomenon, is a thought essentially phenomenologic: "Higher than actuality stands possibility. We can understand phenomenology solely by seizing upon it as a possibility".<sup>62</sup> However, "the map of the I can" and the grasping of a space or of a phenomenon through a sudden act of perception alone, moves slightly far from the phrasing which Merleau-Ponty had himself recognized as the most genuine description of phenomenology's scope, that of a "'wonder' in the face of the world".<sup>63</sup> For instance, when discussing how the phenomenon of a house appears to the consciousness, Merleau-Ponty speaks of it as of an abstract object, constructed mentally out of the many spatial perspectives we have upon it, from all the angles of view, from the outside as well as the inside: "[t]he completed object is translucent, being shot through from all sides by an infinite number of present scrutinies which intersect in its depths leaving nothing hidden"<sup>64</sup>; he further goes on to explain the progression of the

<sup>59</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (2005) *op cit*, p.79

<sup>60</sup> Heidegger, M. (1993) Building, Dwelling, Thinking, in D.F. Krell (Ed.), *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, London: Routledge, p. 359

<sup>61</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (2007) Eye and Mind (1964), pp. 351-378, in T. Toadvine and L. Lawlor (Eds.) *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, St Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, p.354

<sup>62</sup> Heidegger, M. (1997) *Being and Time. A Translation of Sein und Zeit.* (1927) Translated by Joan Stambaugh, Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 34

<sup>63</sup> the words, paraphrased by Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*, were said by Eugen Fink (1905-1975), German philosopher and Husserl's research assistant for the last decade of the latter's life

<sup>64</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (2005) *op cit*, p.79

phenomenon over duration: "[w]hat we have just said about the spatial perspective could equally be said about the temporal. If I contemplate the house attentively and with no thought in my mind, it has something eternal about it, and an atmosphere of torpor seems to be generated by it. It is true that I see it from a certain point in my 'duration', but it is the same house that I saw yesterday when it was a day younger: it is the same house that either an old man or a child might behold".<sup>65</sup> However, the houses we have once inhabited are not abstract objects, translucent and containing nothing hidden from our exterior or interior gaze<sup>66</sup>. The spatial perception of a house cannot be summed up from separate individual slices of space without the risk of remaining inert and lifeless. Not even mental space representations can escape the dictum masterfully formulated by Doreen Massey: "*static time-slices even multiplied to infinity cannot produce becoming*".<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the prolonged encounter between the child and the space of home, "the sense of wonder in the face of the world" experienced in the earliest years of life, are perhaps the closest to a truthful phenomenological meeting with space; an entirely different range of emotions are overtaking an old man returning to the site of his childhood home, and even perception itself is challenged, as dimensions and distances are viewed now as significantly altered. "*The confrontation with objects which are familiar to us for having been part and parcel of our early life is particularly stirring. [...] The most familiar, that which continues our involuntary reactions and spontaneous impulses, is thus made to appear as the most alien. We respond to these sights with emotions which range from fright at the sudden emergence of our intimate being to nostalgic melancholy over the passing of time.*"<sup>68</sup>. Tracing back the thread of thought from the example of the house to the interpretation of perception and of *inhabitation*, it could be concluded that *inhabitation* as understood throughout this study lies far from the term defined by Merleau-Ponty. Rather, *to inhabit* will be understood as substantially opposed to possessing, either potentially or actually, after the model of Walter Benjamin's *trace* and *aura* dialectics: "*In the trace, we gain possession of the thing; in the aura, it takes possession of us.*"<sup>69</sup> Extrapolating this dialectics on the subject of place experience, we reach Pallasmaa's view, more faithful to the phenomenon of *inhabiting*: "*Experiencing a space or a house is a dialogue, a kind of exchange: I place myself in the space and the space settles in me*".<sup>70</sup>

Therefore, in the present study I propose to revert the initial position of "I view, therefore I inhabit; I inhabit, therefore I grasp; I grasp, therefore I possess" as Merleau-Ponty's dialectics of *inhabiting* would suggest. By reverting this position, I aim to arrive at more immaterial grounds, defining *inhabiting* as the internal dynamics involved in this dialogue: the smooth and enduring way in which the space of home settles and inhabits our minds while we are inhabiting it. And long afterwards.

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid*

<sup>66</sup> strong counterexamples are given, for instance, by Gaston Bachelard in his *Poetics of Space*; the house supports reverie precisely through its being which lies beyond the material and the visible

<sup>67</sup> Massey, D. *op cit*, p. 23

<sup>68</sup> Kracauer, S. (1960) *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, Oxford University Press, p. 57

<sup>69</sup> Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project* (1927) Edited by R. Tiedemann, Harvard University Press, p. 447

<sup>70</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (2005) *Encounters*, Helsinki: Rakennustieto Oy, p. 61

## to dwell

Although used interchangeably with *to inhabit* in order to indicate the act of continued use of a residential building, the verb *to dwell* contains an additional and very relevant temporal dimension. The roots of the word are in the Germanic-origin Old English *dwellan* ("to hinder", "to delay"), that later shifted, around mid 13th century, meaning "to remain in a place", "to make a home". The evolution of the word, as well as the secondary meanings it now has, of lingering - "to dwell upon" - indicate that *dwelling* operates on the aspect of temporality. Thus, from words alone, *to dwell in a place*, one can unveil the complex and subtle mediation between duration and spatiality that are involved in the sensitive process of *dwelling*.

Among the phenomenologists that have written about dwelling and inhabiting, Levinas comes closest to this idea of duration as an inherent part of dwelling, particularly in the chapter entitled *Dwelling* from his 1961 work *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Composed in French, the text thus made use of the verb *demeurer*, which is translated in English as *dwelling*, and not *inhabiting*, precisely because the French word *demeurer* is composed around this thought of time passing. *Demeurer* ("to dwell"), coming from the Latin *demoror* ("to delay", "to pause time"), also means "to linger", "to remain for a longer time in a place", "to dwell in a house". From this concept of duration, as a pausing or slowing down of time in the interiority of home, Levinas makes the valuable connection between dwelling and remembering: "[t]he movement by which a being builds a home, opens and ensures interiority to itself, is constituted in a movement by which the separated being recollects itself. With the dwelling the latent birth of the world is produced".<sup>71</sup> The act of recollection is not a result of dwelling, but the very condition for identifying the building with a home: "Because the I exists recollected it takes refuge empirically in the home. Only from this recollection does the building take on the signification of being a dwelling".<sup>72</sup> Thus identified as the place where one finds the inwardness to "dwell" in recollections, "[t]he privileged role of home does not consist in being the end of human activity, but being its condition, and in this sense its commencement. The recollection necessary for nature to be able to be represented and worked over, for it to first take form as a world, is accomplished as the home".<sup>73</sup> Interestingly, despite both *Phenomenology of Perception* and *Totality and Infinity* were written in French, Merleau-Ponty employs the term *inhabiter*, while Levinas utilizes *demeurer* to denote largely similar issues. However, while Merleau-Ponty's *inhabiter* rests more on the visible surface of the house, Levinas' *demeurer* enters the sphere of warmth and intimacy inside the home.

*To dwell*, therefore, has profound temporal reverberations, not only through the long duration involved when significant dwelling occurs, but also because the time constituting *dwelling* is a retrospective time. Consequently, the meaning adopted in this thesis for the term *to dwell* will be largely indebted to the writings of Levinas, and will define it as the state in which a man, sheltered by the physical walls of a house, is able to begin sowing the seeds of memories and thus to commence a new world. Furthermore, it will designate the

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<sup>71</sup> Levinas, E. (1979) *op cit*, p. 157

<sup>72</sup> *idem*, p. 154

<sup>73</sup> *idem*, p. 152

recollection mood of later *dwelling* in the intimacy of this inner world commenced as a home for/of memories.

### **НАСЕЛЯТЬ, ЖИТЬ** (Russian: "to inhabit")

In Emmanuel Levinas' native Lithuanian, *gyventi* ("to inhabit"/"to dwell") comes from *gyve* ("life"), and if Pallasmaa's statement that "*our concept of home is founded in language; our first home is in the domicile of our mother tongue*"<sup>74</sup> holds true, this deep-rooted linguistic connection verifies the ontological strength behind Levinas' assertions regarding *dwelling*.

*To inhabit/ to dwell* is translated in Russian as **ЖИТЬ** or **НАСЕЛЯТЬ**. **ЖИТЬ** has the alternate meanings of "to live" and "to breathe" and thus inscribes itself in the category of words designating both "dwelling" and "living", such as Greek<sup>75</sup> or Lithuanian, those language conditions that testify for the ontological dimension of dwelling. "*To exist henceforth means to dwell. To dwell is not the simple fact of the anonymous reality of a being cast into existence as a stone casts behind oneself; it is a recollection, a coming to oneself, a retreat home with oneself as in a land of refuge, which answers to a hospitality, an expectancy, a human welcome*".<sup>76</sup>

**населять** however, which seems to be used more frequently than **жить**, has the remarkable meaning of "to fill with people". For readers of Dostoevsky, such an understanding of "to inhabit" will not be surprising, as the spaces of his novels are in a constant shift of occupancy, rooms opening unto one another and unto the outside, as a fluctuating movement of characters crosses them, in burgeoning conversation. The word is also reflecting the Russian understanding of home as the place of residence for three or more generations, under the same roof, this sometimes including more distant members of the family.

Valuable descriptions of what it means to inhabit a home by "filling with people", home as a place of encounter, are given by Andrei Tarkovsky's son in an interview taken at his apartment in Florence, Italy:

*You know, in Russia we lived by homes. It's a different idea of living home, everybody coming to our house, it was kind of a place of encounter, something that I miss, because there the atmosphere was much more intense, because of my father. But there you lived by homes. You were visiting friends going from one home to another, because there was not much in that period, in the Soviet Union, so it was a tradition. It's not like here, where home is something very fragile, it's easy to change, to rent an apartment, it's not the place that you've grown up in, that you've become attached with, where you have your memories.*

*... but there, in Russia, then, it was a very interesting period, many people were coming, and all the artists, it was this kind of bohemian life, and it was very interesting for me as a kid to see this. I think I was 7 or 8. Ah, I still remember it, everybody liked it, you*

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<sup>74</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (1992) *op cit*

<sup>75</sup> Liiceanu, G. (1983) *op cit*, pp.105-106

<sup>76</sup> Levinas, E. (1979) *op cit*, p. 156

*know? We had no phone, of course, in that period. People, friends were just showing up at the door. And it was all the time, all, everybody, you would never be alone at the table! There were always friends, someone. It was very interesting, the door was always open. Actually, we had no doors, because it was two flats next to each other and the stairways and the doors were never closed. You could just open it, even at night. Because you had to walk through two*

*apartments. Can you imagine it now? With all these locks and metal doors... but that period was open.*

*Well, there was no silence, no concentration, so sometimes my father would just close himself in his room, to work, and he didn't go out. But the life of the house kept going, people kept coming, parents, relatives. It was almost like this until he left, in 1982<sup>77</sup>.*

### **härbärgera, bebo** (Swedish: "to inhabit")

*To inhabit/ to dwell* is translated in Swedish as **bebo** or **härbärgera**. **bebo** has the alternate meanings of "to populate", "to occupy", "to fill with people" and thus comes close to the previously mentioned Russian term **населять**. Residential traditions in Sweden have, for a long time, differed from the ones described in the case of Russia. Seldom do more than two generations share a house, which maintains a more private, secluded, or even solitary character. Moreover, essentially different from the condition described by Tarkovsky's son in Soviet Russia, the live link between different households complies to different, more frozen dynamics. In the words of Ingmar Bergman: "*here we sit, feeling lonely. We're such a huge country; yet we are so few, so thinly scattered across it. The people here spend their lives isolated on their farms - and isolated from one another in their homes. It's terribly difficult for them, even if they come to the cities and live close to other people; it's no help, really. They don't know how to get in touch, how to communicate. They stay shut off. And our winters don't help*".<sup>78</sup> It is surprising how in such a context the term denoting *dwelling* could also have the meaning of "populating", "filling with people". But the secrecy is resolved if one thinks of the second home, a countryside house however small, and so strongly rooted in the Swedish culture that "*apartment dwellers in Stockholm, Sweden, often consider home to be the second home, where they spend weekends and vacations on the coast or in the forest. Ties to the land and nature, and memories of extended family, prove stronger than the mere number of days spent in a particular dwelling*".<sup>79</sup> It is thus relevant to note the prevalence over duration and habit of the palpable contact with nature and the large family - a house "filled with people" - in the process of identifying a place with a home.

Not equal to *dwelling* or *inhabiting*, **härbärgera** is nevertheless a term in close connection to the concept of dwelling. It can translate as either "to nest", "to protect" or "to harbour", in a curious ambiguity as to whether the place or the person is the agent performing the act. In a substantially aquatic country, with long stretching sea shores and myriads of inland lakes, where fishing and sea commerce had been rooted in the common

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<sup>77</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *My Father's Home*, interview taken by RB on 8 December 2012 (unpublished)

<sup>78</sup> Grenier, C. (2007) Playboy Interview: Ingmar Bergman, (interview taken in 1964), pp. 35-47, in R. Shargel (ed.) *Ingmar Bergman: Interviews*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, p. 37

<sup>79</sup> Cooper-Marcus, C. (1995) *House as a mirror of self: exploring the deeper meaning of HOME*, Berkeley: Canary Press, p. 5

memory of centuries, becoming at home in a perilous sea of anonymous spaces, is thus compared to bringing the ship to shore. Home is thus an anchor, an axis and destination of spatial experience and of life itself. Harbours, protecting, nesting, can furthermore be understood in a multitude of ways against other elements, not just the water of the seas. In the context of Sweden, the interior of the house, however, seems to be mostly in need of offering shelter and harbour against the darkness of the long winters. What has now become equated to the Swedish style of white interiors, with brightly painted patterns and neat, luminous designs, has in fact had a history of barely over 100 years. In the summer of 1894, in Sundberg, a small village in the Swedish Dalarna county, a painter called Carl Larsson was living inside an unusual house, with his wife Karin, also a visual artist, and their (first) five children. Carl was passionate for nature and landscape painting and that summer it happened that *"it rained for six weeks without stopping. Carl was unable to paint outdoors, so on Karin's suggestion, he started painting scenes of the inside of their home. That autumn, the paintings were exhibited in Stockholm to much acclaim, and five years later they were published in the book entitled A Home"*.<sup>80</sup> The inside of the home was the handwork and result of the creativity of both spouses, filled with handmade rugs and textiles and - due to Carl's preference for playfully portraying his children - it was a house "filled with people". One of the reasons for Larsson's success with his exhibition and book *A Home* was that in Sweden "[m]ost houses around the end of the nineteenth century were dark and gloomy, with everything in muted colours. Carl Larsson's house stood out because of its abundance of natural light and bright colours. Everything was painted: window-sills, panels and furniture, in blues, reds, whites and greens".<sup>81</sup>

In a land of long winters and darkness, such an interior - with abundant light and colours - appeared as a harbour from the night and the wilderness of the weather. These interiors were largely copied in houses around Sweden, and soon became a brand for Swedish home lifestyle: large windows with white frames, lamps in the windowsill, bright floors, colourfully decorated curtains, rugs and furniture. One of Larsson's paintings, *Getting Ready for A Game*, depicts a warm dining room whose window overlooks a dark stormy winter night. Larsson wrote about this painting *"It's terrible outdoors. The wind is whistling at the corners of the house, and the snow isn't snow, it is needles stabbing your eyes. [...] Oh, to get indoors and play a game of cards!"*<sup>82</sup> In the painting, above the door leading to this haven from the weather, an inscription is pictured, with the words *"Gud's Fred"*, meaning *"God's Peace"*. And such was the peacefulness irradiating from this book with images of everyday life in a "nested" house, "filled with people" and "harboured" from the storms, *"so serene were its paintings that some soldiers took a copy of the book with them into the First World War, as a relief from what was happening around them"*.<sup>83</sup>

Whether or not this anecdote of the soldiers is true, it offers a brisk, undeniably meaningful description of *dwelling* as "harbouring"; it also contains a subtle shift from lived to represented, from material to immaterial, in the making, seeking and finding a home - be it even in the pages of a book.

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<sup>80</sup> Larsson, C. (2006) *A home: paintings from a bygone age* (Ett Hem), Edinburgh: Floris Books

<sup>81</sup> *ibid*

<sup>82</sup> *ibid*

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*



*" This is indeed the marvellous fact about natural languages:  
whole books can be translated, poems, thoughts, even typical expressions  
can be translated. But words alone cannot be translated.  
A word is a tree. Either it was born on your land or had sprung from a seed  
fallen from someone else's world, a word is, at the end, a distinctive being.  
It grew roots in the soil of your country, it was nurtured by its rains,  
it grew and sprawled under a sun which is nowhere else the same one,  
and, thus being,  
it cannot be easily moved from its ground, transplanted, translated."<sup>84</sup>*

### **a locui** (Romanian: "to inhabit") --> to placefy

In Romanian, a language with forceful Latin origins, the word for *to inhabit* displays characteristics unique in the group of Latin languages. As such, the Latin verb *inhabitare* has been preserved in French (*inhabiter*), Italian (*abitare*) and Spanish (*habitar*), but has no direct correspondence in Romanian. The Romanian term for *to inhabit* is formed from another Latin root, *locus*, which means "place", "location" or "room", and becomes **a locui**. The same root of *locus* has given rise to a multitude of variations in Latin languages, as well as in English. To name a few: *location*, *locality*, *locus* (a mathematical term defining a set of points that satisfy a particular condition), *locanda* (Italian: "inn"), *colocare* (Spanish: "to position"), but none of these variations include the concept of inhabiting or dwelling as inherently connected to place. The transformation of the word *loc* (Romanian: "place") into *a locui* ("to inhabit") and *locuire* ("dwelling") seems to be one singular example, and due to this singularity it provides consistent and crisp new inputs on the nature of dwelling.

A literal transposal<sup>85</sup> of the verb **a locui** into English, bypassing the literal translation *to inhabit*, might resemble the made-up word: **to placefy**<sup>86</sup>. The term thus emphasizes the role of place in the act of dwelling, and, just as in the case of the previously mentioned Swedish **härbärgera**, "to harbour", it operates on the ambiguous share of agency between person and place. **Omul locuiește** (Romanian: "Man inhabits") is transposed as *man placefies*. Thus, despite the subject of the phrase is placed on the person who dwells, the verb (*placefies*, *locuiește*) also contains an agency in itself, namely - the agency of place -, resulting in a phrase that, on a closer look, contains two active agents. In the verb *placefy*, place is understood as activated, as turned from a passive spatiality into a flowing entity. Identified with *to dwell*, *to placefy* thus testifies for a state in which the aliveness of place is the very condition for sustaining dwelling. As the suffix *-fy*, generally signifies an action of creating, of making, in *placefy* place becomes the agent in place-making, just as much, if not more than the person inhabiting that place. The situation is radically reversed from the "possession" mentioned earlier in the literal understanding of *to inhabit* as "to possess" and the lateral theories of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger. In the context of *placefy*, it is as if, contained in

<sup>84</sup> Noica, C. (1987) *Cuvânt împreună despre rostirea românească* (Conversation on Romanian utterance - my translation from Romanian language), București: Editura Eminescu, p. 201; Constantin Noica (1909-1987), prolific 20th C Romanian philosopher

<sup>85</sup> *transposal* is here understood as different from *translation*, an attempt to transpose the linguistic weight from Romanian to English as faithfully as possible

<sup>86</sup> different from the verb *to placify* ("to create a calm, peaceful environment"), whose meaning it only partly intersects

one word alone, would be the notion that the act of dwelling involves a free movement from the person to the place, allowing the place to take hold of the self, in an in-dwelling, "harbouring" embrace: "*Places possess - in perception, as in memory - by their radiant visibility, insinuating themselves into our lives, even taking us over as we sink into their presence*".<sup>87</sup>

In Romanian language, apart from *locuire/locuință*, there is also the word *locaș* to designate "dwelling". Rather archaic in use, *locaș* is an affectionate diminutive<sup>88</sup> form of *loc*, "place". Infused with an ineffable sense of familiarity and warmth, *locaș* refers both to one's most intimate dwelling and to the places of worship, the monasteries which have proliferated throughout the centuries across Romanian lands. The act of founding such a place of worship, as accounted in the chronicles of those past times, would usually begin with a prince, a local ruler, or a simple peasant, travelling across the land and, at some previously unknown point on the journey, perceiving a sudden identification with the place, sometimes in the midst of wilderness. Either had the person just witnessed a clear sense of divine intervention in some dangerous circumstances of his life and wished to express his gratitude, or had he just experienced a glimpse of feeling at-home within that precise topography, the steps to follow this encounter would be to establish that precise location as *loc de pomenire* ("place of remembrance") - usually by raising a cross or digging a well. However, often that *loc de pomenire* would turn into a monastery, a *locaș* (literally "little place", meaning "dwelling"), that would therefore ensure an enduring active agency from the place itself, over time.

Having been born and raised in this culture and language, I tend to equate my understanding of how *inhabiting* and *dwelling* are experienced with the aforementioned description of the triad *placefy-locuire-locaș*. The places of my childhood, be they houses, landscapes, streets or country paths, are all imbued by the atmosphere of a *locaș*, that diminutive form of place conceived as an intimate and close dwelling, familiar beyond habit, gentle in the sense disclosed by Levinas: "*familiarity and intimacy are produced as a gentleness that spreads over the face of things*".<sup>89</sup> I have so often inhabited the memory of those places, that my immaterial revisits have preceded the long passing of time since I was in fact inhabiting or passing by there. That fluid surface of gentleness sometimes prolongs from memory onto the houses and places I now inhabit, in sudden sparks of familiarity and warmth which turn these buildings into dwellings, *locașuri*. That spark is thus at times prompted by my perceptual, affective and recollecting situatedness, but at other times - often - it is prompted by the place itself. I therefore fathom places to have an enveloping role which surpasses one's own struggle or desire to feel at-home within them. The experience of at-home-ness can happen at any point, even in unbuilt locations, and manifests itself as a desire to dwell

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<sup>87</sup> Casey, E., *op cit*, p. 200

<sup>88</sup> "[t]he first specific feature of Romanian language is the widespread use - for instance, far wider spread than in French and German - of diminutive suffixes. These suffixes do not only indicate something small, but serve a multitude of other purposes [...] [u]sing diminutives is, in our case, a way of suggesting creation, making [...] Diminutives do not always make smaller; in a sense they also enhance, through their function of bringing into existence", Noica, C. (1987) *op cit* (my translation from Romanian language), p. 209

<sup>89</sup> Levinas, E. (1979) *op cit*, p. 155

## Chapter 2 REACHING HOME

in that topography, to remain there without a clear vision of a built presence or of a dwelling within duration. It is an urge to establish there a "place of remembrance", *loc de pomenire*.

In the majority of cases, naturally, the one experiencing this sudden feeling will not return to erect there monuments as the rulers of long ago afforded to. In that case, the place will activate itself, it will *placefy* within the memory of the beholder, it will remain there as an invisible, but always inwardly re-visitible *dwelling*.

Along the journeys I pursued for this PhD across the cinematic landscapes of Ingmar Bergman and Andrei Tarkovsky, I have often come across such places. And often, as I am writing at an office desk in school, I still revisit them.



**Image 2.3** Outside the village of Lau, 10km before arriving at the location of Tarkovsky's film *Sacrifice* (1985), a place I often "revisit" after the first (and only time) I had passed by. At this point, dusk was beginning to settle and there was a strong scent of wood smoke in the air which, together with the colours and proportions of the landscape, prompted a familiar feeling of expectation, as if, once I would cross the hill in front of me, I would already see, awaiting, the gate of my grandmother's home. Photograph: © RB, 19 September 2013, island of Gotland, Sweden

# CHAPTER THREE

## HOME: in the Case Studies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman

### HOME AS INNER DWELLING:

Andrei TARKOVSKY's biography through houses and places

Episode 1: Objective Topography

Episode 2: Subjective Topographies

Episode 3: Autobiographical Topographies

### INTERLUDE:

GOTLAND, short history and description

### HOME AS PLACE AFFINITY:

An island's presence in the biography of Ingmar BERGMAN

*"Perhaps autobiography inevitably brings with it  
notions of space and place. [...]"*

*Perhaps space is already always present in autobiography."<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Moss, P. (2001), *Engaging Autobiography*, pp. 188-200, in P. Moss (Ed.) *Placing Autobiography in Geography*, Syracuse University Press, p. 194

## HOME AS INNER DWELLING

### Andrei TARKOVSKY's biography through houses and places

*Only one journey is possible: the journey within.  
We don't learn a whole lot from dashing about on the surface of the Earth.  
Neither do I believe that one travels so as to eventually return.  
Man can never reach back to the point of origin, because he has changed in the process.  
And of course we cannot escape from ourselves; what we are we carry with us.  
We carry with us the dwelling place of our soul, like the turtle carries its shell.  
A journey through all the countries of the world would be a mere symbolic journey.  
Whatever place one arrives at, it is still one's own soul that one is searching for.*<sup>2</sup>  
(Andrei Tarkovsky, 1984)

#### Episode 1: OBJECTIVE TOPOGRAPHY

Andrei Tarkovsky was born in April 1932, in Zavrazhe, on the banks of the river Volga, some 500km away from Moscow. He was the first son of Maria Ivanovna Vishniakova and Arseni Tarkovsky, both graduates from the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute. After Andrei was born, the couple continued to live in Zavrazhe and Moscow for another two years, leading an idyllic existence in the countryside, with short periods of urban life. During this time, Marina, their second child, was born. In 1935 the father left the family and Maria Ivanovna started to work as a proof reader in Moscow, struggling to raise by herself the two children. The three of them lived in a small flat on Schipovsky Alley, a central area of Moscow, in a building now demolished. Out of a firm conviction that a childhood spent in closeness to nature is an education in itself, but also to save money for several months each year, Maria Ivanovna was taking the two children every summer to a tiny village called Ignatievo, 70 km outside the city, where she was renting out a farmhouse. As the second world war started, Maria took the children and left Moscow, to seek shelter in Yourevets, a Volga municipality just across the waters from Zavrazhe, where she had relatives and acquaintances. They lived there between 1941 and 1943, Andrei attending the local school. In 1943 they returned to a war-changed Moscow and continued to live in the Schipovsky apartment. Apart from working as a proof-reader, the mother took care of the artistic and literary education of her children and, despite the lack of material comfort in their lives, she strived to instil in them a growing interest for musical and visual arts.

In 1950, Andrei started higher education in the Oriental Institute of Moscow, specializing in Arabic language and culture. Losing motivation for these studies and becoming involved with various hooligan youth groups, Andrei dropped out of the Institute. At this point, his mother intervened with the surprising gesture of enrolling her son as an assistant in a geological expedition organized by the Academy of Science Institute for Non-Ferrous Metals and Gold. The expedition was nowhere nearer than the Siberian

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<sup>2</sup>To *Journey Within*, Tarkovsky interviewed by Gideon Bachmann in the Swedish film journal *Chaplin*, no. 193, September 1984, translated and republished on *nostalghia.com* (last accessed 20 January 2015)

taiga, and lasted for over one year, but it proved to be precisely the extreme measure which served to clarify and to concentrate<sup>3</sup> the mind and the skills of the future artist. Upon return, in 1954, Andrei applied at the State Institute of Cinematography and brilliantly got accepted. He graduated in 1960, and began his film career, with a short film as a diploma project.

In 1957 Andrei had married Irma Rausch, a colleague from the film school, who played various parts in his first films. The couple had one son, Arseni, born in 1962. They lived in Irma's apartment, on Kalachnikovsky Street. Despite officially divorced only in 1970, their marriage ended in early '60s, when Andrei moved back to his mother's apartment, for a short period of time. He met Larissa Egorkina in 1965, on the set of his film *Andrei Rublev* (1966), for which she was the assistant director. The two of them lived on Orlovo Davidovsky street, in the apartment of Larissa's mother. In 1968, as they went to visit Larissa's parents in the district of Ryazan, they crossed the village of Myasnoye, which was at that time a remote and scarcely inhabited settlement. They became attached to the silence and beauty of the place, and eventually purchased a house there, in 1970, the same year of their wedding and of the birth of their son, Andrei - Andryusha. At a 300 km distance from Moscow, Myasnoye provided seclusion and peace, together with a house which became the closest to a home for the filmmaker who, after having moved through so many apartments, was writing in his diary in 1973: "*I shall soon be forty-two, and I have never had my own place*". The family spent their summers and occasionally winter months at this country-house, where Andrei was constantly working manually to build new rooms, to refurbish or extend parts of it, while Larissa was in charge of decorating the interiors. Her work was so intense that in 1976 Andrei was writing in his diary: "*Dearest Larochka! How grateful I am to you for this house. For understanding what matters to us*". In 1974, after having insistently asked for a work apartment from the Mosfilm authorities, Andrei, Larissa and Andryusha finally move to an apartment of their own, on Mosfilmovskiy street, minutes away from the offices of the State Film studios. This apartment, like the country house, was under constant repair and rebuilding work, due to the spatially creative minds of both Andrei and his wife.

In 1979-1980 Tarkovsky travelled to Italy for the documentary *Voyage in Time* (1983), not foreseeing that his own travel time was very soon approaching. Avoiding the major touristic places infused with overwhelming sense of the picturesque, during the shooting of this documentary, Tarkovsky discovers a tiny old Tuscan village, Bagno Vignoni, which eventually becomes the location for his next feature film, *Nostalghia* (1982). Before leaving Russia to film *Nostalghia*, he takes numerous polaroids with details of their Moscow flat, and of the country house and the landscape in Myasnoye. Intending to prolong his European stay in order to work on several films and theatre plays with the support of western countries, he repeatedly fails to obtain the agreement of Soviet authorities. His family is prohibited to travel out of Russia, and, after interventions from friends, only his wife succeeds to travel and meet him. The couple lives in a friend's apartment in Rome, on Via de Monseratto. They are given an old, but barely habitable, stone house in San Gregorio, and plan to refurbish it, but the designs do not receive the approval from the local heritage

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<sup>3</sup> a reference to Tarkovsky's screenplay *The Concentrate* (1958), the only film work in which he makes direct reference to his year in the taiga. The title was based on a procedure which geologists had to follow, "concentrating" rocks for four times, in order to analyze their innermost content, and eventually obtain industrial diamonds; the same procedure could be thought to have happened during the Siberian expedition also to Andrei's motivation for film studies, which, after several years of professional vagueness, appeared as an artistic diamond.

authorities. They manage to purchase land in a picturesque Tuscan village called Roccalbegna, and start collaborating with an Italian architect to design a house there. The architect's proposals, however, do not quite meet the expectations of Tarkovsky, who conceived this building to be his dream home, incorporating both his deepening nostalgia for the homeland and his new attachment to the Italian landscape. He therefore continues to draw his own projects for the house.

Due to growing tensions, in 1984 the Tarkovskys publically announce their decision to never return to Russia. The following years are marked by a painful waiting for their son to be allowed to join them. The couple moves between San Gregorio, Berlin and London, living in the houses of friends who were supporting their situation of self-exiles. During 1984-1985 Andrei travels to Sweden, living in Stockholm in apartments on Sybillegatan and on an almost rural part of the island of Djursholm, preparing for what was to be his last film, *The Sacrifice* (1985), shot during the spring and summer months on Gotland island, out in the Baltic sea. In 1985, the mayor of Florence offers the Tarkovskys an apartment in a Renaissance building on Via San Niccolo. Larissa devotes once again her energy in refurbishing this house and turning it into a welcoming home for her husband and for the rest of the family which they were still hoping would join them. When Andrei returns from Sweden and finds the renewed image of the Florence apartment, he notes down: "*Her talent, energy, stamina, and patience never cease to amaze me. What would I do without her. I hope now, after five years of life of misery we are going to have our own home*".

### Episode 1 - Epilogue

At the same time of starting to have this regained feeling of home, Andrei finds out about his terminal lung cancer, and spends the following year, 1986, between Paris, where he was either regularly hospitalized or had to receive treatment, a rehabilitation clinic in Oschelbronn, Germany, and the Italian seaside, near Ansedonia. Due to these circumstances, and following long pledges from international figures towards the Russian authorities, his son and Larissa's mother are finally given permission to visit them. Months afterwards, Andrei Tarkovsky dies in the Hartman clinic in Paris, on 28/29th of December 1986. Until the last weeks of his life, he didn't cease to sketch work plans for future films and drawings for the Roccalbegna project. The last drawing for this house, a minimalistic building etched in pure, simplified lines, bears the calmly reconciled words "*Home. Which I will never have*".



Дом, но. я так же люблю



**Image 3.1** Sketch from Andrei Tarkovsky's diary, dated December 1986; © ATII; above the drawing are written, in Russian, the words: "Home, which I will never have"

*And you know, there's another remarkable thing that I have observed. There was a great number of places where he lived. He lived on Schipovski Street. He lived near Mosfilmovskiy Street. He lived in Paris. He lived in Italy. He lived in Berlin. Yet he couldn't call any of these places where he resided his home. He didn't have a home. If he dreamed of something, he dreamed of a home. He wanted to have a home, and if there was something that wasn't given to him it was a home. And this was no coincidence. He was a pilgrim... and all of his protagonists are pilgrims. [...] And Andrei himself never had a home, because he's not supposed to have one. He's about something else. He is in the world, not in a home, even though he dreamed of a home. His destiny was a cane and a road. "My cane is my freedom", Mandelstam<sup>4</sup> wrote.<sup>5</sup>*

(Paola Volkova, Moscow Tarkovsky Fund)

<sup>4</sup> Osip Mandelstam (1891-1938), Russian poet, highly praised by Tarkovsky also; a sample poem, written in haiku style: "The shy speechless sound/ of a fruit falling from its tree/ and around it the silent music/ of the forest, unbroken" (from the 1908 volume *Stones*)

<sup>5</sup> excerpt from documentary *Meeting Andrei Tarkovsky* (USA, 2008)

## Episode 2: SUBJECTIVE TOPOGRAPHIES

*Home... you know, my father was a little bit obsessed by home, by the house.  
He made all these drawings because he never had one.  
The house he was born in doesn't exist anymore, it's underwater,  
so he could never go there to visit.  
He was born in this small country house near Volga, but his parents were from Moscow -  
they were going there for holidays, the parents of my grandmother were doctors there...<sup>6</sup>*  
(Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky)



**Image 3.2** - Cross on the remains of the Krivozerskii monastery, part of the sunken Zavrazhe village; photo ©RB June 2012

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<sup>6</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *My Father's Home*, interview taken by author on 8 December 2012 (unpublished)

The childhood countryside houses: (1932-1935), (1935-1941), (1941-1943), (1943-1960)

Although Arseni and Maria Ivanovna were studying and working in Moscow, Andrei Tarkovsky was born in the village of Zavrazhe, at the confluence of rivers Volga and Nyomda. This was the home of Maria's mother and stepfather, Vera Nikolaevna and Nikolai Matveyevich Petrov - a doctor in the local hospital. As Marina Tarkovskaya, the filmmaker's sister, writes: "*When Mother wrote to Zavrazhe that she was pregnant, Grandmother began pleading with her to let Nikolai Matveyevich deliver the baby at his hospital. The road there was long and hard. First they had to take a train to Kineshma for twenty-four hours. At the train station in Kineshma horse-driven sleds waited to take passengers to other destinations. [They] got in one of them and rode thirty kilometers. The road ran along the Volga, then over the frozen river. The Volga was just about to thaw and they were afraid they would not get to Zavrazhe on time [...] There wasn't enough time to get [Mother] to the hospital, so she gave birth to the baby at home, on the dining room table*".<sup>7</sup> "*He saw the light of day on a table clothed in white linen. His grandfather played the role of midwife*".<sup>8</sup> A letter sent on Andrei's 11th birthday by his father narrates other details of this event, with resonances of Arseni's nature-infused poetry: "*Then you were born and I saw you. I went outside and was alone. I could hear the ice breaking on the Nyomda river. It was evening and the sky was perfectly clear, and I saw the first star. Far away I could hear accordion playing*".<sup>9</sup> In late spring 1932, Maria Ivanovna remained in Zavrazhe with Andrei, while Arseni left to work in Moscow. During these months, with her literary skills that had already manifested themselves in university, she kept a tidy diary, with notes written in a simple and luminous language that seems to mirror the natural visual language later created by her son: "*Yesterday I rested - I put Drilka<sup>10</sup> in the garden under a linden in a box of potatoes. He slept there for three hours*"; "*We walked to the fir trees beyond the church, then went down to the meadow... We walked to the Nyomda. I put him between three logs, swaddled in a blanket, while I swam. The grove beyond the church is filled with grass up to my knees. There are so many flowers that the whole hill is bright with different colors. Night violets have already come out*".<sup>11</sup>

From the autumn of that year, Maria Ivanovna took Andrei to Moscow, but the family would often go for longer or shorter periods of time and live in Zavrazhe. Larissa, Andrei's second wife, writes: "*The first childhood of Tarkovsky was a very happy time. Until 1935, he lived with both parents between Moscow and their country house. His grandfather was often hunting. It was a life like in the olden days. His parents were not peasants, but intellectuals whose lives resembled those of peasants. They had cows. This idyllic existence found expression in his films, in images that come straight from the depths of nostalgia*".<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Tarkovskaya, M. (1990), *The Beginning*, pp. 11-24, in Tarkovskaya, M. (Ed.) *About Andrei Tarkovsky*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, p. 13

<sup>8</sup> Tarkovski, L. (1998) *Andrei Tarkovski*, (my translation from French language), Paris: Calmann-Levy, p. 11

<sup>9</sup> Arseni Tarkovsky's letter, dated 4 April 1943, quoted in Tarkovskaya, M., *op cit*, p. 15

<sup>10</sup> a nickname for Andrei, invented and used by his parents during his early infancy

<sup>11</sup> Tarkovskaya, M. (1990), *op cit*, p. 19

<sup>12</sup> Tarkovski, L., *op cit*, pp. 11-12

### Chapter 3 HOME in the Case Studies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman

Between 1955-1957, during the construction of the Gorki dam and hydroelectric plant downstream, Zavrazhe, together with other nearby villages, was flooded. Houses were relocated uphill, but the house where Andrei Tarkovsky was born remained under water<sup>13</sup>, its upper storey alone being disassembled and moved in an altered shape to a different place.



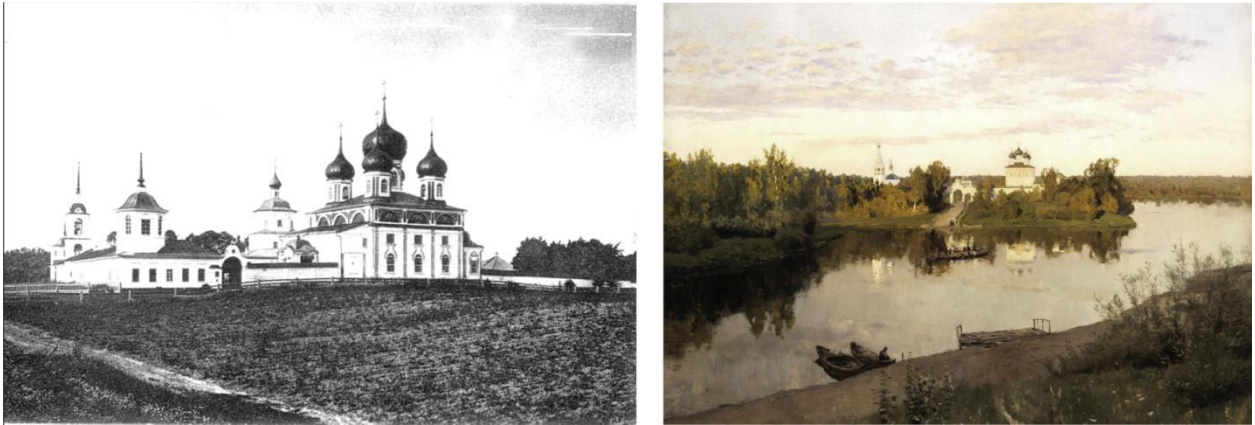
**Image 3.3** - Maria Ivanovna holding the newborn baby Andrei, inside the dacha in Zavrazhe, 1932 (left); exterior of the Zavrazhe farmstead, 1935 (right); images © ATII

*In Russia, everyone knows the legend of the Kitezh<sup>14</sup> town.  
In the times of Mongol invasions, this city, located on the route of the enemy,  
let itself be submerged by the waters of the lake Kitezh, in order to escape the plunderers.  
Underwater, it continued its immaterial existence,  
revealing itself only to chosen ones, at particular times during clear moonlit nights.  
Andrei was one of the chosen ones, because Zavrazhe, his own Kitezh,  
was appearing to him regularly.  
When dreaming, he could return to that house, and touch the places of his childhood.<sup>15</sup>*  
(Larissa Tarkovskaya)

<sup>13</sup> its upper storey alone was disassembled and moved to a different location; it is now open as memorial house

<sup>14</sup> the legend of the city, found in an "unknown location beyond the Volga" was combined with hagiographical narration about Saint Fevronia and transposed in opera by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov in *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevroniya* (1905); in the libretto, in the face of an ominous Tatar attack, "a golden fog rises over the lake and shrouds the city, hiding it from the enemy: only the church bells drone faintly"

<sup>15</sup> Tarkovski, L. , op cit, p. 11



**Image 3.4** - early 20th century photograph of the Krivozerskii monastery, found in Zavrazhe Municipality Archives (left); Isaac Levitan, *Evening Bells*, 1892, oil on canvas, now in Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow (right)

The church of the Nativity of the Mother of God, where Andrei was baptized, has survived despite serious damage to its walls, and is currently being restored<sup>16</sup>. However, together with the birthplace of the filmmaker, one of the sunken buildings of Zavrazhe was the impressive 17th century Krivozerskii monastery, of which only the belfry now emerges from the water. Since 2000, a new cross was erected on top of the belfry, as a memento for all the churches which have been flooded in the '50s.

The image of the monastery lingers with persistent atmospheric presence in the paintings of Isaac Levitan<sup>17</sup>, who arrived in the area in late 19th century. His paintings stem from a translucent and solitary silence, from many spring months of several years, in which the painter, who had been born and educated in cities, lived with local peasants in the most ordinary conditions, struggling with a heightened sense of alienation and loneliness, until he reached an experiential attunement to his surroundings. His works of Volga, precisely because they are painted in Levitan's trademark "mood landscape" style, and thus center on the experience of a landscape, rather than on the formal realism of the landscape itself, serve as mediators for understanding and perceiving the natural environment which marked the early infancy of Tarkovsky. The breadth of the Volga river, which at this spot runs slowly and smoothly, reflects the banks, duplicates the changing skies and liquefies the sounds<sup>18</sup>, ever increasing the sensation of distance, grandeur and loneliness, which characterize most of the Russian landscape. "*Volga left an impression of musicality, the vast expanse of the river was full of everything that floated, hooted, sang and cried out. In the towns there was a smell of fish, all sorts of food, horses - even the dust, for some reason, had a scent of vanilla.*"<sup>19</sup> The aquatic element, which is a distinctly characteristic feature of the tarkovskian universe, might well have

<sup>16</sup> views of this church and the surrounding area are published in a photo-blog at the address (last accessed 9 February 2015) [dimfoto.livejournal.com/93769.html](http://dimfoto.livejournal.com/93769.html)

<sup>17</sup> Isaac Levitan (1860 - 1900), classical Russian landscape painter, whose particular style became known as "mood landscape", a style in which he sought to express depths of the human soul through the very image of nature

<sup>18</sup> "*There used to be special Volga jokes, in which the main point was that people shouted to one another from great distances [on opposite banks], and things were misunderstood*", Likhachev, D. (2000) *Reflections on the Russian Soul*, Budapest: Central European University Press, p.33

<sup>19</sup> Likhachev, D. *op cit*, p.40

sprung precisely from this flowing musicality of the river into which the artist's early spaces have melted.

Long before Zavrazhe was flooded, Andrei's parents had found a cottage in Ignatievo, Tuchkovo municipality, 70km away from Moscow. Beside the possibility to save money during the summertime by living in the countryside and their common love for nature<sup>20</sup>, Arseni and Maria's choice to live in a small wooden house - a *dacha*<sup>21</sup> for several months each year was in fact a common practice in Russia. The word *dacha* existed in Old Russian language since the eleventh century, but in the seventeenth century its meaning came closer to the present one. Derived from the verb *to give* (Russian: *дать*), *dacha* first stood for a piece of land *given* by the tsar to faithful servitors<sup>22</sup>, and afterwards it came to denote the house built on this property. Along with development in Russia's cities, the urban nobility sought refuge in the countryside, especially during the stifling summer months. This tendency created favorable circumstances for the peasants who had recently been given land: temporarily moving to smaller or older houses, they could rent out their newly built properties to the urbanites fleeing their city life for a few months. In time, this summertime transhumance bred a distinctive architectural and functional category of countryside houses. By the nineteenth century, there could be found established *dacha* settlements who were looked after by the locals during the year, while during the summer months they were the residence of well known members of the nobility and intelligentsia, constituting the scene of flourishing cultural and artistic exchanges. They had become so deeply embedded in the building and residential tradition, that by 1842, the *Encyclopedia of the Russian Owner-Architect in Town and Country*, edited by P. Furmann, provided "an architectural pattern book" for *dacha* construction. The *dachas* presented in the book were "solidly built and fully equipped for comfortable family life. They tended to have a study, a nursery, separate rooms for dining and entertaining, bedrooms, and further refinements such as *budoirs* and relaxation rooms. Servants might be accommodated in small rooms inside the main house or in outbuildings. Attention was expected to be paid to the house's external aspect; it was particularly important that there should be a clean and uncluttered approach for visiting carriages".<sup>23</sup> Before the 1917 revolution, the prime-minister Stolypin<sup>24</sup> introduced a major reform in the way that Russian population was cohabiting. "Given the fact that everyone lived crammed on a limited territory, Stolypin brought forth the decision to create so called <living places> for peasants. These were formed of one or very few homesteads, a romantic community functioning in similar fashion to a beehive. Our parents liked this idea very much, since this type of settlement ensured each homestead gets a vast land in the middle of the forest, with a little water stream running nearby, a way of life which corresponded to their romantic natures. But once Stalin came into power in 1938, these settlements were destroyed, and the peasants were forced to live together in a crowded small territory, which permitted easier control and surveillance by the authorities".<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "Both our parents really loved nature and observed all of its manifestations", Tarkovskaya, M. *op cit*, p. 19

<sup>21</sup> a *dacha* (Russian: *дâча*) is a second home, with either a temporary or an all-year-round nature, serving as a countryside residence for city dwellers, but not as a main or the only home of a family

<sup>22</sup> Lowell, S. (2003) *Summerfolk, A history of the Dacha. 1710-2000*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, p. 8

<sup>23</sup> *idem*, p. 31

<sup>24</sup> Pyotr Arkadievich Stolypin (1862-1911), Russian Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs

<sup>25</sup> Marina Tarkovskaya, *Our childhood homes*, interview taken by author on 2 June 2012 (unpublished)



**Image 3.5** - Andrei and his father, in Ignatievo, 1935 (left); the Gorchakov dacha from Ignatievo (centre); Andrei and his mother, Ignatievo, 1935 (right); images © ATII

Before Andrei's parents separated, the entire family spent two summers in Ignatievo: Arseni, Maria, Arseni's mother and the two children; they lived together with the owners of the house, the Gorchakov family.<sup>26</sup> *"For Andrei, this time of his life left a very strong mark, the memory of which he kept as a treasure"*.<sup>27</sup> After Arseni left the family, Maria Ivanovna continued to take the children during the summers to the dacha of the Gorchakovs, with an interruption during the war, when the mother took the children to Yurevets, from 1941 to 1943.

After Stalin's agrarian reforms were implemented, the Gorchakov dacha was removed from its pastoral setting and reassembled inside Ignatievo village, in 1940. Maria Ivanovna considered the closeness to nature essential, and since the Gorchakov dacha no longer offered this, she sought different places, such as Salkovo, 40km away from Ignatievo.

Natalia Baranskaya, a colleague of Maria and Arseni from the Literature Institute, recalls: *"Those were hard times. We were poor but we still wanted to rent a house somewhere in the country for our children in the summer. Especially since our older ones - her son and my daughter - were not very healthy. In 1948 we stayed together in the same little village [Salkovo], outside Zvenigorod. Maria slept in a small room, with Andrei and Marina, while we lived in a makeshift summer room that had a small window without a frame. We would spend our evenings there on the wooden floor scrubbed clean white, on two hay mattresses situated by the log wall. [...] I think [Andrei] liked everything there - the smell of the hay and the wood, the growing darkness seen through the window, the stories and conversation. [...] We would go out into the woods with big baskets to pick mushrooms. There were lots of mushrooms and they were a significant part of our diet. Andrei didn't like hunting mushrooms; he would go to the woods alone and stay there for long periods of time"*.<sup>28</sup>

During the war refuge in Yurevets, Maria Ivanovna and the children stayed in the house of relatives; rather than a war-stricken Moscow, here the surroundings were familiar, since they were just across the waters from the Zavrazhe of Andrei's birth. These years were

<sup>26</sup> Pavel Gorchakov, the owner of the Ignatievo dacha, plays a short part in Tarkovsky's 1975 *The Mirror*; Andrei will also give the name "Gorchakov" to the main character of his 1982 film *Nostalgia*

<sup>27</sup> Marina Tarkovskaya, *quoted interview*

<sup>28</sup> Baranskaya, N. (1990), *Summer Evenings*, pp. 24-26, in Tarkovskaya, M. (Ed.) *About Andrei Tarkovsky*, Moscow: Progress Publishers

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particularly difficult, and Maria lived out of selling flowers, wild strawberries and eventually bargaining some of the precious family belongings. During these struggling years, the brightest moments were the visits of father, returning on leave from the war:

*Andrei and his sister were thus in Yourevets with their mother. Andrei kept a fond memory of this time. He was playing with his sister in the garden. It was springtime, an abundant rain was falling.[...] The children were playing in the puddles, and Andrei bent down to pick up a coin fallen in the water. Suddenly, he heard a voice calling him, a familiar voice. He ran towards that voice, his sister also, before even realizing what was happening. It was the voice of his father, who was returning during a leave from the front.<sup>29</sup> He hugged the two children, and the three of them started to weep.<sup>30</sup>*



**Image 3.6** - Andrei and his mother in Yourevets, 1935, image ©ATII (left); Yourevets today ; photo ©RB, June 2012 (right)

<sup>29</sup> In Synessios, N. (2001) *Mirror*, London: I.B. Tauris, p. 76, this event is assumed to have taken place in Peredelkino, where Maria Ivanovna had presumably gone with her children in the summer of 1943. In making this statement, the scholar Natasha Synessios draws upon Mosfilm information stating that the scene was filmed near the dacha of the writer Bruno lasensky in Peredelkino; it is also known that Arseni Tarkovsky had spent several years after the war in the writers' retreat at Peredelkino, but, lacking further sources of clarifying this issue, the present thesis will assume the position put forth by Larissa, taking into account a potential situation that the scene might merge the event in Yourevets with memories of visiting father in Peredelkino in post-war years

<sup>30</sup>Tarkovski, L. , op cit, p. 27



### The Moscow apartments: (1934-1965), (1974-1982)<sup>31</sup>

*...and then when he was living in Moscow it was these small rooms, in an old house in the centre of Moscow, but it was just these small rooms, where he lived with his mother; then he lived with friends and then he got married and he lived at his wife's apartment and then he left it to his ex-wife and son and he lived at my grandmother's house; and then he remarried, and so, you know, the house in Moscow, the first apartment he got, was in 1974, I think.<sup>32</sup>*

On 1934, Tarkovsky's parents moved into a communal apartment on Schipovsky street, in the central district of Moscow. Together with them were their two children: the two year old Andrei and the newly born daughter, Marina. "The two-room communal apartment was often visited by famous writers, poets, translators, artists. In such an environment was formed the talent of Tarkovsky".<sup>33</sup> Compared to the spatial richness which Tarkovsky's films display, this apartment is surprisingly small, simple and conventional. Later on, in 1974, when Andrei, his wife and son moved into the flat on Mosfilmovskiy street, the space between the walls of the apartment started to fill up with living objects and the feeling of home, visible traces of the owner's home-aware nature.



**Image 3.7** - (from left to right) 1: 1982, Andrei's last visit to the apartment building on Schipovsky street, before leaving Russia; 2, 3, 4: the apartment on Mosfilmovskiy Street: in front of the window of the living room (2); Andrei's study (3); the bedroom (4) - on the wall, an image of the house in Ignatievo; all images ©ATII

Tarkovsky's son narrates: "they got the apartment and then they started to reconstruct, because [my father] always wanted to adjust it to his vision, break up some walls, make an opening here. So they started, tore down some walls, but they never finished it, the apartment stayed like this until ten years ago, when I finished all the work - it was a constant reconstruction! The furniture was all antique, so it also had to be restored. So - the full process in motion. But it was a very interesting time, many people were coming, all the artists, it was a kind of bohemian life, very impressive for me as a kid to see. We had no phone in those days. People, friends, were just showing up at the door. It was very special, the door was always open. Actually, we had no doors, because there were two flats next to each other and the stairways, so the doors were never closed, even during the night, because you had to walk through two apartments. Can you imagine it now? With all these locks and metal doors... but that period was open. In those days, you would never be alone at the table! There were always friends, someone visiting. Well, sometimes my father was really disturbed, of course, because he had no silence, no concentration, so sometimes he would just close himself in his room. But the life

<sup>31</sup> both apartments are depicted in Alexander Sokurov's 1987 lyrical film *Moscow Elegy*

<sup>32</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *quoted interview*

<sup>33</sup> Maliukova, L., *Contours of the Moscow Museum*, Novaya Gazeta, No. 9, august 2014, [www.novayagazeta.ru/arts/64982](http://www.novayagazeta.ru/arts/64982) (last accessed 15 January 2015)

*of the house kept going, people kept coming, parents, relatives... so that was that period. It was mostly like this until he left, in 1982.*"<sup>34</sup>

### The house in Myasnoye: (1970-1982)

*Yes, that was the Moscow apartment, but the countryside house was actually the house where they put all their energy in, the money and everything... All the best things, all the best furniture, everything was going there. And actually there he was indeed happy, the place is 300km from Moscow by car, there's no trains.. it's far away from the train station, so there were not many people who were coming by. It was a kind of place where you could concentrate and work, he was also working physically a lot, he was building all the time. But there he could work, he wrote screenplays there; for him it was a very important place*"<sup>35</sup>.

In the 1960s, the strict regulations previously imposed on dacha construction by the soviet regime have started to relaxed. There were no more limitations of size or style, nor regarding the plot and the distance from inhabited areas. In mid '60s, Andrei had met Larissa on the set of *Andrei Rublev* (1966). After having finished the difficult and engaging shooting of the film, Larissa, who had relatives in Avdotinka, a village in the Ryazan district, persuaded him to go for a while in the countryside. The places seemed to be echoing Andrei's childhood and they were bringing with them a lifestyle he had long ago loved, but forgotten during the film school. The area "sunk into his soul"<sup>36</sup>, thus they often returned there. One spring, as they were walking together through the forests outside Avdotinka, "they lost their way and then suddenly came to a village they didn't know, and they saw a winding sandy road leading uphill, to a particularly looking house. It was a dark brick house, standing on higher ground, with a magnificent view over the meadows and the river, seen shining through the leaves of the trees down in the valley. It also had windows on two sides, overlooking a blooming garden. Andrei and Larisa gazed for a long time towards this house, with much longing"<sup>37</sup>. Returning to Avdotinka later, they found out from villagers that the house was for sale. It was not easy, but finally in 1970, their dream materialized and they bought this precise house"<sup>38</sup>. Located far from other buildings, the house was situated on a large piece of land with old trees, that stretched on the two sides of the local road: the land across the street from the house descending towards the river. One year after they bought it, a fire of unknown cause burnt down the house and only the brick walls remained.

The reconstruction process proved to be an endless source of inspiration for Andrei and Larissa, Andrei drawing numerous designs for the house, while Larissa was supervising

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<sup>34</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *quoted interview*

<sup>35</sup> idem

<sup>36</sup> Nikolai Skripkin, *Myasnoye - the haven of the famous director*, published in the weekly journal *Dom. Stroy*, no. 41, October 2014: [domstroymedia.ru/articles/publication/7834/](http://domstroymedia.ru/articles/publication/7834/) (last accessed February 2015)

<sup>37</sup> the scene is narrated almost entirely in the film *The Sacrifice* (1985)

<sup>38</sup> Galina Chikvarkina, *Andrei Tarkovsky's favourite village*, article published on 29 March 2012 in the online newsletter RV: [rv-ryazan.ru/news/12928.html](http://rv-ryazan.ru/news/12928.html) (last accessed February 2015)

the works done by local craftsmen and designing the interiors. *"Andrei himself drafted a new home, he drew sketches for all spaces of the house. His wife put his plans into action, finding local builders to erect the house strictly following his sketches. From the outside, the house seems small, but the impression changes dramatically once you are inside. The house surpasses by far the village standards, having a porch, a large hallway, a kitchen and a bathroom, a room where Andryusha and Larissa's mother were sleeping, the bedroom of the spouses and the study room. All objects have been preserved inside the house, keeping the authentic feeling of dwelling. The walls themselves seem to emanate the creative energy of Tarkovsky. The corridor displays an unusual combination of colors: green floor, white walls, dark brown wooden furniture. All furniture is wooden, items come from late 19th and early 20th century, and are carefully chosen to harmoniously fit together in an homogenous style. The house has two stoves, one in the kitchen, one in the study and bedroom. The kitchen is small, but very cozy. In the kitchen oven, Anna Semyonovna, Larissa's mother, was once baking delicious cakes. Andrei and Larissa often walked in the forest, Larissa picking up flowers and Andrei collecting strange shaped twigs and roots, from which he was afterwards designing home decorations and accessories. A central place in the house was occupied by a piano. Across the street from the house there is a small Russian bath cottage, which Tarkovsky built himself. From the porch of this cottage, there is a beautiful view of the river, to which it is connected by wooden steps".*<sup>39</sup>

Larissa writes: *"For him [this] home was a primordial, maternal, nourishing place. It meant far more than a house: it was a refuge, a clinic, a place where he was able to write, but also to build an attic, a sauna, a barn. He needed nothing more than this. [...] It was him that managed to breathe into the house an inimitable atmosphere. When he would sit on the porch of his home, the miracle was starting. The miracle were the clouds, the grass, the insects. The inner film, the most truthful one, the one without subject or characters, which he had always dreamed of filming, was then rolling before his eyes".*<sup>40</sup>

In time, Myasnoye came to represent a world of its own for the family, as well as for the creative process which Tarkovsky developed. Small stories of interactions with the local people, the nearby animals or even the natural events as perceived from this house found their way into the screenplays of later films, or sketched out as nuclei for potential new projects. *"Animals started to enter our lives only after we had purchased Myasnoye. In the beginning, we took a cat. Afterwards, numerous animals were coming from to us the forest. Hares. They were not afraid: they would play with the cat, I was feeding them. For Andrei this was a miracle. He was watching the birds flying around me, resting on my head or on my shoulders. When I was leaving the house, the chickadees were following me, flying so slowly as if they were walking in the air. A scene of The Mirror".*<sup>41</sup> The artist's son also narrates similar episodes of his childhood spent at Myasnoye: *"[My father] had this project for a documentary about the countryside; it never happened, but it would have been very funny: at that time there were maybe only five-ten families living there... and these people had become completely strange, because the place was so isolated and they were living there all the time. [...] [The forester's] horse used to come to our place, he was walking freely all around the village and he used to come to our kitchen window, it was at his level, so it was happening that we'd be sitting at the table, inside the house, and suddenly a horse head just*

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<sup>39</sup> idem

<sup>40</sup> Tarkovski, L., *op cit*, p. 82

<sup>41</sup> idem

### Chapter 3 HOME in the Case Studies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman

*appeared through the window! asking for food, because we were giving him bread and salt, or apples".<sup>42</sup>*

Larissa remembers that when Andrei went to Myasnoye for the last time before leaving Russia in 1982, *"he walked around the house and the garden, with a heightened attention watching and listening to everything that was going on in the nature, as if seeing or hearing something we could not perceive, and he kept saying to us: Larissa! Anna Semyonovna! Do you hear it?"<sup>43</sup>*



**Image 3.8** - images of Myasnoye: polaroids taken by Andrei inside the dacha and around, before leaving Russia; all ©ATII

In the mid nineties, when the exile restrictions had been lifted, Larissa returned to Myasnoye and stayed for long periods of time in their beloved home, before she died in 1998 of lung cancer, the same disease that had taken away her husband.

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<sup>42</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *quoted interview*

<sup>43</sup> Tarkovski, L. *op cit*, p. 115

### The travels, Italy and Sweden: (1979-1980), (1982-1986)

*Because of his profound nostalgia for Russia, even though he knew he would be in Italy for the length of the movie, I often saw that he would stop to stare at the ploughed fields, it was in autumn. He would spend ten minutes staring at those ploughed fields! One day I asked: "Andrei, why do you look at the ploughed earth?" "Because I am in Russia. The ploughed earth is the same everywhere and for those ten minutes I feel as if I am in Russia"<sup>44</sup>.*

#### ITALY

Tarkovsky had initially traveled to Italy in late 1979, filming the documentary *Voyage in Time* (1983), together with his friend Tonino Guerra<sup>45</sup>, with whom he also collaborated on the script. The documentary traces their search for a suitable film location. Earlier in 1979, Maria Ivanovna, Andrei's mother, had died, and, according to Larissa, his feeling of loneliness deepened and this accounted greatly for his decision to leave Russia and work abroad for a while.

In what was to be the 1982 film *Nostalghia*, initially conceived as a Russia-Italy coproduction, the first draft of the screenplay included an architect, coming to visit the built magnificence of Italy. Along the twelve versions of the screenplay, the idea evolved, the main character changing into a writer, researching the path of a Russian musician, a real figure, who lived in Italy during the 19th century. In *Voyage in Time*, as in the memories of Guerra, the two of them roam through the most picturesque and photogenic places of Italy, but all of this natural and architectural grandeur leaves the Russian filmmaker desolate, as he realizes he wants "to interfere with people and feelings, not beauty and architecture".<sup>46</sup> It was only in Bagno Vignoni, a remote village in the depths of Tuscany, away from the main touristic routes, that Tarkovsky felt he could grasp the essence of place, an essence reconciled with his own memories of atmosphere and proportions. This little village and its medieval swimming pool which replaces the central square "captivated him since he first came here. He was spending weeks on end there among sounds, the light, the water. He would have made this place the center of his film".<sup>47</sup> In 1980 he returned to Russia and continued to develop the screenplay. Then, in 7th March 1982, he left for Italy, in order to film *Nostalghia*. The plan was to shoot parts of the film in Italy and other fragments, including the family's countryside house, were to be filmed in Russia, in Myasnoye. However, during the process of working on the film, the Russian film studio decided to step out of the coproduction. Moreover, the son, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law were not given permission to visit Andrei in Italy, for the duration of his work on the film. Only Larisa managed to join him towards the end of 1982. Increasingly, the members of the family who remained in Russia started to be treated as outcasts and as "unfriendly to the system", to the extent that even previously close friends were now avoiding them. As the conditions worsened, in 10th of

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<sup>44</sup> Tonino Guerra, interviewed for the documentary *Tarkovsky: Time within Time* (Newcastle Productions, 2014)

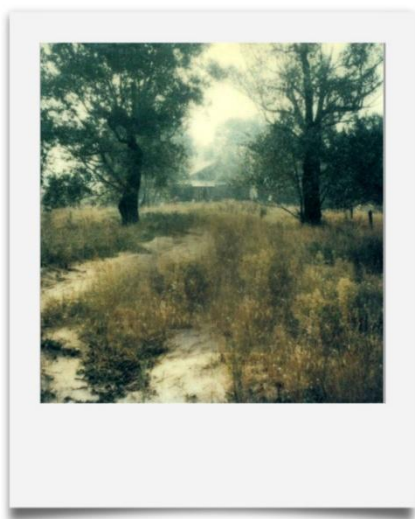
<sup>45</sup> Tonino Guerra (1920-2012), Italian poet and screenwriter

<sup>46</sup> from the documentary *Voyage in Time* (Italy, 1983)

<sup>47</sup> Demont, E. (1990), In Search of Lost Time, pp. 330-371, in Tarkovskaya, M. (Ed.) *About Andrei Tarkovsky*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, p. 333

May 1984, Andrei and Larisa publically announced that they would never return to Russia. In the film, a direct material of Russia's stepping out of the production meant that another location, in place of Myasnoye, had to be found in Italy.

This was not easy, since in Italy even the vegetation differs from Russia. But a good spot was found - a valley with deciduous trees - and the house was rebuilt, strictly following the forms and proportions of the Myasnoye dacha: "he chose the place, he put the wooden pole in the ground and said: here should be the camera; and the house should be right there. They traced all the measures and started building. After two months of working building up the house, when the film crew was shooting somewhere else, he came and looked at the place from the wooden pole and he said: no! the house should be more to the left. And they had to rebuild it completely. But he didn't change the position of the pole, he changed the position of the house! The guy who had to build and rebuild it, the scenographer, told me this story".<sup>48</sup> In the behind-the-scenes footage of *Nostalghia*, Andrei is seen constantly holding in his hand a polaroid, comparing the captured image of his far away home and the house which now stood before him.



**Image 3.9** - polaroid of the Myasnoye dacha, taken by Andrei before leaving Russia; image ©ATII (left); Italy, Andrei walking on the set of *Nostalghia*, holding a polaroid photograph in his hand<sup>49</sup>; image ©Donatella Baglivo (right)

With all the difficulties of living abroad, and the pain of being separated from their son, Andrei and Larisa began to settle in Italy, strongly believing that once they will have a house and the proper conditions for receiving Andryusha, Olga - Larisa's daughter from her first marriage and Anna Semyonovna - Larisa's mother, things might improve and their dear ones could eventually receive a permission to join them. Before arriving in Italy, Tarkovsky has long had a profound admiration for Renaissance visual art, which populates

<sup>48</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *quoted interview*

<sup>49</sup> extract from Donatella Baglivo's documentary footage on the filming of *Nostalghia*

many of his early films, and which ensured smoother adapting to an environment that bears strong traces of this familiar artistic context. *"I saw him getting accustomed to living in Italy, how, like many other Russians, he came to love this country with time. He grew attached to the country as he could never have become attached to France, despite the fact that he was revered, loved and respected in France. Cartesian rationalism was always distressing him, and he rebelled against it [...] In Italy, in the climate of intuition and human warmth marking Italian culture, he felt much better."*<sup>50</sup>

Talking about the affinity which Russian artists seem to have for Italy, Tarkovsky's son, himself established in Italy since the late '80s, says: *"[Italy] is similar to Russia in its presence, the overwhelming presence of nature, of landscape, of beauty, or rather, in the strong feeling you have for nature and landscape. But in Italy it is maybe the opposite of Russia. I strongly believe that landscape influences a lot nationalities, the personality of a nation. Russian spaces are endless spaces, whereas here there are all these hills - it's a completely different vision, the perspective is completely changed; here you always have something in front of you, in Russia you can go with your eyes to infinity. It's a little bit like living on the ocean, and people living on the ocean have different mentality, since they constantly find themselves in front of the infinity, of the water. That is something very Russian, very specific for the middle of Russia... which you don't have here. The Russian nature is sad. In a very few words you can characterize the Russian nature by its sadness, all this longing... It's not explosion, it's not the joy of the Italian nature, which even in winter is still showing itself as beautiful, possessing an inner joy. In Russia - no. If you go to the Russian countryside, your first feeling is this, my God, the longing, the sadness"*<sup>51</sup> Incidentally, it was precisely this Russian longing and sadness, this nostalgia, which Tarkovsky sought to capture through the film he shot in Italy.

Oleg Yankovsky<sup>52</sup>, the main actor of the film *Nostalghia*, remembers events during the work for the film in Italy: *"One evening we were sitting in a small cafe in an empty square. We began to talk about nostalgia. How could one play-act it in a Russian way? What did it involve? Only birch trees? But there are birch trees in Italy, too. And nostalgia? It probably also exists in Italy. Then, as if it were in a second-rate film, two boys came to us, one with a hat, the other with an accordion, and the boy began to play a Russian tune. <It's too much,> said Andrei. <Don't tell anybody: they won't believe it.> But that was how it was. There was always an aura of unpredictable opportunities and experiences around him. The most ordinary reality would unexpectedly become incredible"*<sup>53</sup>

Tarkovsky ceaselessly repeated that through this film he wanted to express a certain nostalgia that is specifically Russian, a feeling in which home-attachment and homesickness are paradoxically interconnected, since *"[Russian artists] cannot simply avoid the home, as an*

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<sup>50</sup> Zanussi, K. (1990), About Tarkovsky, pp. 210-217, in Tarkovskaya, M. (Ed.) *About Andrei Tarkovsky*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, p. 215

<sup>51</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *quoted interview*

<sup>52</sup> Oleg Yankovsky (1944-2009), Russian actor, he played the role of the Father in Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* (1975) and the main character, Andrei Gorchakov, in *Nostalghia* (1982). Tarkovsky had him in mind also for his last film, *The Sacrifice* (1985), but the Russian film studios did not allow Yankovsky to travel to Sweden

<sup>53</sup> Yankovsky, O. (1990), Tarkovsky - A Truly Russian Artist, pp. 218-256, in Tarkovskaya, M. (Ed.) *About Andrei Tarkovsky*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, pp. 220-221

*understanding of its symbolism is central to literary expression. Neither is homelessness a viable alternative; eternal wandering threatens to prevent the writer from achieving both spiritual depth and heightened aesthetic awareness*".<sup>54</sup> However, there is a significant amount of representative works of Russian novelists, in which the absence of a home, either caused by a physical distance from the homeland, or a lack of a permanent residence within its borders, constitute the very catalyst for a literary representation of what home means for a Russian. These works in prose, suggestive for the Russian spirit, seem to point "*that those who are <outside looking in> may enjoy the clearest perspective on this Russian <home> although they are not allocated a place within it*".<sup>55</sup> In this context, Tarkovsky's distancing from Russia and his work dedicated to longing for the homeland, together with the home situated therein, are inscribed in a long artistic tradition initially established by Gogol<sup>56</sup>, "*who refined and practiced the theory of knowing Russia better from a distance; he took in the sweeping, panoramic view of Russia depicted in Dead Souls from the vantage point of Rome*".<sup>57</sup> "*The meaning of home becomes apparent and artistically expressible only when the writer is allowed to venture away from home*"<sup>58</sup> was plainly stated later by his fervent admirer, Bulgakov<sup>59</sup>.

In a similar note, Larissa Tarkovskaya writes about Andrei's attachment to the dacha in Myasnoye: "*He would have been able to live there his entire life, with the condition of knowing that one day he could leave it and go wherever needed. Without this freedom, any place, even the dearest, would become a prison for Andrei*".<sup>60</sup> Once given the chance to leave his dacha and to be conclusively far away from it, to experience strongly and fervently its absence, the artist was ultimately able to express its meaning through moving images. Tarkovsky's trip to Italy was therefore a journey of getting closer to the meaning of home, clearly inscribed in the tradition of Russian artists, and continuing their literary works through cinematic language. "*My job is to speak in living images, not in arguments. I must exhibit life full-face, not discuss life*"<sup>61</sup> he noted down the words of Gogol, his precursor in nostalgia.

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<sup>54</sup> Singleton, A. (1997) *Noplace like Home: the literary artist and Russia's search for cultural identity*, New York: State University of New York Press, p. 3

<sup>55</sup> idem, pp. 7-8

<sup>56</sup> Nikolai Gogol (1819–1898), one of the most praised Russian writers of all time, who spent twelve years travelling through Europe, mainly settled in Italy; his novel *Dead Souls* was first published in 1842

<sup>57</sup> Singleton, A. *op cit*, p. 12

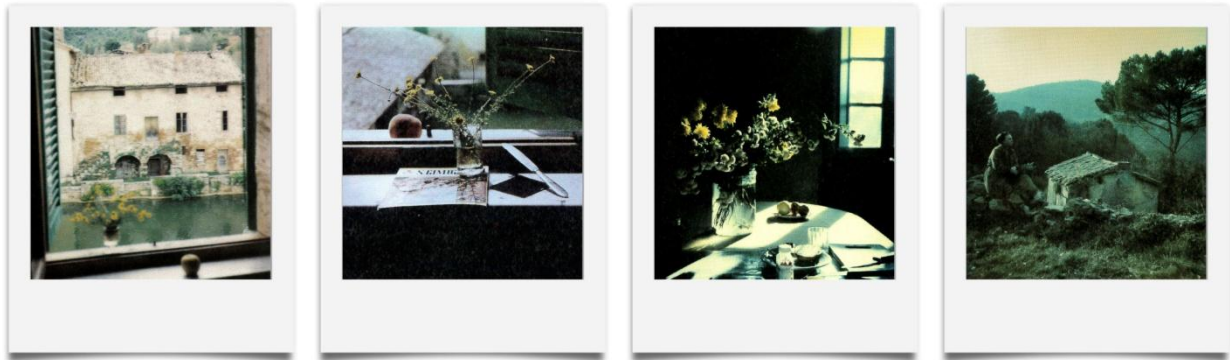
<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Mikhail Bulgakov (1891-1940), Russian writer, mostly known for his novel *The Master and Margarita*

<sup>60</sup> Tarkovski L. *op cit*, p. 82

<sup>61</sup> fragment from a letter written by Nikolai Gogol in 1848; quoted in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on Cinema*





**Image 3.10** - Images of dwelling in Italy (from left to right) 1 and 2: 1982, the window of the hotel room in Bagno Vignoni, during the filming of *Nostalghia*; 3 and 4: 1983, San Gregorio, the first Italian house of the Tarkovsky family; all ©ATII

Away from the known way of life, the Tarkovskys continued to extend their home atmosphere into the Italian lands, as Olga Surkova remembers:

*For Tarkovsky, the house has always been important, his refuge after work. When I arrived at his apartment in Italy, located on the top floor of an old 15th century house, I could not help but smile satisfied. Everything was as it used to be in Russia, as it was supposed to be in his house. Had I entered this apartment by mistake, I could have guessed immediately who the owners are - to such a degree was I familiar to the interiors, the scents, the objects, which were miraculously settling in places inhabited by the Tarkovskys, however briefly. There it was: the same whitewashed walls, contrasting strongly - as Tarkovsky liked it - with the silhouettes of the old, dark wooden furniture. The empty room had become filled with the infinite lives of the objects within it: just like in his films, so also were the spaces created by him and his wife in their real homes. There was everything I knew: fresh flowers in simple transparent glass vases, large baskets of fruits, photographs on the walls, lithographs or reproductions of paintings on the shelves, among books, and windowsills full of random vintage trinkets, these things which had a patina, the trace of their existence in time. The kitchen walls were adorned with bunches of garlic and herbs, as they are sold in southern markets. The apartment was filling with smells of delicious food cooked at home, with love and imagination, bringing that particular value to the word <meal>, as it was once attached to it by our grandfathers and great-grandfathers. This was the strong inheritance of Larissa, who can tirelessly build the fortress walls of home around any place where her husband stops to work on films, for longer or shorter stays: be it a hotel, a random village hut, or a rented house<sup>62</sup>:*

After having lived in Rome for a while, the couple finds a cheap old stone house in San Gregorio, and they buy it in 1983. After much repair work on this dilapidated building, they spend several months there, befriend the villagers. A local mason remembers "He used to come over. Just dropped by and said, for instance: <let's go somewhere.> We took the car and went to the mountains. Or went to gather blackberries or pick flowers. [...] He always said hello to everyone he met, even to the children in the village"<sup>63</sup>. The plans for the restoration and extension of the tower they had bought in San Gregorio never received approval, but in

<sup>62</sup> memoirs of Olga Surkova, Tarkovsky's assistant on writing *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*

<sup>63</sup> Alberto Barberi - quoted in Demont, E. (1990), *op cit*, p. 346

1984, the mayor of Florence gives them as a gift from the municipality a top floor apartment, 10 minutes away from the house where Dostoevsky<sup>64</sup> had completed his novel *The Idiot* (1869) and overlooking the olive groves from the hill where Tchaikovsky<sup>65</sup> had spent his twelve Italian years (1878-1890). This apartment has remained the most permanent residence of the family afterwards, and now hosts the Archives of the Andrei Tarkovsky International Institute. Although "at that time it felt a little bit like countryside, not even like a town"<sup>66</sup>, Florence was still far from Andrei and Larissa's wish to recreate in Italy a life close to nature, just like they used to have it in Russia. This is why, in 1985, they found and purchased land in Roccalbegna, a 12th century Tuscan village with preserved street texture and houses engulfing remaining ancient walls with frescoes. They started collaborating with several local architects on projects for a house on this terrain, but in parallel, Tarkovsky began intensively sketching his own visions for this house.



**Image 3.11** - Sequence of drawings by Andrei Tarkovsky, for the prospective house in Roccalbegna, Italy (1982-1986); images ©ATII, presented in the exhibition "Le Case di Andrei Tarkovskij", Florence, Italy, in December 2012

<sup>64</sup> Fyodor M. Dostoevsky (1821-1881), one of the main Russian writers of all times, greatly revered by Tarkovsky

<sup>65</sup> Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), Russian composer and author of some of the most famous ballets

<sup>66</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *quoted interview*

Viewed in the context of drawings previously sketched for the house in Russia, these projects display an intrinsic blend between two different cultures and building traditions, the architectural forms being the visible side of another, more profound assemblage of cultures. Considered as a sequence, the drawings record not only the metamorphosis of the small Russian dacha into an imposing Italian villa, but rather, the way in which the Russian home lingers with much stamina within Italian forms, subsumed and coexisting with a growing fascination for them. What's surprising is that there seems to be no apparent contradiction between these disparate architectural forms, the blend happens naturally, almost organically. Moreover, despite the final versions of the house highlight the magnificence of the exterior, its interior spaces are tuned to a different, more human scale, giving rise to an unexpected non-tensed ambivalence between the outside and the inside. This ambivalence is not traceable in the projects developed by the architects, which don't succeed to capture the subtleness of the blend between the dacha and the Tuscan villa.

When seeing the proposals of the architects *"he said: I want a country house, not the Moscow metro station! I just want something simple"*.<sup>67</sup> In order to make his views more understandable for the Italian architects, Tarkovsky kept a tidy album made of cut-outs from interior design magazines, with architectural details he liked, all of them in a minimalistic rustic format. The album was regrettably lost, but his son remembers the very few requirements: *"He just wanted a house. A home. With old stonework, masonry ,very simple, but at the same time complex in its details"*.<sup>68</sup> After the untimely death of the filmmaker, the land was sold in the same, unbuilt, state; his wife and son could not afford continuing the work on the house, nor was there a feeling of home left to inhabit this potential construction: *"my father was able to create his world out of nothing, it was existing around him like an aura, which you cannot take away. That's why people, not only us, also other people, friends, miss him, still miss him, because it was so strong, this atmosphere around him, he created this feeling, that's the most important thing that everybody misses. And it was like home, being next to him, in this atmosphere. You can do it with constructions, with walls, but he could manage to build it with just words and feelings. Normally you can build this home within you, but he was expanding it outside, so strongly and powerfully"*.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> idem

<sup>68</sup> idem

<sup>69</sup> idem

## SWEDEN

If the historical and literary Italian context provided for Tarkovsky traces of familiarity and points of artistic congruence, the Swedish lands were distinctly different. "It would seem that due to its northern location, Scandinavia should have much more in common with Russia, yet it was very distant from him because of its Protestant puritanism, a completely different type of intuition, another understanding of life and the world than the one he carried within himself".<sup>70</sup> In these circumstances, it is particularly notable to observe how Tarkovsky managed to artistically inhabit Sweden, in order to create such a spatially meaningful oeuvre as *The Sacrifice* (1985).



**Image 3.12** - (from left to right) 1. Sybyllegatan 77 (the red building); 2. view from Lill-Jansskogen; 3. Andreegatan - (building on the right); 4. historic image of one of the preserved buildings near Andreegatan; images ©RB (1-3), 4 ©Stockholm City

The Russian artist's ties with Sweden were multiple and had started since late '70s, when the Swedish Film Institute had initially invited him to work on a film financed by them. Moreover, there was a failed attempt of a collaboration between Bergman and Tarkovsky<sup>71</sup>, a plan which was lingered over many years. In both cases, the proposals did not receive the support of the Moscow film authorities. Once *Nostalghia* was completed, the Swedish Film Institute renewed their offer and Tarkovsky set off to Sweden in spring 1984. With temporary breaks in Florence, where the family's main residence was, and some months spent in Berlin, Tarkovsky lived in Sweden until end of 1985. His first residence in Stockholm was on Sybyllegatan, on the third floor of a neoclassical apartment building overlooking a street neatly lined with similar tall buildings, 15 minutes walking distance from both the Film Studios and from the park Lill-Jansskogen, one of the many urban forests of the city, where to this day one can find deer, rabbits and rural silence.

Later on, Andrei was given a different apartment, in a small residential area on Kungliga Djurgården, an island covered in woodlands and packed with historical and cultural attractions of great significance for Stockholm. Andrei's apartment, despite being located inside one of the very few four-storey buildings in the area, overlooked historical cottages and mansions that have been preserved since the seventeenth century and which still carry the character of the place from the days when Djurgården was the home of shipbuilders.

<sup>70</sup> Zanussi, K. (1990), About Tarkovsky, pp. 210-217, in Tarkovskaya, M. (Ed.) *About Andrei Tarkovsky*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, p. 215

<sup>71</sup> Berinde, R. (2013) Entering the Room: Spatial Metaphors as Dialogue between Tarkovsky and Bergman, pp. 156-171 in J. Pieldner and Z. Ajtony (Eds.) *Discourses of Space*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Beside such neighbours, Tarkovsky's street, ominously called Andreegatan, was 3 minutes away from the water shore and another 3 minutes away from Skansen<sup>72</sup>, where houses still carry the weight of the Swedish traditional everydayness.

In spring 1985, the film crew left for the east coast of Gotland island, out in the Baltic Sea. One of the crew members remembers: "24 April 1985. We have arrived in Gotland by plane. We are staying in Visby, the capital of the island, with its fortress walls, ruins and gardens. Andrei is in rapture about this well-prayed-over land, and says: <It was a good choice I made, for a reason!> There are ninety-two churches of the early Middle Ages on this island. For a long time he searched for an Orthodox church with its original frescoes built by Russian merchants in the 12th century".<sup>73</sup> Gotland had been cinematically discovered twenty years before by Ingmar Bergman, who had also become an islander in the meantime, residing in the north of the island. The landscape was barren and plain, with scarce vegetation. "When locations were being considered, we were looking for an open, endless, timeless stretch of landscape".<sup>74</sup> "It's a more Bergman-like nature, but there is still the fog, the place itself... I think he liked it precisely because it was so void, so empty, he could clean the film image from everything superficial, he kept only the essence. And the essence was the same, it was the house".<sup>75</sup> However, "to face the sea every morning is, for a Russian, truly to feel that one had reached the end of the world"<sup>76</sup> and the chosen location displays a strange, hidden duality. Along the seashore the landscape is arid and flat, with stony beaches, sparse pine groves and continuous grass. Moving just a little further inland from the seashore film locations, the vegetation becomes strikingly similar to Russia: abundant wheat fields surrounded by forests of pine and birch trees, strongly echoing the nature around Tarkovsky's Ignatievo, as it was depicted in *The Mirror*. Despite the astonishing resemblance, none of the scenes in *The Sacrifice* was filmed in these settings, and this seemingly minor detail could nevertheless be essential in understanding Tarkovsky's spatial conception of this last picture, filmed across the water from Russia. The house portrayed in the film has a wooden exterior and stone interior, it seems to shatter under the wind from the outside, but gives a sensation of stability from the inside. Inhabiting the sea shore that faces Russia, Tarkovsky chose a location that transmits emptiness and longing, but which, just in the case of the house, had also another side, of nurturing and protection. This nature, so similar to the places of Andrei's childhood, remained hidden from the camera. When no return to Russia was possible again, there remained no cinematic image of dear places. To visualize them on film would have equalled acknowledging their loss, whereas remaining hidden, these continued their existence within.

The interiors Tarkovsky creates in the main house of the film (where the main character, Alexander, and his family live) are skilful reiterations of his houses from Russia and Italy, but the secondary house which is portrayed becomes the ground for a subtle

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<sup>72</sup> Skansen, the first open-air museum, opened in 1891. Its founder, Artur Hazelius (1833–1901) purchased over 150 houses from various parts of Sweden and transported them piece by piece to Stockholm, where they were re assembled to form a comprehensive experience of pre-modern Swedish life

<sup>73</sup> Alexander-Garret, L. (2012) *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Collector of Dreams*, London: Glagoslav, p. 136

<sup>74</sup> idem, p. 110

<sup>75</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *quoted interview*

<sup>76</sup> Lowell, S. (2003), *op cit*, p. 95

blend with the Swedish context. The props list for this secondary house (where Maria lives) include "artefacts of religious peasant culture, old ornaments, kitsch"<sup>77</sup> and for inspiration there is a reference to the photography album of Sune Jonsson, entitled *Bilder av nådens barn* ("Images of the Children of Grace"). This album, published in 1963, had the subtitle "an environmental study" and included photographs and short stories from the lives of people from the Västerbotten region in the north of Sweden, which was also Jonsson's native land. In this book Jonsson focused on the religious communities of the area: "[I wanted to photograph] the home environments that the Rosenius<sup>78</sup> people of my grandfather's generation created". He considered that these home environments "gave shape in an austere way to people's longing for the afterlife and deep faith in God as a loving father who gladly kept in grace all faithful Christians on their way home... Returning as an adult to an experiential subject matter that I had been formed by and distanced myself from, opened my eyes to the Old Believers' trust and clarified view of life".<sup>79</sup>



**Image 3.13** (from left to right) 1. photograph from Jonsson's *Bilder av nådens barn* (Vormträsk 1962); 2 and 3. scenes from *Sacrifice*, interior of Maria's house; 4. photograph from Jonsson's *Bilder av nådens barn* (Hökmark 1961)<sup>80</sup>

Despite Tarkovsky doesn't mention in any of his writings the fact that he had drawn inspiration from Sune Jonsson's work, the influences are strongly visible in film. The feeling of home experientially communicated by the photographs is akin to Tarkovsky's contemplative long takes. It seems the gaze of both artists met the surface of everyday things with the same sense of wonder and reverence for home; Jonsson entitled his album "an environmental study", believing that by photographing the way in which people inhabit their closest environment, he could capture and communicate aspects of their innermost

<sup>77</sup> Props List for *Interior-Maria's House/ Studio 1/ Swedish Film Institute*; the document is reproduced digitally by nostalgia.com research archive, with the permission of Kerstin Eriksdotter, Assistant Director for *The Sacrifice*; [http://people.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalgia.com/TheTopics/Offret/Documents/scene\\_02.jpg](http://people.ualgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalgia.com/TheTopics/Offret/Documents/scene_02.jpg) (last accessed February 2015)

<sup>78</sup> Carl Olof Rosenius (1816-1868) was a Swedish preacher, native of Västerbotten, whose teachings were influential in the 19th century religious revival movement, mainly in northern Sweden

<sup>79</sup> Jonsson, S. (2007) *And Time Becomes a Wondrous Thing*, Umeå: Västerbotten Local Folklore Society

<sup>80</sup> The house belongs to Jenny Edström, from Hökmark, Lövånger; Sune Jonsson wrote: "When I first visited her home in the summer of 1961, I was struck by the distinctive home environment that had been shaped by the local Rosenianism. "Nådens barn" (Children of Grace) somehow became a natural term for these old faithful believers. And I began my investigation of their environments which were quickly disappearing"

realities. Whether or not Tarkovsky was aware of Jonsson's perspective on *Nådens barn*, it is significant the choice of his photographs as a reference for cinematically composing a feeling of home in a Swedish context. Against the ascetic Gotland landscape, these warm interiors that are molded on the spatial traces of a lost spirituality, reinforce the idea that Tarkovsky inhabited Sweden not by subscribing to its contemporary culture, its flamboyant modernity, or even through immersing in its natural and architectural picturesque settings. Instead, he silently set to construct a dwelling within, starting from the austere homes of peasants from times gone by, people who lived their religious lives simply and quietly, inside the walls of homes that had become subtle expressions of their faith.

It might be that the images of *Nådens barn* inspired Tarkovsky because they were the outward representations of "dwelling places of the soul", a reverse from his own inward reality: "*We carry with us the dwelling place of our soul, like the turtle carries its shell*".<sup>81</sup>

*It would be a gross oversimplification to transfer the experiences of the authors' homes directly onto their work. Yet, their biographies reveal the centrality of home in their lives, the relationship of home and creativity, and their understanding of the complexities inherent in being and becoming "at home".<sup>82</sup>*

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<sup>81</sup>To *Journey Within*, Tarkovsky interviewed by Gideon Bachmann in the Swedish film journal *Chaplin*, no. 193, September 1984, translated and republished on *nostalgia.com* (last accessed January 2015)

<sup>82</sup> Singleton, A. (1997) *Noplace like Home: the literary artist and Russia's search for cultural identity*, New York: State University of New York Press, pp. 12-13

### Episode 3: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TOPOGRAPHIES



Image 3.14 - Andrei in Siberia, 1953, image ©ATII (left); opening shot of Tarkovsky's 1962 film *Ivan's Childhood* (right)

Tarkovsky's year-long expedition to the Siberian taiga has been often considered the source of his unfathomable closeness to nature, whose presence prevails throughout all his films<sup>83</sup>. While this connection is undeniable, it is also relevant to note that he was likewise in proximity to nature during his childhood: "*Nature is always present in my films, and it's not a question of style. It's the truth. While my father was fighting in the war, my mother would take us to the countryside every spring. She considered it her duty [...] my mother knew that nature is indispensable, and she instilled in us a peasant culture*".<sup>84</sup> Apart from this, the detailed awareness of natural phenomena protruding daily existence has been a recurring motif in the folklore of Russian peasantry. "*To them, grass, trees, birds, animals, stars, and seasons are living things, holding commune with man, taking part in his joys and sorrows, inspiring him with hope and fear*".<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> "*his year in the Siberian taiga would serve as a dramatic base line for nearly all his subsequent work: nature is ever present in his films – often celebrated, always mysterious – as is the lone protagonist, struggling to make sense of his own destiny and, in the later work, that of humanity as a whole*" (Sean Martin (2006). Live in the house – and the house will stand: the role of autobiography and lived experience in Tarkovsky's films and aesthetic", pp. 6-39, in G. Jónsson and T. Óttarsson (Eds.), *Through the Mirror: Reflections on the Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

<sup>84</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky - quoted in Claire Devarrieux (2006). "The Artist Lives off his childhood like a parasite" pp. 44-45 in J. Gianvito (Ed.), *Andrei Tarkovsky: interviews*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, p. 45

<sup>85</sup> Rappoport, A.S. (1913) *Home Life in Russia*, London: Methuen & Co., pp. 14-15; further, Rappoport gives the example of one such folk chant: "*I turned into a brown linnet, I perched upon a raspberry bush. I began to sing, to warble so plaintively that the bush bent low and carried my voice so far. My mother came to the door weeping: 'If thou art my daughter, enter the house; if thou art a brown linnet, fly to the forest and warble*".



It goes beyond doubt that one year spent away from the city life of Moscow would have imprinted itself into mind as a deepened understanding of the natural world known from childhood. However, there was another aspect to the Siberian trip, which was entirely new for the young Andrei. In 20 years, this would be the first time he was away from home, from his mother and sister, and, since they mostly camped in tents or under the starry sky, it was the first extended period of not having the warmth and stability of a house. This homeless condition would later repeat, as a more subdued echo, during his long travels, but it is pertinent to notice that the incipient forms of a cinematic imagination coincided with the first experience of profound longing for home. Together with physical distance, the home environment sank into memory, paving the way for the metaphoric development of remembered images and dreams, a mixture that would later pervade the entire film work of Tarkovsky. During these months away from home, his decision to become a filmmaker became increasingly clarified, as he writes in a cover letter addressed to the VGIK<sup>86</sup> film school in 23 July 1954: "*When I was at the institute<sup>87</sup> I often thought that my choice of profession had been rather hasty. I did not yet know enough about life. I became really interested in cinema and literature, but most of all in our country's people, its natural environment and its way of life. In May 1953 I got a job with a scientific expedition from the NIGRIzoloto Institute<sup>88</sup>, going off to work in eastern Siberia. I stayed with the expedition for a year in the Turukhansk Taiga, travelling hundreds of kilometers. That expedition provided many interesting experiences. I met many people, both geologists and ordinary workers. All this strengthened my resolve to become a film director. In April 1954 I finished my work with the expedition. As well as collecting, I kept a sketchbook of Siberian landscapes, which is now in the NIGRIzoloto Institute archives. I then started preparing for the VGIK entrance exams. I now dream of becoming a good director of Soviet cinema*".<sup>89</sup>

Andrei graduates with the short film "*Steamroller and Violin*" (1961), then takes on the challenge of completing the dramatization of *Ivan*<sup>90</sup>, after the director who had previously attempted this had been dismissed. Tarkovsky changes the title into *Ivan's Childhood*, restructures the narrative of the film around a newly added temporal and spatial layer made from the memories and dreams of Ivan and completes the film in 1962; national and international acclaim follow. Both *Ivan's Childhood* and the following 1966 film *Andrei Rublev* are marked by a strong absence of home. Ivan's dreams of his mother and the happy life before the war are aimed at unveiling the drama of war, of a child's safe place being stolen from him. In *Ivan's Childhood*, the closest image to home is a burnt village, where all that remains from houses are their stoves, with chimneys reaching up to grey skies. In *Andrei Rublev*, the painter monk is a constant pilgrim, from monastery to monastery, through forests and fields; the only sheltering and all-encompassing safe place from the film being the immaterial mansions visible in the icons which crown the entire oeuvre of Rublev and which the film gradually grows towards.

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<sup>86</sup> All-Russian State University of Cinematography, now renamed Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography

<sup>87</sup> The Institute of Oriental Studies, where Tarkovsky had been enrolled since 1950

<sup>88</sup> The Research Institute of Geological Prospecting, Moscow

<sup>89</sup> republished in Tarkovski, A. (1993) *Journal 1970-1986* (my translation from French language), Paris: Diff. Seuil, p. 267

<sup>90</sup> *Ivan*, 1957 war novel by Vladimir Bogomolov (1926-2003), in which the author draws inspiration from his soldier experiences in World War II



Image 3.15 - sketches for the reconstruction of the house in Myasnoye (dating 1970-1972); images ©ATII

It is only from the 1972 *Solaris* onwards, that the image of home enters the space of film and infuses its strong presence upon it. The film is an adaptation of a science fiction novel<sup>91</sup>, but Tarkovsky alters the screenplay and, just as in the case of *Ivan's Childhood*, introduces new episodes around which he restructures the entire narrative. These episodes relocate a great part of the action, from the abstracted *Solaris* spaceship down to the surroundings of the home of Chris<sup>92</sup>. Preceding the departure into space, these images of the house populate Chris's memories while being on *Solaris* and inconclusively end the film with a return home which is ambiguously real or imagined. Throughout all these episodes, the house is present as an experientially real entity, the camera stopping in prolonged pauses over its doors, thresholds, windows, walls. This represents a significant spatial turn from the previous films: after having no image of a house, or having mere houses in ruins, starting with *Solaris*, the camera begins to explore with reverent familiarity the textures, nooks and details of the home. This change is all the more relevant if explored alongside biographical information. The development of the cinematic image for *Solaris* coincided with the time when Tarkovsky was doing repair and reconstruction work, drawing new plans for the dacha the family had recently purchased in Myasnoye, and which had been affected by a fire. His diaries are full of plans of improvement, including lists of materials for reparations, sketches for possible extensions and for interior design. Before the purchase of this dacha, the absence of a home image in Tarkovsky's films seems to be the echo of the acute absence of place felt in Moscow; the Muscovite apartment inspired words such as: "*I feel restricted. My soul is restricted inside me. I need another living space*" (diary entry, 20 October 1973). At the same time, all throughout his diaries there is no other statement underlined with such vehemence and repeated more often than praising the dacha:

*We bought a house in Myasnoye. The one we wanted. We shall gradually put the house and garden in order, and it will be a wonderful country house; stone. The people here seem nice. I've installed a beehive. We'll have honey.* (diary entry, 10 May 1970);

*Here I am back in Myasnoye; I arrived a few days ago. It's paradise.* (diary entry, 3 June 1975);

<sup>91</sup> *Solaris* - the 1961 philosophical science fiction novel by Polish writer Stanislaw Lem (1921-2006), which merges SF topics with explorations on human memory and experience

<sup>92</sup> Chris Kelvin, psychologist, the main character of *Solaris*

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*How lovely it is here in Myasnoye. I have a wonderful room. (diary entry, 4 July 1975); We are living quietly and peacefully in the country. (diary entry 14 September 1975).*

It is therefore interesting to trace a parallel between the growing attachment for the Myasnoye dacha, and the topic and image of the house gradually becoming central to Tarkovsky's films. The house in *Solaris* makes direct reference to the details, shapes and proportions present in the architectural drawings developed for the dacha reconstruction (plans, sections, facades and details). Viewed alongside the finished form of the dacha, there are notable similarities also between materials, colour and texture, composition of facade, entrance, steps and windows. The location for the *Solaris* house was chosen just months after the purchase of the dacha, in a setting similarly close to water and overgrown with trees:

*We've found the location for Kelvin's house. I think it's very good. White willows and a pond. And in another place a river, again with white willows. We must start building the décor (diary entry, 11 July 1970).*



Image 3.16 - Kelvin's house from *Solaris* (1972)

The protrusion of autobiographical elements in the fabric of the film was not merely accidental. Long before setting to work on *Solaris*, Tarkovsky had already started thinking of developing the screenplay for what would later become his first openly autobiographical work, *The Mirror* (1975). "The Mosfilm documents on *The Mirror* begin in 1968, with the proposal and the first version of the script".<sup>93</sup> As early as 1970, there are records in his diary about the project for a film entitled *The Bright Day*, after a poem of his father<sup>94</sup>: "I think constantly about *The Bright Day*. It could make a beautiful picture. It will actually be an instance of a film, built in its entirety on personal experience. And for that reason, I'm convinced, it will be important for those who see it" (diary entry, 7 September 1970); "I so want to make *The Bright Day*. Probably it should be

<sup>93</sup> Synessios, N. (2001) *Mirror*, London: I.B. Tauris, p. 16

<sup>94</sup> "By the jasmine lies a stone, Beneath the stone lies treasure./ On the path stands Father./ It is a bright, bright day./ The silver poplar's flowering,/ And the centifolia rose,/ Beyond — grow curling ramblers,/ And tender, milky -grass./ Never again have I been/ As happy as then./ Never again have I been/ As happy as then./ There can be no returning,/ Nor has it been given/ To tell what perfect joy/ Filled that garden heaven". (Arseni Tarkovsky, 1942)

*mixed, black-and-white and colour, depending on memory*" (diary entry, 12 July 1971). The literary screenplay for *The Mirror* was later published under the title of *A White Day*. The project was dropped for several years, however, some episodes from the screenplay migrated as memories of Kelvin in *Solaris*.

It is nevertheless significant to observe that the openly autobiographical interest, just as in the case of the image of home permeating the films, appeared once the artist had a purchased Myasnoye and grasped the sense of security of home, similar to childhood days in the countryside, and unlike in the Moscow environment. Once inhabiting this house, early memories in the countryside seemed to surface, and the diary of the filmmaker started being populated by childhood reminiscing. Either narrating dreams, evoking fragmentary past events or pleating metaphors within the fabric of nostalgic poems, the Russian filmmaker's attention seems to be directed towards the physical elements that envelop these memories, rather than towards actual events: "*No sound of movement, no knocking/ No floor boards sing in the hall/ Just now in the empty house/ The doors were gently closed/ They've taken the lace from the window/ And boarded up the frame*" (diary entry, 2nd July 1973); "*And now goodbye my dearest/ My dearest birthplace. Fleeing, I can't remember/ The window of our home*" (diary entry, 3rd July 1973).

This house, which appears so diffusely and yet profoundly spatial in writings is in fact a composite image of the three dachas where he spent considerable periods of time in his childhood: in Zavrashche, in Yourevets and in Ignatievo. This triad of buildings remained the closest image of a childhood home that the artist referred to repeatedly, but more poignantly in the process of developing the film *The Mirror*. The persistence of recollections of emplacement, a feeling of belonging and being warmly enclosed, was largely indebted to their disappearance from his immediate grasp. Out of fear for the vulnerability of these mental spaces engulfed and cradled in childhood memories, Tarkovsky refused to visit the physical remains of these houses, but as he confesses, the process of creating *The Mirror* had to be a purification of all painful memory debris. In this context, it is interesting to remark the essentially different attitudes towards each house and the varying techniques he adopted towards envisioning this early spatial autobiography: starting with **Yourevets**, where the house still exists in the same place where it had been when Andrei lived there during the war with his mother and sister, he revisited it after 30 years of absence, very early during the preparation work for *The Mirror*; there was an attempt to film there, but the village had changed so much in the meantime, that he left it feeling empty and robbed of his memories; in the case of **Ignatievo**, the house had been moved inside the village, from the forest location where it used to be in the '30s; he therefore rebuilt it on the same place where it had once stood, using family photographs and the memories of the dacha's owner, Gorchakov; the film crew lived in it for some time before starting the actual filming; finally, in the case of the house from **Zavrashche**, where Andrei was born, and which had been sunken underwater in the meantime, it is subtly evoked in the film through poetic cinematic language, in brief episodes that merge dream and hazy memory.

In order to understand how these houses were transformed into images, one would have to turn to Tarkovsky's narrated memories of spatial experiences for each of them, these often lyrical recollections being the very roots of the subsequent visual foliage of the films.

### Zavrazhe

The house - now sunken - from the small village of Zavrazhe, where Andrei was born and had spent the sweet everyday of his early infancy, triggered an entire poetics of loss and longing. The artist's sister, Marina, recalls him having constant dreams of swimming through dark waters towards the door of this sunken house, but never actually being able to enter and oneirically abide in its interiority. In the film sequences where the little boy approaches the house, he constantly stops at the door, aside from one scene, a poetic spatial metaphor that subtly associates memories of having inhabited this house with dreams of its flooded decaying existence.

*I have this dream often. Each time it is almost identical, with only the smallest of changes. The only thing that varies is the house where I was born: the sun may be shining or it may be raining, winter or summer. And now as I dream of the log walls blackened with age, and the door, ajar, leading from the porch into the darkness of the vestibule, I already know that I am only dreaming it, and the unbearable joy of returning to my birthplace is diluted by the expectation of waking;<sup>95</sup>*

*I have a recurring dream which is amazingly regular. I dream that I am walking through Zavrazhe, past the birch grove, the ramshackle, abandoned bath house, past the small, old church with the flaking plaster and torn bags of lime and broken weighing scales from the collective farm visible in the porch. And among the tall birch trees is a wooden, two-storey building. The building where my grandfather - Nikolai Mateevich, a provincial doctor - delivered me, on a starched tablecloth thrown over the dining-room table<sup>96</sup> some forty years ago. And this dream is so accurate and convincing that it is more real than actuality;<sup>97</sup>*

*And again I am walking past the decrepit bath house, and past the sparse trees by Zavrazhe. Everything is the same as it always is when I dream about going back. But this time I am not alone. I am with my mother. We are walking past the old fences - oh, those old fences! - along paths which I have known since childhood. This is the grove where the house stood. But the house has gone. The crowns of the birch trees stick out of the water that has drowned everything: the church, the cemetery, the outhouse behind my childhood home, and the house*

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<sup>95</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 303

<sup>96</sup> the image of the dining room table covered in white table cloth recurs in the dream scenes of *The Mirror*, as the child wishes to return to this house; highlighting the dissolution of this childhood home, the table appears to be stranded outside the house, in the tall grasses of the forest; see [ANNEX booklet](#), p. 117 and p. 123

<sup>97</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 298

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*itself. I strip off and jump into the water. [...] My eyes gradually become used to the submarine half-light, and I begin to discern, in this all but opaque water, the silhouette of familiar objects. [...] And there stands the house... The black gaps of the windows, the splintered door hanging by its one hinge, the crumbling stove chimney, bricks lying in a heap on the ruined roof;*<sup>98</sup>



**Image 3.17** - Scenes from *The Mirror* (1975): dreams of returning to the childhood house which now lies underwater

The first drafts of the screenplay contained one episode in which the young Andrei sinks in the waves of river Volga, while his Mother washes laundry on the riverbank, and afterwards they swim together towards and within an underwater house, but, alas, they do not encounter here their familiar and vividly remembered spaces, but rather a foreign hostile presence, which they cannot inhabit, nor recognize as their own: "*We shouldn't have come here! You should never return to ruins, whether it be a town, the house you were born, or someone you have separated from*"<sup>99</sup>. The raw dream image, however, was later artistically transformed within the film. An associative process of juxtaposing feelings gave rise to a stronger, more inclusive metaphor: after seeing the image of Mother washing laundry and Andrei swimming in the river, we see the little boy approaching the house and this time entering it, crossing the threshold and passing through rooms in which light-filled curtains float in the air, translucently veiling the view of the house, caressing and covering him in their bright vaporous texture, as he moves on in slow motion (**Image 2.16**). The beautiful metaphor speaks in a domestic tone of the flooded house, as well as of the layers of time gone by, the curtains bringing homely familiarity and taming the dramatic image of a sunken house and the even more dramatic image of oblivion.

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<sup>98</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 312

<sup>99</sup> idem, p. 313

### Yourevets

The house where the family had taken refuge during the war, in Yourevets, Zavrazhe, belonged to some distant acquaintances, but then changed ownership; sensing that the mental image of the house had remained more familiar than its transformed material image, Tarkovsky had refused to visit it, for thirty years. However, months after having written the screenplay for *The Mirror* he left decided to visit it and recorded this event in his diaries, before and after the trip:

*Going to Yourevets this evening for a day or two. It's quite disturbing. I haven't been there for thirty years, after all. What will it be like? My feeling is that it will be quite different from all those years ago, when I was twelve. Perhaps I ought not to go at all, so that I don't lose yet another illusion? Too late now, I have to go (AT diary entry, 6th December 1973);*



**Image 3.18** - Scenes from *The Mirror* (1975): the visit of Father in Yourevets, during the war

*Returned from Yourevets this morning.[...] It was cold, everything covered in snow. Yourevets made no impression on me. It was as if I was seeing it for the first time. I recognized the school I used to go to, and the house where I lived during the War. [...] I was correct to write in the script for the film I am now making that we should not return to the ruins. How empty I feel in my soul! How sad! So I have lost one more illusion, perhaps the most important one for the preservation of the peace and quiet within my soul! I have buried my childhood home with my film (AT diary entry, 6th December 1973).*

The bleakness of these entries in the face of encountering the physical absence of a home so perceivable inwardly was an idea often referred to by Tarkovsky. As far back as 1964, he spoke in an article about the great divide between memory and reality, in which the latter invariably destroyed the poetry of the thing remembered. Mentioning the importance of childhood memories in the artistic creation, the article was stating the need to reconstruct such memories in an artistically informed manner. Offering a model for such reconstructions in his films, he would much later write about the need to replace narrative causality with poetic articulations of fragments: "*memory has to be worked upon before it can become the basis of an artistic reconstruction of the past; and here it is important not to lose the particular emotional atmosphere*"<sup>100</sup>, which is lost when sets are reproducing the spatiality with mechanical accuracy. Film, as any other meaningful reconstruction, should psychologically prepare the encounter with a scene, with a place, by *building up a mood* similar to the condition in which this space had once been perceived.

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<sup>100</sup> ST, p. 29



Image 3.19 - (from left to right) 1. scene from *Nostalghia*; 2 and 3. scenes from *The Sacrifice*

Tarkovsky's wife, Larissa, remembers a story<sup>101</sup> from Andrei's days in Yourevets, how he was playing with his sister in the garden beside the house, and, while picking up a coin from a rain puddle, he heard a familiar voice calling them: the voice of Father, returning on a leave from the front. In the film, this scene is not literally represented. Instead, the two children are playing in the garden, the boy flipping through an album with etchings by Leonardo, when they hear the very missed voice calling. The primary remembered event was altered according to Tarkovsky's precepts of "building up a mood", the screenplay of *Mirror* revealing that "*It was then, in those days, that Father used to read aloud to us Leonardo's writings about how to depict battle scenes*"; the image of Leonardo's album therefore condenses in itself, interwoven, the memory of happy times together with Father, the longing for him, and the overshadow of war.

Another relevant aspect is that, although this episode was not transposed directly into *The Mirror* despite it was one of Andrei's fondest memories, fragments of it appear in later films, and always bearing much emotional weight. In *Nostalghia* (1982), Andrei, the film's main character, in dim hues and smooth velocities of a dream, bends down to pick up a feather that had fallen in a puddle with coins, a glass and a curtain. His gaze is afterwards directed, as if triggered by the connection with the distant memory of the father returning home, along a path that leads to his house, away in his homeland; this is the first time that the Russian home appears in the film. Another oneiric episode finds Alexander, the main character of *The Sacrifice* (1985), walking through a snowy thawing garden. The camera lowers its gaze, looking at muddy leaves with papers, coins and debris, and, as if reversing the events from Yourevets, Alexander calls out "*My boy!*", as his son's feet are seen stepping on the melting snow.

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<sup>101</sup> see also page 78





**Image 3.20** - (from left to right) 1. Andrei on the set of *The Mirror*, 1975, in Ignatievo; 2. Andrei and his mother, in front of the Gorchakov dacha, Ignatievo, 1935; 3. Maria Ivanovna, Andrei's mother, on the set of *The Mirror*; all images ©ATII

### Ignatievo

The most thought-provoking approach in treating cinematically either of these childhood houses involves the case of the Ignatievo dacha. The condition of existence of this house is midway between Zavrazhe and Yourevets: if the Zavrazhe dacha had disappeared entirely and Yourevets continued its existence in the same location as it had been during the years that Andrei had lived there, in the case of Ignatievo, the dacha had been moved from its forest position further inside the village. By changing its location, the vitality of the memories surrounding the house had faded, leaving behind two empty places: the forest where it had once stood, and the dacha which, separated from its natural setting, had lost its poetic baggage.

The dacha had experientially survived only through the artful photographs taken over the years by a close family friend, Lev Gornung, images through which Andrei had often revisited his childhood. A proof to this fact stands his 1962 short story *I Live With Your Photograph*:

*And this is the farm where a long time ago we lived for several years. In the foreground is the branch of an apple tree, it's spring, there are a few leaves and these are still not fully opened. And the house. Eight windows. There are more of them, but only eight can be seen, and one is open. We have only just arrived in the country. We - that is, our family: crazy and, as it seemed to me in those days, cheerful. The farm will only wake up tomorrow morning, and this evening things are still uncertain: eight windows, and only one wide open. What is going on at the moment behind these windows?;*

*This is a room in the Gorchakov's house, or rather one corner of it. On the right the sun is pouring through a window [...]. It's shining onto a tall, gleaming cupboard, a chair beside it, and a chest of drawers that looks like a box, or maybe it's a box that looks like a chest of drawers. This is next to the cupboard, and piled up beside it and on top of it is a mountain of cloths and cushions, a basket of stripped willow twigs, and a white ball lying in the sunlight from the window. The walls are of half-planed planks, which must be as golden as honey. [...] There's a lamp hanging from the ceiling, or rather a lampshade, flat, enamel, dark on top and light underneath, but there's no paraffin lamp because it hasn't yet been unpacked.*

## Chapter 3 HOME in the Case Studies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman

*In the next photo my Mother is in the vegetable garden at the farm. [...] In the background is the house, a small window between the beams, the garden fence [...] Time streams like my Mother's golden hair between her fingers, it pours and pours like liquid, refracting the sun and regenerating the ageing pine-trees through their shadow on the grass of my childhood, full of needles and prickly.<sup>102</sup>*

When beginning the work on *The Mirror*, Tarkovsky decided to rebuild the house in its initial forest location, with the help of these photographs with the assistance of Pavel Gorchakov, the owner of the original dacha, who also plays a minor role in the film. However, once the house was erected, the film narrative did not unfold directly from his personal recollections. Instead, he took a remarkable decision and added to this existing personal layer another one, of emplaced perception, which involved the entire film crew: "When the set had been built up on the foundations of the ruined house, we all, as members of the team, used to go there in the early morning, to wait for the dawn, to experience for ourselves what was special about the place, to study it in different weather conditions, to see it at different times of the day; we wanted to immerse ourselves in the sensations of the people who had once lived in that house, and had watched the same sunrises and sunsets, the same rains and mists, some forty years previously. We all infected each other with our mood of recollection".<sup>103</sup> The film image of the house in *The Mirror* therefore became a mediation between the subjective memories of Tarkovsky and a newly direct experienced immersion within the atmosphere of the place.



Image 3.21 - details and corners from the apartment, as presented in various scenes of *Mirror*

### The Moscow Apartment

The intricate approaches to represent cinematically the memories of dachas differ substantially from the filmic treatment of the Moscow apartment. Tarkovsky's previously mentioned short story<sup>104</sup> was prompted by a visit to this apartment from Schipovski street, looking at old photographs his mother was keeping there. The story dwells at length upon envisaging the situation captured in the photographs, however, the introductory paragraphs which describe the apartment - the actual physical setting of the story - are notably succinct:

*I go into the house, this house where I used to live and which I grew out of like a teenager growing out of his clothes [...]. Mother is not here, and I wait for her in the cramped rooms of my childhood, which will never be repeated and can only fade in my memory like embers in a*

<sup>102</sup> the story was published in English in Gill, S. (2008) *Bright, Bright Day: Andrei Tarkovsky*, London: White Space Gallery, pp. 11-19, from where the passages below are taken

<sup>103</sup> ST, p. 136

<sup>104</sup> *I Live with your Photograph* (1962), published in Gill, S. *op cit*, pp. 11-19

*dying fire. The house and its two rooms barely each to my elbows and knees, the air is stuffy and there isn't enough, there is very little left after those fifteen years of use.*<sup>105</sup>

In film, the apartment appears in more than eight episodes, each of them tuned to a different temporality: it is either the residence of the narrator, the house of his young parents, the home of his mother or the place where his father had moved out to. Biographically analyzed, these spaces are disparate in space and time, and they are likewise depicted differently in terms of chromatics and atmospheres. Moreover, compared to the images of the actual house on Schipovski, the cinematic representation of this apartment is exaggeratedly spacious and raggedly luxurious, therefore it is presumable that its space is an abstract conglomerate of anonymous urban places<sup>106</sup>. "The narrator's flat, various parts of which are seen throughout the film, apparently became an attraction of sorts at Mosfilm, and people would go on excursions to see it. It was re-created in one of the large studios there, and reportedly had almost all the props-people of Mosfilm working on it. It is made to resemble an old Moscow flat, containing remnants of time past: a tiled stove, cast-iron radiators, an old bathtub on legs and rusting, leaking pipes. It consists of a long corridor, with a series of rooms giving off it, but the way it is filmed makes it feel like a rambling, labyrinthine structure, where the individual spaces appear to change their positions constantly. Everywhere there are half-opened doors. One of the rooms is disused, with peeling wallpaper; [...] A French poster of Andrei Rublev and photographs of Tarkovsky's parents on the walls leave us no doubt as to the identity of the occupant. [...] The atmosphere here is austere, weighed down, cold. It is mostly a place of conflicts and arguments, of painful memories and impending death"<sup>107</sup>.

The same atmosphere seems to engulf also the filmmaker's perception of his later apartments, as he writes in his diary about the apartment where he lived with Larissa until 1974, on Orlovo Davidovsky street:

*All three rooms have leaking ceilings. I wrote to Sizov. Our only hope is for him to help us get a flat in a new block near the studio (diary entry, 16 December 1973);*

*Altogether, our living conditions are awful. There's water pouring into all three rooms (diary entry, 17 December 1973);*

the atmosphere also continues later on, even after they had received the new apartment from Mosfilmovsky street:

*We are doing repairs in Moscow. There is a lot to be done and we don't have enough money for the materials. We are doing the work ourselves (diary entry, 10 November 1976).*

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<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> a spatio-temporal mapping of this apartment is exposed at length in the [ANNEX booklet](#), pp. 126-227

<sup>107</sup> Synessios, N. *op cit*, pp. 76-77

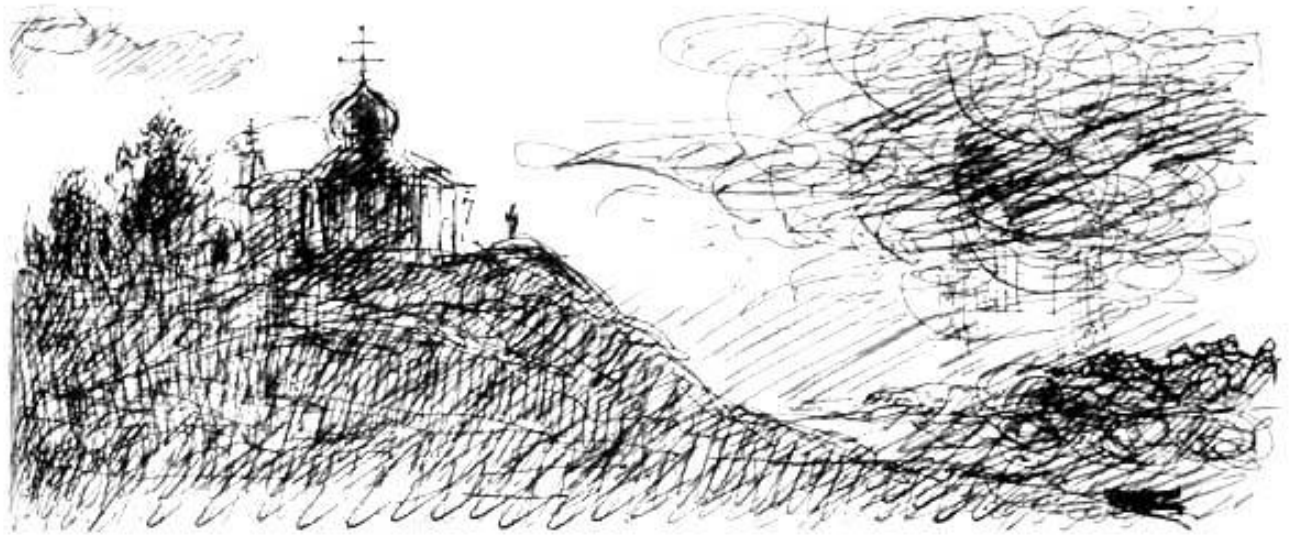


Image 3.22 - hand-drawn sketch from Tarkovsky's diary, during mid '80s

*Only one journey is possible: the journey within.  
We don't learn a whole lot from dashing about on the surface of the Earth.  
Neither do I believe that one travels so as to eventually return.<sup>108</sup>*  
(Andrei Tarkovsky, 1984)

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<sup>108</sup> *To Journey Within*, quoted interview



**Image 3.23** - (from left to right): 1. Tarkovsky's house in Rome, Italy - on the wall, a picture of his dog from Russia; 2. polaroids taken by Tarkovsky in his floor studio in San Gregorio - on the wall, a Russian Orthodox icon known as *The Vladimir Mother of God*; 3. Tarkovsky in Gotland Sweden, with a photograph of the home in *Sacrifice*; images 1-3 ©ATI; image 4 ©Swedish Film Institute

### The travels. Italy. Sweden.

When Tarkovsky left for Italy in 1982, he did not know he would never return to Russia. Neither did he know this after having completed the film, such as when writing to his father in September 1983:

*Dear Father,*

*I am very saddened that you could think I have chosen the role of an outcast and that I am about to leave my Russia altogether. [...] I consider this film highly patriotic, and many of the thoughts which you have told me in reproach are actually expressed in [Nostalgia]. [...] I am certain that everything will turn out for the better, that I will complete my work I am undertaking here and that I will soon return to Moscow with Anna Semionovna, Andrei and Lara, to embrace you and all the others.<sup>109</sup>*

In the letter, Tarkovsky made reference to an official request he had send to the Governmental authorities, to grant him a leave of several years in order to complete his project in the west, then return home. The request, together with Tarkovsky's attitude to being away from Russia, but creating deeply Russian works, resembled in much detail the one described by Bulgakov in a letter directed to Stalin, in 1931, for similar reasons of obtaining a permit to stay longer: "*I knew that I was travelling not at all in order to delight in foreign lands, but rather in order to endure, exactly as I had foreseen that I would recognize the value of Russia only outside of Russia and that I would attain love for her only when I was far away*".<sup>110</sup> Tarkovsky never received a reply to this request, and the exile began.

Rather than diaries or autobiographical sketches, his longing for home during these years is voiced directly through the characters of his films. The screenplay for *Nostalgia* hides deeper associations than the film itself, the Russian writer travelling through Italy and dreaming of his home, visualizes it painful detail: "*the dull dawn pours through the high window with its cracked ship's windows, and rests on the starched white tablecloth*"; the screenplay

<sup>109</sup> letter published in Tarkovski, L. *op cit*, pp. 121-128

<sup>110</sup> quoted in Singleton, A. *op cit*, p.12

ends in a bittersweet tone of homecoming, augmented by the repeated use of the pronoun "his", a belonging not perceivable on film:

*Gradually it seems to grow lighter. Perhaps it is the light from the moon, standing above the plain, that shows the dark arches and huge columns of the ruins of the ancient cathedral soaring into the lightening sky above the house, towering above the house and above [them] as they sit immobile under the tree. The strong walls, like those of a prison, enclose his house in their embrace, and clods of his homeland covered by his grass, his mist, and illuminated by his moon...*<sup>111</sup>

In Sweden, Tarkovsky said that Gotland's shores overlooking the Baltic Sea were "at a stone's throw from Russia". He had previously said "There is always water in my films. I like water, especially brooks. The sea is too vast. I don't fear it, it is just monotonous. In nature, I like smaller things. Microcosm, not macrocosm; limited surfaces."<sup>112</sup> However, the landscape of Gotland, "because of all these open spaces ending in the sea... is very close to Russia; there is nothing, no barriers, everything is infinite; this influences a lot the mentality and comes close to the Russian way of seeing things, with melancholy."<sup>113</sup> This apparent melancholy, however, has long been the dwelling place of an inner beauty in Russian culture. "The approach to Russia's natural landscape as outwardly impoverished but inwardly reflective of a hidden, almost mystical beauty [...] eventually became the dominant and familiar image of Russian terrain".<sup>114</sup> And it was precisely in this inward mysticism that something was missing from the Swedish shores. In Russia, the endless spaces were punctuated by islands of faith, the archaic silhouettes of Orthodox churches and monasteries, "the most common sight in the countryside to break the horizontal plane of Russia's level landscape".<sup>115</sup> This sight was entirely missing from the seascapes of Sweden, and Tarkovsky acutely felt their absence:

*Last night I had a terribly sad dream. I dreamed again of a northern lake somewhere in Russia; it was dawn, and on the far shore were two Orthodox monasteries, with amazingly beautiful churches and wall frescoes. And I felt such sadness! Such pain!*  
(diary entry, Stockholm, 8 November 1984)

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<sup>111</sup> CS (*Nostalgia*), pp. 502-503

<sup>112</sup> extract from the Swedish Film Institute's booklet on *The Sacrifice (Offret)*, translated from Swedish for the research archive nostalgia.com by Lars-Olof Löthwall

<sup>113</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *quoted interview*

<sup>114</sup> Ely, C. (2003) *The Picturesque and the Holy – Vision of Touristic Space in Russia, 1820 – 1850* in J. Cracraft and D. Rowlands, eds. *Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to the Present*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 82

<sup>115</sup> idem



**Image 3.24** - Isaac Levitan, *Quiet Abode*, 1890, depicting the sunken monastery from Zavrazhe, the village where Andrei Tarkovsky was born

Filming in Gotland, Tarkovsky verbally and associatively alludes to the distant presence of monasteries beyond the waters, opening *The Sacrifice* with the words: "*Once upon a time, long ago, an old monk lived in an Orthodox monastery*"; the narrative, overlaid upon an anonymous place, injects a luminous - yet nostalgic - familiarity, as if immaterially reconstructing these edifices on the timeless landscape of the Swedish shores. Geographically, Tarkovsky's last film is separated from his homeland by the waters of the Baltic Sea, but such cinematic glimpses, together with the inner spatiality of the house depicted in the film, efface distances and infuse the film with a profound sense of home. The aquatic borders which characterize the working conditions of Tarkovsky's last film resemble the circumstances of creating *The Mirror*, which had sprung from a desire to revisit the childhood home that the artist was separated from by "*the water that has drowned everything: the church, the cemetery, the outhouse behind my childhood home, and the house itself*".<sup>116</sup> Preparing for *The Mirror*, Tarkovsky described the waters that were cutting him off from his childhood home as dark, opaque and perilous, but in *The Sacrifice*, as if reversing the position and encircling the autobiographical element of his entire cinematic works, the film ends with the trembling image of a sea clothed in light.

Tarkovsky dedicates the film to his son, "*with hope and confidence*", the words superimposed on an image of bright waters. "*Water is alive, it has depth, it moves, it changes, it reflects like a mirror, you can drown in it, you can drink it, you can wash yourself. [T]he entire mass of water on earth is made up of one molecule. Water is monadic*".<sup>117</sup> Being tamed cinematically with delicate domestic associations, the previously dreaded vastness of infinite seas or the gloomy separation from a beloved place, become now for the filmmaker images of continuity and togetherness beyond space and time, icons of radiant faith.

Such subtle changes make strongly perceivable a concealed, immaterial journey that Tarkovsky had pursued during his wanderings across so many countries and places: outwardly moving irrevocably farther from the homeland, inwardly moving ever closer to home.

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<sup>116</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 312

<sup>117</sup> lecture for students, translated in Synessios, N. (2001), pp. 66-67; To this quote, Synessios adds: "*This last idea is particularly important for Tarkovsky, because a monad is another name for God, the divinity that permeates everything, whose ineffable presence he sought to capture through images*"



*A journey through all the countries of the world  
would be a mere symbolic journey.  
Whatever place one arrives at,  
it is still one's own soul that one is searching for.*<sup>118</sup>  
(Andrei Tarkovsky, 1984)

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<sup>118</sup>To *Journey Within*, quoted interview

## INTERLUDE. GOTLAND, short history and description



Image 3.25 - position of Gotland on Baltic Sea, viewed in a European context (left) and detailed map of the island (right)

*In Swedish fairytales, the island of Gotland appears to be an enchanted land which emerges from the sea in the evening and sinks without a trace in the morning. The oldest prehistoric findings from Gotland date back to 5,000 BC and geological studies have shown that, after that date, the island was submerged by the sea at various times.<sup>119</sup>*

*The fairytales might capture some of the submarine life of the island, as well as its intrinsically aquatic becoming.*

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<sup>119</sup> adapted from Garzia, A. (2002) *Fårö. La Cinecittà di Ingmar Bergman. Un'isola svedese raccontata con foto, storie, interviste e film* (Fårö. Bergman's Cinecittà. A Swedish island narrated through photographs, stories, interviews and film - Swedish/Italian edition), Rome: Sandro Teti Editrice



**Image 3.26** - the Helgumannen fishing village, North of Fårö (top); the När sea shore, South-East Gotland (bottom); photographs ©RB, taken in August 2008 (top) and September 2013 (bottom)

In the middle of the Baltic Sea, 90km away from the Swedish mainland and 130km from the Baltic States<sup>120</sup>, Gotland is the largest island of Sweden, stretching 176km from South to North and 52 km from West to East, with a 800km long coastline. On the North of Gotland lies Fårö, a smaller island with a maximum length of 22km and up to 7km wide. The two islands are connected by a ferry, which runs every half an hour, the ride lasting less than 10 minutes.

### History.

The water expanses have long separated and united Gotland with diverse cultures: the Scandinavians, the Russians, the Finns, the Saxons, the Livonian and the Baltic peoples. Olaf of Norway<sup>121</sup>, previously a fierce Viking king who had plundered the shores of Britain before being baptized Christian in Brittany in 1015, fled a rebellion in 1028, and landed on the North-Eastern shores of Gotland, in a place then called Akergarn, presently renamed as St. Olofsholm<sup>122</sup>. The medieval Gutasaga<sup>123</sup> narrates how a local chieftain "*received Christianity after the teaching of Saint Olaf, and he built a chapel house there where Akegarn church now stands. Then Saint Olaf went to Yaroslav in Holmgard (Novgorod)*".<sup>124</sup> In Novgorod, the Norwegian king came closer to Christianity - which he had known only briefly before his Baptism - and particularly to the ascetic and luminous forms of spirituality which mark the Eastern Church, and he gradually changed his ruthless ways, growing in meekness and kindness. In 1030, with a redefined image of what kind of rules should guide a Christian dominion, King Olaf set sail back to his land. On his way back to Norway, he presumably once again stopped in Gotland, reinforcing the spiritual legacy he had left, bringing priests and bishops from Novgorod to continue the conversion of islanders.<sup>125</sup>

From the 8th century AD, Gotland had began to develop as an agricultural rich territory situated along the main northern trading routes. The tales of "travelling peasants" that saw incredible faraway places remained inscribed in the memorial picture stones preserved near longhouse farmsteads from the Iron Age. Due to its strategic position, the island was a commercial hub in the Baltic Sea starting with 1050s; the Viking-Age city of Visby soon became one of the leading centres of the Hanseatic League, the medieval confederation spanning from England, Netherlands, Belgium and the Baltic countries, to Scandinavia and the Kievan Russia. The main trading product of the Gotlanders were their masterfully baptismal fonts, carved in stone by local craftsmen. The enthusiasm with which the islanders received the new faith brought in by King Olaf of Norway and by the Christian foreign tradesmen, together with the prosperity resulted from international trade, led to the

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<sup>120</sup> in the '80s, when Tarkovsky was in Gotland (as previously mentioned), the Baltic States - Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia - were still integrated in USSR; that is why the island was considered to be "across the water from Russia"

<sup>121</sup> Saint Olaf of Norway/ Olaf II Haraldsson (995-1030), considered to have converted Norway to Christianity

<sup>122</sup> meaning "the islet of Saint Olaf"

<sup>123</sup> Gutasaga (*Gutasagan*) - a 13th century saga written in Old Gutnish, narrating the history of Gotland before and in the early days of its Christianization

<sup>124</sup> translation available on [www.germanicmythology.com](http://www.germanicmythology.com) (last accessed March 2015)

<sup>125</sup> *Pilgrim's Way on Gotland: between St. Olofsholm and Visby* - brochure edited by Visby Cathedral (Visby Diocese of Church of Sweden), County Museum Gotland and Gotland County Council, published by Snabba Tryck AB

construction of over 100 churches across such a small island<sup>126</sup>, in a period of only three centuries. During this time, the island became known as a "medieval Atlántida", a necessary halting point on Scandinavian crusaders' journey towards Jerusalem.<sup>127</sup> In the 14th century, Gotland started to lose international importance; trading competition from European cities, plague and oppressive measures from Danish rulers weakened the economy, and most of the edifices of previous ages turned to ruins.<sup>128</sup>

Despite fallen into decay, the imprint of these medieval times has indelibly shaped both the landscape and the architectural texture of the island. The capital, Visby<sup>129</sup>, guarded by twelve silent church ruins, now feeds on its past through numerous cultural heritage activities, events and festivals. On the edge of sea and of nostalgia, the life of the walled city seems to unfold somewhere else, beyond the pace of time on the Swedish mainland. Outside Visby's medieval walls, the countryside of Gotland is punctuated by the remains of farmsteads, and by the particularities of a landscape formed through centuries of sheep grazing and farming: the Bronze Age walled meadows cut out from forested areas having now become distinct habitats.



**Image 3.27** - fragments of industrial and cultural heritage from the agricultural past of the island: mills and barns in Fårö; photographs ©RB, taken September 2013

<sup>126</sup> of these, 92 are surviving to this day, both in Visby and in Gotland's countryside

<sup>127</sup> Garzia, A. (2002) *op cit*

<sup>128</sup> there are currently 19 church ruins on the island, 12 of which are located in the capital city, Visby; "*although the exact number of churches that existed in Visby during the Middle Ages is unknown, there were certainly more than in any other Swedish city*"; Lagerlöf, E. (1973) *Gotlands Kyrkor* (Churches of Gotland) Uddevalla: Raben & Sjogren

<sup>129</sup> included in the UNESCO's World Heritage list since 1995; According to the UNESCO's inclusion statement, Visby is "*an extremely distinguished example of a Northern European walled Hanseatic town which has in a unique way preserved its townscape and its highly valuable architecture, the form and function of which clearly express the importance of this human settlement*"

### Landscape.

Gotland was formed out of a coral reef. At different moments of the geological eras, parts of its territory were increasingly or decreasingly submerged by water. Today, a journey across the island reveals highly contrasting landscapes, some of them unfolding inside the other like pockets of unknown topography: from rocky shores and mountainous looking areas with highland vegetation to fields resembling savannahs and mild smooth beaches with flowers. This geographical multiplicity is the result of the land's interaction with sea water and the particularities in land-use which had varied across the centuries.

Half of the island is covered in forests, the composition of which is determined by the soil: the thin soil over a bedrock of lime favours the growth of pine trees and, very rarely, where soil is thicker, deciduous trees - particularly birch - abound<sup>130</sup>. Characteristic for the non-forested inland areas are the "grazing landscapes", former meadows interrupted by pine groves, with meagre grass and cropped juniper bushes that nurture the sheep kept outside all year long. Another image, arid and mountainous, is to be found in higher areas of the island, where beds of hard limestone had not allowed the development of soil, the landscape remaining open, non cultivable. Heather and strong herbs grow here, resembling highlands and alpine regions.

The coasts are equally diversified in Gotland, with coastal cliffs of up to 40 metres height, on the western shore; the process which formed these cliffs also produced the most interesting feature of the island, "raukar", the sea stacks along the north western shores of Fårö, where varying densities in the rock did not let the water erode it in its entirety, as the coastal cliffs; tall statues of stone therefore remain in vigil by the sea, grouped into scenic formations.



**Image 3.28** - a typical inland "grazing meadow" with scattered pine groves, an all-year round pasture for sheep - photograph ©RB, taken September 2013 (left); Langhammars, the most famous "raukar" formations, extending for kilometers along the north western shores of Fårö - photograph ©RB, taken August 2008 (right)

<sup>130</sup> although similar to Swedish northern lands, the combination of open fields, birch and pine trees has become a classic pictorial depiction of the Russian countryside

Sand beaches are a coastal feature that mostly influences present day's economy of Gotland; every summer, the population of the island increases, both due to international tourism, but mainly as Swedish residents from the mainland come to inhabit their summer houses from Gotland and to swim in the mild Baltic sea along its smooth beaches; similar to the flux of this seasonal migration, the sand beaches were formed as particles of eroded rocks from mainland Sweden were brought by the sea waters on to Gotland shores.

Despite the touristic attraction of the sandy shores, the most common coastal landscape in Gotland is formed of shingle beaches: formations of flat rock and masses of stones. These stout stone walls may sometimes be found far inland, having been thrown there when the Baltic Sea was higher. As the water retreated, soil was washed away from gravel, creating conditions for only a very limited variety of nettles and strong herbs to grow; regardless the arid flora, these places have become a secure haven for multitudes of bird species, and are now protected as "bird sanctuaries".

Less common than the shingle beaches, but mostly peculiar, are the sea shore meadows, which cover mainly the south east and south west shores of the island. In these areas, the bedrock was formed of softer stone, which allowed for rich grasses and flora to grow, and - as such - the lands have developed into pastures. As in the inland meadows, the herbs are stronger and shorter, adapted to extensive grazing, and the flatness of the landscape is also interrupted by groves or solitary pine trees. But, as a distinct feature, the grass, herbs and plants of sea shore meadows are capable of tolerating high salt concentrations, which result from intermittent flooding of sea tide, thus shaping a particular image, feel and scent of these southern shores.<sup>131</sup>



**Image 3.29** - a typical shore meadow in När, grazed by sheep and cows; just meters away from the location where Tarkovsky filmed *Sacrifice*, photograph ©RB, taken September 2013

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<sup>131</sup> geological information taken from S. Eliason, M. Bassett and S. Willman (Eds.) *Geotourism highlights of Gotland*, compiled by Department of Earth Sciences, Uppsala University, NGO GeoGuide BaltoScandia programme and Gotlands Museum, Tallinn:2010



**Image 3.30** - St. Nikolai church ruin, Visby (built in the 13th century, on the remains of an earlier edifice), now converted into a cultural and artistic centre; photograph ©RB, taken in August 2008

*24 April 1985. We have arrived in Gotland by plane.  
We are staying in Visby, the capital of the island, with its fortress walls,  
ruins and gardens.  
Andrei<sup>132</sup> is in rapture about this well-prayed-over land, and says:  
"It was a good choice I made, for a reason!"  
There are ninety-two churches of the early Middle Ages on this island.  
For a long time he searched for an Orthodox church  
with its original frescoes, built by Russian merchants in the 12th century.  
(diary entry, Layla Alexander Garret)*

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<sup>132</sup> **Andrei Tarkovsky**, who came to Gotland in order to film his 1985 film *The Sacrifice*; the diary quote belongs to a member of the film crew; published in Alexander-Garret, L. (2012) *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Collector of Dreams*, London: Glagoslav, p. 136; see pp. **90-91** of this document for context



*I think Ingmar's island<sup>133</sup> mirrors his own personality.  
Now this island is extremely poor,  
so he feels as though he is flowering there because everything is gray  
- the stones, the crippled little trees that can hardly grow because the wind is constantly  
blowing.  
There are flowers, but small, dry flowers. The island is so old, it's ageless. No feeling of time.  
Nothing has happened there for hundreds of years.  
The people look the same as they have for centuries.  
The only animals are sheep. They come and look through his windows -  
and on the seashore there's no sand, just rocks - there are the white bones of dead sheep.  
I think from this island he can start.  
(interview, Bibi Andersson)*



**Image 3.31** - shingle beaches bordering the northernmost shores of Fårö; photo ©RB, taken in August 2008

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<sup>133</sup> **Ingmar Bergman**, who first came to Fårö, Gotland, in 1960, to film *Through a Glass Darkly*, then built a house there in late '60s and lived his last 20 years mostly on the island; the quoted words were spoken by Bibi Andersson, one of Bergman's most prolific actresses ((interview taken in 1971) in Meryman, R. (2007) *I live at the Edge of a Very Strange Country*, pp. 96-112, in R. Shargel (ed.) *Ingmar Bergman: Interviews*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, pp. 104-105

## HOME AS PLACE AFFINITY

### An island's presence in the biography of Ingmar BERGMAN

*I stumbled into this landscape of Fårö,  
with its lack of color, its hardness and its proportions  
extraordinarily sophisticated and precise,  
where one has the impression of entering a world which is eternal [...]*  
*How it happened I do not know,  
but here I now believe that my life has once again taken root.*<sup>134</sup>  
(Ingmar Bergman)



**Image 3.32** - the seascape outside Ingmar Bergman's house on Fårö; photo ©RB,taken September 2013

Fårö, the island on the north of Gotland, has over the years become closely associated with the life and work of Ingmar Bergman. The Swedish director arrived there for the first time in order to shoot a film. In his own writing: *"It so happened that, in 1960, I was to make a film called Through a Glass Darkly, about four people on an island. In the opening shot, they appear at dusk out of a rolling sea. Without ever having been there, I wanted the filming to take place in the Orkneys. The board of the film company wrung their hands when faced with the expense and put a helicopter at my disposal to explore the Swedish coast. I returned even more determined to do the filming in the Orkneys. One almost desperate executive suggested Fårö. Fårö was supposed to be like the Orkneys. But cheaper. More practical. More accessible. To settle the argument we set off one stormy April day for Gotland, to reconnoitre Fårö and then definitely decide on the Orkneys"*.<sup>135</sup> However, the outcome of visiting Fårö and becoming immersed in the place had implications on the entire

<sup>134</sup> translation from Garzia, A. (2002) *op cit*

<sup>135</sup> LM, p.207

subsequent work and biography of Bergman. "I don't really know what happened. If one wished to be solemn, it could be said that I had found my landscape, my real home; [...] I told Sven Nykvist<sup>136</sup> I wanted to live on the island for the rest of my life and that I would build a house just where the film's stage house stood. Sven suggested I should try a few kilometres farther south. That is where my house stands today. It was built between 1966 and 1967. [...] This is your landscape, Bergman. It corresponds to your innermost imagining of forms, proportions, colours, horizons, sounds, silences, lights and reflections".<sup>137</sup> This section of the thesis endeavours to explore the mechanisms, background and consequences of what seems to be a sudden and inexplicable attachment to a previously unknown place, using information from the films, letters, and autobiographical writings of Ingmar Bergman. Through an exploration of Bergman's architectural and experiential descriptions of places, the aim is to answer the pending and unuttered question behind the words: "I don't know what happened [...] I had found my landscape, my real home".

*This is your landscape, Bergman*



**Image 3.33** - the summer house of the Akerblom family - Ingmar's maternal grandparents, Dalarna, Sweden; © IBF (left); typical scene from Dalarna during the '20s -'30s - in the image, the Persson family of farmers, Dalarna, 1930, photographer: Einar Erici; © Swedish National Heritage Board (right)

### Våroms, Dalarna (1918-1956)

As will be later exposed, after this initial encounter, Bergman ceaselessly and without hesitation identified himself with the newfound landscape of Fårö, and, in so doing, provided numerous original glimpses on the meaning of home and its relationship to place. The inscrutable immediate bond with an unknown landscape is both curious and contradicting the main positions developed in place attachment studies<sup>138</sup>, a condition which makes further inquiry on the topic relevant not only from the point of view of tackling the topographical element in the biography of Ingmar Bergman, but also from the perspective of drawing new conclusions in the field of place attachment studies.

<sup>136</sup> Sven Nykvist (1922-2006), Swedish cinematographer, who collaborated with Bergman on over 20 films

<sup>137</sup> idem., p. 208

<sup>138</sup> as will be detailed in chapter four

The fragment previously quoted, describing Bergman's arrival on the island, is mentioned in most of the writings on the mutual relationship developed between the Swedish director and Fårö. However, in the initial context of *The Magic Lantern*, the narration is preceded by another passage, which often remains overlooked: "*I had grown up in Dalarna; its landscape, the river, the hills, the forests and moor lands were deeply engraved on my consciousness. And it became the island of Fårö*".<sup>139</sup> Dalarna is a mountainous inner region of Sweden and, on a first glance, the parallel between it and a flat island where the seashore is always less than 5km away is strikingly uncanny. But on a closer look, Dalarna is a land strongly marked by the presence of water - as lakes and rivers, while Fårö's geology and flora - as detailed in the previous section - display characteristics of mountain pastures and heath-covered highlands.

The Dalarna family summer house had been built by the maternal grandfather of the filmmaker, who passed away when Ingmar was still a child: "*Grandfather had built a summer house at Dufnas, one of the most beautiful places in Dalarna, with its wide view over the river, the heathlands, out-barns and hills, blue beyond the hills*".<sup>140</sup> Then, the house belonged to the maternal grandmother, until her death in 1956. Bergman recalls a note<sup>141</sup> from the diary of his mother, Karin, in the month of his birth, which mentions that just days after the child was born he contracted high temperature. Being weak and ill herself, Karin sent the child to stay with her mother in Dalarna, where a wet nurse was found for him and where he gradually gained strength in the brisk mountain air. The connection with the place was to linger steadfastly in the perception of the artist: "*the summer house in Dalarna was called <Våröms>, a dialect word meaning <Ours>. I went there the first month of my life and still dwell there in my memory. It is always summer, the huge double birches rustling, the heat shimmering above the hills, people in light clothes on the terrace, the windows open, someone playing the piano, [...] the river flowing black and secretive even on brightest days*".<sup>142</sup> "*Ever since my childhood, the river has existed in my dreams. Always dark and swirling [...], the logs smelling of bark and resin as they slowly swing round in the strong current, and sharp stones protruding menacingly below the swirling surface of the water. The river channel cuts deeply between the banks where thin alders and birches find root; the water is lit by the sun for a few moments, then dies and becomes blacker than ever. The ceaseless movement towards the curve of the river, the subdued murmur*".<sup>143</sup> "*the truth is that I am forever living in my childhood [...] standing in front of the summer cottage and listening to the enormous double-trunk birch tree*".<sup>144</sup>

In the memoirs of the filmmaker, the recollections of long summers spent in Dalarna seem to be pleated with the separate, opposing topography of Stockholm archipelago, where the family alternately spent their holidays. "*Father hated Våröms, Grandmother and the suffocating heat of inland. Mother loathed the sea, the archipelago and the wind, which gave her pains in her shoulders. For some unknown reason, she had now given up her opposition*" and one

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<sup>139</sup> LM, p. 207

<sup>140</sup> BoB, p. 22

<sup>141</sup> LM, p. 290

<sup>142</sup> LM, p. 52

<sup>143</sup> LM, pp. 269-270

<sup>144</sup> Bergman, I. (2007) *Images: my life in film*. (1st edition 1990) New York: Arcade Publishing, p. 22

summer, the Bergmans set off to inhabit "a yellow house in a thickly wooded bay on the island of Smådalaro", 45 km away from Stockholm, a location which remained their "idyllic summer place for many years ahead".<sup>145</sup> Ingmar was to inherit his father's landscape affinities: "from my father I think I have got [...] my closeness to the landscape, to the seashore"<sup>146</sup> and Fårö seems to be the meld of these childhood summer locations: a flattened, condensed image of Dalarna tethered on the edge of an infinite sea.

*It corresponds to your innermost imagining of forms, proportions, colours, horizons, sounds, silences, lights and reflections*

Apart from drawing parallels with landscapes of his childhood, in the fragment describing his arrival on Fårö, Bergman makes also another statement, claiming that the arid environment of the island resounds secretly with his "innermost imagining of forms, proportions, colours, horizons, sounds, silences, lights and reflections". Such details of experiential encounter with the world are, on one hand, befitting a committed phenomenological text; on the other hand, they are readily available in the case of a visual artist as Bergman, who is such a keen autobiographical writer. A feasible path to approach the issue of place experience, therefore, is to consult the written autobiographical descriptions of places, tracking the passages that mention forms, proportions, colours, horizons, sounds, silences, lights and reflections. Incidentally, Bergman's texts - either the autobiographies, the screenplays or other writings - seem to be knitted from the thread of precisely such observations.

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<sup>145</sup> LM, p. 111

<sup>146</sup> Meryman, R. (2007) I live at the Edge of a Very Strange Country, (interview taken in 1971), pp. 96-112, in R. Shargel (ed.) *op cit*, p. 102

*the large apartment in the quiet Trädgårdsgatan was the epitome of security*

### Uppsala (1918-1930s)

The apartment belonging to Bergman's maternal grandmother, situated on Trädgårdsgatan 12 in Uppsala, provided architectural experiences which were to be decisive for the spatial universe of the filmmaker. Cinematically, he transposed these recollections almost directly in his 1982 film *Fanny and Alexander*, but the written accounts include a richer experiential content. From the more objective descriptions included in earlier scripts<sup>147</sup>, these memories gain subjective weight and phenomenological relevance in autobiographies and interviews. As such, in 1947, Bergman was writing the note called *In Grandmother's House*, as a preface to a theatre play.



**Image 3.34** - Uppsala: the street adjacent to Trädgårdsgatan, where Bergman's grandmother lived; photo ©RB, taken March 2013

Descriptive fragments focus on the qualities and peculiarities of the apartment: "*Grandmother lives in a university and cathedral town in Central Sweden in a small two-storey house facing the street known as Allégatan. In summertime, it's green there. The house is standing in the shadow of the cathedral. There are windows facing a big, enclosed yard, which is connected to the street by a cobblestone archway some fifteen yards deep*";<sup>148</sup> the portraiture of the house continues in a similar objective key, but every now and there are poetically experiential details - though still depersonalized: "*Grandmother's flat is very big, located on the second floor, its entrance facing the yard. There is a hall and a drawing room with a firewood bin and coloured windows, a big kitchen with a dining room [...] Then there's all those nooks and crannies filled with secret whispers, comfort and wondrous things. All those ceramic stoves rumbling with winter fires. The statuettes, seeming almost alive in the quiet sunlight. The sunlight is almost like a note when you are alone*".<sup>149</sup> The latter passage already points towards what would afterwards become the trademark of Bergman's architectural written reminiscences: the lights, the silence and the

<sup>147</sup> the 1947 theatre play *Unto My Fear*, produced with the Gothenburg theatre

<sup>148</sup> *In Grandmother's House*, preface to Bergman's theatre play *Unto My Fear* (1947); English text available courtesy of Bergmancenter, Fårö, as part of the exhibition *The Drawing Room* (2012-2014); ©BC

<sup>149</sup> idem

subdued sounds of spaces; from such quiet experiential observation would also emerge the formal purity of his later films.

The same space of grandmother's Uppsala apartment is transfigured in the impersonated writings envisaged as openly autobiographical, exhibiting literal exemplifications of Bergman's experiential imaginings, with lights, silence and reflections prevailing: *"It is early spring and the sunlight keeps coming and going with swift soundless movements over the curtains and pictures"; "the chairs around the table and the walls are covered in yellow leather, darkened with age and smelling old"; "the carafes and cut-glass bowls glimmering in the changing light"; "The sunlight turns fiery, lighting up the prisms in the chandeliers, sweeping over the picture of houses growing out of the water"; "Lying on the little couch listening to the silence, seeing the beam from the streetlamp throwing light and shade on the ceiling. When snowstorms swept across the Uppsala plain, the lamp swung, the shadows intertwined and there was a squeaking and revelling in the tiled stove".*<sup>150</sup>

For Bergman, the space of this house is closely connected to events having taken place therein, such as discovering the enchanting world of moving images through a magic lantern, and mostly to the fond memory of his grandmother - an authoritarian, but benign and friendly presence in his childhood: *"we read aloud to each other, we invented stories [...] our discussions were always enveloped in twilight, intimacy and winter afternoons".*<sup>151</sup> Despite their emotional load, the autobiographical passages featuring the Uppsala flat are not merely nostalgic recollections, but seem to contain a condensed experiential weight, which, when remembered, acted as a creative fuel in later artistic work. Bergman himself had repeatedly mentioned the spatial intensity and the strong sense of emplacement which memories of Uppsala bear, leading themselves imaginatively habitable throughout his entire life:

*A sunken world of lights, odours and sounds. Today, if I am calm and just about to fall asleep, I can go from room to room and see every detail, know and feel it. In the quietness of Grandmother's home, my senses opened and decided to keep all this forever and ever.*<sup>152</sup>

*To me, the large apartment in the quiet Trädgårdsgatan was the epitome of security and magic: the numerous clocks measuring the time, the sunlight wandering across the infinite green of the carpets, the fires fragrant in the tiled stoves, the chimney pipe roaring and the little stove doors tinkling. Down in the street, a sleigh with its jingling bells sometimes passed, the cathedral bells rang for divine service or a funeral and, morning and evening, the delicate and distant Gunilla bell could be heard. Old furniture, heavy curtains, dim pictures.*<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> LM, pp. 20-23

<sup>151</sup> LM, pp. 22-23

<sup>152</sup> BoB, p. 18

<sup>153</sup> LM, p. 20

*The room's anonymity gave me a sense of security*

### Stockholm (1920-2002)

Unlike grandmother's apartment in Uppsala, considered as an "epitome of security", the multitude of Stockholm houses inhabited for longer or shorter periods of time succeed each other almost anonymously in the autobiographical writings, overshadowed by the tensions which had prevailed in the Bergman household, among the parents and between parents and children. The inner topography of these houses is fading, their spatial poignancy deeming, descriptions dwell mostly on perceptual details. As such, experiences of light and sound seem to grow in intensity, permeating through the structures of these ambiguous spaces, light gaining a weight and a materiality of its own, to which rooms are but an ethereal support.

*In the autumn of 1920, we moved to Villagatan 22<sup>154</sup> in the Östermalm district of Stockholm. It smelt of new paint and polished parquet flooring. The nursery had sun-yellow linoleum on the floor and light-coloured blinds with castles and meadow flowers on them<sup>155</sup>; and later: "My family lived on the first floor in an apartment house on the corner of Skeppargatan and Storgatan in Stockholm. The dining room faced on to a dark back courtyard with a high brick wall, the outdoor privy, dustbins, fat rats and a carpet beating stand.<sup>156</sup>*



**Image 3.35** - images of Lill-Jansskogen park in Stockholm; photos ©RB, taken in the light of the Swedish white nights, June-July 2013

The only place which seems to have left a stronger imprint in the recollections of the filmmaker is the yellow parsonage building which still stands today beside Sophiahemmet Royal Hospital, where he lived in his late childhood and early teenage years, while his father was a chaplain of Sophiahemmet. "Though only a short walk from the heart of the city on what was then its outermost rim, the house had a commodious farm kitchen, a great living room hearth,

<sup>154</sup> first residence in Stockholm; the Foundation Ingmar Bergman, home to the Ingmar Bergman Archives, has researched, mapped and published all the places inhabited by Bergman, as well as the locations of main films; this interactive map is available online at [ingmarbergman.se/en/places](http://ingmarbergman.se/en/places) (last accessed March 2015)

<sup>155</sup> BoB, p. 2

<sup>156</sup> ibid



*and an almost rural setting within the hospital park that adjoined Lill-Jansskogen*".<sup>157</sup> About this house, to which the family moved in mid 1920s, Ingmar writes: "We had moved to a yellow house on the edge of the great park that borders Lill-Jansskogen in Stockholm. [...] The park of Sophiahemmet, the royal hospital, is large, the front facing on to the Valhallavägen, the Stadium on one side and the College of Technology<sup>158</sup> on the other. It penetrates deep into Lill-Jansskogen<sup>159</sup>. The buildings, not many in those days, were scattered over the rolling landscape".<sup>160</sup> This is also the only house in Stockholm which is mentioned in Bergman's writings as a topos of revisiting fond memories: "One day at the end of February, I found myself in a quiet comfortable room at Sophiahemmet. The window faced out onto the garden. I could see the yellow parsonage, my childhood home, up there on the hill. Every morning, I walked for an hour in the park, the shadow of an eight-year-old beside me; it was both stimulating and uncanny".<sup>161</sup>

The rest of the urban apartments appear scarcely in the autobiographical writings. The house which Bergman owned for the longest period, for 32 years, until he moved permanently to Fårö, was bought in 1970 as "a newly built apartment house at Karlaplan 10 where Strindberg's<sup>162</sup> House had once stood".<sup>163</sup> There are hardly any experiential descriptions of this house. A fragment referring to another apartment he owned in Stockholm, where he used to retreat in troubled times, seems to capture Bergman's distanced attitude from all these urban residences: "The room's anonymity gave me a sense of security".<sup>164</sup> Surrounding the anonymity of this houses, is a general resentment toward Stockholm as a living place: "It's not a city at all. It is ridiculous of it to think of itself as a city. It is simply a rather larger village, set in the middle of some forests and some lakes. You wonder what it thinks it is doing there, looking so important";<sup>165</sup> "I don't know why anybody lives in Stockholm, so far away from everything. When you fly up here from the south, it's very odd. First there are houses and towns and villages; but farther on there are just woods and forests and more woods and a lake, perhaps, and then still more woods with, just once in a while, a long way off, a house. And then, suddenly, Stockholm. It's perverse to have a city way up here. And so here we sit, feeling lonely".<sup>166</sup>

The only spatial quality which seems to enliven these anonymous houses from Stockholm remains the light: "I hate the winter. I hate Stockholm in the winter. When I wake up during the winter - I always get up at six, ever since I was a child - I look at the wall opposite my window. November, December, there is no light at all. Then, in January, comes a tiny thread of light. Every morning I watch that line getting a little bigger. This is what sustains me through the black and terrible winter: seeing that line of light growing as we get closer to spring".<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Gado, F. (1986), *The Passion of Ingmar Bergman*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, p.7

<sup>158</sup> now renamed as the Royal Institute of Technology, KTH

<sup>159</sup> see page 90 for a broadened context

<sup>160</sup> BoB, p. 12

<sup>161</sup> LM, p. 93

<sup>162</sup> August Strindberg (1849-1912), one of the most famous Swedish writers, who also produced remarkable works as painter; he was a major source of inspiration for Bergman, who repeatedly staged several of his theatre plays

<sup>163</sup> LM, p. 86

<sup>164</sup> BoB, p. 90

<sup>165</sup> Baldwin, J. (2007) *The Northern Protestant*, (interview taken in 1960), pp. 10-20, in R. Shargel (ed.) *op cit*, p. 15

<sup>166</sup> Grenier, C. (2007) *Playboy Interview: Ingmar Bergman*, (interview taken in 1964), pp. 35-47, in R. Shargel (ed.) *op cit*, p. 37

<sup>167</sup> *ibid*

Poetic observations of light phenomena have, for Bergman, the capacity to render familiarity to places. He writes lengthy passages of this kind only when remembering the Uppsala apartment and, later, the island's light conditions and the inside of his home in Fårö, but no such descriptions are used to characterize the apartments from Stockholm. Unlike urban houses which elude perceptual experience, it is interesting to notice how glimpses of silence and light illumine and domesticate other corners of the city, making the experience of these non-residential spaces comparable to that of the Uppsala childhood home. As such, describing a day beside his mother's hospital bed, Bergman writes: "*The room was suddenly filled with bright early spring light, the little alarm clock ticking away busily on the bedside table. [...] I sat there for several hours. The church bells of Hedvig Eleonora rang for morning service, the light shifted and I could hear piano music somewhere*".<sup>168</sup> Or elsewhere, recounting a December afternoon, listening to Bach's Christmas Oratorio inside Hedvig Eleonora church: "*The gold-shimmering moving sunlight was reflected strongly in the row of windows in the parsonage opposite the church, forming figures and patterns on the inner abutment of the arch, the direct light slanting through the dome in brilliant shafts. The mosaic window by the altar flared for a few moments, then was extinguished, a soundless explosion of dull red, blue and golden brown. [...] The trembling uneasy light patterns on the wall moved upwards, narrowed, lost their strength and were extinguished. [...] A gentle greyish-blue light filled the church with sudden stillness, timeless stillness*".<sup>169</sup> Such passages not only reveal profound affinity to the conditions of changing grey-blue light that envelop the still, timeless landscape of Fårö, but also resemble closely the recollections of the contemplative child sitting inside an Uppsala apartment, "*[l]ying on the little couch listening to the silence, seeing the beam from the streetlamp throwing light and shade on the ceiling*".<sup>170</sup>

Parallels and affinities of this kind read as testimony for Bergman's mnemonic spatiality: "*The truth is that I am forever living in my childhood, wandering through darkening apartments, strolling through quiet Uppsala streets, standing in front of the summer cottage and listening to the enormous double-trunk birch tree*".<sup>171</sup> Tellingly, from such experiential recollections practiced by mentally dwelling in the rooms of previously inhabited houses, the link between spatiality and memory lingers in his written works and becomes a recurring metaphor: "*I set to stroll on the brightly lighted corridors of memory*";<sup>172</sup> "*I was going to return to my films and enter their landscapes*".<sup>173</sup> This metaphorical stylistic tool would gradually migrate inside Bergman's cinematic world.

*I can still roam through the landscape of my childhood and again experience lights, smells, people, rooms, moments, gestures, tones of voice and objects. These memories seldom have any particular meaning, but are like short or longer films with no point, shot at random.*<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> LM, p. 7

<sup>169</sup> LM, p. 281

<sup>170</sup> LM, p. 23

<sup>171</sup> Bergman, I. (2007) *Images: my life in film*. (1st edition 1990) New York: Arcade Publishing, p. 22

<sup>172</sup> idem, p. 14

<sup>173</sup> idem, p. 15

<sup>174</sup> LM, p. 17



Image 3.36 - scenes from Ingmar Bergman's 1957 film *Wild Strawberries*; revisiting the childhood home

*I set to stroll on the brightly lighted corridors of memory*

### Autobiographical dwelling: 1956-1961

The autobiographical turn in the filmography of the Swedish artist appears to have started with his 1957 film *Wild Strawberries*. In the film, an old man revisits the house of his childhood, which comes alive before his eyes, as he smoothly re-enters its redeemed familiarity, during an afternoon reverie. The house depicted in the film is a close replica of Våröms, the summer house belonging to his grandparents, from Dufnas, Dalarna. Bergman often visited this house during the summers but, following the death of his grandmother, the property was sold in 1956. It is relevant to note the chronologic coincidence: once this childhood place was no longer in physical reach, the impulse to revisit it moved into artistic creation.

The filmmaker tells of how the idea for *Wild Strawberries* was prompted by an actual encounter with the place, as one day - travelling through Sweden by car - he stopped to visit Våröms. During this visit, the space itself imaginatively turned into a metaphor that would further be developed in film:

*I went up to the house and took hold of the door knob of the kitchen door, which still had its colored glass pattern and a feeling ran quickly through me: suppose I open it? Supposing old Lalla, our old cook, is standing inside there, in her big apron, making porridge for breakfast, as she did so many times when I was little? Suppose I could suddenly walk into my childhood? Then it struck me: supposing I make a film of someone coming along, perfectly realistically, and suddenly opening a door and walking into his childhood? And then opening another door and walking into reality again?<sup>175</sup>*

The film did not preserve the idea of opening the door as trigger for the transformation of present into past, from directly perceiving a materiality of loss into physically grasping the immaterial remembered image. Perhaps, however sincere, the film image would have looked too naive. Instead, the house turns from its decaying present-day into the bright icon of the protagonist's recollections, at the sound of piano music coming from inside the house. Seemingly arbitrary, this association is in fact - as many stylistic tools employed by Bergman - an integral part of the artist's innermost childhood landscape. In the opening of the book on *Wild Strawberries*, he tracks the springs of this film's inspiration as far back as the childhood days, inhabiting once again to the contemplative moments inside grandmother's house:

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<sup>175</sup> BoB, p. 131

*[M]y association with film goes back to the world of childhood. My grandmother had a very large old apartment in Uppsala. I used to sit under the dining-room table there, listening to the sunshine which came in through gigantic windows. The sunlight moved about and sounded in a very special way. One day, when winter was giving way to spring and I was five years old, a piano was being played in the next apartment. On the wall hung a large picture of Venice. As the sunlight moved across the picture, the water in the canal began to flow, the pigeons flew up from the square, people talked and gesticulated. Bells sounded from the picture itself. And the piano music also came from that remarkable picture of Venice.<sup>176</sup>*

The synaesthetic strength in such juxtapositions of senses as sounding sunlight and bells chiming from inside of a static picture phenomenologically describes the deeply-lived space of those childhood days, that was not to be found in any of the Stockholm residencies.

Few years after this initial autobiographical cinematic attempt, Bergman went to film in Fårö, an encounter briefly introduced in the beginning of this section. "*One day in April 1960, a renowned and strong-willed director somewhat reluctantly arrived on Fårö, an unfiled screenplay in his briefcase. The headstrong people and the strong-willed director met*".<sup>177</sup> Through a *Glass Darkly* (1961), discloses a stark asceticism in its visual composition: an empty beach beside an infinite sea, a stone house surrounded by an orchard and four characters living therein. The narrative unfolds as do the austere spaces of this dwelling. The house's habitability is revealed not through flamboyant furnishings, decor or lighting - characteristic to other Bergman films - through the way in which the landscape subtly permeates it: lights sweeping in through half open doors, windows letting the silence of the sea inhabit rooms.

*After a rough crossing, we landed on Fårö, then rattled along the slippery winding coastal roads. In the film, there is a stranded wreck. We swung round a corner of a cliff, and there was the wreck, a Russian salmon cutter, just as I had described it. The old house was to be in a small garden containing ancient apple trees. We found the garden. We would build the house. There was to be a stony shore. We found a stony shore facing infinity.<sup>178</sup>*

Not only did the film's treatment of space constitute a new turn in the artistic creation of the director, the moment of filming in Fårö was also the beginning of a peculiar phase in his biography, a phase marked by a heightened interest in issues of habitation. Shortly after shooting this film, Bergman initiated an intense search for a place to turn into a home, along the Swedish, Danish and other foreign sea shores. The process lasted for over five years, from 1961 to 1966. Part of it has been recorded as careful notes with newspaper ads selected by Bergman himself, but the main part is formed of the rich correspondence the filmmaker kept with lawyers, real-estate agents and various authorities from whom he requested permission to build in natural preserved areas or to purchase property in foreign lands.

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<sup>176</sup> Bergman, I. (1993) *Wild Strawberries*. London: Faber and Faber, p.6

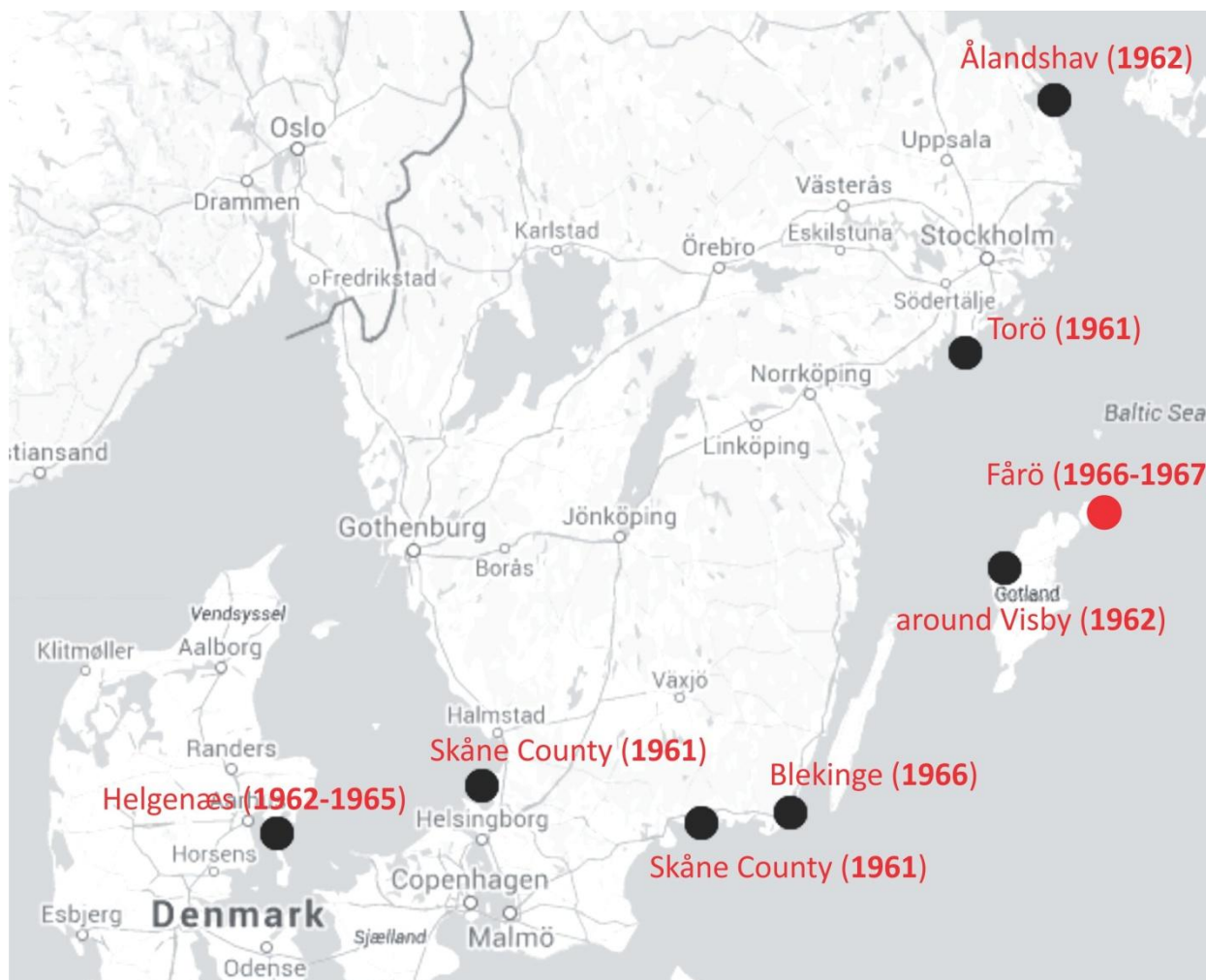
<sup>177</sup> Brogren, G. in *Fårö, The Cinematic Landscape of Ingmar Bergman* exhibition organized by The Fårö Bergman Centre Foundation and Fårö Local History Association (2013-2014); text available courtesy of Elisabeth Edlund, ©BC

<sup>178</sup> LM, pp. 207-208

*I would love to have a private place by the sea*

### Searching for Fårö: 1961-1967

This correspondence is kept in the Ingmar Bergman Archives<sup>179</sup> from the Swedish Film Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, and a review of its contents is able to trace a clarification of Bergman's understanding of space, and the subtle ascent towards the architectural and landscape clarity of the house he eventually built on Fårö island in 1967.



**Image 3.37** - a map of Denmark and Sweden, showing the places or areas mentioned in the real-estate correspondence maintained by Bergman in the period 1961-1966, with indication of the year when each property was under consideration

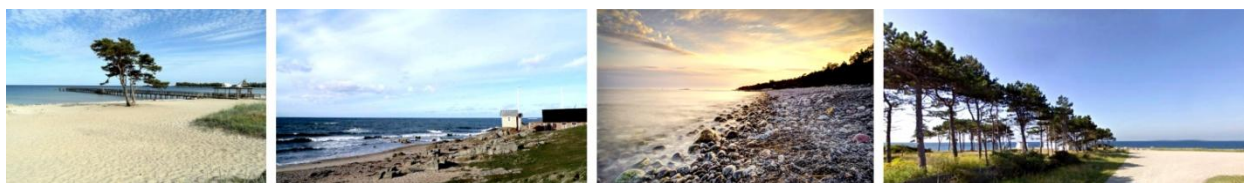
The places for which such archival records exist are, chronologically: Skåne<sup>180</sup> county (for which there are 7 letters, from May to October 1961), Torö island<sup>181</sup> (5 letters, from September to October 1961); a number of locations near Visby, Gotland (3 archival records

<sup>179</sup> the following section presents the results of a research period undertaken as part of this PhD, at the Ingmar Bergman Archives, Stockholm, with the particular support of Mr. Jan Holmberg, president of the Ingmar Bergman Foundation

<sup>180</sup> Skåne is the southernmost county of Sweden, with Malmö as the regional seat of governor residence

<sup>181</sup> an island from the Stockholm archipelago; Bergman had rented a holiday home there before 1961 and was considering buying it, but due to many difficulties with paperwork he abandoned the plan

from spring 1962); Helgenæs<sup>182</sup>, near Aarhus, Denmark (with a number of 29 archival items, from May to October 1962, then a brief continuation in 1965); Åland<sup>183</sup> (one archival record from 1963, containing newspaper ads of several properties); Blekinge<sup>184</sup> (one archival entry, from 1966, with a notification sent by a real-estate agent regarding a property that had become available). In 1966, however, Bergman had already purchased a stretch of land in Fårö, for which there are another 11 archival records, tracing the progress of the works on the land: the correspondence with the Gotland County Board, the Gotland Governor and the District Land Surveyor, seeking the approval to build a house close to the sea shore; various letters exchanged between Bergman and Kjell Abramson, the architect who designed this house; additional archival records, dated later, in early '70s, concern the will for the inheritance of the Fårö property.



**Image 3.38** - (from left to right) 1. east coast of Skåne © Monika Nilsson; 2. west coast of Skåne © fotosnack.de; 3. Torö island © Pawel Macieszonек; 9. Helgenæs, Denmark © googlestreetview

The first of these archival items is dated May 1961, during the post-production of the Fårö-located *Through a Glass Darkly*. In the first recorded letter, Bergman writes to C.G. Johansson, from the real-estate office AB Skånebyrå, Malmö, about potential properties in Skåne, the southern province of Sweden:

*I would love to have a private place by the sea. It does not matter on which coastline it is. It should be a place where you can live as comfortably in winter as in summer. Therefore, either an old place, which is modernized or modernizing, or a modern built house. The house should have proper facilities. The living area should not be less than 150-200 square meters.*<sup>185</sup>

Not pleased with the searches and the offers received from Johansson and his manager, Norrman, during several months of their searches, Bergman (through his assistant) writes back in October 1961, wishing to clarify his precise requests for a potential purchase:

*Unfortunately, the object does not suit [...] since it is not isolated enough from other buildings. In order to avoid any further misunderstandings, I beg to announce the following general guidelines, so that it is easier for manager Normann to sift through the proposals:*

<sup>182</sup> a peninsula just across the water from Aarhus and 1 hour drive from it; part of the Djursland peninsula; the compound name *helge-næs* means "holy headland"

<sup>183</sup> a group of islands separated from mainland Sweden (around Uppland area) through Ålandhav, the Sea of Åland, a waterway in the Gulf of Bothnia, connecting the Bothnian Sea with the Baltic Sea

<sup>184</sup> one of the traditional provinces of Sweden, situated in the south of the country, neighbouring Småland, Skåne and the Baltic Sea. The name comes from the nautical term *bleke* referring to the waters of the sea, and means "dead calm" Due to the beauty of its scenic archipelago, Blekinge is sometimes called "garden of Sweden"

<sup>185</sup> from Letter: I. Bergman to C. G. Johansson, dated 19 May 1961, Archival Folder J048-2 (Skåne); ©IBF (Translation from Swedish for all the selected archival material was done with the valuable help and guidance of Adrian and Evalena Hallam)

### Chapter 3 HOME in the Case Studies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman

- plot or land area of about 15-20 acres;
- absolutely isolated from view;
- a good house, an older style property would be acceptable, with the possibility of renovating it according to personal taste;
- necessary: beachfront, not be separated from the sea by any public or private road;
- necessary: car access to the area; [...]

*These are some points.*

*In terms of location, I cannot give precise directives, since there are lovely places even in the most inaccessible and unusual locations.<sup>186</sup>*

The search for suitable properties in Skåne was eventually halted in late 1961, no house or plot of land being entirely in accordance to the wishes of the filmmaker. Likewise, the attempt to buy a house in Torö was stopped due to hindrances with paperwork and ownership. The thought of Åland islands remained at the stage of collecting newspaper ads with fishing cottages for sale. In early 1962, an acquaintance from Gotland wrote to the artist, signalling some available properties just outside of Visby, but none of them met the condition of being both secluded from public view and being close to the sea. In spring, same year, Bergman travelled to Aarhus, Denmark, and there he found - for the first time - a place which seemed attuned to his dwelling dreams, in the peninsula of Helgenæs. The Danish legislation of that time did not allow a foreigner to purchase real estate in Denmark, so Bergman consulted a multitude of lawyers, accountants and real-estate specialists from Aarhus in order to proceed with his plans. He was advised to apply personally to the Danish Ministry of Justice and ask for a special purchase permission. His application was rejected, but the text, charmingly subjective, constitutes precious evidence of Bergman's peculiar way of relating to places, which eventually determined his strong affinity to the landscape of Fårö:

*You have asked me to provide a justification for my application for the purchase of property in Denmark. For an artist, such a justification can always be a little irrational and it is likely to be not entirely compelling as a legal argument. First, I have looked for many years all over Europe, including Sweden, for a place where I can spend my spring, summer and autumn, or rather, the periods when I write my manuscripts. When I visited Aarhus University last spring, some good friends brought me on a short trip along the coast. I felt instantly that this was the nature, the tranquility, the atmosphere, which for many years I have tried so intensively to find.<sup>187</sup>*

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<sup>186</sup> from Letter: I. Bergman to P. Norrman, dated 5 October 1961, Archival Folder J048-2 (Skåne); ©IBF

<sup>187</sup> from Letter: I. Bergman to G. Løber, dated 19 July 1962, Archival Folder J051-2 (Denmark); ©IBF



**Image 3.39** - (from left to right) 1. Ålandshav © Panoramio; 2 and 3. beach near Visby © Anders Lif; 4. Blekinge © google streetview

A fragment from his 1962 working notebook, written after the trip to Denmark, records his desire to be beside the sea as well as his need to feel at home: "*It felt good to go home. [...] everything stems from my sole desire to be in pleasant shooting locations. Actually, it all began with my longing to see the sea, Torö, to sit on a birch log and look at the waves for all eternity*".<sup>188</sup> Seeking to be again "in pleasant shooting locations", Ingmar Bergman returned to Fårö in summer of 1965, in order to film his 1966 *Persona*. In his own words: "*The start of filming was fixed and the location became Fårö. The choice was easy. Fårö had for many years been a secret love of mine*".<sup>189</sup> One of the islanders who worked for building the set in *Persona*, recalls: "*a house was constructed and there they also built a rail for a camera dolly. This house [...] was situated in the woods by the cliffs near Hammars. [...] when the dolly was inaugurated, it was time for a feast with coffee, cake and cookies, beneath the pines of the forest*".<sup>190</sup> For Bergman, the seashore in *Persona* displayed the very forms and proportions for accommodating a house, characteristics which he, as shown before, had been looking for all over the Scandinavian coastline.

At the suggestion of his cinematographer, Bergman found out that a piece of land was for sale close to this very location; "beneath the pines of the forest", he walked to this place, saw it and, unlike in all the previous cases where doubts had hindered him from making the purchase, he immediately initiated all the arrangements with the owner, Åke Nyström for the terrain on Hammars 1:26, the size of approximately 70,000 km<sup>2</sup>. After this, Ingmar addressed the Stockholm-based architect Kjell Abramson to design plans for a house located on this plot. The filmmaker knew the architect since 1963, when, as director of Dramaten, the Royal Dramatic Theatre, he had commissioned Abramson and his wife to renovate parts of Dramaten, changes including the addition of "*a canteen with daylight*".<sup>191</sup> Kjell Abramson remembers: "*He called me into his office, we were situated close by. And he asked me if I could design a house for him. He told me how big he wanted the living room, there, in his office. [...] I sketched out how I imagined a house in that location would be. Obviously, using the simplest of natural materials, pine and limestone. On site, I measured out the house. I fitted the foundations around the pine trees using sticks. We were to meet at the church, me Ingmar, and two colleagues from the Royal Dramatic Theatre. Together, we went to inspect the location. He walked the plot with me and was very pleased. <Excellent> he said, and that was that*".<sup>192</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Bergman, I. (2007) *op cit*, pp. 25-26

<sup>189</sup> LM, p. 207

<sup>190</sup> Evert Fagerberg's story retold by Gunilla Brogren, in *Fårö, The Cinematic Landscape of Ingmar Bergman*, quoted exhibition; text available courtesy of Elisabeth Edlund, curator of the exhibition; ©BC

<sup>191</sup> Arnqvist Engström, F. (2014) *Ingmar Bergman's Wooden Dream, an interview with Kjell Abramson*, published in *Wood, the Core of Scandinavian Design, Hemstilat* (magazine available exclusively as Ipad App - text and images courtesy of Frida Arnqvist Engström)

<sup>192</sup> idem



In 18 February 1966<sup>193</sup>, Bergman and Abramson sent an envelope to the Gotland County Board, which included the drawings for an overview map (scale 1:20000); site plan (scale 1:2000), plan of the house<sup>194</sup> (scale 1:200), facades and sections (scale 1:100). To the drawings, Bergman added a signed letter in which he mentioned "*I hereby respectfully request authorization for the Hammars farm on Fårö, no. 1:26, to build a home that is to serve me as a workplace and recreational refuge for in different seasons. On the economic map the plot of land is called Djaupadalshage*".

*I experienced a feeling of home and an affinity for the place which I had hitherto not experienced anywhere else*



**Image 3.40** - West facade of the house at Hammars, included in the initial proposal; drawing © K. Abramson, courtesy of F.A. Engström

To ensure a smoother bureaucratic path of his application, Bergman addresses the following day another, more personal letter to the Governor of Gotland county, writing: "*As perhaps you know, I applied at the Administrative County Board for permission to build a house on Fårö. This decision of mine is preceded by years of searching around the coasts of Europe for a place where I could retreat from the difficulties; ever since I was a child I have been addicted to the sea, I have been "sea-charmed", as Gosta Nystroem<sup>195</sup> has once put it. During the summer shooting for my film *Persona*, which took place on Fårö, one day I happened to walk near the terrain which I now have in mind as the site for my prospective house. I felt suddenly that this was the place, just the sea, the coast, the trees and the light. All the doubts and reservations which have previously prevented me from settling elsewhere were now blown away and I experienced a feeling of home and an affinity for the place which I had hitherto not experienced anywhere else*".<sup>196</sup> Bergman finishes his moving letter emphasizing on the urgency of his application to the County Board. The Governor of Gotland County replied three days later, mentioning some further potential obstacles for the construction of Bergman's dwelling dream: "*since the 1940s, around all the shores of Gotland there is a strict building ban in order to protect the landscape, however, provincial government can dispense from that restriction in special cases. I have taken on to review these matters myself, because a single wrongly planned or wrongly built cabin can eliminate the sense of grandeur of the open*

<sup>193</sup> from Letter: I. Bergman to Gotland County Board, dated 18 February 1966, Archival Folder J057 (Fårö); ©IBF

<sup>194</sup> the house was to be one floor only

<sup>195</sup> Gösta Nystroem (1890 - 1966), Swedish composer, originary from Dalarna. His most appreciated symphony, *Sinfonia del mare*, "Symphony of the Sea", composed between 1946-1948, was written in one fluid movement and pictures different moods inspired by the sea

<sup>196</sup> from Letter: I. Bergman - M. Wahlbäck, dated 19 February 1966, Archival Folder J054-2 (Fårö); ©IBF

coastal landscape. [...] I have found out that no application for a building exemption has been received from you by the provincial government".<sup>197</sup> The Governor ends encouraging Bergman to request permission to build from the provincial government of Gotland, promising that he would personally take care that the bureaucratic procedure would run smoothly from there on.

Following this initial correspondence, there was delay on both sides. On the part of Bergman, matters of administering the Royal Theatre and continuation of work on *Persona*; on the part of Gotland authorities, the process was halted several times due to misunderstandings, as some rumours had circulated that Bergman wishes to build not a house, but an extended permanent film studio unit on the island. After such a prolonged silence, Bergman writes once again to the County Governor, on May 2: "*I would be extremely grateful, if there was an opportunity to receive a decision, either positive or negative, within a reasonable time. Should my application be refused, I must know as soon as possible, in order to launch a renewed hunt for properties along the coasts of Europe*".<sup>198</sup>

The lengthy answer he received was compiled by the District Land Surveyor and included further complications Bergman's application had staggered across, mostly due to his requirements of close contact of the land. Mr. Westerlund, the Land Surveyor, writes: "*As it had been established, along to the shore there is a continuous stretch of empty beach, and buildings are pulled back a little into the coastal forest; the beach and part of the forest remain common property. The buildings can then be moved further inwards, depending on what the county architect or what the county administration decides. The rules do not forbid for houses to have a visual contact with the sea, but according to the fundamental principles of the province, any new constructions should preserve the forest brows intact along the beach, with settlements hidden from the sea shore. I understand, of course, your excellence's desire to have peace and privacy within the oasis of Fårö, a place with much nature and solace for the soul. I hope, however, that your essential requirements can be fulfilled with some slight modifications to meet the presented conditions*".<sup>199</sup> Although lengthy and complicated, the letter of Mr. Westerlund was hopeful and just a step away from an approval. Bergman answered almost immediately saying: "*the contact with the sea is of crucial significance for me. However, I can understand very well that the shoreline must remain common property. This is a democratic principle, which I appreciate very highly. So thank you again! I hope one day we might be seen as good neighbours in this paradisiacal place*".<sup>200</sup> In other words, the filmmaker agreed to move the house further up, at the edge of the forested area, close enough to the water so that a direct visual contact is maintained, and far enough so that the silhouette of the built volume can be dimmed through its subtle meeting with the stony beach and the pines which hide it. The subtleness of this blend proves the talent employed by the architects Kjell and Britta Abramson, who, using pine wood, Gotland limestone and elegant simplicity, designed a genuinely "down to earth"<sup>201</sup> house.

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<sup>197</sup> from Letter: M. Wahlbäck - I. Bergman, dated 22 February 1966, Archival Folder J054-1 (Fårö); ©IBF

<sup>198</sup> from Letter: I. Bergman - M. Wahlbäck, dated 2 May 1966, Archival Folder J054-2 (Fårö); ©IBF

<sup>199</sup> from Letter: S.E. Westerlund - I. Bergman, dated 9 May 1966, Archival Folder J055-1 (Fårö); ©IBF

<sup>200</sup> from Letter: I. Bergman - S.E. Westerlund, dated 11 May 1966, Archival Folder J055-2 (Fårö); ©IBF

<sup>201</sup> from Arnqvist Engström, I. (2014) *op cit*

*all these thousand pieces,  
which will eventually become a home and a workplace*



**Image 3.41** - Birdseye view of Bergman's house at Hammars, as pictured in 2009; image © Bukowskis Auction House, Stockholm, Sweden

*I can understand why people might think it strange for someone to suddenly decide  
to live on an island he'd never even heard of before. [...]  
It's the never-ceasing sounds of the wind, the waves, the gulls.  
The enormity of the sea creates a sense of timelessness, changelessness, security.  
But it's also the proportions and ancient character of the landscape.  
There isn't a whole lot of leafy foliage, not a whole lot of sandy beach,  
cliffs, and rocks,  
and not a whole lot of woods. But there is something of it all here  
in a kind of wonderful balance and harmony - the low stone walls running through  
the flat landscape, which can appear harsh and drab,  
only to suddenly blossom after the spring melt in vast carpets of colour and life.  
And then there's the light.  
I can sit for hours just looking out the window,  
watching how the light wanders and shifts<sup>202</sup>.*

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<sup>202</sup> Ingmar Bergman quoted in Bergström, L. (2007) Bergman's Best Intentions (interview taken in 1995), pp. 175-182, in R. Shargel (ed.) *op cit*, p. 176

The building process began in late 1966, local men participating in the construction directly, hands-on, with their knowledge and skills of stone masonry and carpentry. In February 1967 the house was nearly done and a party was organized for the construction team formed almost entirely of islanders, in order to celebrate their work. Although he wished to be present for the event, Bergman was held back with a theatre production in Oslo, Norway, and instead he sent a letter of gratitude, which was to be read aloud by the architect Kjell Abramson, who was in Fårö supervising the construction site.

In the letter<sup>203</sup>, Bergman wrote:

*Dear Friends,*

*First and foremost, I want to wish you all a warm welcome to our little party. I hope that you have a pleasant evening and that the food and drink will make you at ease. Sadly enough, I cannot be with you this evening, however much I would like to. I've been in Oslo for four weeks, where I work on a production at the National Theatre. [...] Therefore, I am writing this letter to you, so that you will understand that in my thoughts I am with you tonight, and I especially want to thank you for what you have done until now and for what you will do in the future.*

*The house by the sea has for many years been my dream, to have a work room facing out a sea horizon outside, silence, solitude, closeness to nature; for a long time I thought that it would remain a dream that would never come true. I've been searching in vain for the right place along many coastlines, both Swedish and foreign. It was when filming "Persona" that I suddenly realized this is the right place. Here, the dream could come true.*

*Through your contribution, the house is now growing, by your professionalism and kindness it is filled by all these thousand pieces which will eventually become a home and a workplace. I hardly think I could sufficiently explain to you how much this means to me personally, and how grateful I am to all of you for your noble efforts.*

*I hope we will meet in any case later this spring, when the dream would have become reality, and the house will be standing there ready. It will be a pleasure for me then to thank each one of you.*

The house was eventually ready during the shooting of the film *Shame* (1968). Arne Carlsson, one of the islanders who was a handyman for the crew of this film, and who, training along the team, eventually became an accomplished cinematographer<sup>204</sup>, recalls: "*Lots of Fårö folks got employed during the shoot. Since I was licensed to drive a lorry I got the job of transporting supplies to the various locations. At the end of the shoot, Bergman had built a house for himself here on Fårö and decided that he wanted to stay and live here*".<sup>205</sup>

So sure was he about this decision that, when being interviewed during the filming of *Shame* (1968), Bergman gave these answers:

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<sup>203</sup> from Letter I. Bergman - K. Abramson, dated 13 February 1967, Archival Folder J053-2 (Fårö); ©IBF

<sup>204</sup> apart from various films, many on which he worked with Ingmar Bergman, he was also the still photographer for Andrei Tarkovsky's 1985 *The Sacrifice* and the cinematographer of two documentaries about this film

<sup>205</sup> Arne Carlsson, quoted in *Fårö, The Cinematic Landscape of Ingmar Bergman*, quoted exhibition

### Chapter 3 HOME in the Case Studies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman

Interviewer: *Do you see your current state as permanent?*

Ingmar Bergman: *I have built my house, and here I'm planning to stay.*

Interviewer: *When the snow comes you'll be completely isolated, won't you?*

Ingmar Bergman: *Yes. Imagine how nice it will be!*<sup>206</sup>



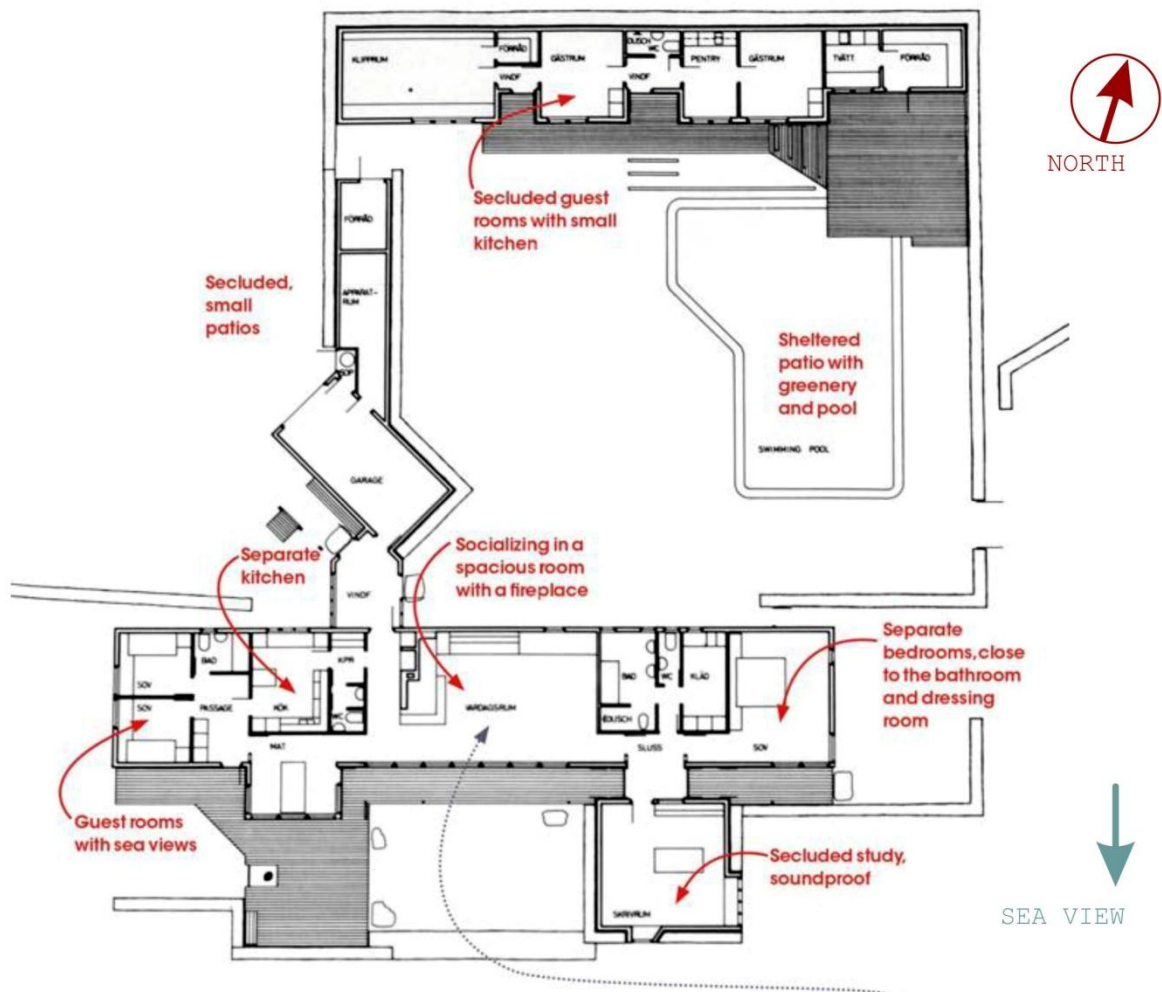
**Image 3.42** - the living room in Bergman's house on Fårö island, as pictured around noon time; photo ©RB, taken during September 2013; see [ANNEX booklet](#), pp. 9-12 and pp. 63-77

*He has built there on this terribly uncomfortable island a cozy little world surrounded by a strange stone wall. It is very strange because when you come in through these walls, you have a feeling that you have neighbours and people around, because it's very warm - all yellow and wood. He has a swimming pool there. You have a feeling you can pick up a telephone and go to a neighbour. And then you go out and there is empty land all over.*<sup>207</sup>

<sup>206</sup> Hamdi, B. (2007) Ingmar Bergman is Making a Film on Fårö Again, (interview taken in 1967), pp. 53-60, in R. Shargel (ed.) *op cit*, p. 60

<sup>207</sup> Bibi Andersson in Meryman, R. (2007) I live at the Edge of a Very Strange Country, (interview taken in 1971), pp. 96-112, in R. Shargel (ed.) *op cit*, pp. 104-105

## THE HOUSE BY THE SEA



**Image 3.43** plan of the house at Hammars, as submitted for building authorization; drawing © K. & B. Abramson; courtesy of F.A. Engström; drawing includes the architects' brief explanations

### Brief Description of the House

The collaboration between Ingmar Bergman and the Abramsons was a flexible process: the filmmaker had some requirements about certain spaces, details and views, while the architects were given free hand to design a house they found fitting to the location. They would make their designs and bring the sketches to Ingmar's office in the Royal Dramatic Theatre. From Kjell Abramson's narrations, their architectural approach was in consonance with Bergman's desires, their proposals being constantly met with enthusiasm.

The house's most distinctive features are the clarity of the layout, the multifaceted relationship with the sea and - maybe most pleasing - the warmth of the inside, in striking contrast with the cold looking exterior. On the outside, the building appears gray, a combination of Gotland limestone and "pine which has been treated with sulphuric acid that gives the wood its special gray, windswept expression. [...] Outside, the wood has a gray glow, inside

*it's yellow. You can also get different looks from pine, depending on whether you use panels or smooth surfaces, for example. It's the refining of the material that I really appreciate".<sup>208</sup> On the inside, the pine surfaces display a diverse range of looks, depending on the room and on the construction element on which it is employed. "Kjell selected the materials for the house both inside and out. Walls and ceilings are made of wood. The ceilings are often layered slates, a more descriptive term might be multi-glued pine. The workroom also contains of layered slats and panels in the roof. Some of the panels are smooth, others are embossed, giving a dramatic effect".<sup>209</sup>*

All rooms benefit from a variety of views, ranging from landscape glass walls to tall slender windows which merely allow glimpses of the sea and under-the-ceiling openings that let only the sunlight pour inside and illuminate the ceiling. In what concerns the functional organization, the house has two parallel ways of access, one through the garage, the other through a patio shielded from rain and wind. On this patio there are two wooden benches "*on this bench you can sit and rest, and opposite there's a bench to put your mushroom basket and packages*".<sup>210</sup> There was initially a clear separation between private guest apartments overlooking an interior garden with pool, and the family's residential unit, designed in parallel to the sea shore. This sea-facing area had, in turn, two guest bedrooms with their own bathroom, while the world-famous filmmaker and his wife were to live in a simple space formed of kitchen, dining area, living room, one bedroom, bathroom and dressing and, separately, Bergman's private office. Among the artist's own ideas was the stove in the living room, designed in such a way that one could sit on it, read and watch the changing light on the sea from there. According to his own words, he sketched the stove inspired by one he had once seen in an old Russian film. Another requirement clearly stated by Bergman was the double door of the study, which was to offer him full privacy and silence even when guests were visiting. This office, with a special pyramidal ceiling clothed in warm pine wood, "*shaped like that of a chapel*"<sup>211</sup>, has three windows of different characters. The largest one is square shaped, with wooden sash and a wide windowsill covered in wool, on which one can sit and watch the sea. Another one is smaller, situated higher on the wall, and is shaped as a funnel capturing the light. The third window is cut out of the interior wall and allows visibility towards the corridor and the domestic life beyond. This study was also home to Ingmar's musical collection, the double door ensuring not only the silence of the room, but also the clarity of the music played therein. In here, Bergman "*played Shostakovich to the rabbits that lived underneath the house. According to him, they enjoyed it*".<sup>212</sup>

The construction was completed in 1967 according to this initial layout, but, over the years some changes were made to existing spaces and new rooms were added following a linear configuration. These changes were done in close collaboration with the Gotland-based architect Per Erik Nilsson. The wall dividing the kitchen from the dining zone was torn down,

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<sup>208</sup> Kjell Abramson interviewed by Frida Arnqvist Engström, in Arnqvist Engström, F. (2014) *Ingmar Bergman's Wooden Dream, an interview with Kjell Abramson*, published in *Wood, the Core of Scandinavian Design, Hemstilat*

<sup>209</sup> Frida Arnqvist Engström, in Arnqvist Engström, F. (2014) *quoted interview*

<sup>210</sup> Kjell Abramson, *quoted interview*

<sup>211</sup> *The Ingmar Bergman Auction: 28 September 2009*, Stockholm: Bukowski Auktioner Aktiebolag (publ.), p. 49; Catalogue compiled by Bukowskis Auction House in collaboration with Ingrid Dahlberg, Birgitta Steene, Maaret Koskinen, Paul Duncan, Kenneth Johansson, AB Svensk Filmindustri

<sup>212</sup> idem

so that the sea view penetrates through the house and reaches the kitchen area. The house was expanded according to the needs observed by living in it and, thus, changes were made only to the permanently inhabited area, not to the garden guest apartment: the volume directly facing the sea became elongated up to the final dimensions of 56 meters in length, with a width of less than 6 meters. The guest bedrooms from this sea-facing unit were replaced with a TV-video room, with walls covered in video-cassettes neatly organized alphabetically. This room was also soundproof from the rest of the house, through a double door. In time, after this room followed an archive room, where awards and important documents were kept. On the far western end of the house, the library was added, a room facing the forest towards which it looks through a large sash window, various tall and slim openings, and some additional ceiling lights bring the space to life through trembling rays and flickers, varying with the different times of the day.

On the western end of the house, other two rooms were added: a larger one which was to become the master bedroom, whereas the previous designated bedroom turned into Ingrid's study<sup>213</sup>; after this bedroom, a "*meditation room*" was added in the easternmost point overlooking the stony beach and the sea through a corner window.

A product of love for the landscape and a result of various residential needs, the house has become also a built image of the inhabitant's daily rhythms. Each room corresponded with clear life patterns which Bergman followed with diligent precision: waking up at 6am every day, the meditation room was the place from where he watched the new day break; the study was the place for morning creative struggle, starting on 9:30 sharp, each day, sitting in front of a wall with a window too high to be visible from the working desk; the length of the house, expressing the desire to dwell watching the sea, was also the right configuration of space to accommodate Ingmar's night promenades during his repeated insomnias. A walk through the house, from one edge to the other, unveils ever changing sounds, echoes, silences and shades of darkness.

When interviewed, the architects Kjell and Britta<sup>214</sup> summarized "*why the house is still so interesting today; its position, function and the simplicity of the materials used are some of the things they agree on. They also emphasize that [Bergman's] creativity had an affinity with nature. Perhaps Ingmar Bergman personifies the Swedish soul more than anyone else. And with that comes a feeling for the experiences of a rugged environment*".<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Ingrid von Rosen (1930-1995), Ingmar Bergman's wife from 1971 until her death, 12 years before his

<sup>214</sup> at the time of the interview, February 2014, Kjell was turning 90, Britta 88. "*As a couple, they have run their architect firm together for half their lives, and they tend to complete each other's sentences*" in Arnqvist Engström, F. (2014) *quoted interview*

<sup>215</sup> idem



Living the house in words (fragments of Bergman's autobiographical writings on Fårö)

1971

*Then I went to my island; I have lived there four years. On the island the reality is so real, it's no place for demons and bad dreams. Instead of bad dreams, I now have very ridiculous ones, comincal dreams - I often laugh. [...]*

*On the island, everything has its proportions; you are a very small part of this island and of the life there. If you scream, it has no effect, nobody hears; or perhaps a bird will fly up. You can make as much noise as you want, you can suffer; and it's only a part of the whole. And it gives to a hysterical mind such as mine - I was born hysterical, it's inherited from my parents - the proportions, the definite proportions of reality, it gives you peace. Because you know you cannot alter anything. That is good and healthy.<sup>216</sup>*

*My island is so good for me. The atmosphere, the people, the landscape, the sea, the rhythm of my life there - life and reality have their right proportions. [...] So here is the exact position, Mr. Bergman, of your life, of your importance. That gives a security, a sort of rest. I think it's very healthy for grown-up people to learn their exact proportions on earth, very good for the creative job. Then that will be more proportional.<sup>217</sup>*

1976

*In the middle of March we moved out to Fårö, where the long struggle between winter and spring had just started, one day strong sunlight and mild winds, shimmering reflections on the water and newborn lambs scuttling about on the bare thawed out ground, the next day stormy winds from the tundras, the snow coming in horizontally, the seas raging, windows and roads blocked, the electricity off. Fires, paraffin stoves and battery radio. All that was calming. [...] I slowly made my way along unfamiliar roads almost always leading to silence and the sensation of having lost my way. But writing was part of my daily discipline.<sup>218</sup>*

*Fårö had been my security. I had lain as if in a womb without a thought that I should ever again in my life have to leave.<sup>219</sup>*

1979

*Today, we arrived at Fårö. It is as it should be. It is coming home. A chilly, sunny spring day. It is fantastic. [...] This is home. Everything else is dreams and unreality.<sup>220</sup>*

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<sup>216</sup> Simon, J. (2007) Conversation with Bergman, (interview taken in 1971), pp. 69-95, in R. Shargel (ed.) *op cit*, p. 85

<sup>217</sup> Meryman, R. (2007) *op cit*, p. 105

<sup>218</sup> LM, p. 95

<sup>219</sup> *idem*, p. 100

<sup>220</sup> fragment from Ingmar Bergman's notebook for *Fanny and Alexander* (1982), quoted in *The Drawing Room* (2012-2014) exhibition of Bergman Center, Fårö, ©BC

*The director stayed for a while. Built sets, borrowed windows from old houses.  
Shot a film. Set abandoned farms on fire.  
The island became his location;  
the inhabitants became his constructions workers, extras and handymen.  
The people of the island got work, experiences and a change from the daily routine.  
Time passed. [...] The strong-willed director stayed on.  
Bergman became a resident. Became a Fårö man.<sup>221</sup>*

### Building Houses and Moving Images: Bergman's legacy on Fårö

After the house in Hammars was built, Bergman started to live on Fårö for many months a year, going to Stockholm only when work demanded the travel. A genuine mutual sympathy developed between the famous filmmaker and the islanders - so little known on mainland Sweden; ties grew increasingly stronger, on many professional and personal levels. In 1971, Bergman purchased a white manor house dating from 1854, with all its built belongings, nearby Dämba lake, a few kilometres southwest of Hammars. The farm was formed of two main buildings, the owner's house and a smaller one designated for servants, adjoined by a white wall, the perimeter of the precinct being completed by a living wall of lilac bushes. Outside this yard, the estate also had a barn building and a mill. Between 1971 and 1972, the filmmaker set on an ambitious project of renovating this building, without any architect or conservation specialist, but hiring only islanders, under the supervision of a fåröese craftsman, Adolf Karlström, who had also worked on the construction of the Hammars house.

Of the manner of work on this property, Bergman was saying: *"on the island I am reconstructing an old house. The work is being done by local farmers and fishermen. And we have no architect. We just sit down and discuss it together. This is very Swedish"*.<sup>222</sup> Once the house was renovated, another even more ambitious project started when the barn was turned into a film studio with a private cinema. The main house in Dämba, as well as the studio arranged inside the barn, were film locations in his 1973 TV production *Scenes from a Marriage*. Later, a world premiere of one of his films, *The Magic Flute* (1975) took place inside this cinema. The Dämba estate appears throughout his writings:

*A hundred-year old semi-derelict barn belonged to the restored house at Dämba on Fårö. We rebuilt it and used it as a primitive film studio for *Scenes from a Marriage*. When the filming was over, we turned the studio into a screening room with an ingenious editing area in the hayloft. When *The Magic Flute* editing was completed, we invited some of those who had been involved, together with some inhabitants of Fårö and a number of children, to our world premiere. It was August and a full moon, the mist sweeping in over Dämba marsh, the old house and mill glowing in the low cold light. [...] My Fårö screening room gives me untold pleasure. Through the friendly accommodation of the Film Institute's Cinematheque, I can borrow from their inexhaustible store of old films. My chair is comfortable, the room cosy, it grows dark and the first trembling picture is outlined on the white.<sup>223</sup>*

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<sup>221</sup> Gunilla Brogren, in *Fårö, The Cinematic Landscape of Ingmar Bergman*, quoted exhibition, ©BC

<sup>222</sup> Alvarez, A. (2007) A Visit with Ingmar Bergman, (interview taken in 1975), pp. 113-125, in R. Shargel (ed.) *op cit*, p. 118

<sup>223</sup> LM, pp. 233-234



Image 3.44 - views from the house at Dämba over the lake: morning (above) and evening (below); ©RB, September 2013

After this peaceful settling on the island, the filmmaker's life seemed to be rooted and calm. In 1975 he was declaring: "I must also say that I feel extremely Swedish. I live here and I couldn't live anywhere else for any length of time. I have my roots in this country".<sup>224</sup> But only one year later, in 1976, after a trial and arrest on false accusations of tax evasion, Bergman decided to leave Sweden in a self-imposed exile, and lived for almost nine years abroad, mainly in Germany. The artist's autobiography records one moment around the time when he and his wife Ingrid eventually took this difficult decision to leave the country - a peculiarly lyrical fragment full of spatial descriptive qualities that bear strong resemblance to the way in which the space of the Uppsala apartment and the Dalarna house are recollected in writing:

*We arrived in Stockholm on Midsummer Eve. Ingrid phoned her father, who had gathered together friends and relations on his farm near Norrtälje<sup>225</sup>. He insisted that we come at once. It was past eleven o'clock and a mild evening, everything at its most beautiful and fragrant. And then the Swedish light! Towards morning, I was lying in a white bed in a room that smelt of summer house and newly scrubbed wooden floor. Outside the window was a tall birch, its shadow drawing a swaying pattern on the light-coloured blind, rustling, whispering and whispering.<sup>226</sup>*

<sup>224</sup> Alvarez, A. (2007) *op cit*, p. 117

<sup>225</sup> municipality in Stockholm county, one hour driving distance from Stockholm

<sup>226</sup> LM, p. 106

It is relevant to observe that such experiential details, stylistically resembling narrations of his childhood memories, are mentioned precisely at the moment when the filmmaker was struggling with the decision to leave the country. Regarding the childhood home in Uppsala, Bergman had written: "*A sunken world of lights, odours and sounds. Today, if I am calm and just about to fall asleep, I can go from room to room and see every detail, know and feel it. In the quietness of Grandmother's home, my senses opened and decided to keep all this forever and ever*";<sup>227</sup> the above quoted moment from *Norrtälje* seems to disclose a similar attitude towards experiencing and remembering space, the sensitive lens of memory capturing the perceptual qualities of Swedish light and space, in order "*to keep all this forever*".

During the exile years, Bergman avoided Stockholm, closed down the film studio on Fårö, but kept the houses in Hammars and Dämba, to which he was returning for longer or shorter stays, sometimes for shooting films, but simply to just live on his island: "*in 1976, Bergman could contemplate abandoning Sweden: never Fårö*".<sup>228</sup> Sometimes, these visits would be just overnight escapades, for no other reason rather than simply being there: "*One evening we chartered a private plane and flew to Visby. We got to Fårö rather late, but it was still light. The huge lilac hedge outside the old house at Dämba water was in full bloom. We sat on the steps to the house until dawn, enveloped in the heavy fragrance, then early in the morning we flew back*".<sup>229</sup>

It was during his exile, in 1980, that Bergman built another house on the island: Ängen - "meadow" on a clearing in the forest outside of Hammars. Seen from the outside, it looks like a rescaled and minimally modified replica of the Dämba estate. On the inside, however, it benefits from a modern open plan, luminous and spacious, dominated by the grandeur of the stove<sup>230</sup>. Ängen and Dämba were used as guest houses when friends and the numerous children of the filmmaker came visiting. In mid '80s Bergman returned to Sweden, living mostly on Fårö, closely observing his strict daily routine of writing, walking, driving to the cinema at Dämba, buying the newspapers from Sudersand, etc. After the death of Ingrid, his wife, he barely left the island at all. He died at Hammars in 2007, aged 89, and is buried in the Fårö parish church.

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<sup>227</sup> BoB, p. 18

<sup>228</sup> Cowie, P. (1982) *Ingmar Bergman: A Critical Biography*, London: Secker & Warburg, p. 329

<sup>229</sup> LM, p. 104

<sup>230</sup> more information about The Bergman Estate on Fårö [www.bergmangardarna.se/en](http://www.bergmangardarna.se/en) (Last accessed: March 2015)

## Chapter 3 HOME in the Case Studies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman



- *How many years have you been here on Fårö?*  
- I will have served here for seven years come June 1st.  
- *Do you feel that the Word is well received here?*  
- I certainly do. The church is well attended and that also goes for other religious gatherings here. And when you visit the houses and farms and talk to people, especially the older residents, you find so much hidden and genuine religiosity.  
- *The religious indifference among the young, does it grieve you?*  
- Well, it does not quite grieve me, but naturally there are times when I wonder about what will happen in the future.

SVEN BERNANDER, assistant pastor  
interviewed by Ingmar Bergman  
*Fårödokument, 1969*  
(35:01-38:52)

Image 3.45 - film still from Bergman's *Fårödokument* (1969), with transcript of the dialogue with Sven Bernander



- I was born in December, 1866. [...] My grandfather used to make tar. For others and for himself. But the worst thing was, he dug up tree stumps, drove them away and split them, and made the tar. And all he asked for in return was half the tar. Not much pay for a day's work.

- *Getting between the big island and the small island was hard back then.*

- Yes, there was an ordinary rowboat and then there was a bigger ferry that could take a horse and a carriage. It could be rowed or sailed, depending on the weather. But if the weather was really bad, there was no way to cross. [...] I tried my hand at both house building, carpentry and smith-work. I've been both a blacksmith and a carpenter. If someone came to me and wanted some work done, if I accepted and did it, I suppose I got SEK 0.5 or SEK 1 a day. That was the wage for a day. The women wove, both wool and cotton, but you needed money to buy string and things like that. But anyway, it's been like that for a hundred years. You see, I've stayed faithful to the church. And I still want to be a member of the Church of Sweden. I do.

- *But wasn't it hard getting to church? When the weather was bad and such?*

- Well, the weather could turn just any way it wanted. When you decided to go to church, you went. On one Christmas morning, a steamer had run aground on the Salvorev sandbank. They asked if any Farö residents wanted to work on Christmas Day. But no one wanted that, so they hired people from Farösund, or Bunge. The wind from the north-east came on, with lots of snow. When we passed through Gåsemora, they had gone and turned over in the snowdrifts. But we kept on going, we were going to church. And our journey went all right.

CARL EKMAN, craftsman, 102 years old  
interviewed by Ingmar Bergman  
*Fårödokument, 1969*  
(29:18-33:52)

Image 3.46 - film still from Bergman's documentary *Fårödokument* (1969), with transcript of the dialogue with Carl Ekman



Image 3.47 - (from left to right) 1. film still from *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961); 2. film still from *Persona* (1966); 3. film still from *Shame* (1968); 4. film still from *Passion of Anna* (1969) - all of the films were shot on Fårö

Bergman encountered the island in 1960, while filming *Through a Glass Darkly*; he found the piece of land for building a home in 1965, while filming *Persona* and completed the construction of this house in 1967, while working on *Shame*. Already living on Fårö, he shot *Passion of Anna* in 1968. Then, in 1969, he turned to the genre of documentary, making the landscape and the residents of Fårö into his characters, in *Fårödokument*.

*From 1969 on, Fårö is Ingmar Bergman's base and he is a permanent resident there for many years. Numerous Fårö inhabitants find work and income, some for one or two seasons during a film production, some for many years. Encounters happen in various ways. [...] In his Fårödokument (1969), Bergman takes a firm stance on the side of the vulnerable people living in sparsely populated areas, giving professional fishermen, parents with small children and small-hold farmers a platform. Aina – the local school teacher – mentions her hopes for more travelling funds for her pupils. Her wish comes true and the school children go to Ronneby and Skåne, returning with experiences to last them a lifetime.<sup>231</sup>*

*Bergman liked the people of Fårö and this was his way of giving something back, a way of thanking them for what he had got from them. The opening titles also say that the films are dedicated to the people of Fårö. Bergman had a clear approach that had to be adhered by. He wanted to include Fårö residents of all ages and from different backgrounds.<sup>232</sup>*

In 1973, *Scenes from a Marriage* was to be shot on the island, and a sequel to *Fårödokument* was filmed in 1979. But in the 1969 documentary, for the first time the biographical and the artistic trajectories triggered by Bergman's encounter with Fårö intersected on screen. The biographical trajectory led from the initial fascination for the forms and proportions of the landscape, in 1960, to the acquisition of land, the construction of houses and, finally, the permanent residence, the self-identification as a Fårö man and the involvement in the social lives of the islanders. The artistic trajectory led from the 1961 *Through a Glass Darkly*, constructed as a chamber-play by the sea-shore, to the later films gradually inhabiting increasingly more territory of the island, moving further inland, among abandoned farms, forests, marshes, winding roads and mills. Afterwards, *Fårödokument* treats with a resident's objectivity the social reality of living on the island, while being at the same time infused with a sense of poetry and wonder, which a person who sees these places for the first-time might feel.

<sup>231</sup> Gunilla Brogren, in *Fårö, The Cinematic Landscape of Ingmar Bergman*, quoted exhibition, ©BC

<sup>232</sup> Arne Carlsson, quoted in *Fårö, The Cinematic Landscape of Ingmar Bergman*, quoted exhibition, ©BC

In the documentary, the camera lens gazes with equal amazement in long-shots, at the simple beauty of the island's landscape, and in close-ups, at the beautiful simplicity of its inhabitants. Blended together, the landscape and the people, as understood, represented and narrated by Bergman himself, form a legible cinematic image of his peculiar and fascinating journey of dwelling on Fårö, from feeling the place's sense of home to the building of a home, from the affinity with the place to the affinity with its people.

*The island yields a certain type of human being;  
and the inhabitants of Fårö dwell in a remarkable,  
inexplicable symbiosis with their environment.*

*The rhythm of life there appeals to Bergman.  
"When one has had all the success, all the money,  
everything one has ever wanted, ever strived for,  
then one discovers its nothingness.*

*The only things that matter are the human limitations one must try to overcome  
and one's relationships with other people".<sup>233</sup>*

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<sup>233</sup> Cowie, P. *op cit*, pp. 329-330, including quote from Ingmar Bergman (source of quote not mentioned)

*Here are my sources, my roots.  
It's the only place in the world where I feel really at home.  
There are about 500 inhabitants on the island,  
and I did a lot of interviews.  
To talk with my friends here, their problems, their lives,  
to look at them when they are at work  
- this was extremely personal to me.<sup>234</sup>*

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<sup>234</sup> Ingmar Bergman speaking about *Fårödokument* in Wolf, W. (2007) Face to Face with Ingmar Bergman, (interview taken in 1980), pp. 148-155, in R. Shargel (ed.) *op cit*, p. 152



## Chapter 3 HOME in the Case Studies of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman



**-Do you feel isolated here?**

- No. I like solitude. It's better to have few friends than many. I have no quarrel with anyone, I guess I'm friends with everybody. I like everybody and I like everything. You shouldn't be... you shouldn't hate anything. I try to teach my children that. But I teach them not to trust people. Horses can be trusted, but people can't be wholly trusted. You never know what they're after. [...]

**- Are you religious?**

- Yes, I believe... like my ancestors did, in the God of my childhood. It's the only thing you can depend on in times of trouble. When things are all right you don't need the Lord - but I find adversity easier to bear than prosperity, I guess. My father once let me go to a dance, right after I had been confirmed. He said "dancing is no sin", he was a very cheerful person... "but you should dance like a child".

**INGRID EKMAN**, landowner  
interviewed by **Ingmar Bergman**  
**Fårödokument, 1969**  
(07:10-08:41)

**Image 3.48** - film still from Bergman's *Fårödokument* (1969), with transcript of the dialogue with Ingrid Ekman



- I want Faro to remain the way it's always been.

**- You don't have any electricity and no phone?**

- No, I don't. But that's fine.

**- You've never moved out of here?**

- No, you could say that. But I've been around fishing, of course. Over the Baltic Sea and down to Poland and along the coast. I've had my bouts, in good weather as well as in foul. My father was a fisherman. He would take mail and supplies to Sandön, and I did it after him... up until 1943.

**- This castle behind your back...**

- Oh that... I did that as a child. In the evenings after school, the saw going at full speed, until late in the night. [...] There's always work, as long as you are willing. And have the strength. That's no problem. You need to tend to the equipment. Things need to be sorted out for next season. So work is never done. That's one thing you won't have to go without. But if I weren't at sea, or near it, then I just don't know... Then you're as good as gone, that's for certain. In a city or large community, you're done. That'll be the end of you. But freedom, that's what man is made for.

**fisherman**  
interviewed by **Ingmar Bergman**  
**Fårödokument, 1969**  
(16:26-18:291)

**Image 3.49** - film still from Bergman's *Fårödokument* (1969), with transcript of the dialogue with a local fisherman

# CHAPTER FOUR

## First Conversation about HOME

Concepts and Methods from HOME STUDIES

New perspectives on PLACE ATTACHMENT and PLACE ELASTICITY

PLACEFYING HOME: inner dwelling, place affinity

FAMILIAL LANDSCAPES of inner dwelling and place affinity

## Concepts and Methods from HOME studies

In chapter two we have reviewed some of the essential theories on Place and Dwelling coming from fields such as Neuropsychology, Human Geography and Architectural Phenomenology. In chapter three we travelled alongside Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman, respectively, across their autobiographical topographies, encountering places they had become attached to, dwelt in, where they established or found a home, where they longed for other, distant lands. Having unveiled the rich palette of spatial experiences and architectural anchoring in the life and works of these two artists, the question to ask now is how can this context - so abundant in well-documented and original views on the nature of home and dwelling - be approached methodologically? Could the intersecting features of their biographies, such as the increased interest in the topic of home and the preference for the landscape of Gotland, provide the necessary ingredients for a conversation to yield potential new understandings about HOME?

In 1980, a volume entitled *The Human Experience of Space and Place*<sup>1</sup> was published, edited by an environment-behaviour researcher and a human geographer, with a distinct focus on the psycho-social relations developed between people and their environment, termed at that time anthropo-geography. An article signed by Anne Buttimer, *Home, Reach and the Sense of Place*<sup>2</sup> drew attention to the importance of studying home, as a primary and essential space experience, to which any environmental design practices and policies should be related. In 1985, a dedicated volume called *Home Environments*<sup>3</sup> appeared, the result of a common endeavour from the fields of geography, social sciences, architecture, philosophy and psychology. The contributors sought then to answer the complex question regarding the meaning of home - our most common and our less understood spatial experience - and to address more subtle issues, such as: when is a place invested with the quality of a home and what happens when this identification does not take place? As early as 1985, the editors of the book declared that, although the book provides valuable insights, "*the question continues to fascinate the field*". It has, indeed, continued to fascinate, as proven by the multitude of subsequent complementary publications, to name a few: *Place attachment*<sup>4</sup>, *House as a Mirror of Self*<sup>5</sup>, *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*<sup>6</sup>, the launch in 2004 of the academic journal *Home Cultures*<sup>7</sup> and the recent volume *Place attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications*.<sup>8</sup> Despite the impressive amount of research that has been done, it is exceptional to note that there still are innumerable ways to answer afresh the old question about the meaning of home.

<sup>1</sup> Buttimer, A. and Seamon, D. (Eds.) (1980) *The human experience of space and place*, London: Croom Helm

<sup>2</sup> Buttimer, A. (1980) Home, Reach and the Sense of Place, pp. 166-187, in A. Buttimer and D. Seamon (Eds.) *op cit*

<sup>3</sup> Altman, I. and Werner, C. (Eds.) (1985) *Home Environments*, in *Human Behaviour and Environment: Advances in Theory and Research, Volume 8*, New York: Plenum Press

<sup>4</sup> Altman, I. and Low, S. (Eds.) (1992) *Place attachment*. New York: Plenum Press

<sup>5</sup> Cooper Marcus, C. (1995) *House as a Mirror of Self: Exploring the deeper meaning of HOME*, Berkeley: Conary Press

<sup>6</sup> Cieraad, I. (1999) *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, New York: Syracuse University Press

<sup>7</sup> *Home Cultures: The Journal of Architecture, Design and Domestic Space* (2004-present); Bloomsbury (formerly Berg) Journals

<sup>8</sup> Manzo, L.C. and Devine-Wright, P. (Eds.) (2014) *Place attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications*, London & New York: Routledge

In terms of theory and concepts, these research efforts have so far agreed from the outset that "[a]lthough we might study the house as a discrete variable, home is not an empirical variable whose measuring we might define in advance of careful measurement and explanation"<sup>9</sup>, which is why major attention has been given to the development of appropriate methodologies to describe the process of being and becoming at-home. Some of the key conceptual elements in tackling the issue of home-ness and place attachment, which researchers tend to repeatedly address, are: the defining role that childhood plays in setting spatial patterns and preferences; the multiple bonds (identity-related, social, emotional, behavioural, habitual) that link a person with a place; home practices, home rules, home rituals, objects and materialities that shape a strong feeling of at-homeness; second home, homelessness, placelessness; the influence of modern mobility on the relations to places and the persistence of bonds with places past; the role of memory and past place attachment in the adaptation or lack of adaptation in a new environment. The consecrated methods to study these complex relations between people and their everyday domestic behaviours have usually been: ethnographic observation, home tours, interviews, participatory visual methods performed at home, photographic and video material. However, these classical methods bring with them afferent difficulties, as they are limited both in space as in time. However strong the sense of familiarity the researcher manages to establish with his/her target group, there would be areas and moments of life uncovered by the study. Agreeing upon the fact that the meaning of home "*has strong roots in the experiences of childhood where the visual images of home were formed*"<sup>10</sup> and that later attitudes to spaces are to a certain degree shaped by these early attitudes, the study of children's behaviour inside the domestic space would render valuable results<sup>11</sup>. However, in the case of children, the researcher's interaction with the target group is even more limited, even more fragile than elsewhere: "*more than the domestication of childhood, it is the practical, methodological obstacles of doing research on young children in the home that have contributed to the underdevelopment of studies in children's home life*".<sup>12</sup>

Regarding the relationship between researcher/outsider and inhabitant/insider, geographer Anne Buttimer had phrased the dilemma in 1980:

*"The outsider's 'trap', to exaggerate a bit, is that one looks at places, as it were, from an abstract sky. He or she tries to read the texts of landscapes and overt behaviour in the picture languages of maps and models and is therefore inevitably drawn toward finding in places what he or she intends to find in them. The 'insider's' trap, on the other hand, is that one lives in places and may be so immersed in the particulars of everyday life and action that he or she may see no point in questioning the taken-for-granted or in seeing home in its wider spatial or social context".*<sup>13</sup>

and she further interrogates a potential approach to mediate between outside and inside:

<sup>9</sup> Dovey, K. (1985) Home and Homelessness, pp. 33-64, in I. Altman and C. Werner (Eds.) *op cit*, p. 34

<sup>10</sup> Dovey, K. *op cit*, p. 37

<sup>11</sup> Nilsen, R.D. and Rogers, B. (2005) That's Not a Good Idea, Mom: Negotiating Children's Subjectivity while Constructing 'Home' as a Research Site, in *Children's Geographies 3 (3)*, pp. 345-362

<sup>12</sup> Cieraad, I. (2013) Children's Home Life in the Past and Present, pp. 213-226, *Home Cultures, volume 10, issue 3*, p. 223

<sup>13</sup> Buttimer, A. (1980) *op cit*, pp.171-172

*"Would it not be a worthwhile goal, then, to examine our own experiences in various places and use this as a testing ground for our generalizations and also our efforts to achieve better communication across the divide?"*<sup>14</sup>

However, regarding the way in which children interact with their home spaces, the empathic attitude of the geographer would still suffer from a lack of authentic direct transposal in the situation of the studied child. In this case, it is only the autobiographical endeavour of the researcher who strives to look back at how he/she had experienced home, or rather, how this past home had remained imprinted on the mind, what triggers its sudden reappearance. Clare Cooper Markus asks: *"Have you, perhaps, felt the texture of a particular tree or of a brocade-covered couch, heard the sound of a distant train or of a nearby steam radiator and suddenly found yourself for an instant in your grandmother's home or in a secret childhood hideaway? Our senses have a way of reconnecting us, without warning, to memories of times and places long ago, and in particular to memories of childhood"*<sup>15</sup> Autobiographical introspection, nevertheless, highly infused with emotion, subjectivity, and perhaps veiled and confused memories, could pose some questions regarding the authenticity of the study, thus, a need for an "exterior" look upon the experience of at-home-ness present in these memories might still be needed. In this context, Irene Cieraad considers the material of autobiographical novels as a potential source of relevant information about the realm of childhood memories: *"Memories of the childhood home are often vivid and can be triggered by a familiar smell, sound, or an image, such as a photograph. As such, they have been a rich source of literary inspiration, and accounts in memoirs and autobiographical novels give unique insights into children's experiences of the home, its atmosphere, spaces, sounds, and smells. These remembered experiences touch upon all aspects of the home environment, from its materiality to the spatial layout, from the convivial life of the household to the sensory dimension of sounds and smells, and the wider environs of the street"*<sup>16</sup> To regard the autobiographical novel as a potential research material, therefore, resolves some of the issues raised by the researchers interested on the study of historical domestic practices: *"How is it possible to analyze what people do in their homes, when domestic spaces and practices often remain hidden from view? How is it possible to recover past domestic practices, which cannot be studied by ethnographic observation, home tours, interviews and participatory visual methods?"*<sup>17</sup> By looking at an autobiographical novel placed in the past, the researcher is thus "taken" inside these historical times, spaces and practices hidden from view.

It is within this framework that the present study situates itself: a new look on the autobiographical artistic work of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman, as potentially revelatory for the experience and meaning of home, focusing on the child's relation to the space of home and the lingering presence of this spatial connection in memories and later work. Methodologically speaking, the only available direct mode of enquiry - as classically

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<sup>14</sup> idem, p. 172

<sup>15</sup> Cooper Marcus, C. *op cit*, p. 19

<sup>16</sup> Cieraad, I. *op cit*, p. 214

<sup>17</sup> Blunt A. and John E. (2013) Domestic Practice in the Past: Historical Sources and Methods, pp. 269-274, *Home Cultures*, volume 11, issue 3, p. 270

understood - remains the home tour, as (some of) the homes and places of these two artists have been preserved. Then, the film and writings replace the conventional interviews, participatory visual methods, video taken on site, and are decoded according to a phenomenographic procedure of enquiry. Presented at length in chapters 5 and 6, this phenomenographic method is a derivative from the phenomenological approach, fitted for the nature of cinematic material. "*Phenomenologically, place is not the physical environment separate from people associated with it, but, rather, the indivisible, normally unnoticed phenomenon of person-or-people-experiencing-place*".<sup>18</sup> In film, and particularly in auteur/autobiographical film, places are never presented only objectively, as parts of the physical environment separate from people. The gaze of the camera, mediating between the representational mind of the filmmaker and the visual/spatial perception of the viewer, adds the person-experience dimension to any portrayed space. As such, places in autobiographical films, are not abstract or detached, but are already visualized experiences of place, and could thus be understood as cinematic phenomenology of place.

By replacing the afore-mentioned autobiographical novel with the more perceptually-direct mediation of autobiographical film, this present study might bring a contribution to the field of home studies, due to the very intersubjective nature of the filmic experience<sup>19</sup>. By assuming the theorists' claims that "*the film experience uniquely opens up and exposes the inhabited space of direct experience as a condition of singular embodiment and makes it accessible and visible to more than a single consciousness who lives it*",<sup>20</sup> the present research therefore ensures an artistically-filtered entrance inside these home spaces, inside the childhood landscapes of Tarkovsky and Bergman, providing a direct visualization of communicated domestic experience. As Irene Cieraad has pointed out<sup>21</sup>, in the autobiographical novel, remembered experiences of childhood comprise all material and convivial aspects of the home environment, including spatial layout and sensory dimensions. Added to this, autobiographical film is indissolubly bound to the spatiality of the portrayed places and the remembered experiences are communicated intersubjectively.

As observed by Anne Buttimer<sup>22</sup>, most researches performed in home studies maintain the perspective of someone standing on the outside, looking in. When focusing on the space of home, such studies describe what are the objects, corners, layouts, practices that make that dwelling a home, how are they used and performed. The contribution brought by a phenomenographical reading of the autobiographical films would be that it allows to step inside these houses<sup>23</sup>, and experience what makes them homes, through seeing, hearing, even smelling and sensing<sup>24</sup> the portrayed memories of their nooks and coves.

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<sup>18</sup> Seamon, D. (2014) Place Attachment and Phenomenology: The Synergistic Dynamism of Place, pp. 11-22, in L.C. Manzo and P. Devine-Wright. (Eds.) *op cit*, p. 11

<sup>19</sup> as introduced in chapter 1 and methodologically detailed in chapter 5

<sup>20</sup> Sobchack, V. (1991) *The Address of the Eye. A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton University Press, p.9

<sup>21</sup> Cieraad, I. *op cit*

<sup>22</sup> Buttimer, A. (1980) *op cit*

<sup>23</sup> see chapter 1, pp. 41-42

<sup>24</sup> see chapter 6, pp. 222-225, "words: senses beyond audio-visual"

## New perspectives on PLACE ATTACHMENT and PLACE ELASTICITY

Place Attachment, largely defined as the bond between people and places, has witnessed an important turn of self-redefinition, with the emergence of evermore mobile societies. "Research on place attachment has largely focused on emotional bonds with the current home place. However, one consequence of mobility is that mobile persons may develop and sustain attachment to several different places".<sup>25</sup> In the context of migration studies, the effort to define the meaning of home can become increasingly difficult, as migrant people dwell in a constant negotiation between past and present, making homes in their new country of domicile and maintaining an active bond with their past places, as they "handle double or multiple belonging and combine new and old attachment to places".<sup>26</sup> In many cases and studies, the ability to rid oneself from the places of the past has been viewed as an essential catalyst for a better integration in the new environment, a chance for a new start, sprouting new roots in new lands. However, neither Tarkovsky, nor Bergman, the two cases presented in this study, nor the writer of these lines, could subscribe to this view of limiting place-attachment to the spatial delimitation wherein one has set their latest residence. Rather, place-attachment as understood through the prism of this present research, would rather comply more closely to the concept of *place elasticity*, a term introduced by geographers Barcus and Brunn<sup>27</sup>. They construct their concept on three main assumptions about places: the place's ability to generate strong bonds, the place's permanence and the portability of place attachment. However, the concept of *place elasticity* and the three components that construct it, are seen, throughout their article, as mainly socio-culturally conceived. "We propose to define elasticity of place as the stretching of place boundaries through social-familial networks and perpetuated by advances in transportation and communication technologies".<sup>28</sup> From this perspective, they view the bonds with place as maintained through digital and virtual technologies that ensure enduring contact with social circles from home, "bringing distant environments into an individual's home or immediate surroundings".<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, about place's characteristic of permanence, they assert: "to stretch the boundaries of place, the place itself must be firmly rooted in the psyche of an individual"<sup>30</sup>, but they claim that permanence "can be attributed to friends or family members that maintain in a place and perpetuate connections to the place".<sup>31</sup> When imaginative permanence of places is mentioned, they suggest that repeated visits to these places maintain a strengthened connection. Lastly, in terms of place's "portability", this is understood through a continuing involvement, with the aid of digital communication, in the life of the community situated in that place of the past. This position assumed by Barcus and Brunn is in line with the majority of studies performed in the field of place attachment and migration, keeping an enhanced focus on the socio-psychological factors that bond a person to a place.

<sup>25</sup> Gustafson, P. (2014) Place Attachment in an Age of Mobility, pp. 37-68, in L. Manzo and P. Devine-Wright, *op cit*, p. 40

<sup>26</sup> Christensen, A. and Jensen, S. (2011) Roots and Routes: Migration, belonging and everyday life, pp. 146-155, in *Nordic Journal of Migration Research volume 1, issue 3*, p. 153

<sup>27</sup> Barcus, B. and Brunn, S. (2010) Place Elasticity: Exploring a New Conceptualization of Mobility and Place Attachment in Rural America, pp. 281-295 in *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography 92 (4)*

<sup>28</sup> *idem*, p. 284

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*

<sup>30</sup> *idem*, p. 285

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*

However, all throughout the previous chapter, walking alongside Tarkovsky and Bergman through their biographical and remembered topographies, we had witnessed an essentially different case of enduring place attachment, a different form of place permanence, place portability, and, ultimately, place elasticity, not in the least less veridical than the socio-familial ties resulted from the afore mentioned studies. These two artists and their peculiar approach on the space of home as perpetuated in memories helps to identify another form of *place elasticity*, based on spatial experiences per se.

In the case of Bergman, his writings mention a rather tensed familial environment in his early years; the attachment to the places of his childhood, therefore, has no particular social component, and is strictly experiential: "*A sunken world of lights, odours and sounds. Today, if I am calm and just about to fall asleep, I can go from room to room and see every detail, know and feel it. In the quietness of Grandmother's home, my senses opened and decided to keep all this forever and ever*".<sup>32</sup> In Bergman's case, the place's permanence is not maintained through communication and repeated visits, since he very seldom mentions returns to his grandmother's apartment from Uppsala, but nevertheless the authenticity and actuality of the place is kept alive through such repeated and regulate imaginative revisits. The situation, of experientially remembering a past home ensures a more genuine, more accessible, and even more "economical" portability of the place. It is the mind, the memories, that provide the bond, the permanence and the portability to those past significant places, and, contrary to the case of modern communications, when place's elasticity stretches beyond distances, in this redefined case, places are elastic due to their stretching across time frames. In one of his films, Bergman imagines the protagonist revisiting the country home where he had spent his childhood summers, and has him narrating: "*I began to think of this or that, associated to places I played as a child. I don't know how it happened, but the day's clear reality dissolved into the even clearer images of memory that appeared before my eyes*".<sup>33</sup> Thus, it is in the ability of memory images to surpass the clarity of place's reality which makes past places elastic, extendable across time and reality frames.

In Tarkovsky's case, the situation is even more revealing, since there was a clear physical separation between him and the places he was longing for. Initially, the yearning for the home where he was born, which had been sunk underwater, and which he was repeatedly revisiting in his dreams: "*I have a recurring dream, each time it is almost identical, the house where I was born, with only the smallest changes. The only thing that varies is that the sun may be shining or it may be raining, winter or summer. And now as I dream of the log walls blackened with age, and the door, ajar, leading from the porch into the darkness of the vestibule*".<sup>34</sup> Tarkovsky concludes with a statement profoundly similar to Bergman's: "*and this dream is so accurate and convincing that it is more real than actuality*".<sup>35</sup> In Tarkovsky's case, therefore, we can read another case of *place elasticity* as stretching across temporal confines, and perpetuating place's physical identity through an enduring experiential reality that is maintained not through prosthetic communicational devices, but through an acute sense of

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<sup>32</sup> BoB, p. 18

<sup>33</sup> Isak Berg, in *Wild Strawberries* (1957), (0:19:53-0:20:13)

<sup>34</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 303

<sup>35</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 298



remembering. Later on, Tarkovsky's self-imposed exile separated him definitively from his cherished *dacha* in Myasnoye, and the exile films, *Nostalghia* (1982) and *Sacrifice* (1985). It was thus not the case of preserving place attachment through revisits and, at that time, digital communications were not an alternative. However, in *Nostalghia*, the spatiality of the *dacha* is subtly and profoundly portrayed, in a literal replica, whereas the house in *Sacrifice* reiterates some of its spatial experiential details. This once again sustains the thought that place attachment is not solely produced and maintained as a social construct, but is more enduring in the experiential value of place memories. Speaking of the same Myasnoye *dacha*, Tarkovsky's son, now living in Italy, gives valuable insights into this world of remembered sensations that bond a person to a place and serve to strengthen this redefined view on place attachment and place elasticity:

*"Childhood is a place that you can never go back to. Even if I go to the country house, I cannot find it, it's always upsetting and depressing to see the place of your childhood, because you cannot be a child anymore, so it's somehow torturing yourself going back there. Memories are much better sometimes. So I'm going to Myasnoye quite often, but I can't find all the things that were there, especially people, there's nobody there, everybody died, so it's some kind of going to a catacomb, a little bit. But still, there are a lot of memories, but even more, not memories, because memories are one thing, the sensations are more powerful, so that's what you need sometimes, a sort of feeling, the sound of the doors, of floors, windows, and how you open, how you walk around, the noises, you know? you have all this kind of noises that are imprinted in your memory, your childhood memories, even before you started to remember, I think... because when I first went to this house I was six months old, so that's why I have all these memories, very, very old memories of that place, and it's wonderful. But I can't live there, it's discomfoting".<sup>36</sup>*

The present research, therefore, wishes to place the emphasis on the "place" value in place attachment, and, through the cinematically portrayed memories of homes in the films of Bergman and Tarkovsky, to exemplify precisely these sensorial realities (squeaking sounds of floors and doors, etc.) that pervade the films and are such powerful memory triggers which ensure an elasticity of place experience over time, but are so seldom mentioned and so little graspable in the interview-based studies on place attachment.

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<sup>36</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *My Father's Home*, interview taken by author on 8 December 2012 (unpublished)

## PLACEFYING HOME: inner dwelling, place affinity

### inner dwelling

*A journey through all the countries of the world would be a mere symbolic journey. Whatever place one arrives at, it is still one's own soul that one is searching for.*<sup>37</sup>

As it was pointed out earlier in this chapter, Tarkovsky's biographical trajectories and autobiographical topographies constitute an example of *place elasticity* understood as an extension of place attachment beyond geographical distance and mainly beyond time passed, beyond oblivion, through an increasing aptitude of experientially remembering and mentally inhabiting the places lost in the past.

Tarkovsky's first separation from home happened when he was 20 years old<sup>38</sup>, the profound nostalgia coinciding with his first mentions of an awakening cinematic imagination. During the months spent away from home, Tarkovsky began thinking of applying to the film school, while observing small events from the pristine Siberian nature and dwelling among remembered images of home.

The pattern of connecting cinematic imagination with a longing for home continued later, all along his professional path, films being one after the other nurtured from memories of a past dwelling. The crux of this representational pattern happened with the exile films, when places cinematically portrayed were now situated irrevocably out of reach. As such, the immaterial surface of film became the medium of visualizing an inner, more powerful reality - that of moving ever closer to dwelling in a strengthened, inward image of home.

Apart from the influence that this *inner dwelling* exercised over Tarkovsky's cinematic representational style, it is interesting to notice the residential paradigms which he kept in his exile years in Western Europe. According to traditional views on place attachment, such an ongoing nostalgia for a lost homeland hinders the chance of ever finding a new place to call home elsewhere. On the other hand, we see Tarkovsky acquiring and refurbishing an old house in San Gregorio, Italy, then settling peacefully in a Florence apartment and purchasing land in Roccalbegna, ceaselessly drawing plans and sketches for a house he would plan to build there. While in Stockholm, "*Andrei picks houses that would suit him to live in. Sweden reminds him of Russia, especially in the snow, but he only ever dreamed of living in Italy*".<sup>39</sup> Later on, as his illness had reached terminal stages, we find him fervently drawing sketches for the Roccalbegna house, which he already knew he would never come to build. It is thus visible that Tarkovsky's place attachment to the dacha in Russia did not act as a pathological condition preventing him from developing attachment and a sense of home-ness in any other place. Rather, if the sense of home that permeates so much his last film, *Sacrifice*, is so strong, this is not only because of Tarkovsky's immediate bond to the Gotland shores, but the bond to Gotland is itself caused and filtered through an ongoing, now inner, mental, spiritual attachment to the landscapes of Russia. Among recent theories of place attachment, Maria Lewicka, a researcher on the effect of migration on place identity, argues

<sup>37</sup>To *Journey Within*, Tarkovsky interviewed by Gideon Bachmann in the Swedish film journal *Chaplin*, no. 193, September 1984, translated and republished on *nostalghia.com* (last accessed 20 January 2015)

<sup>38</sup> see page 94

<sup>39</sup> Alexander-Garret, L. (2012) *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Collector of Dreams*, London: Glagoslav, p. 85

through her case studies - which contradict traditional views - that memories of past places are in fact potential catalysts for forming new attachments. "*For many people, mobility and interest in the past are opposites - mobile people are seen as living in the present or occupied with future plans and the past is treated as a burden that prevents adaptation to new environments. However [...] not only are the two not contradictory, but they can reinforce each other because memory may serve as a facilitator of attachment to new places*".<sup>40</sup>

Reading the case study of Tarkovksy's particular biography of places and place nostalgias, one could understand this connection between residing in new places and *inner dwelling*, between an enduring attachment to places situated out of reach and an increased awareness for the newly found topographies, as a result of a particular type of *dwelling*, practiced since a very early age. Here, *dwelling* is fit to be replaced with *placefying*, the term proposed in the second chapter<sup>41</sup> as a verb in which place turns from a passive spatiality into a flowing entity, moving from physicality into the memory of the one who experiences it, the awareness of the place's presence enabling the sense of at-home-ness. As mentioned in chapter two, when one experiences this feeling of at-home-ness, even if separation from that place happens, the place then becomes active within, *placefying* in the mind, as an inwardly immaterial dwelling, always close, always re-visitible. Moreover, once a person experiences such profound feeling of at-home-ness in a place, allowing the place to be the active agent in the experience, rather than taking into possession the place, this develops into a sort of place sensibility, a capacity to let the place speak and envelop oneself, thus ensuring the possibility for later meaningful attachments to other places.

### place affinity

*I can understand why people might think it strange for someone to suddenly decide to live on an island he'd never even heard of before*<sup>42</sup>

A look on Ingmar Bergman's topographical biographies provides another opportunity for theorizing new paths in understanding place attachment. On the one hand, his attachment to the places childhood similarly extends beyond time frames, this time-bound elasticity of places causing such early remembered landscapes to inhabit daydreams and cinematic imaginations until his old age.

On the other hand, in Bergman's case there is yet another, unique characteristic, which could be seen as an effectively reversed unfolding of place attachment. Defined as the bond between people and places and traditionally understood as a link developed at an earlier stage in life, on multiple levels (such as psychological connection to a landscape, memories, identity, society or community), *place attachment* is assumed to endure in time and cause the person to identify that location with a home and thus decide to continue inhabiting there, or to decide to return to that precise place if a dislocation would have occurred. For Bergman, we see a reversed situation. The film director, aged 43, arrives on a

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<sup>40</sup> Lewicka, M. (2014) In Search of Roots: Memory as Enabler of Place Attachment, pp. 49-60, in in L. Manzo and P. Devine-Wright, *op cit*, p. 49

<sup>41</sup> see chapter 2, page 56

<sup>42</sup> Ingmar Bergman quoted in Bergström, L. (2007) Bergman's Best Intentions, (interview taken in 1995), pp. 175-182, in R. Shargel (ed.) *Ingmar Bergman: Interviews*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, p. 176

previously unknown island, becomes acquainted with the landscape and its light conditions via the process of shooting a film, soon develops a strong attachment to the topography of the place which he already defines as home, and, due to that almost irrational attachment, pursues all efforts in order to build himself a house and dwell there for the final four decades of his life. More interestingly, when discovering the prospective location for his house, Bergman did not have even remote relations on the island but, through the actions of settling, building and dwelling therein, he develops ever strong social ties with the islanders, up to the point of defining himself as a Fårö man, an identification and social sense of belonging as never previously mentioned in his biography. His case, therefore, seems to contradict the majority of the findings in the field of place attachment.

Summarizing the path Bergman took before taking the decision to live on Fårö, we can see the roots for this in his earlier searches for houses, asking real estate agents for properties, which he would afterwards evaluate if fitted or not to his dwelling needs. With a few requirements (isolated from view, proximity to the sea), Bergman declared himself open to whatever the place may be offering: *"In terms of location, I cannot give precise directives, since there are lovely places even in the most inaccessible and unusual locations"*.<sup>43</sup> It is relevant to note this openness towards the character of the place, another a testimony to *dwelling* understood as *placefying*, allowing oneself to become immersed in the place. It is also relevant to point out that out of the many places considered for purchase, despite they were responding to the outward clear requirements for plot and location, none of them corresponded to the inner needs of the director. None apart from the landscape of Fårö: *"one day I happened to walk near the terrain which I now have in mind as the site for my prospective house. I felt suddenly that this was the place, just the sea, the coast, the trees and the light. All the doubts and reservations which have previously prevented me from settling elsewhere were now blown away and I experienced a feeling of home and an affinity for the place which I had hitherto not experienced anywhere else"*.<sup>44</sup>

Hitched on the shores of an infinite sea, Bergman's Fårö house is therefore an example of *härbärgera*<sup>45</sup>, *dwelling* as "harbouring", while the particular type of place attachment as observed in his case could be summarized in the words he had himself employed: *"an affinity for the place"*, or *place affinity*. A mode of establishing a subtle conversation between the inner need of *placefying* and the topography, the sounds, lights and smells, the complete perceptual palette that a place experience could sustain, a allowing the place to take hold of the self, in an in-dwelling, "harbouring" embrace.

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<sup>43</sup> from Letter: I. Bergman to P. Norrman, dated 5 October 1961, Archival Folder J048-2 (Skåne), ©IBF

<sup>44</sup> from Letter: I. Bergman - M. Wahlbäck, dated 19 February 1966, Archival Folder J054-2 (Fårö), ©IBF

<sup>45</sup> see page 61



**Image 4. 1** Ingmar Bergman on the shores of Fårö, during the filming of *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961); image ©Sorquist/Hammarstedt/ Ekstromer



**Image 4. 2** The shores around the location for *Through a Glass Darkly*, in our days; photo ©RB, taken September 2013

## FAMILIAL LANDSCAPES of inner dwelling and place affinity

*Live in the house - and the house will stand.  
I will call up any century,  
Go into it and build myself a house.  
That is why your children are beside me  
And your wives, all seated at one table,  
One table for great-grandfather and grandson.  
The future is accomplished here and now.<sup>46</sup>  
(Arseny Tarkovsky - *Life, Life*)*

As previously exposed, the claims of scholars in Place Attachment studies assert that the permanence and rootedness of a place, a house identified as home, within the psyche of an individual largely depend on the family connections that populate its inner rooms. The two case studies seem to stand for contradicting this consecrated view: Tarkovsky's synthesized images of homes in his later films and in his exile years are haunted by the absence of his family, that was stranded in Russia; Bergman, on the other hand, settles in Fårö more or less like a hermit in need of a creative environment, slowly but steadily develops strong ties with the islanders, then moves there with his (fifth) wife after whose death he continues to live alone, at the edge of the sea, for another twelve years. For Bergman, this solitary house epitomizes the image of home, despite its constant emptiness (biographies record it "filled with people" only during the month of July, when Ingrid, Bergman's last wife, was struggling to gather all of Ingmar's children from previous marriages, to celebrate his birthday). The places of his childhood, apart from the summer house in Dalarna and the silent apartment of his grandmother, are anonymous places that never seem to revisit his experiential memories. The situation is nevertheless the opposite of Tarkovsky's case, whose spatial imagination resides in the memories of some few years of fulfilled joy materialized in several country dachas, before his parents separated.

Therefore, it is interesting to note this precise distinction between familial emptiness and familial fulfilment inhabiting houses sketched upon the background of biographical topographies that have intersected on the stark shores of Gotland, Sweden. The topic of family and the home, relations to wives/ mother-grandmother/ father-grandfather had been discussed to a great length in literature related to each of the two artists, respectively<sup>47</sup>.

Positioning the two of them in a dialogue from this perspective, especially due to the converging geographical topographies, I had asked Romanian film critic Elena Dulgheru, who had previously published several books on Tarkovsky's works and had direct access to numerous Russian-language sources:

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<sup>46</sup>*Life, Life*, poem by Tarkovsky's father, Arseny, translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair and featured in the film *Mirror*

<sup>47</sup>for Tarkovsky, such studies are published in, for instance: Martin, S. (2011) *Andrei Tarkovsky*. Harpenden: Oldcastle Books; Synessios, N. (2001) *Mirror*, London: I.B. Tauris&Co; for Bergman, most relevant studies on biographical and filmographical depictions of family are to be found in Steene, B. (2005) *Ingmar Bergman: A Reference Guide*, Amsterdam University Press; Kalin, J., (2003) *The Films of Ingmar Bergman*. Cambridge University Press and in Holmberg, J. (2015) *Family Values*, [ingmarbergman.se/en/universe/family-values](http://ingmarbergman.se/en/universe/family-values) (Last accessed Jan'16)

RB: "Focusing especially on Tarkovsky's last film, *Sacrifice*, filmed within Bergman's Gotland topography, could there be conceived a dialogue between the two of them, on the topic of home as a space and receptacle of family? The conversation would regard the precise examples of Tarkovsky's *Sacrifice* and Bergman's Gotland films, given, of course, the similarity of the exterior physical context: the same landscape and the same lights, but also the correspondence of interior context: the house as a plenitude of family relations.

ED: Tarkovsky had learned a lot from the bergmanesque poetics, from the way the light is constructed, from the visual compositions, from modes of looking at the human face... but the message of their works is, from a certain level, diametrically opposed. They both follow the line of introspection, but for one of them introspection is directed towards the morbid side of human subconscious - and here I refer to Bergman -, while for the other introspection follows the path from morbid towards the angelic, seeking mostly the angelic - and here I refer to Tarkovsky.

*Sacrifice*, despite being set within a preferentially bergmanesque space, still displays a more rationalistic image than the blurry crepuscular zone of halftones in which Bergman's films are sunk. The same scenography of the house at the edge of the sea is an enclosure, a matrix of the family, of a serene family for Tarkovsky, while for Bergman the house is a performance stage of familial dramas, a theatre of loneliness. For Bergman, the house is by definition a space of loneliness and of spiritual emptiness and, even if there is a family within there, that family witnesses - and we contemplate - a great interior scission. The house is not a happy home for Bergman, but a space of eternal struggle, of selfish conflicts - such as in *Wild Strawberries* - of fights between man and woman, children and parents, a space of real ruptures that, unfortunately, cannot resolve and move towards peace. Tarkovsky is also painfully aware of these familial ruptures, we see this very clearly both in *Sacrifice* and in *Mirror*, but for him there is always a luminous and clear ideal, towards which the characters yearn, and which reflects in the set design of the houses"<sup>48</sup>.

Partially opposing, or rather completing, the position expressed by Mrs. Dulgheru, one could see in Bergman's late-age attachment and loyalty to a place, Fårö, which he comes to call home, a gradual healing of the ruptures and scissions that had populated the images of his film houses. In his accounts of place affinity for this island, there is no distinction between the exterior conditions and his interior topographies: "*This is your landscape, Bergman. It corresponds to your innermost imaginings of forms, proportions, colours, horizons, sounds, silences, lights and reflections*". This view is adopted by author Jesse Kalin, in his study of Bergman's cinematic imagery as "*geographies of the soul*": "*here, geography combines the idea of spiritual places and spiritual journey with the more literal sense of physical places and travel between them. Such fusion of the literal and spiritual is directly suggested by Bergman himself. From his first pictures on, the character of the places in which his subjects and their stories are set is always significant and conveys in its physical features a representation of important elements of their spiritual struggles. What Bergman shows us throughout his films are landscapes in which the moral and the visual are fused into one representation - both something that film does best and the key to the specifically filmic in Bergman's art*".<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Elena Dulgheru, *The Archetype of the House for Andrei Tarkovsky*, interview based on previous writings and research of film critic E. Dulgheru, taken by RB on 10 December 2011 (unpublished)

<sup>49</sup> Kalin, J., (2003) *The Films of Ingmar Bergman*. Cambridge University Press, p. 2

# CHAPTER FIVE

## LOOKING FOR A METHOD: Phenomenology to Phenomenography

PHENOMENOLOGY AS MODE OF ENQUIRY IN PHILOSOPHY

PHENOMENOLOGY AS RESEARCH METHOD IN PLACE STUDIES

PHENOMENOLOGICAL VISUAL METHODS

PHENOMENOGRAPHY

ADAPTING PHENOMENOGRAPHY



The previous chapters have laid the ground of our enquiry: the topographical biography of the two artists, permeated by glimpses into their experiences of home, that would later inform the moving images of home from their film work. Due to the essentially subjective nature of all these concepts, a secure methodology is needed in order to provide a stable framework within which the ineffable configurations of home experience could be placed and scrutinized. This chapter therefore tracks the quest for consolidating a method, with gradual conclusions unfolding from each other, increasingly clarifying the methodology adopted by this study.

### PHENOMENOLOGY as Mode of Enquiry in Philosophy

Spiegelberg's important work, *The Phenomenological Movement*, dedicates one chapter to tracing the possible points of intersection between the many varieties of phenomenological approaches, thus identifying the unity of thought which surpasses local differences. The author strived to "*distinguish between several steps or phases of the method, arranged largely according to the degree to which they were common ground among all those who identified with the phenomenological movement*".<sup>1</sup>

After careful consideration, Spiegelberg concludes that there are six types of enquiry of a phenomenological nature, and thus phenomenological analyses can include from one to all of the six types. According to the underlying aim of each type, he names them as: descriptive, of essences, of appearances, constitutive, reductive and hermeneutic. Reading the works of phenomenologists, but also reviewing the influences phenomenology has had on other fields - architecture and space studies included - one can easily recognize the patterns coherently summarized by Spiegelberg, and therefore, it is useful to include his outline at this point.

**Descriptive Phenomenology:** denotes the analysis based on direct exploration and description of particular phenomena, in which the enquiring mind is stripped bare of any presuppositions, aiming to grasp the intuitive presence of the phenomenon under study. Seemingly simplistic, this type of analysis implies the *seeing* of things in a phenomenological, brisk way, a requisite exposed by Husserl: "*At the lowest level of reflection, at first it seems as if evidence were a matter of simple seeing, a mental inspection without a character of its own [...] And how different the seeing of things shows itself to be on a closer analysis. [...] It [might seem] apparent that it really makes no sense at all to talk about things which are simply there, and just need to be seen. On the contrary, the simply being there consists of certain mental processes of specific changing of structure, such as perception, imagination, memory, predication, etc. and in them the things are not contained as in a hull or vessel. Instead, the things come to be constituted in these mental processes, although in reality they are not at all to be found in them. [...] Now let us*

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<sup>1</sup> Spiegelberg, H. (1994) *The Phenomenological Movement*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers

*notice that the task of phenomenology, or rather the area of its tasks and inquiries, is no such trivial things as merely looking, merely opening one's eyes".<sup>2</sup>*

**Phenomenology of essences:** is a particular approach which implies the study of phenomena as essences, analyzing the essential relations within and among phenomena.

**Phenomenology of appearances:** gives less attention to the essence of phenomena, and more to the way in which they appear, from changing perspectives, varying degrees of clarity, different modes of perception. Phenomenologists believe that "*memory, fantasy and other forms of attention can disclose as many acts of perception as factual experience*",<sup>3</sup> and the task of a phenomenology of appearances is to describe all these different modes in which one single phenomenon appears. One of the hypotheses of this approach is that, by disclosing a description of appearances, the essence of the phenomena would also invisible transpire. "*Phenomenology must carefully describe things as they appear to consciousness. In other words, the way problems, things and events are approached must involve taking their manner of appearance into consideration*".<sup>4</sup>

**Constitutive Phenomenology:** is concerned with the way in which phenomena are established, or constituted, within our consciousness. In this particular case of analysis it would first seem that the phenomenological endeavour leaves aside the appearances and what is disclosed in direct perception, and dwells on the conceptual realm of consciousness, aiming to grasp that fleeting stance in which a phenomenon is firstly grasped and made sense of in mind. However, for Husserl, this method meant a somehow inverse process of reaching appearances, in his views "*in the Cartesian sphere itself, different types of objectivity are constituted. And to say that they are constituted implies that immanent data are not, as if first seemed, simply in consciousness in the sense in which things are in a box, but that all the time they are displayed in something like appearances*".<sup>5</sup>

**Reductive Phenomenology:** is based on the notion phenomenological reduction<sup>6</sup>, initially enounced as a useful tool, but later becoming an explicit phenomenological performance of its own. Husserl was "*always insistent that reduction provides the only genuine access to the infinite subjective domain of our inner experience*".<sup>7</sup> Through the process of reduction, by removing reference to the real world and to the previously known assumptions about phenomena, all intuitive appearances of an experience "*are taken as genuine in their own right*",<sup>8</sup> therefore there is no separation between various features or semblances of a phenomenon. As a necessary step for the phenomenological reduction to access the essence of phenomena, by admitting the difficulty in suspending all previously known facts about it, Husserl later devised the so-called method of *imaginative free variations*.

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<sup>2</sup> Husserl, E. (1990) *The Idea of Phenomenology* (first edition *Husserliana* 1958), London: Kluwer Academic, pp. 9-10

<sup>3</sup> Moran, D. (2000) *Introduction to Phenomenology*, London: Routledge, p. 152

<sup>4</sup> idem, p. 6

<sup>5</sup> Husserl, E. (1990) *op cit*, p. 56

<sup>6</sup> see chapter 1, pp. 37-38

<sup>7</sup> Moran, D. (2000) *op cit*, p. 147

<sup>8</sup> idem, p. 152

While abiding within imagination, the method avoids the habit of naturalistic positing from everyday perception, in which we focus on the object as thought, not on the experience of the object. The *imaginative free variations* method implies a creative approach of substituting parts of the original intuition, one by one, trying and testing which features of features remain unchanged along the process: "*the whole point is to open up new aspects of the experience and especially those invariant aspects which belong to the essence of the experience. [...] The essential features are those which cannot be varied in our imagination. Imaginative free variation allows for the essence of the phenomenon to manifest itself*".<sup>9</sup>

**Hermeneutic Phenomenology:** is the approach which states that, through a meticulously devised phenomenological interpretation, concealed meanings of the phenomena are revealed. Introduced by Heidegger and later adopted in part by Gadamer<sup>10</sup> and Sartre<sup>11</sup>, it was skilfully developed by Paul Ricoeur<sup>12</sup>.

### conclusions (I):

In reference to these six types of phenomenological enquiry, the present study considers the films taken into account to be a visual **descriptive phenomenology** of an experience of space and, due mainly to the audio-visual nature through which these descriptions are communicated, and because the constant mediation interposed by the surface of film in reading these descriptions, it is - of course - a **phenomenology of appearances**.

Another essential aspect is that, while operating on the fragile territories of place memory, lost places, nostalgia, the thesis considers that the artistic image of autobiographical architectures is formed through an imaginative process of distilling the remembered image of a house, undergone by the filmmaker - a process lengthily described in their writings. Therefore the loss of place which is mourned through the very action of seeking to rebuild that house as a cinematic image acts as a phenomenological reduction, while, at the same time, the process of seeking the essence of that remembered image resembles closely the imaginative free variations method. As such, the thesis considers the film images and the creative process through which they were shaped, to be the visualization of a process of reductive phenomenology.

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<sup>9</sup> idem, p. 154

<sup>10</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), German philosopher, with major contributions in the field of Hermeneutics

<sup>11</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), French philosopher, writer and literary critic

<sup>12</sup> Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), French philosopher, influential for having coherently blended phenomenological thought with hermeneutics

## PHENOMENOLOGY

### as research method in humanities and human sciences

Since it aims to study lived experience according to precise - albeit varying - methods, the type of enquiry phenomenology proposes constitutes an appealing research tool in humanities and human sciences as education, health science, clinical and environmental psychology. In such applied hypostases, the focus of phenomenological research is lived experience as observed within that precise field of human activity. Extended beyond the philosophical realms, phenomenological research became "*the study of lived or experiential meanings in the ways that they emerge and are shaped by consciousness, language, our cognitive or non-cognitive sensibilities, and by our pre-understandings and presuppositions. Phenomenology may explore the unique meanings of any human experience or phenomenon*".<sup>13</sup>

Growing apart from its philosophical sibling, as a human science phenomenology developed its growing set of empirical data gathering techniques and reflective methods, often importing characteristics from other fields, but differing from them by remaining focused on lived experience and "*sensitive to the concrete, subjective and pre-reflective dimensions of the life-world*".<sup>14</sup> Therefore, regardless the overarching field of research wherein the approach is applied, the themes explored are differing aspects of lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality) and lived human relations (communality).<sup>15</sup>

The characteristic methods developed in phenomenology as applied in human sciences, therefore are ranging from empirical to reflective methods.

Empirical methods imply those means through which a researcher gains insight into the studied phenomenon, and are generally collected through interviews, direct observation, asking for written descriptions from participants; a separate strand of data collection which has proven fruitful is to look into fictional literature and artistic sources of a particular perceptiveness and intuitive sensitivity. Throughout these collected data, the experiential factor seeps in through "*descriptions of lived-through moments, experiential anecdotal accounts, remembered stories of particular experiences, narrative fragments, fictional experiences*",<sup>16</sup> the researcher trying to detect those direct descriptions of particular lived situations unspoiled by explanations or generalizations. With the difference of research scope, the empirical methods employed in phenomenological research otherwise resemble to a high extent those formulated in ethnography and anthropology.

The following step in phenomenological research as applied method is the reflective stage, proceeding through "*the creation of a research text that speaks to our cognitive and non-cognitive sensibilities*".<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Adams, C. and von Manen, M. (2008), Methods: Phenomenology, pp. 614- 619, in Given, L. (Ed.) *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, p. 614

<sup>14</sup> idem, p. 616

<sup>15</sup> idem, p. 619

<sup>16</sup> idem, p. 618

<sup>17</sup> idem, p. 616

### conclusions (2):

At this point it is required to mention that the "research text" in phenomenological analyses has so far remained of a purely linguistic nature, phenomenological accounts being delivered in the form of perceptually rich literary pieces. This is largely due to the fact that, when the phenomenological approach started to make its way into various fields of human sciences, data gathering techniques were imported from similar enquiring initiatives, such as ethnography and anthropology. At that time, interviews were the basic research tool, and phenomenological research has adapted the ethnographic interview to fit experiential matters. As has been mentioned earlier, although the techniques are similar, phenomenology is distinct from ethnography and anthropology through its focus on lived experience.

However, precisely due to the initial common ground in data collection it is relevant to notice the gap which exists on the side of visual methods. Anthropology has moved from having visual material as a product of the exploration into using the production of images<sup>18</sup>, of ethnographic photography and of ethnographic film as a technique in itself, for exploring, questioning and developing the research approach. In parallel, visual ethnography<sup>19</sup> has grown in complexity and gained the importance of a structured topic standing on its own, through "*acknowledging the varying relationships between images and other texts, in research, analysis and representation [...] understanding the research encounter and thus the production of images as always collaborative and situated [...] involving a high degree of self-reflexivity, whereby the researcher interrogates her or his role, situatedness, and subjectivity in the research encounters*".<sup>20</sup> Recently, scholars have noticed the embedded multidimensional experiential contents of images as a potential for further developing visual ethnography<sup>21</sup> through "*acknowledging the relationship between the visual and the other senses and the multisensoriality of the image [...] understanding the research encounter as a collaborative event that is part of a multisensory environment*".<sup>22</sup>

In this context, the thesis interrogates why such a visual understanding and approach has so far been absent from phenomenological analyses in human sciences. A re-reading of scholars' understanding of visual ethnography and anthropology enforces the strength which images and the thinking through images are able to bring to any investigation of human experiences and, as such, through its various paths into phenomenological thinking, the present study would wish to test the validity of such visual methods in understanding lived space.

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<sup>18</sup> Ruby, J. (1996) Visual Anthropology, pp. 1345-1351, Levinson, D. and Ember, M. (Eds.) *Encyclopaedia of Cultural Anthropology*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, vol.4

<sup>19</sup> Pink, S. (2007), *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media and Representation in Research*, London: SAGE

<sup>20</sup> idem

<sup>21</sup> Pink, S. (2011), A Multisensory Approach to Visual Methods, pp. 601-614 in Margolis, E. and Pauwels, L. (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook Visual Research Methods*, London: SAGE

<sup>22</sup> idem, p. 606

## PHENOMENOLOGY as research method in space-place studies

The phenomenological type of enquiry has been applied with particular strength as a research method in the field of space-place studies, leading to relevant results. Numerous analyses were made especially from the viewpoints of social geography, environmental psychology, environment-behaviour studies, all of which were building upon the spatiality embedded in the concept of "life-world". Since 1990, the *Journal of Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology* has been gathering contributions from this field, publishing reviews of the advances in space-place studies and proposing innovative methods and cases of research. Not attempting to address in depth the vast and complex literature that has been produced by the scholars involved with the topic, this section will only provide a brief summary of the guiding concepts and specificities of the method, as adapted from an overview written by the main editor of this journal<sup>23</sup>.

Introducing the many kinds of phenomenological research performed in human sciences, Seamon explains their abundance by saying that phenomenology is "*the exploration and description of phenomena, where phenomena refers to things or experiences as human beings experience them. Any object, event, situation or experience that a person can see, hear, touch, smell, taste, feel, intuit, know, understand, or live through, is a legitimate topic for phenomenological investigation*".<sup>24</sup> He further identifies the roots of the spatial relevance of phenomenology to lie in the notion of intentionality<sup>25</sup>, "*the argument that human experience and consciousness necessarily involve some aspect of the world as their object, which, reciprocally, provides the context for the meaning of experience and consciousness*",<sup>26</sup> and in Heidegger's later ideas in which he challenged the classical thoughts separating person and environment, by placing the focus on either one of the two. Heidegger suggested that there is a "undissolvable unity" between people and world, which he expressed through his concept of being-in-the-world. Intentionality would therefore mean "*a basic structure of human existence that captures the fact that human beings are fundamentally related to the contexts in which they live or, more philosophically, that all being is understood as being-in-the-world*".<sup>27</sup>

In examining the intentional relationships between people and their worlds, human sciences thus delineated a set of phenomenological notions essential for their enquiries: lifeworld, place and home. "*These notions are significant for a phenomenological approach to environment-behaviour research because each refers to a phenomenon<sup>28</sup> that, in its very constitution,*

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<sup>23</sup> David Seamon, professor Architecture and Environment-Behaviour research, from the Department of Architecture, Kansas State University; the paper hereby mentioned is *Phenomenology, Place, Environment, and Architecture: A Review of the Literature*, version published exclusively online at [www.arch.ksu.edu/seamon/Seamon%202000%20review%20extended%20version%20Wapner%20et%20al.pdf](http://www.arch.ksu.edu/seamon/Seamon%202000%20review%20extended%20version%20Wapner%20et%20al.pdf) (Last accessed March 2015)

<sup>24</sup> Seamon, D. (2000) *Phenomenology, Place, Environment, and Architecture: A Review of the Literature*, Kansas State University: published online (without pagination)

<sup>25</sup> see chapter 1, p. 30 and p. 36, for more on intentionality

<sup>26</sup> Seamon, D. (2000) *quoted work*

<sup>27</sup> Pollio, H. R. (1997) *The phenomenology of everyday life*. New York: Cambridge, p. 7

<sup>28</sup> as already detailed in chapter 2

*holds people and world always together and also says much about the physical, spatial, and environmental aspects of human life".<sup>29</sup>*

Reviewing a great variety of phenomenological analyses on environment-behaviour topics, Seamon summarizes some key characteristics or attributes of the method, as follows:

**Direct contact:**

Any phenomenological study must involve the researcher's direct contact with the phenomenon. When studying the phenomenon as experienced by a group of people, the researcher has to take part directly in those experiences and devise interviews that incorporate and stimulate participation, carefully balancing between direct observation of the phenomenon itself and an attentiveness to the people's descriptive accounts. When the research material consists of literary and artistic artefacts "*for example, photographs, a novel, or music - the researcher must try to immerse herself in the text so that she becomes as familiar as possible with it. Thus, she might carefully study the text and thoroughly record her experience and understanding*".<sup>30</sup>

**Uncharted territory:**

Another characteristic signalled by Seamon is that the researcher has to approach any phenomenon as a beginner, quoting the definition of phenomenology as "*a science of beginnings*"<sup>31</sup>. The phenomenon has to be assumed as an entirely new, unknown, uncharted territory, which is also why phenomenological procedures are hard to define as generally applicable, since they have to constantly change and adapt to the situation given. "*In this sense, the central instrument of deciphering the phenomenon is the phenomenological researcher herself.[...] The phenomenologist has no clear sense of what she will find or how discoveries will proceed*".<sup>32</sup>

**Experiential portrayals:**

Seamon concludes that, if the essential research tool in phenomenology is found in the very experiential being of the researcher, the accounts and specific research methods employed in order to communicate this aspect should respond to the dynamic and fluctuant nature of the experience itself. "*The best phenomenological methods, therefore, are those that allow human experience to arise in a rich, unstructured, multidimensional way*".<sup>33</sup>

**conclusions (3)**

The last requirement, for fluctuant, multidimensional ways of portraying experience brings to mind once again the potential such analyses would have by stepping outside the field of verbal language and experimenting in the realms of audio-visual. As stated in the previous section, visual ethnographers have long been working with images in order to narrate their stories and, more recently, have stressed on the multisensory weight which images bear, thus lending themselves able to express lived experiences in a more vivid and truthful way. Writings from visual and sensory ethnographers, but mostly the extensive works of Sarah

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<sup>29</sup> Seamon, D. (2000) *quoted work*

<sup>30</sup> Seamon, D. (2000) *quoted work*

<sup>31</sup> Stewart, D. and Mukunas, A. (1990) *Exploring Phenomenology: A Guide to the Field and its Literature* (2nd ed.) Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, p. 5

<sup>32</sup> Seamon, D. (2000) *quoted work*

<sup>33</sup> idem

Pink<sup>34</sup>, underline specifically the importance of moving images in describing space and place: "*one of the goals of the sensory ethnographer is to seek to know places in other people's worlds that are similar to the places and ways of knowing of those others. In attempting to achieve this, she or he would aim to come closer to understanding how those other people experience, remember and imagine. This perspective, while rooted in social anthropology, is interdisciplinary in that it also draws from theoretical approaches developed in human geography and philosophy. Thus I argue for a rethinking of the ethnographic process through a theory of place and space that can engage with both the phenomenology of place and the politics of space. Such an approach is particularly appropriate to and supportive of the formulation of a sensory ethnography. This is because it recognizes the emplaced ethnographer as her or himself part of a social, sensory and material environment and acknowledges the political and ideological agendas and power relations integral to the contexts and circumstances of ethnographic processes*".<sup>35</sup>

It would therefore seem as a constructive endeavour to apply such visual and sensory methods in phenomenological research and thus extend the process of enquiry beyond the linguistic field. "*Because film and writing are such different modes of communication, filmmaking is not just a way of communicating the same kinds of knowledge that can be conveyed by [the] text*".<sup>36</sup> Just as in the case of anthropology, phenomenological research that would make use of visual means could become a "*parallel stream [...] with its own areas of interest and its own distinctive ways of creating meaning*".<sup>37</sup>

The question is raised, therefore, once again. Phenomenological research is focused on notions of lived space, lived time, lived body, and seeks an experiential portrayal of these phenomena, able to capture the "*rich, unstructured, multidimensional ways*" in which they are experienced. Anthropologists affirm that "*visual research using film is capable of investigating a wide range of elements, individually and in their combinations: movement, speech, the auditory, the material, the corporeal*"<sup>38</sup> and provides "*a framework for observing how people inhabit their physical environment - how they use it, alter it, and experience it in sensory terms*".<sup>39</sup> At the same time, ethnographers observe that filmmaking and "*the appropriation of techniques from arts practice might secure means of communicating academically framed representations of the sensory embodied experiences*".<sup>40</sup> The path seems therefore open and waiting for phenomenologists to import such methods that render experience legible even in academically framed representations.

While this research initially aimed use filmmaking<sup>41</sup> as a direct descriptive phenomenology of place, the thesis will now restrict itself to reading the moving images of Bergman's and Tarkovsky's as indirectly portent of spatial phenomenological meaning.

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<sup>34</sup> Sarah Pink - Anthropology Professor, with training in Social and Visual Anthropology, and expertise across social sciences, design and media (RMIT and Loughborough University)

<sup>35</sup> Pink, S. (2009) *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, London: SAGE, p. 23

<sup>36</sup> MacDougall, D. (2011) Anthropological Filmmaking: An Empirical Art, pp. 99-114, in Margolis, E. and Pauwels L. (Eds.) *quoted work*, p. 100

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *idem*, p. 101

<sup>39</sup> *idem*, p. 112

<sup>40</sup> Pink, S. (2009) *op cit*, p. 24

<sup>41</sup> through videos recorded at the home places and film locations of Bergman and Tarkovsky; see Chapter 7: "Limitations of the Study/ Future Research" for more about this part of the research work that was not included in the thesis



## PHENOMENOGRAPHY

### Ulrich Sonneman's Phenomenography and Karl Jaspers's method

In 1954, during the flourishing times of the phenomenological movement and at the rise of its multitude of emerging branches generally termed *phenomenologies*, one article signed by philosopher and psychologist Ulrich Sonneman introduced a new term, aimed at demarcating what he considered the two main distinct categories of phenomenology. The article itself was seen by many as slightly cryptic in the easiness with which it was inventing compounds of words. One of these terms, contested or overlooked at that time, was *phenomenography*, which Sonneman introduced in order to distinguish between existential phenomenology and the sort of phenomenological approach developed by psychiatrist Karl Jaspers, at the start of the 20th century. By definition, first person experience was an imperative for any phenomenological attempt, but Jaspers was both a philosopher and a psychiatrist, so, beside sympathizing with the phenomenologists and the promise of authenticity which the movement had brought into philosophy, he was also interested in understanding into more depth his patients. His 1913 work on *General Psychopathology* opens with a chapter entitled *The Subjective Phenomena of the Abnormal Life of the Psyche (Phenomenology)*<sup>42</sup> in which he asserts a redefined understanding of the task of phenomenology: "to make present intuitively the mental states which actually only the patients experience".<sup>43</sup> Jaspers' approach thus essentially differs from the previous ways into phenomenology, by methodologically leading the way "into the world of the other".

By renaming Jaspers's phenomenology as *phenomenography*, Sonneman thus denoted the description of experiences to be less hermetic and intrasubjective, and more communicative and intersubjective. "*The problem of intersubjectivity is precisely the problem of other minds. That is, the problem is to explain how we can access the minds of others. According to this supposition, this is a problem of access because other minds are hidden away, closed in, behind the overt behavior that we can see*".<sup>44</sup> Thus, with an innate intersubjectivity in the very method of inquiry, phenomenography opened an epistemological approach to "the world of the other".

### Herbert Spiegelberg's Imaginative self-transposal

Herbert Spiegelberg, the scholar who brilliantly framed critically and chronologically the phenomenological movement<sup>45</sup>, and who also signalled Sonneman's overlooked term, *phenomenography*, considers Karl Jaspers to be a pioneer in using phenomenology to deepen understandings of other fields.<sup>46</sup> Phenomenological psychopathology as developed by Jaspers, mainly in -the interval between 1920 and 1950, had devised a precise methodology which enabled an "imaginative access to phenomena which are perceptually inaccessible",

<sup>42</sup> most of the information related to Karl Jaspers is adapted from the chapter *Karl Jaspers' Phenomenology of Psychopathic Phenomena* (Spiegelberg 1975: 36-45)

<sup>43</sup> Jaspers, K. (1963) *General Psychopathology* (trans. from German by J. Hoenig & M.W. Hamilton). Manchester: Manchester University Press, p.55

<sup>44</sup> Gallagher, S. (2005) *How the Body shapes the Mind*, New York: Oxford University Press, p.209

<sup>45</sup> Phenomenological Movement, Herbert Spiegelberg

<sup>46</sup> Spiegelberg, H. (1975) *Doing Phenomenology*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff

belonging to the world of another conscience. The way to achieve this imaginative access was through a series of steps, such as:

- *immersion* in the behaviour and movements of the patient;
- analysis of the patient's answers to precise *questioning*;
- readings of *spontaneous accounts* in the patients' writing exercises.

Spiegelberg, recontextualizing the method and using the advances in theory that had been made during the 50 years since Jasper had first formulated it, develops an operative tool to access "the world of the other", proposing the model of *imaginative self-transposal*<sup>47</sup>, widening the applicability of Jasper's method from psychiatry to any phenomenologically relevant field, where the researcher would want to explore *indirect experiences* (i.e. narrated *direct experiences* of others).

The *imaginative self-transposal* method has several distinct features:

- it starts by "occupying the place of the other"; this operation transgresses the boundaries of a mere local placement, and attempts to enter "the frame of mind of the other person";
- to do so, it firstly gathers as many facts as possible from the available biography of the studied other;
- it completes this biographical account with first-hand perceptions, narrations, descriptions recorded from the studied other, in the manner of Jaspers' *questioning* and *spontaneous accounts*;
- upon completion of these first steps, the researcher proceeds to imaginatively construct the world of the other, "the world as he is likely to see it", from the information collected in the previous stages;
- the researcher may then begin to phenomenologically explore the studied phenomenon, as experienced by the other, constantly referring back to the previous steps: the place, the frame of mind, the biographical and autobiographical context, the imaginatively constructed world of the other.

### Phenomenography as a Research Method

Sonneman's term and Spiegelberg's research approach had remained underexplored in phenomenological debates until the 1980s. At that time, a research group from the education studies department of Gothenburg University, led by Ference Marton, had been performing phenomenological studies on student experience of taught subjects, but they were constantly realizing that "*to provide a grounding for empirical research in other people's experience rather than one's own, it was necessary to transcend the original form of phenomenology*".<sup>48</sup> Therefore, they reclaimed the term *phenomenography*, and utilized it to denote their increasingly sharply defined qualitative research method which had as an initial aim "*to describe the qualitatively*

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<sup>47</sup>The mainsprings of Spiegelberg's operation closely resemble Husserl proposed *imaginative free variations* and especially Paul Ricoeur's reading of it applied to analyzing narrative configurations (Ricoeur, 1992), see earlier in this chapter, p. 168

<sup>48</sup> Richardson, J.T.E. (1999). The Concepts and Methods of Phenomenographic Research, *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 69, no.1, (53-82), p. 63

*different ways in which a phenomenon is experienced, conceptualized or understood, based on an analysis of accounts of experiences as they are formed in descriptions".<sup>49</sup> In time, the term and the method have become identifiable with the empirical research on education and on how theoretical concepts are learned in various fields of human activity. The emphasis has shifted from the experience itself, to focus on the importance of "variation and the architecture of this variation in terms of different aspects that define the phenomena".<sup>50</sup> The description of experience, which was initially at the root of both phenomenology and phenomenography, now "points to a collective level, as it represents variation in experiences across the participants".<sup>51</sup>*

The present research, exploring the experience of home and its shifting, moving image in the films of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman, will apply an adapted version of the phenomenographic method, merging features of Spiegelberg's *imaginative self-transposal* with characteristics of *phenomenography* as a qualitative research approach, adjusting it to pertain to visual material. This process started with reviewing literature on phenomenography, case studies and critical debates regarding the scientific validity of the method and potential improvements in its application.

### Characteristics and research unit of phenomenography:

Phenomenographers define phenomenography as an empirical research method which allows the study of variation in experiencing phenomena of the world around. Both phenomenology and phenomenography are therefore related to the experience of phenomena, but the main difference between them lies in the object of interest: while phenomenology aims to tackle the essence of experience, phenomenography is interested in the qualitatively diverse ways in which one phenomenon can be experienced by a number of people (see **image 5.1**). The research unit in phenomenology is experience, as observed through applying the phenomenological reduction, by the researcher himself, on his/her own accounts of experiences; the research unit in phenomenography is constituted by the ways of experiencing, as described by the people participating in the study. Therefore, a second - and essential - difference appears: the phenomenologist explores phenomena through a first order - focus is entirely on direct experience, to which the researcher only has access; the phenomenographer, on the other hand, explores phenomena through a second order, which means an analysis of descriptions of experiences, as disclosed by the participants (who had, in turn, experienced the phenomena on a first order). The research outcome of a phenomenologist's study is a description of how the studied phenomenon is directly experienced, and, due to its first order approach, it provides increased depth and thickness to the description. The phenomenographer gathers descriptions of the ways in which the phenomenon is experienced by the participants in the study, and applies an in-depth reading of these accounts, seeking patterns, parallels and differences, and, through an iterative procedure, he identifies themes, narrows them down and assembles the findings

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<sup>49</sup> Dall'alba, G. and B. Hasselgren (1996), *Reflections on Phenomenography - Toward a methodology?*, in Gothenburg Studies in Educational Sciences, v. 109, p.202

<sup>50</sup> Marton, F. and Booth, S. (1997). *Learning and Awareness*, New Jersey: L. Erlbaum Press, p. 117

<sup>51</sup> Roisko, H. (2007). *Adult Learners' Learning in a University Setting: A Phenomenographic Study*, Tampere University Press, p. 190

according to categories of description. Accuracy of the findings is considered to ensue precisely from variation, as well as from the overlapping themes and categories identified. Therefore, a renewed, more diverse and more comprehensive image of the phenomenon studied results from acknowledging the multiple ways in which it can be experienced.

	PHENOMENOLOGY	PHENOMENOGRAPHY
starting point	phenomenon as experienced	
unit of research	the experience of the phenomenon	the ways of experiencing the phenomenon
mode of enquiry	first order: appearance of the phenomenon as experienced by the researcher	second order: analysis of the ways of experiencing, as described by participants
focus of enquiry	individual level	collective level
main method applied	phenomenological reduction (bracketing)	identifying and refining relevant categories of descriptions, through repeated (cross-) readings
research outcome	detailed description of the experience	categories of ways of experiencing
main aim of research	understanding the ESSENCE of the experience	understanding the VARIATIONS in experiencing
strength	depth and thickness of the description	comprehensive view of the phenomenon, in the light of varying ways of experiencing it
weakness	increased subjectivity; blindness to other ways of experiencing the same phenomenon	lack of depth in individual accounts; tendency for facile generalizations; omission of context

Image 5.1 - summarized comparison between phenomenological and phenomenographic research methods

### Data collecting and data analysis:

In phenomenographic research, as it has developed from the 1980's until present day, the semi-structured interview represents the most common form of data collecting. With a certain theoretical hypothesis in mind, the researcher formulates a set of questions, deliberately leaving an amount of questions open to unpredicted answers. "A phenomenological study might be the articulation of just one person's experience. It asks: <How does the person experience the world?> or often <How did I experience this phenomenon?> In contrast, because of phenomenography's focus on identifying and mapping the different ways in which people experience a phenomenon, the study population is typically larger".<sup>52</sup> Generally the interviewee group size ranges from 15 to 30 participants, but, depending on the research question, bigger or smaller groups have been demonstrated to provide relevant results.<sup>53</sup> Some researchers have mentioned the rich potential of applying phenomenographic methods on analyzing

<sup>52</sup>Bowden, J. (1996). Phenomenographic Research - Some Methodological Issues, pp. 49-66, in G. Dall'Alba and B. Hasselgren (Eds.), *Reflections on Phenomenography: Towards a Methodology?* Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis

<sup>53</sup>for instance, Dunkin, R. (2000). Using phenomenography to study organisational change, pp. 137-152, in John Bowden and Eleanor Walsh (Eds.), *Phenomenography*, Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, p. 148: "I have described a process that included only two people. In previous research studies using a multiple-person approach, there have been much larger teams. The use of a larger and more diverse group is likely to ensure that analysis is taken as far as it can be taken, but this advantage can be offset if group effectiveness is reduced. An effective challenge process requires trust and confidence within the group."

historical documents and even literary fragments, territories which have so far remained uncharted. In these cases, the phenomenographic research begins only from the analysis stage, and needs to be moulded upon the nature of the interview and of the historical data available.<sup>54</sup> There is a reported favourable outcome in using a different form of data collection through video recordings of the participants, a method which is thought to overcome the limitations of verbal expression, warranting "a more complete well-structured experiment".<sup>55</sup>

In the case of data collection through interviews, where most methodological developments have been made, the analysis of the transcripts consists of seven consecutive steps:

1) an initial reading through the transcripts, with possible side annotations regarding noticed categories. This process is called *familiarization*, and represents a required step for grasping the material;

2) with a certain question in mind (*what does home represent to you?*, for instance), the researcher reads again through all the transcripts, selects the fragments which directly or indirectly answer this question and identifies the most significant elements which characterize these answers;

3) further on, the answers are condensed and each of them is labelled according to the element which characterizes it the most;

4) following this process, preliminary groups are formed of answers which have a certain similarity;

5) comparisons, differentiations and parallels are made between the groups formed hitherto, resulting in an increasing or decreasing number of categories and the migration of some answers from one group to another (previously or newly formed); "As a result of the interpretative work, utterances are brought together into categories on the basis of their similarities. Categories are differentiated from one another in terms of their differences. In concrete terms, the process looks like this: quotes are sorted into piles, borderline cases are examined, and eventually criterion attributes for each group are made explicit. In this way, the group of quotes are arranged and rearranged, narrowed down into categories and finally are defined in terms of core meanings, on the one hand, and borderline cases on the other. Each category is illustrated by quotes from the data"<sup>56</sup>

6) once the categories are considered finalized, they are named according to the main elements defining the answers belonging to each of them;

7) the analysis ends with a detailed description of the character of each category, and with an overall conclusion which draws parallels and contrastive comparison between the differing categories.

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<sup>54</sup>Bowden J. (2000). The Nature of Phenomenographic Research, pp. 1-18, in John Bowden and Eleanor Walsh (Eds.), *Phenomenography*, Melbourne: RMIT Publishing

<sup>55</sup>Wellington, C. and Ward, R. (2010). Using video to explore programming thinking among undergraduate students, *The Journal of Computing Sciences in Colleges*, 25, 3

<sup>56</sup>Marton, F. (1986). Phenomenography - A research approach to investigating different understandings of reality, pp. 42-3, in *Journal of Thought*, vol. 21, no. 3, 28-49

Throughout these seven steps of the method, certain peculiar approaches need to be followed, such as *abductive reasoning*<sup>57</sup> - constantly shifting between empirical data and theoretical concepts, allowing one to be understood in the light of the other. Another trait of the phenomenographic method is that whenever categories are condensed and distilled, the researcher has to operate on two different analytical planes: one refers to the context of the individual interview, within which any deductions are made; the other refers to the entire group of interviews that have addressed the same theme. "*The process is tedious, time-consuming, labour-intensive, and interactive. It entails the continual sorting of data, adjusted, retested, and adjusted again. There is however a decreasing rate of change and eventually the whole system of meanings is stabilised.*"<sup>58</sup>

The final product of the analysis, which contains the range of categories identified, described and compared, is enriched with quotes from the transcripts, for the double purpose of illustrating critical features of each category and for helping to differentiate between categories. As a result, some themes sought within the interviews and explored through phenomenographic analysis will display a wider spectrum of categories, thus depicting the deeper dimensions which the phenomenon itself has developed as inscribed within human experience.

### Strengths and limitations:

When Marton and his colleagues initially proposed this research method, they described it as "*complementary to other kinds of research*", "*research that aims at description, analysis, and understanding of experiences*", "*research which is directed towards experiential descriptions. Such an approach points to a relatively distinct field of inquiry which we would like to label phenomenography*".<sup>59</sup> For Marton, essential in defining this new field of inquiry was the finding that "*phenomena, aspects of reality, are experienced (or conceptualized) in a relatively limited number of qualitatively different ways. In between the common and the idiosyncratic there seems, thus, to exist a level; a level of modes of experience, forms of thought, worthwhile studying*".<sup>60</sup> The strength of phenomenography is therefore its ability and potential to map out experience in a broad palette, precisely as it is recorded at this in-between level, structured and narrowed down to distinct, overlapping foci of condensation, which delimit "*the range of perspectives in a collectivised system of categories of description that aim to capture the different ways of experiencing the phenomenon. This is because the research task in phenomenography lies not just in describing phenomena as others experience them, but also, and more importantly, in describing the variation between these ways of experiencing*".<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Abductive reasoning is a form of logical inference that moves from an observation to a hypothesis that accounts for the observation, ideally seeking to find the simplest and most likely explanation. In abductive reasoning, unlike in deductive reasoning, the premises do not guarantee the conclusion.

<sup>58</sup> Marton, F. (1986). op cit, p. 30

<sup>59</sup> Marton, F. (1981). Phenomenography - Describing Conceptions of the World around us. *Instructional Science* 10, pp. 177-200, Amsterdam: Elsevier, p. 180

<sup>60</sup> idem, p. 181

<sup>61</sup> Dunkin, R. - op cit, p. 139

Over the years, as phenomenography evolved and was widely applied in other fields of research, concerns were raised regarding its nature, its attention to the context in which the research is performed, and the validity of the method.

To accusations that phenomenography is very similar, and almost equivalent to grounded theory and ethnography, phenomenographers replied by highlighting the focus on experience of phenomena (unlike grounded theory) and, respectively, the lack of need for day-to-day involvement in the social processes implied by the study (as required in accurate ethnographic research). However, the factor which best distinguishes phenomenography from either the afore-mentioned methods, or from phenomenology, is the focus on variation of experience, and the steps performed to map out the range, limits and patterns of this variations.

It has been repeatedly signalled that phenomenography turns a blind eye to the context of the participants, be it cultural, social, environmental, or circumstantial (the same respondent could give a significantly different answer if circumstances change slightly, his description of experience being easily influenced by immeasurable factors such as mood or clouded memory). If this was indeed the case in a number of studies where the interview was not properly designed to incorporate a certain flexibility and adaptation, Marton's own intention when presenting the programme of phenomenography was a different one and, for him, this attention to the context also constituted one of the distinguishing characteristics from phenomenological research: "*a phenomenological investigation is directed towards the pre-reflective level of consciousness. The aim is to describe either what the world would look like without having learned how to see it or how the taken-for-granted world of our everyday existence is <lived>. In phenomenography, we suggest, we would deal with both the conceptual and the experiential, as well with what is thought of as that which is lived. We would also deal with what is culturally learned and with what are individually developed ways of relating ourselves to the world around us*".<sup>62</sup> It is likely that this initial task was too ambitious, especially in the case of up to 30 interviewees in a study, therefore none of the experiments which followed it could thoroughly tackle this conceptual, learned and cultural context of participants, as presented by Marton, but it can be argued that this issue could be resolved by choosing environments equally familiar to the interviewees and the researcher, targeting smaller study groups and pairing the interview with real-life situations (in which the phenomenon under study is also concomitantly experienced).

As regards validity of phenomenographic research, it is the verbal, linguistic component of the method that is considered mostly problematic. "*[A]ll such attempts to turn the <first-person> enterprise of phenomenology into a <third-person> enterprise suitable for the social sciences fall foul of precisely the same conceptual problem. Their proponents insist that their intention is to describe the world as people experience it. However, they have to depend on other people's discursive accounts of their experience*".<sup>63</sup> Repeated concerns have been raised regarding "*the practice of interpreting linguistic differences and choice of words among interviewees*

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<sup>62</sup> Marton, F. - *idem*, p. 181

<sup>63</sup> Richardson, J.T.E., *op cit*, p. 73

*as differences in meaning of conceptual content".<sup>64</sup> The proposed solution given by a number of phenomenographers is to use a flexible form of the interview, which can be altered at points and guided in such a way as to trigger further descriptions, detailing the deeper meaning of the words employed, but there is still a high risk of error in selecting the modes of expression which need more explanation.*

*the analysis boils down to identifying and grouping expressed ways of experiencing the phenomenon (literally or metaphorically making excerpts from interviews and putting them into piles)*  
(FERENCE MARTON)

## ADAPTING PHENOMENOGRAPHY

Architecturally speaking, the application of the phenomenographic method to the visual data explored in this thesis started with the literal construction of piles - which, in this case, were made not of interview excerpts, but of printed stills selected from the studied films. However, the attempt had started from the theoretical stage, while still being unaware of phenomenography as a potential research framework.

### Inquiring path towards PHENOMENOGRAPHY

The thesis research began from the question: "*How is the meaning and memory of home communicated through the films of Ingmar Bergman and Andrei Tarkovsky?*" Attempting to answer this, I had in front of me an immense and very diverse range of research material, the written autobiographies; the work notebooks with drawings for film sets; the artists' lectures for film students, the text of the screenplays, published short stories and poems by them; their diaries, interviews with them on various topics, some of their professional or personal letters; moreover, the universe of their films, and, also visually, photographs with them or taken by them, documentaries about the making of several films, biographies written by people who knew them closely, recollections of anecdotes from the filming process, written by fellow crew members. With the question of "spatial experience of home" in mind, the attempt was to anchor this material on phenomenological grounds and to thus explore the phenomenological aspects found in the available audio-visual and written research data. Readings from film theory and about film techniques and practice ensured a better understanding of the studied cases. As follows, the first analytical step in the research was to thoroughly read through all the available written sources and select the passages directly or indirectly related to the topics concerning the research question: places, perceptions and feelings about places identified as home, spaces, houses, landscapes, architecture, memories, nostalgia, place descriptions, spatial metaphors. Through this initial

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<sup>64</sup> Sin, S (2010). Considerations of Quality in Phenomenographic Research, pp. 305 - 319, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 9 (4), p. 308



reading, several strong links were noticed between the two filmmakers, which constituted the basis for the idea of developing the discourse as a dialogue between the two of them. As the thesis developed and new sources were identified along the process (triggered by visits to the Tarkovsky and Bergman archives), the selection of passages continued to grow, increasingly clarifying a contour of the topographical biographies presented in chapter 3.

Concomitantly with the initial stages of this process, whilst preparing the literature review on phenomenology, Herbert Spiegelberg's *imaginative free variations* method for approaching the "world of the other" appeared to mirror the endeavour I had already started. The thorough reading of available biographical and autobiographical sources seemed to respond to the first steps in Spiegelberg's method, which requires gathering as many facts as possible from the available biography, completing it with autobiographical details, first-hand descriptions and accounts - which were plentiful in the case of both Tarkovsky and Bergman. Furthermore, in Spiegelberg's method these steps are meant to enable a position of "occupying the place of the other" - in a metaphorical sense, beyond locality. However, since space-place-architecture is the main element in the present research, the actual visits to places which were meaningful in the biographies of these filmmakers ensured a topical, perceptual positioning in "the place of the other", an actual viewpoint from which first-hand accounts of places could be analysed with an enhanced experiential understanding. The method proposed by Spiegelberg was therefore gradually responding to the development of my research, and became a guiding framework; furthermore, when exploring its precursor, Karl Jasper's studies in phenomenological psychology, defined as *phenomenography* by Ulrich Sonneman, the term *phenomenography* seemed to accurately fit the thesis' methodological aims, due to its implicit connection to both *phenomenology* - the study of lived experience, and to *representation* - the inscription of this experience.

Nevertheless, *phenomenography* - in the form in which it has developed as a qualitative method in educational research - seemed to loosen the link between the term and the present undertaking, precisely because the established *phenomenography* disregards the inherently visual, imprinted element. Phenomenography's embedded discursive nature does not comply with research material based on moving images, experience of places and language-elements which are tributary to translations. Moreover, although phenomenographers have mentioned the potentiality of applying the method on historical, narrative or biographical material (i.e. not obtained through interviews, but existing a priori and separately from the research effort), there was no record of such an experiment, to this day. But despite the obvious differences between the established phenomenography and the material pertaining to this thesis, there were also numerous points of convergence, which - given the reported valuable results presented by phenomenographers - could sustain the intention to trace the "qualitatively different ways" in which home can be perceived, remembered and represented, based on the works of these two poetically autobiographical filmmakers. Accordingly, a major component of the thesis was the design of a phenomenographic methodology adapted to autobiographical, poetically constructed filmic material.



**Image 5.2** - glimpses from the adapted phenomenographic method, at work: on the desk I have cards with printed film stills; then, I watch again the films, with these cards in front of me, taking notes on the back of each card, summarizing the narrative and aural content of the scene, connections traced with other scenes, ideas for biographical references

## Reclaiming PHENOMENOGRAPHY

To start with, the methodology defined throughout this thesis blends aspects of both phenomenological enquiry and phenomenographic analysis, since it aims to tackle variation and essence alike in the architectural experience communicated through film. From phenomenological research it borrows the depth and thickness of enquiry, closely exploring each aspect of architectural experience as expressed in a multitude of ways through written and visual material. From the pre-phenomenographical methods of research into indirect experiences, it applies the construction of a biographical foundation wherefrom to begin the analysis. And lastly, it epistemologically follows the steps of the phenomenographic method, building and narrowing down the categories of description.

The etymology of the term *phenomenography*, and the unused potential of its content, stand as the very basis for reclaiming it in order to analyse and describe film material. It is formed of *phenomenon* and *-graphy*, coming from the Greek words φαίνόμενον (to appear luminously, to shine) and γράφειν (to inscribe, to write). Upon a literal reading, therefore, it would mean "a writing of phenomena". In similarly formed compounds of words, the *-graphy* suffix means respectively "writing", such as in *calligraphy* (literally: "beautiful-writing") and *photography* ("light-writing"); it can also mean "description, account", such as in *biography* ("life-writing"); a "listing" of elements, such as in *bibliography* ("book-writing"); or a "mapping description", as in *geography* ("earth writing").

The story of the Greek γράφειν (*graphein*), however, opens up other fertile paths of interpretation. Initially meaning "writing", it was formed as an onomatopoeic word that imitated the sound of the stylus scratching the tablet on which signs were inscribed. It thus grasped multiple meanings: the action of inscribing; the visual trace left by the inscription;

the audible component of inscribing. The combination of these three seems to incorporate therefore not just the results, but also the experience of inscribing. Moreover, the word γράφειν, combined, forms "to record", to store an information, while in the modern language, the same verb is used for video-recording: η κάμερα γράφει meaning "the camera is recording". Building upon such significations, understood in the context of this research, a re-reading of the term *phenomenography* entails the inherently audiovisual characteristic of γράφειν, and looks at the ways in which phenomena are audiovisually communicated as experiences, engulfing the description and the mapping of the phenomenon, as well as the inscription, the remembrance and the writing of the phenomenon through the means of autobiographical film art<sup>65</sup>.

In order to reclaim *phenomenography* for architectural experience and film as medium, the present research adapts a phenomenographic analysis to map the experience of home and its moving image in the films of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman. Given the particular context, before any of the phenomenographic steps were to be performed, it was necessary to clearly and sharply define the constituting components: the investigated *phenomenon* and *graphein*.

The *phenomenon* was broadly defined as experience of space-place, narrowed down to the experience of home, as an archetype for understandings of and relations to spaces; the literature review concerning dwelling, home-ness and space-place dialectics, as seen from a wide range of angles, including architecture, phenomenology, human geography, home studies, anthropology, spatial studies, was summarized in chapters 2 and 4. The second imperative concern was to properly define what is the *graphein* comprised in the given case, the ways of inscribing, recording and writing experience, peculiar to narrative arts. This will be shortly summarized here.

### Graphein - narrative and imaginative representation

The main differentiation between the material comprised in the films, short stories and - to some degree - the autobiographies, was their innate narrativity, the artistic imagination which constituted an additional layer to that of direct experiences as could have been gathered through, for instance, interviews. Acknowledging this differentiation between "actual and real" experiences and narratively filtered experiences as represented in art, there were some particular topic to explore, in understanding how these latter ones, instead of being an impediment in the research, could in fact embody even deeper meanings than those expressed in direct, unmediated accounts. The notions of imagination, representation and metaphors were thus essential components of the *graphein* involved in the study. From this point of view, the figures mostly influential were: the French phenomenologist Paul Ricouer<sup>66</sup>, the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard<sup>67</sup> and the Russian philosopher of language Mikhail Bakhtin<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> "Direction is no longer a means of illustrating or presenting a scene, but a true act of writing. The film-maker author writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen" (Alexandre Astruc, *La Camera-Stylo*, 1928)

<sup>66</sup> see also earlier in this chapter, p. 169

<sup>67</sup> Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962), French philosopher, with ample contributions in the fields of science and poetics

<sup>68</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), Russian philosopher and literary critic, with major contributions in philosophy of language and literary theory

For Ricoeur, "*narration is significative inasmuch as it represents the experience of time*".<sup>69</sup> Time becomes a fundamental component of narrativity itself, thus, the value of fiction is constituted from a dialogue between fictional time and historical time. Historical time, with its needs of archiving and genealogies, tends to capture in its constraints the fictional time, for which it delimits chronologies and temporal categorizations. On the other hand, fictional time, narrative time, deploys "*imaginative variations, different ways of accounting for the experience of time through narration. The documentary proof of the historical narrative has its corollary the reliability of the fictional narrative, an internal coherence as rigid as the external coherence of historical narratives*".<sup>70</sup> Ricoeur considers the particular characteristic of "*imaginative variations*" to be precisely the response which narrative fiction brings when facing the chronological temptation of historical time: "*Would not the response of fiction be to invent imaginative variations with respect to the cosmic reinscription effected by history, imaginative variations on the theme of the fault which separates the two perspectives on time? [...] If these imaginative variations can be multiplied endlessly, it is because in the kingdom of fiction the specific constraints of historical knowledge have been suspended beforehand - this knowledge that is dependent upon the stringencies of calendar time*".<sup>71</sup> Moreover, Ricoeur observes that to a certain degree, historical temporalities are at work and define the very nature of narrativity: "*Fictional narrative is quasi-historical to the extent that the unreal events that it relates are past facts for the narrative voice that addresses itself to the reader. It is in this that they resemble past events and that fiction resembles history*".<sup>72</sup>

From the perspective opened up by Ricoeur, the fictional worlds present in the films of Andrei Tarkovsky and Ingmar Bergman could constitute quasi-historical sources for exploring the phenomena the study searches for. Moreover, since the narratives in the majority of these films are infused with autobiographical themes, the filtering fiction is at times defined by the very past-ness of its mode of presenting facts to the viewer, at other times an example of sifting real experiences through a lens of imaginative variations, a mode of exploring what could have taken place differently during the same duration: "*The exploration of the possible can thus give free rein to imaginative variations which have the experiential value of eternity*".<sup>73</sup> Accordingly, it is this experiential value which the present study seeks in the cinematically represented experiences, despite their disputable historical authenticity.

Ricoeur's thinking, therefore, has been influential in considering the value of narratives from a temporal perspective. However, he maintains a critical position towards the proliferation of instances where language is spatialized, claiming that in modern scholarship space seems to come before time, in the treatment of narrative imagination and representation. As a consequence, his views on space as a component of the narrative are restricted to the concept of point of view and the field of perception: "*the development of a narrative always involves a combination of purely perceptual perspectives, implying position, angle of*

<sup>69</sup> Collington, T. (2001) Space, Time and Narrative: Bakhtin and Ricoeur, pp. 221-231, in *Space and Culture* vol. 4/ 7-9, p. 228

<sup>70</sup> Ricoeur, P. (1988) *Time and Narrative* 3, Translated by K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 162

<sup>71</sup> Ricoeur, P. (1991) Narrative Time, p. 339-354, in M. Valdés (Ed.) *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, p. 351

<sup>72</sup> Ricoeur, P. (1988) *op cit*, p. 190

<sup>73</sup> Ricoeur, P. (1991) *op cit*, pp. 351-352

aperture, and depth of field".<sup>74</sup> From this study's frame of reference, it is particularly relevant to note the direct cinematic notions employed by Ricoeur. Nonetheless, his writings on narrativity are dedicated to establishing a hierarchical position of temporality over spatiality.

On this topic, Mikhail Bakhtin presents a different perspective, through his concept of the *chronotope*<sup>75</sup>: "[w]e will give the name *chronotope* (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. [...] In the artistic *chronotope*, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history".<sup>76</sup> Elaborated by Bakhtin in the field of literature narratives, the *chronotope* could be even more directly applicable in cinema,<sup>77</sup> where any represented narrative is indissolubly linked to both space and time<sup>78</sup>. The represented fiction was recorded within a place and is viewed within another space; it flows in "actual" time on the screen, while narrating fictional time. Moreover, in the shared viewing experience of the film, "[f]ilmmaker, film and spectator all concretely use the agency of the visual, aural and kinetic experience",<sup>79</sup> sharing, as it were, a common and concrete space, which extends far beyond the time frames of when a film was made and when it is presented. As such, the film viewing experience corresponds closely to the "textual space" noticed by Bakhtin as a convergence function of the *chronotope*: "these real people, these authors and the listeners, the readers, may be (and often are) located in differing time-spaces, sometimes separated from each other by centuries or by great spatial distances, but nevertheless they are all located in a real, unitary and as yet incomplete historical world set off by a sharp and categorical boundary from the represented world of the text".<sup>80</sup>

Observed initially by Natasha Synessios<sup>81</sup> and then reiterated by numerous scholars, the *chronotope* is a concept "particularly apt for *Mirror*<sup>82</sup>, whose polyphonic nature arises from the diversity and interrelation of its temporal and spatial realities. [...] Bakhtin believed that questions about self can be pursued only when treated as specific questions about location. Tarkovsky's *chronotopes* map an emotional terrain, in as far as we come to apprehend aspects of his characters through their locus".<sup>83</sup> Extending the discussion from *Mirror* to the entire filmography of Tarkovsky, the *chronotopes* portent of autobiographical meanings that transverse the space of the films could be viewed as Ricoeur's *imaginative variations*, in which the element of space is embedded in the temporal fabric of the narrative. In the present study it will be these, the

<sup>74</sup> Ricoeur, P. (1985) *Time and Narrative 2*, Translated by K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 94

<sup>75</sup> from the Greek words *chronos* and *topos*, literally meaning "time place", rather than "time space" as given by Bakhtin

<sup>76</sup> Bakhtin, M. M. (1981) *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics*, pp. 84-258 in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (1935) Translated by C. Emerson and M. Hollquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, p. 84

<sup>77</sup> with numerous applications in literature, the *chronotope* has recently been started to turn fruitful in film theory; one of these endeavours is the ongoing research project initiated in 2011 by Lancaster University, *The Chronotope in the Age of Cinema*, which aims to fill a gap existing in the literature, by publishing a compendium of relevant cinematic *chronotopes*

<sup>78</sup> see [ANNEX booklet](#), section "Cinematic Chronotopes of *Zerkalo*/ "Mirror", pp. 120-127, for an attempt to trace and reconstruct the architecture of Tarkovsky's "*Mirror*" based on the film's *chronotopes*

<sup>79</sup> Sobchack, V. (1991) *The Address of the Eye. A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton University Press, p.21

<sup>80</sup> Bakhtin, M. M. (1981) *op cit*, p. 253

<sup>81</sup> Synessios, N. (2001) *Mirror*, London: I.B. Tauris&Co, especially the chapter "*Mirror's Chronotopes*", pp. 70-79

<sup>82</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky's autobiographical film *Mirror* (1975)

<sup>83</sup> Synessios, N. *op cit*, p. 70

reiterated *chronotopes*, the spatio-temporal *imaginative variations*, will disclose themselves as a result of the phenomenographic analysis, in the "categories of description" from chapter 6.

Apart from space and time, another layer in the narrativity of the films taken into consideration, is the oneiric layer, the language and logic of dreams involved in their cinematic imagery. In his autobiography, Ingmar Bergman wrote, contrasting historical narrative with the oneirically-fictional one: "*When film is not a document, it is dream. That is why Tarkovsky is the greatest of them all. He moves with such naturalness in the room of dreams. He doesn't explain. What should he explain anyhow?*"<sup>84</sup> and elsewhere: "*Tarkovsky is for me the greatest, the one who invented a new language, true to the nature of film, as it captures life as a reflection, life as a dream*".<sup>85</sup> In the territory of dream images, of oneiric imagination and the narrative of reveries, Gaston Bachelard's views appeared as mostly suitable: "*for the philosophical realist, as well as for the ordinary psychologist, it is the perception of images which determines the processes of the imagination. In their opinion, we begin by seeing things, then we imagine them; we combine, through the imagination, fragments of perceived reality, memories of experienced reality [...] To make fertile combinations, one must have seen a great deal. The advice to see well, which is the basis of the realists' education, easily overshadows our paradoxical advice to dream well, to dream in harmony with the archetypes rooted in the human consciousness*".<sup>86</sup> The present study therefore embraces this view and acknowledges the brisk nature of cinematic images, as sprung from the oneiric framework of imagination that has generated them. Only through such a view, the moving images of these films can pertain to being analyzed as if they were living accounts of experiences: "*imagination is, above all, a type of spiritual mobility. We must therefore systematically add to the study of a particular image the study of its mobility, its fertility, its life*".<sup>87</sup> To study the *chronotope* of a door, for instance, would, in this view, mean that the image of a door present in one of the films, at one point, may not be understood in its imaginative fullness when separated from other reiterations of the same element; the image of an opening door in an oneiric episode<sup>88</sup> gains its "living" character only when analyzing its spatio-temporal construction in the filmic language that precedes it. For Bachelard, through the birth of an image, the past is present to a certain degree, but the way it is reshaped and renewed makes the oneiric image in some ways of a higher order than the pure recollection: "*through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away. Because of its novelty and its action, the poetic image has an entity and a dynamism of its own*".<sup>89</sup>

The creativity and vitality of the image as understood by Bachelard resembles in many ways Ricoeur's concept of the "*living metaphor*"<sup>90</sup>. The moving images of the analyzed films will therefore be considered as creatively living spatial metaphors, and will be presented accordingly, in chapter 6. Chapter 7 opens with a dialogical narrative portraying the creativity and live-ness of some spatial metaphors that permeate both Bergman's and Tarkovsky's oeuvres and imaginaries: doors, thresholds, rooms.

<sup>84</sup> LM, p. 73

<sup>85</sup> this quote, such as the one featured in the Prologue of this Thesis, appears in many publications, but isn't credited by any

<sup>86</sup> Bachelard, G. (1987) *On Poetic Imagination and Reverie*. Translated by C. Gaudin, Dallas: Spring Publications, pp. 12-13

<sup>87</sup> idem, p. 20

<sup>88</sup> see chapter 3, pp. 99-100 and ANNEX booklet, p. 123, for the episode of the child returning to the childhood house

<sup>89</sup> Bachelard, G. *op cit*, p. 71

<sup>90</sup> developed in Ricoeur, P. (2003) *The Rule of Metaphor: the Creation of Meaning in Language* (1977, first English translation), Translated by R. Czerny Ottawa, London:Routledge

### Phenomenon+Graphein - Phenomenography

The present research, however, does not intend to focus solely on the living moving images, and their constitution. The absence of contextual anchoring in the analytical process was repeatedly signalled by many scholars as an essential gap that affects the validity of the findings in classic phenomenography. This research, therefore, strives to ground the discussion on images in the socio-cultural and biographical contexts wherein they had emerged. By adding this necessary contextual framing to the method, the format comes closer to the way in which Marton initially formulated it as a research approach. It also mirrors the preliminary steps in the methodologies of accessing "the world of the other" as defined by Karl Jasper in the 1920s and the more recent one by Herbert Spiegelberg. More precisely, this operation reflects Jasper's initial step of *immersion* into the behaviour of the other and Spiegelberg's requirement of starting the enquiry by gathering all available biographical accounts and structuring them in order to construct the "world of the other" and the "place" from where one can look at the world as if "through the eyes of the other". In the case of the present research and its core focus on spatial experience, this requirement was fulfilled by gathering and arranging the written information, but the process was enriched due to the qualities of film viewing, which allows the viewer to directly experience and quite literally get immersed into the world of the film<sup>91</sup>; moreover, travels to existing locations were another immersive participation into the proportions and features of places which were defining for the two artists' spatially sensitive formation.

In the process of this study, once the contextual backdrop has been construed, the analysis moved on to read the films and create the categories. Paraphrasing and adapting the steps of the traditional phenomenographic analysis, the process was as follows:



**Image 5.3** - sample of selected stills from *Sacrifice* (sequence of 4 frames, from 0:24:49 to 0:25:27)

**STEP 1:** a viewing of all the films, in parallel with reading through the available written sources; this step included taking extensive notes; although at that time I was not consciously following a research process and was still unaware of phenomenography, this step coincided with the required initial phenomenographic step of familiarization; the notes served to create initial correlations and structures of thought for later analyses;

**STEP 2:** on a second viewing, film after film was once again watched, keeping in mind the question of architectural experience, and each shot considered spatially relevant was selected as a film still, archived and time-coded according to the film chronology, forming sequences of ensuing images. The process presupposed between 180 to 280 stills per film

<sup>91</sup> in the case of auteur filmmakers and autobiographical films, the world of the film is precisely the artistically filtered world as directly experienced by them

and initially it palpably included printing the stills and cutting them out as cards: for each film, therefore, a pile of such cards was formed.



**Image 5.4** - print screen showing a glimpse of selected stills in my digital archives (left); fragment from the collection of printed film stills/ "cards" (middle and right); the photos show the cards for *Rubelev*, *Ivan's Childhood*, *Mirror* and *Solaris*

At a later moment during the research, this process was entirely transferred digitally, due to the use of a software<sup>92</sup> which allowed simultaneous selection and archiving of film stills as well as tagging and adding explanatory notes; therefore steps 2 and 3 were merged and could be performed at the same time.

**STEP 3 (1st categorization):** The following step, which once the software method was implemented was performed at the same time at which the stills were selected, included the labelling of each still (or card, in the non-digital version), with a main title (regarding the most characteristic aspect that defines the respective shot from a spatially experiential point of view) and various additional notes, which included information about the aural content of the shot, the links to the previous or following scenes, and, where relevant, fragments of the dialogue or of the voiceover. This initial labelling was carried out within the context of one single film at a time. Once this was achieved, the identified titles were grouped, according to their importance in the film plot and their architectural relevance, into a list containing primary elements, and another one formed of secondary elements. In the present research, the outcome of the first categorization was a list of 26 main categories and 13 secondary categories.



**Image 5.5** - the labelling of "cards" and, respectively, the tagging of digitally archived film stills

**STEP 4 (2nd categorization):** In the second round of categorization, the film stills and the related notes were read in the shared context of all films, therefore outlining new associations and parallels. As a result, some elements which seemed of lesser importance within one film were observed to be recurrent viewed in the context of all films, bearing

<sup>92</sup> Zoner Photo Studio 16 (released autumn 2013, © Zoner Software)



deeper associative significance. As such, new labels appeared, leading to 28 main and 14 secondary categories.



Image 5.6 - forming categories from the "cards" and, respectively, the digitally categorized film stills

**STEPS 5 and 6 (3rd and 4th categorizations):** The following two iterative steps involved the borderline cases: the film stills which belonged to two or more categories, and where the boundary between the defining elements was too vague to allow differentiation. To proceed with the refinement, a reading within and across categories was performed, mostly supported by the multiple tagging and cross-referencing operation tools of the employed software, thus permitting a hierarchization based on the most common occurrences of the same element across categories. A further criterion for differentiation was given by the text fragments which have been previously extracted from screenplays and other written sources, and served to augment or diminish the importance of some of the elements. Step 5) led to 28 main categories and 15 secondary categories, while step 6) resulted in a more compacted collection of 25 main and 10 secondary categories.

**STEP 7 (5th categorization):** The final refinement included an additional filtering factor, which mirrored the one initially applied to the film readings: that of the architectural experience. Therefore, all of these categories were re-read aiming for a post-categorization under architecturally-relevant headings, and some of the previously formed categories were relabelled, some migrations in between categories occurred again, and some new groups were formed. The categories were then organized according to their architectural hierarchy, starting from theme (brief) and location, going through materials, construction elements, furnishings, articulations and, finally, transitions and spatial configurations. According to this format, the final set thereby formed contained 31 main and 10 secondary categories<sup>93</sup>.

**STEP 8 (illustrations):** In the traditional phenomenographic method, the analysis ends with a detailed description of the character of each category and an overall conclusion. In this thesis, chapter 6 constitutes the explanation and selected detailing of this final step in the analysis. If in traditional phenomenography the unfolding of categories is enhanced with excerpts of interviews, the present research will illustrate categories with film extracts of each group, and further quotes selected from the available written sources. The development and iterative refinement of the categories can be seen in image 5.7.

<sup>93</sup> the lists will be presented and explained in more detail throughout chapter 4, wherein the contents and characteristic of each category will be furthermore explored

PHENOMENOGRAPHIC PROCESS		
CATEGORIES (films)		STEP 3 17 <sup>th</sup> AUGUST
MAIN CATEGORIES <small>(categories with most cards)</small>	SECONDARY CATEGORIES <small>(not precisely defined/divided yet)</small>	
WALL	TABLE	STAIRS
WINDOW	FIRE	ROOF
DOOR	LIGHT	BELL
FLOOR	SHORE	DREAM
CEILING	ROOM	WIND/FLYING
WATER	HOME OBJECTS	ANIMALS
TREE	HOUSE	flowers, leaves, fruits
MIRROR	BOOKS/PAPERS	ROAD
PORCH	MUSIC	STREET
CHILD	LAMP	WELL
CURTAINS	CHAIR	BRIDGE
CHURCH/ICONS		MIST, SMOKE, FEATHERS
STOVE		—SNOW, MILK—
LANDSCAPE		
BED		

PHENOMENOGRAPHIC PROCESS		
CATEGORIES (films)		STEP 4 19 <sup>th</sup> AUGUST
MAIN CATEGORIES <small>(categories with most cards)</small>	SECONDARY CATEGORIES <small>(not precisely defined/divided yet)</small>	
WALL	TABLE	STAIRS
WINDOW	FIRE	ROOF
DOOR	LIGHT	BELL
FLOOR	SHORE	DREAM
CEILING	ROOM	WIND/FLYING
WATER	HOME OBJECTS	ANIMALS
TREE	HOUSE	flowers, leaves, fruits
MIRROR	BOOKS/PAPERS	ROAD   BIKE   CAR
PORCH	MUSIC	STREET
CHILD	LAMP	WELL
CURTAINS	CHAIR	BRIDGE
CHURCH/ICONS	CLOCKS	MIST, SMOKE, FOG
STOVE	SOUNDS seagulls, larks, foghorn	SNOW, FEATHERS
LANDSCAPE		MILK
BED		

PHENOMENOGRAPHIC PROCESS		
CATEGORIES (films)		STEP 5 19 <sup>th</sup> AUGUST
MAIN CATEGORIES <small>(categories with most cards)</small>	SECONDARY CATEGORIES <small>(not precisely defined/divided yet)</small>	
WALL	TABLE	STAIRS
WINDOW	FIRE	ROOF
DOOR	LIGHT	BELL
FLOOR	SHORE	DREAM
CEILING	ROOM	WIND/FLYING
WATER	HOME OBJECTS	ANIMALS
TREE	HOUSE	flowers, leaves, fruits
MIRROR	BOOKS/PAPERS	ROAD   BIKE   CAR
PORCH	MUSIC	STREET
CHILD	LAMP	WELL
CURTAINS	CHAIR	BRIDGE
CHURCH/ICONS	CLOCKS	MIST, SMOKE, FOG
STOVE	SOUNDS seagulls, larks, foghorn	SNOW, FEATHERS
LANDSCAPE		MILK
BED		GLASSES, PITCHER

PHENOMENOGRAPHIC PROCESS		
CATEGORIES (films)		STEP 6 20 <sup>th</sup> OCTOBER
MAIN CATEGORIES <small>(categories with most cards)</small>	SECONDARY CATEGORIES <small>(not precisely defined/divided yet)</small>	
WALL	TABLE	STAIRS
WINDOW	FIRE	—ROOF—
DOOR	LIGHT	BELL
FLOOR	SHORE	—DREAM—
CEILING	ROOM	WIND/FLYING/ DREAM
WATER	HOME OBJECTS	ANIMALS
TREE	HOUSE	flowers, leaves, fruits
MIRROR	BOOKS/PAPERS	—ROAD+BIKE+CAR—
PORCH	—MUSIC—	—STREET—
—CHILD—	LAMP	WELL
CURTAINS	CHAIR	—BRIDGE—
CHURCH/ICONS	—CLOCKS—	MIST, SMOKE, FOG
STOVE	SOUND: music, clocks seagulls, birds, foghorn, dogbark	SNOW, FEATHERS
LANDSCAPE		MILK
BED		HOME OBJECTS: glasses, vases, pitcher, decorations, cutlery

# PHENOMENOGRAPHIC PROCESS

## THE FINAL CATEGORIES

STEP 7 20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER

**HOUSE/ HOME**

**LANDSCAPE**

**CONSTRUCTION (IM)MATERIALS:**

MEMORY

WORDS/ scent

LIGHT

DARKNESS

SILENCE

MIST/ SMOKE/ FOG

SOUND:  
music, clocks  
seagulls, birds,  
foghorn, dogbark

WIND: flying, dreams

WATER

**SPATIAL ELEMENTS:**

WALL

WINDOW

DOOR

FLOOR

CEILING

PORCH

STAIRS

SHORE/ THRESHOLD

**FURNISHING:**

TABLE

CHAIR

BED

LAMP-CANDLE

MIRROR

STOVE

CURTAINS

HOME OBJECTS:  
glasses, vases, pitcher,  
decorations, cutlery

**SPATIAL ORGANISATION:**

ROOM

TRANSITIONS

MONTAGE

COMPOSITION

**FRAGMENTS:**

TREE

FIRE

BOOKS:/PAPERS

CHURCH/ICONS

WELL

ANIMALS

VEGETATION:  
grass, flowers,  
leaves, fruits, seeds

MILK

BELL

SNOW:  
snowflakes, feathers

Image 5.7 - evolution of phenomenographic categories, according to iterative refinement procedures

## conclusions (4)

Inverting the process of architectural phenomenology, this present analysis explores how the filmmaker operates through the perceptual and associative regimes of the film in order to "build" spatial experience and render habitable the rooms of moving images. This method enquires how film communicates the experience of the most familiar space, the home, the house which, through dwelling, has acquired the qualities of "place" and thus acts to "*situate one's memorial life, to give it a name and a local habitation*".<sup>94</sup>

The phenomenographic method, as introduced in the ending of the previous chapter, allowed for an understanding of the seven films as a continuum, rather than as separate narratives, which opened up new readings, parallels, hierarchies. On a first glance, the method involved a sum of lifeless stills, which - not being glued together according to the separate narratives and time flows of each film - were now mere independent images. The process would have resembled an autopsy of the chopped films, were it not for the side notes which accompanied each image and situated it diegetically within the order and rhythm of the film from which it was taken. Moreover, after an increased number of viewings of all the seven films, it was possible to grasp each image as a part of a whole, and not as an autonomous postcard, the side notes starting to dynamically write themselves in my mind, rather than on paper. Knowing Tarkovsky's thoughts about working with film stills, claiming that "*no time truth exists in the separate frames. In themselves they are static and insipid*",<sup>95</sup> I sought to avoid that by operating with the images only after having established a steady sense of familiarity with the overarching environment of Tarkovsky's films and biography, rather than hastily - at the incipient stages of this study. This has allowed me to use the images as prompts, which although still, were now moving - playing the fragment of film inside my mind. To further explain, in the beginning of the doctoral research, when I would be looking at a film still from a film by Tarkovsky, I might have marvelled at the quality of the composition, the details and textures of space, the dimmed colours and the particular conditions of light. However, after the repeated viewings of the films, with notes taken for each of the stills I would select as being spatially relevant, with further viewing in order to verify and add on to the notes, a look on such a still image afterwards would not stir in my mind observations as the ones previously mentioned. The composition of the frame might have been indeed fascinating, but the image acted as an introduction for a short film that was starting to play, from memory, in my mind.

Thus, when looking at a film still after such a preparation, I could analyse the movement of the camera and of the characters at that moment of the film, rather than the static qualities of the shot. And, more importantly for an architectural reading of the films, instead of treating the bidimensional characteristics of the image, it allowed me to understand and analyse the spatial relations implied by the moving image.

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<sup>94</sup> Casey, E. (2000) *Remembering: a phenomenological study*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 184

<sup>95</sup> ST, pg. 120

# CHAPTER SIX

## ARCHITECTURAL PHENOMENOGRAPHY through Andrei Tarkovsky's films

PHENOMENOGRAPHY as threshold to Tarkovsky's cinematic world

The List of Phenomenographic CATEGORIES

PLACE

HOUSE/HOME

LANDSCAPE

CONSTRUCTION IMMATERIALS

MEMORY

WORDS

SILENCE

LIGHT/DARKNESS

SPATIAL ELEMENTS

WALL

FURNISHING

TABLE

CURTAIN

FRAGMENTS, TRIGGERS

BIRD WINGS

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

TRANSITIONS

MOVING IMAGES OF HOME. Conclusions

## ARCHITECTURAL PHENOMENOGRAPHY through Andrei Tarkovsky's films

*"He was oblivious of all but his camera.  
Without his camera, his steady searching gaze became uncertain.  
He discovered the essence of things and phenomena  
only when the lens of his camera was before him".<sup>1</sup>*

(Erland Josephson,  
lead actor in Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia* and *Sacrifice*)

### PHENOMENOGRAPHY as a threshold to Tarkovsky's cinematic world

The focus of this chapter is the variation in the representation of lived space, as observed in the films of Andrei Tarkovsky. In this case, the representation, the moving image, is formed of the imponderable surface of film, with all the inner characteristics of a shot and of an assemblage of shots and their innate associations. Throughout this thesis I assert that the medium of film can fluidly write the experience of having lived a space, and can thus describe the phenomenon of home in a visible, almost habitable description. In the early days of cinema, film theoretician Alexandre Astruc said that, when the director and the screenwriter are one and the same person<sup>2</sup>, directing a film *"is a true act of writing. The filmmaker author writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen"*. Although many essay-films use the cinematic medium to deploy their verbal message, the "writing" referred to here is not to say that the film would be a mere transposal of text into images. While working in Russia, Tarkovsky had developed a particular style of working, establishing the mise-en-scene, the choreography, sometimes even the dialogue, while looking through the camera lens. It was this gaze through the camera that seemed to define - as a language defines a literary text - the nascent space of the moving image. Outside of Russia, such practices were very unusual and made the cinematographers doubt that their role is overtaken by the director. Sven Nykvist, the cinematographer of *Sacrifice* (1985), who described at length his own struggle to become accustomed to Tarkovsky gripping his camera, offers a clear explanation of what "writing" meant in Tarkovsky's cinema: *"Sometimes I get the feeling that we're in the business of photographing words. It's easy to forget that long before the invention of the soundtrack, stories were being told in silent pictures. You know, that's really all I want to do: tell stories in pictures, and that's why I enjoy working with directors like Tarkovsky"*.<sup>3</sup>

The assumption that film is a form of writing phenomena implies two stages: the first one requires that the filmmaker himself finely grasped the essence of the phenomena he was writing when directing his film; the second stage is that of understanding the language in which these phenomena are written: in this case, the language of cinema and of composing images together according to film laws, but also the language of lived space. Lived space

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<sup>1</sup> Josephson, E. (1990) He was a Man True to his Calling, pp. 326-329, in Tarkovskaya, M. (Ed.) *About Andrei Tarkovsky*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, p. 327

<sup>2</sup> Tarkovsky was himself eagerly militating for the overlapping of the two roles, and, even in the films for which the screenplay was given to him (the case of *Ivan's Childhood*, *Stalker* or *Solaris*) rewrote it to a degree befitting his cinematic style

<sup>3</sup> Nykvist, S. (1990) [Untitled Memoir], pp. 321-322, in Tarkovskaya, M. (Ed.) *op cit*, p. 322

implies a shorter or longer experience of inhabiting, merged with the memory of that experience, as main ingredients and driving force in shaping the spatial cinematic depiction. Thus, representing the experience of a place implicitly involves the comprehension of spatial memory mechanisms, since "*in memories, corporeal space is immediately linked with the surrounding space of the environment, some fragment of inhabitable land*".<sup>4</sup> The epitome of this connection concerns memories related to the idea of house and home, because "*a house, especially one that has been our childhood home [...] serves as an active enclosure for the most cherished - which is to say, the most intimate - memories of place*",<sup>5</sup> an assertion justifiable in the openly autobiographical films, whether the spatial subject of the film is a childhood home, another adult dwelling, the longing for home, the absence of a home, the emptiness or the warmth of a home, nostalgia for the homeland. The present thesis considers this fluctuating stream of house icons<sup>6</sup> as *moving images of home*. Not mere depictions of familiar spaces, these moving images are treated as hypostases of the recollected archetype, in which sensorial perception is interwoven with experiential memories and emotional associations, and which can emerge in non-autobiographical works as remote spatial characteristics, space configurations or mere associative textures and fragments.

These extracted "still moving images" were initially curated according to their relevance in depicting spatial and architectural experience: from the configuration of landscapes, the location of the house in the landscape and the appearance of the house as an external image, to the entrance of the house, the threshold, the separating elements of walls, floors, ceilings, the mediating elements of porch and stairs, the openings, windows and doors, to elements of furnishing and the way in which these items are configured as relations within and between rooms. Across these spatial categories, some generic qualities were observed: particular uses of light, darkness, sound, music, silence, words, memory and dream as temporal, rhythmic and spatial texture, natural elements - wind, fog, smoke, fire, water, rain. Since they all contribute to a greater or lesser degree in defining and constructing the space depicted in the shot, these "qualities" were grouped under the heading of "construction (im)materials".

At the beginning of the analysis, I drafted a set of categories as I would have envisaged the main headings of an architectural textbook, hoping to fill them, one by one, with the appropriate film stills. However, this initial set was greatly altered as the viewing of the films progressed, due to the relationships emerging when images taken out of different films were now put together. As such, although some of the categories I had devised a priori might have initially contained a significant number of corresponding film stills (for instance, the element "roof"), since there were no strong resemblances between the images taken from different films, nor was there a significant experiential load to the scenes (a "roof" might be looked at, climbed on, fallen from, talked about... which was not the case

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<sup>4</sup> Ricoeur, P. (1992) *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 148

<sup>5</sup> Casey, E. (2000) *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 213

<sup>6</sup> *icon* here is used as *likeness*, from the original sense in Ancient Greek εἰκόνα (eikona), from εἶκω (eiko, meaning / look alike)

in the selected film stills), the category was considered invalid for the scope of the analysis. As such, the condition of inner visual, spatial and experiential similarities between images belonging to one category was essential in the development of the analysis. Ultimately, after the iterative refinement of categories, it is precisely these inner relationships present within each category that constitute the main finding of applying this method on the moving images of Tarkovsky's films. As such, categories which remained in the final stage of the analysis, for instance "door", signify not only that the element "door" appears with much poignancy throughout Tarkovsky's oeuvre, but that among all the scenes which feature doors in his movies there are internal relationships and affinities. The more one way of experiencing or of portraying "doors" was repeated throughout the films in a very similar moving image, the clearer a subcategory was forming. To exemplify, for the element "door", five subcategories concern static, formal characteristics of doors that repeat throughout the films, whereas ten subcategories concern verbs, which not only determine ingenious dynamics of the film shot, but - due to the very fact that they repeat with persistence in different scenes from different films - seem to embody a way of experiencing. For this reason, inside each category, an increased importance is given to these subcategories labelled "verbs", the movements and actions within the shot which are directly related to the spatial fragment contained therein and which fluidly describe its experiential qualities, as an illustration that *"authentic architectural experiences consist [...] for instance, of approaching or confronting a building, rather than the formal apprehension of a facade; of the act of entering, and not simply the frame of the door; of looking through the window, rather than the window itself; or occupying the sphere of warmth, rather than the fireplace as a visual object"*.<sup>7</sup> In many cases, such verbs, "ways of experiencing", are also identifiable in writings, sometimes as recorded events, at other times as parts of dreams, poems and short sketches for potential films.

While the collected "ways of experiencing" intends to contribute to the understanding of the variation in the experience of home, as seen through the light of an artist's work, for me it has acted also as an immaterial act of constructing a house. In the documentary *"One Day in the Life of Andrei Arsenevich"* (2000), Chris Marker was describing Tarkovsky's films as *"raising an imaginary house, a unique house where all the rooms open onto one another. [...] Opening a door by chance, the actors of The Mirror could cross paths with those from Nostalgia"*.<sup>8</sup> I remember reading Marker's words with heightened architectural interest before starting this study. While configuring and distilling the categories of the phenomenographic analysis, the sense of architectural amazement was continually sparked whenever a certain spatial quality was visible as a pattern present throughout the entire filmic oeuvre. These categories of architectural experience have unfolded as an ephemeral construction, defining the space of a house that was gaining increasing clarity. Cinematically written from feeling and recollections of experiences, such a construction might be a most faithful memorial house to the Russian master. As such, unveiling the separate categories has in fact been an endearing walk through the rooms of a lived memorial house, unusually habitable, warm and familiar.

<sup>7</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (1996) *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, London: Academy Editions, p. 45

<sup>8</sup> Chris Marker, *One Day in the Life of Andrei Arsenevich* (Une journée d'Andrei Arsenevitch) (documentary, France, 2001)

## The List of PHENOMENOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES

When setting out to perform the phenomenographic analysis, an important reference was the list of architectural "primary feelings" sketched by Juhani Pallasmaa:

- *the house as a sign of culture in the landscape, the house as a projection of man and a point of reference in the landscape;*
- *approaching the building, recognizing a human habitation or a given institution in the form of a house;*
- *entrance into the building's sphere of influence, stepping into its territory, being near the building;*
- *having a roof over your head, being sheltered and shaded;*
- *stepping into the house, entering through the door, crossing the boundary between exterior and interior;*
- *coming home or stepping inside the house for a specific purpose, expectation and fulfilment, sense of strangeness and familiarity;*
- *being in the room, a sense of security, a sense of togetherness or isolation;*
- *being in the sphere of influence of the foci that bring the building together, such as the table, bed, or fireplaces;*
- *encountering the light or darkness that dominates the space, the space of light;*
- *looking out the window, the link with the landscape<sup>9</sup>.*

The phenomenographic analysis of Tarkovsky's films identified 41 spatially relevant categories. These 41 categories were grouped in six main headings: Place, Construction (im)materials, Spatial elements, Furnishing, Fragments/triggers and Spatial Organisation. At certain points, these categories and groups intersect, merge and influence each other. Taken together, these categories generate another list (see next page), calibrated on the spatial universe depicted by Tarkovsky, of "primary architectural feelings", or rather "ways of experiencing home". The method is replicable on other cases of auteur filmmakers, by observing closely the way in which the space - and particularly the space of home - is "written" on film. Each such endeavour would potentially bring a contribution to architecture's field of knowledge, shedding a little more light on how the space of home is perceived, remembered and represented, and how abstract spatial elements are lived in the bittersweet everydayness of home.

Of the branches from the List of categories hereby presented, only a few will unfold subsequently, over the course of this chapter. Categories and subcategories have been selected to exemplify each of the main headings identified, aiming to hint toward the flavour of architectural experience embedded and written through these films. The selected categories will be: House/Home and Landscape (from Place); Memory, Words, Silence and Darkness (from Construction Immaterials); Wall (from Spatial Elements); Table and Curtain (from Furnishing); Bird/Wings (from Fragments,Triggers); Transitions (from Spatial Organization). Apart from Transitions, the other categories are illustrated in the **ANNEX booklet**, section: Visual Categories, pp. 93-118. Categories of the group Spatial Organization are illustrated, potentially continuing the written discourse, in the **ANNEX booklet**, section Cinematic Chronotopes of *Zerkalo/ "Mirror"*, pp. 119-127.

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<sup>9</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (1996) *The Geometry of Felling: A Look at the Phenomenology of Architecture*, in K. Nesbitt (ed.) *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, pp. 451 - 2



**PLACE:** HOUSE/HOME: house - as static, exterior image; in the background; surroundings;  
**verbs:** looking towards; walking towards, into; looking away from, walking away from  
**LANDSCAPE:** articulated; reproductions; as backdrop to scenes;  
**verbs:** looking at, looking from within the landscape; moving into the landscape

**CONSTRUCTION IMMATERIALS:**

**MEMORY:** of events; place as memory trigger; remembering home  
**WORDS:** narrations of home; senses beyond the audio-visual; belonging  
**SILENCE:** moments; texture  
**SOUNDS:** film music; birdsong; dog barking; far cries, folkloric songs; ambient sounds  
**LIGHT, DARKNESS:** playful light; unexpected light; dim light; darkness  
**WATER, RAIN, FOG, SMOKE, VAPOUR, STEAM, WIND, FLYING**

**SPATIAL ELEMENTS:**

**WALL:** forest, walls of nature; walls of logs and earth; wall as texture: luminous, stone-brick-concrete, smoothly rough, roughly ruined, ruin; walls as playground of light; shadows drawing walls; inhabited walls; inscriptions on walls  
**verbs:** gathering; separating; directing  
**DOOR:** doors in the background; doors leading to light/darkness; closed, unopened; door as frame; solitary doors  
**verbs:** sounding doors; walking towards the door; opening the door; entering; talking, looking across; stopping, turning around - in the doorway; going out; closing the door  
**WINDOW:** as backdrop; dark windows, view-less windows; lighting windows; view outside, reflection from - the window  
**verbs:** looking out the window; sitting, standing in front of the window; walking towards; talking in front of the window; looking away, moving away from; inhabiting the windowsill; sitting, jumping on the sill; breaking windows  
**FLOOR:** soil, leaves, grass - floors of nature; water - flowing floors; smooth floors; high-angled  
**verbs:** falling to the floor; sounding floors; lying, sitting on; dropping objects on  
**CEILING:** trees and sky as ceiling  
**verbs:** reaching up for, pouring down from  
**PORCH, SHORE:**  
**porch verbs:** moving through; standing, sitting on; looking out from  
**shore verbs:** walking along; walking towards; flying along; standing beside; floating away from  
**STAIRS:** wooden, metallic, of stone  
**verbs:** climbing down; climbing up

**FURNISHING:**

**TABLE:** as main image; outdoor table; close view on objects on the table  
**verbs:** bringing objects on; reading, writing at; sitting, eating at; sitting on; standing near  
**CHAIR:** the wooden chair; wicker chairs, outdoor chairs  
**verbs:** sitting on; holding objects on; looking out the window from  
**BED:** improvised beds; impersonal images; close-ups on sleep  
**verbs:** sleeping on; lying on; sitting on; getting in/ out of; praying on; floating over  
**CANDLE:** placed on the table, shelves, floors  
**verbs:** talking about; holding, moving with; extinguishing  
**LAMP, kerosene, light bulbs:** as single source of light; in windows  
**verbs:** lighting places and moments; flickering, tinkling, falling; turning off  
**MIRROR:** on the wall; reflections from; inside the mirror  
**verbs:** looking within; communicating through  
**CURTAINS:** rain, forest - curtains of nature; dark curtains; curtains filled with light  
**verbs:** breathing; moving  
**HOME OBJECTS:** glasses; vases; porcelain

**FRAGMENTS, TRIGGERS:** tree; fire; church; icons; well; stove; bell; birds, animals; flowers; snow; milk; books

**SPATIAL ORGANIZATIONS:** ROOM, CORNERS, LAYOUT, TRANSITIONS through SPACE

*"Place serves to situate one's memorial life, to give it a name and a local habitation. To situate means first of all to point out the proper place or site of something. Secondly it means to heed that place or site. These two methods, placing and heeding, are both preliminaries to a topology".<sup>10</sup>*

## PLACE[s]

refers to those spaces imbued with a sense of familiarity and attachment, a feeling sprung either from the narrative of the film itself or identified from Tarkovsky's biography. Alternatively understood as construction grounds for further experiential strata, these places are the "*preliminaries to a topology*" of architectural experience. The group **Place** therefore is made up of **House**, **Home** and **Landscape**, two categories with a great degree of mutual influence and dominant factors in the topographical biography of Tarkovsky.

*"to see how, under what conditions, the film could take shape as it were by itself [...] and in the way it adapted to the places chosen for location. We drew up no prescriptive plans for scenes or episodes as complete visual entities; what we worked on was clear sense of atmosphere and empathy with the characters [...] I go on to the set in order to understand by what means that state can be expressed on film. And once I have understood that, I start shooting"<sup>11</sup>*

## HOUSE. HOME

exterior house image; in the background; surroundings; **house verbs**: looking towards, looking away from, walking away from, walking towards, walking into, running towards

*"Do you like your house, my boy?"  
Alexander to his son, in *Sacrifice* (1985), 0:19:51*

As a main focus of this analysis, home is treated throughout all the spatially-relevant categories identified. However, while other categories look at spatial elements, fragments and compositions of space, lingering on the nature and characteristics of interiority in the space of home, this first category treats the **house/home** concept in its entirety and thus, in its exteriority. According to visual selection, the category contains those film fragments where houses appear as viewed from the outside, approached, looked at, etc. Another selection, of verbal instances summoning the concept of **house**, contains those fragments where the references to home are spoken by the film characters or recited in voice-over, a textual association through which the home imaginatively comes to inhabit and render closeness to unfamiliar spaces. Contrary to the long takes inside of houses, the images of

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<sup>10</sup> Casey, E., *op cit*, p.184

<sup>11</sup> ST, p. 132

their exterior appear more restrictedly, their apparition being determined mostly by the movement towards or from them.

*The first meeting of the viewer with the home of the chief protagonist was extremely important for Andrei: the director wished the house to come across as a kind of member of the family. [...] For a long time, we meticulously discussed both the external and internal appearance of the house. [...] The residents of this house must feel as if they are sheltered by walls of stone. The house is perhaps a hundred years old.<sup>12</sup>*

### house as static image:

the house as an exterior, static presence dominating the shot; one of the least represented subcategories; begins appearing as a vague anticipation as early as the 1966 film *Rublev*. In the bell construction episode, which is also the narrative apotheosis of *Rublev*, the bell is being lifted up from the ground through an intricate system of ropes that resemble the silhouette of a house:

*The men, having checked for the last time that everything has been made fast, climb up from the pit which has become more a part of them than their own homes. [...] The mighty ropes stretch and sing like the strings of an instrument. And not a single person amongst all those gathered around the pit is indifferent or detached as they wait for the new bell, invested with so many hopes, to come up out of the earth.<sup>13</sup>*

The episode culminates in the joyful ringing of the bell, which thus concludes the first scene sketching a house contour, as a sonorous and transparent presence.

From *Solaris* (1972) onward<sup>14</sup>, Tarkovsky's films are populated and defined by the presence and spatiality of houses. Formally resembling to a high degree the *dacha* he had recently built in Myasnoye<sup>15</sup>, the house in *Solaris* appears in several scenes as a static presence that dominates the shot in which, apart from the lingering gaze, no other action takes place. These silent scenes contemplate the house from the same position, with mere changing light conditions and at different times of the year, surrounded by either fog, smoke, snow, or darkness.

*I have this dream often. Each time it is almost identical, with only the smallest of changes. The only thing that varies is the house where I was born: the sun may be shining or it may be raining; winter or summer - I am used to this.<sup>16</sup>*

Smoke and fire engulfing the house is to be found in the remarkably lengthy static scene in the ending of *Sacrifice* (1985). The internal dynamics of the shot, however, are of a different kind here, movement and duration contained in the destructive nature of fire: the scene opens with the image of the house traversed by a thin layer of smoke, its shape filling the composition, and ends much later, with the burnt and incandescent ruins lying flat in the open landscape. In is the auditory cue only, the birdsong, which continues uninterrupted.

The image of the childhood *dacha* appears from diverse and often confusing viewpoints throughout *Mirror* (1975), however, it is toward the end of the film that a legible, facade-like

<sup>12</sup> Alexander-Garret, L. (2012) *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Collector of Dreams*, London: Glagoslav, p. 110

<sup>13</sup> Tarkovsky, A. (1991) *Andrei Rublev* (Literary Screenplay). London: Faber and Faber, p. 178

<sup>14</sup> for biographical correspondence, see Chapter 3, p. 96

<sup>15</sup> for images of this house, see Chapter 3, pages 82, 84 and 96

<sup>16</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 303

image of it visible among the pine trees. Its representation is interspersed in the fictional episode with the narrator's mother depicted as a newlywed happy young woman, imagining how her life will be like. Later, the Russian dacha, dreamed or remembered, which pervades throughout the texture of *Nostalghia* (1982), appears at one some point as static, inert. The main character, Andrei, sees it while looking reality of his actual emplacement, Italy, which had become transparent. In the almost static image of the familiar landscape with a house<sup>17</sup>, an angel breaks the stillness, walking slowly on the porch of the house, as an archaic and mournful folkloric song is heard in the background.

In *Mirror* (1975), and later in the exile films, *Nostalghia* and *Sacrifice*, another usage of exterior static shots of houses is encountered, namely - as a means of introducing a secondary character of the plot. In *Mirror* it is the house of the doctor, which Alexei and his mother visit briefly, that first appears solitary, with lighted windows in the foggy landscape. Later, Domenico (from *Nostalghia*) and Maria (from *Sacrifice*), both secondary characters of a crucial importance to the narrative unfolding of the film<sup>18</sup>, are introduced through the facades of their derelict houses, with rough textured walls and boarded up windows.

*They wander a long time beneath the burning sun before finding themselves in front of a wide and low stone house, with a roof covered with bleached grass and saplings, which have grown through the half-broken tiled roof. The doors and windows of the house are boarded up. From within the house comes the unexpected howl of a dog, woebegone and pining.*<sup>19</sup>

Similar to these constructions, and often overlooked, the gateway to the mysterious Zone in *Stalker* (1978) is introduced through a house-like silhouette, with an oversized door and tiny windows, which transiently appears from the green midst of the luxurious vegetation, as a promise or a menacing presence, whose contour is soon effaced by fog.

*Ahead, out of the fog, looms some sort of half-destroyed station building. The trolley stops. Stalker jumps on to the sleepers. STALKER: "Right, we're home!"*<sup>20</sup>

*Half a mile in the distance, a grey-white building becomes visible through the morning haze. It has black holes where its windows once were. STALKER: "That's where your room is. We've got to go over there."*<sup>21</sup>

The image of the house appears in an almost axonometric projection, two times throughout the films. First time, in the ambiguous ending of *Solaris*, the camera moves upward from the reconciliation threshold, revealing the configuration of the house, its location and immediate surroundings, to eventually reach a level where the house becomes a miniature, a mere "island of memory floating on the ocean.

*The clouds become thinner. Among the waves of the ocean of Solaris, there is a small island with Chris's house, and the lake nearby. Theme music ends. Fade out.*<sup>22</sup>

From the same elevated position, the camera looks down on a miniature house, the model of the house in *Sacrifice*, crafted as a birthday gift by the son of the main character -

<sup>17</sup> actually rebuilt in Italy, see page 84 for more details

<sup>18</sup> the two characters are often discussed together by scholars, due to their similarly mystic and elusive presence

<sup>19</sup> CS (*Nostalghia*), p. 486

<sup>20</sup> CS (*Stalker*), p. 389

<sup>21</sup> CS (*Stalker*), p. 392

<sup>22</sup> CS (*Solaris*), p. 185

Alexander, and like a reply to the question he addresses him earlier in the film: "Do you like your house, my boy?"

*The window panes reflect the sunset. The illusion of scale and verisimilitude is such that when Mr Alexander looks round, his gaze is drawn from the "lake" to the pines and his house beneath them, his head spins as though from flying. [...]*

*"Maria?" He is surprised. "What is the meaning of this? Who did it... the masters?" [...]*

*"It's the Kid", Maria finally says. [...] "He made it, with Otto. It's his present".<sup>23</sup>*

Both high-angle shots of houses, therefore, are linked to depictions of filial relationships. In *Solaris*, Chris Kelvin, the main character, has just affectionately returned to the home of his father. In *Sacrifice*, the mute son brings the toy house as a gift, an offering, to his father, who, in turn, would bring the house as a sacrifice to God<sup>24</sup>, at the ending of the film. It is also relevant to note that in cinema studies, high angle shots are considered to represent either helplessness of the characters, or to convey the idea that the characters are held protected, in the gaze of God.

### house - in the background:

the exterior image of houses located further from the frontal space of the screen, less poignant in presence, but contributing to the domestication of landscapes and scenes represents an image of the early films, in which characters were moving through and dwelling in different kinds of spaces rather than homes (in *Ivan's Childhood* and *Rublev*); Here, these house silhouettes appear briefly, their interiors lying out of reach for the camera's gaze or the character's movement. In *Rublev*, they serve to construct a certain historical texture, illustrating - without going into detail - not particularly the vernacular architecture of the times, but more precisely the atmospheres of settlements in middle ages Russia.

*The film is set in the fifteenth century, and it turned out to be excruciatingly difficult to picture 'how everything was'. We had to use any sources we could: architecture, the written word, iconography. Had we gone for reconstruction of the picturesque tradition of the picturesque world of those times, the result would have been a stylised, conventional ancient Russian world, of the kind that at best is reminiscent of miniatures or icons of the period. But for cinema that is not the right way. [...] Therefore one of the aims of our work was to reconstruct for a modern audience the real world of the fifteenth century, that is, to present that world in such a way that costume, speech, life-style and architecture would not give the audience any feeling of relic, of antiquarian rarity. In order to achieve the truth of direct observation, what one might almost term physiological truth, we had to move away from the truth of archaeology and ethnography.<sup>25</sup>*

Interestingly, such depictions of villages or other forms of rural compact settlements disappear entirely from later films, once the house gains a singular identity of its own, starting with *Solaris*. The houses of *Solaris*, *Mirror*, *Nostalghia* or *Sacrifice* are all rooted in their

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<sup>23</sup>CS (*Sacrifice*), p. 536

<sup>24</sup> the Swedish title of the film, *Offret*, would be literally translated as "offering". The film is built upon the merging meanings of gift-offering-sacrifice, while the character of the postman, Otto explains the "sacrificial" nature of offering a gift: "Any present you make, you always somehow regret it. Otherwise, what sort of present it is?" In Eastern Orthodox Church, of which Tarkovsky was a member, the Liturgy is also called "the Offering", the priest offering the Gifts/ the Sacrifice to God. As if completing a circle, in the dismissal prayers the priest says: "For every good and perfect gift is from above, coming from You, the Father of lights". Eastern scholars have observed this intrinsic potential liturgical connection, while in English literature the most competent study is Michael McCormick's 2006 book *Model of a House: An Essay on Andrei Tarkovsky's The Sacrifice*.

<sup>25</sup> ST, p. 78

landscape, with no neighbouring buildings in sight, a faint footpath in place of a road being the only physical connection to any outlying infrastructures.

*When locations were being considered, we were looking for an open, endless, timeless stretch of landscape. It could be situated at any point on the globe before or after a nuclear catastrophe. [...] It was to look on the outside as if marooned on an uninhabited island.<sup>26</sup>*

In *Sacrifice*, only one such minor house image appears sketched on the background, chalking the atmosphere of a particular way of settling within a landscape, in the opening and closing sequences: a hut rising from the stony shores of Gotland, further down from the place where Alexander plants the dead tree which his son will later faithfully water. Beside the strong articulation which it brings within the frame composition, this hut is never approached by the camera or by the characters. It is unknown<sup>27</sup> whether this hut was a film prop or if it existed on location, however, the picturesque landscape of Närsholmen peninsula, where the film was shot, is punctuated by such solitary fishing huts hinged on the line where land meets water, dramatically enhancing the flatness of the natural configuration.

In other cases, it is from the background of images that the main house of the film first springs. In *Solaris*, the house appears for the first time not by directly looking at it, but more subtly, as a background image of a scene where the Chris, the main character, approaches a pond. As such, the house's silhouette is distinguished reflected on the water's surface. Similarly, the house-like entrance to the Zone in *Stalker*, seems to emerge from the green of the grass. In *Mirror*, the scene in which the house first appears, behind the pine trees, is defined by the presence of Mother in the foreground, staring yearningly at the road, while in voiceover the narrator tells us how she waits each day for her husband to come from the train she had heard whistling, only to find out each day that he's not coming, and perhaps "he'll never come again". Father's absence from these peaceful days spent at the countryside dacha is a biographical feature of painful importance for the filmmaker, and the cinematic representation seems to bring to the fore this reality, as an introduction to the much missed childhood home.

Another set of images contain the house as a meaningful backdrop for the unfolding of certain narrative episodes, as in *Sacrifice*, when Alexander asks the servant Maria about the miniature house his son had built. As they talk, the actual house - the key topic of their discussion - is glanced through the trees, in the background. In *Solaris*, as Chris prepares to depart for the space station, he's lighting a fire on which he burns all his sketches, photographs, album pages, printed memories of his life which he then finds superfluous. The scene is taking place on the foreground of the twilight house, while architectural plans and photographs of houses, doors, people, are visible on the pages thrown on the fire. Referring to the interior of the house behind him, Chris says: "There's no point keeping these papers. The ones to hold on to are in my room".

Lastly, images of toy houses appear in some scenes of *Mirror* and *Solaris*. Tarkovsky's sister explains how the toy house in which a child sleeps on a bed of straws, in *Mirror*, was

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<sup>26</sup> Alexander-Garret, L. (2012) *op cit*, p. 110

<sup>27</sup> the filming sheets regarding the shore scenes do not mention any props for this hut

actually a potato box in which they used to play as children, in days spent at Ignatievo<sup>28</sup>. In *Solaris*, the blue tree house where we presume Chris had played as a child, appears in the background as he proclaims his stubborn views on the prevalence of science over the human soul. Later in the film, the tree house appears once again in the background of Chris's return to the home of his father, after his humbling experience on the Solaris space station. This time, the door to the tree house is open, as seems to be Chris's heart and understanding of his father.

### house - surroundings:

without a built vicinity, the exterior representation of houses is marked by the natural setting wherein they are built, the setting being of equal importance as crucial as the house configuration itself.

The two most prevalent settings of houses are either among thick layers of trees (in *Solaris*, *Mirror*, *Sacrifice*), or built at the edge of a water (*Solaris*, *Sacrifice*). In the shade and protection of these trees, tables with white table cloths are laid<sup>29</sup> (*Mirror*, *Sacrifice*) just outside the house.

*Chris is walking through the wood. He comes out at the edge of a lake. He walks along the shoreline. His house is on the other side.*<sup>30</sup>

*A dark, wooden house stands beneath the still pines. Its roof is steeply pitched and has brightly painted shutters. There are women on the planking of the terrace, spreading a white starched cloth on a table. There is an aroma of smoke and home baking. Linen is hanging out to dry on a line; it shines white in the darkness of the grove.*<sup>31</sup>

The same proximity of trees, but fruit trees instead of pines, fewer and frailer, is present in the depiction of the Russian dacha in *Nostalghia*, the replica of Tarkovsky's own house in Myasnoye<sup>32</sup>. Incidentally, rather than the house itself, it is the surroundings of the house, the same frail tree silhouette and the same thin fog, which appear momentarily in the Tuscan landscapes to remind the exiled writer in *Nostalghia* of his home.

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<sup>28</sup> for biographical details, see Chapter 3, pages 77 and 103-104

<sup>29</sup> see later in this chapter, pp. 238-239 and ANNEX booklet, p. 117

<sup>30</sup> CS (*Solaris*), p. 135

<sup>31</sup> CS (*Sacrifice*), p. 513

<sup>32</sup> images with the surroundings of the house in Myasnoye can be seen in Chapter 3, pages 82 and 84



Image 6.1 Walking towards the house. Film still from *Mirror* (1975), 0:11:57

### house verbs:

in the case of houses viewed from the outside, the range of "verbs" contained as movement within the film shot are: looking towards, walking towards and into, looking away from, walking away from.

**looking towards the house** is used repeatedly as a transition tool, moving between two states of mind, between present and past. For instance, Andrei Gorchakov, the main character of *Nostalgia* (1982), is seen on the corridor of a hotel in Tuscany, looking absently straight ahead. The next shot, employing the angle and framing commonly used for dialogue shot/reverse shot, pictures his wife, Maria, looking seemingly straight at him, smiling, then turning around as if inviting him to look in that direction also. In the third shot, the camera pans towards the their Russia dacha, a movement through which we have the sensation of looking towards the house together with Andrei and Maria Gorchakov. The physical reality of the Italian hotel is by now effaced, whereas the spatiality of the Russian countryside envelops us. The sequence continues almost one hour later in the film, as Andrei falls asleep and dreams of his home. Within the same framing as before, Maria, her children and Maria's mother are seen looking towards the house, through a series of jump cuts that create a sensation of time-space ambiguity: Maria is first seen in the foreground, the camera slowly pans right to reveal her mother, then Maria appears again, further away together with the children, closer to the house, looking towards the camera. A foghorn-like sound breaks the silence of the shot as the sun rises brightly behind the house, and they all turn around looking, at the sunrise, then at the house itself. After this, they all turn slowly away from the house, looking at the camera, and the next shot changes the view to Gorchakov, and creating the impression that all of them turned to look at him, and he himself had witnessed this mesmerizing bright dawn. Through the act of looking at the house, therefore, a spatial loop had been made; with a gap of 60 minutes in between, the gaze towards home brings back the recollecting mind to the physical reality of the Tuscan



hotel. As such, more than a spatial movement, the "looking at the house" embodies temporal and emotional "jumps" in the narrative of the film.

An equal method of a temporal transition between two states is used in the ending of *Mirror* (1975), when we see the young mother and father at the side of the small forest encircling the house. A medium high-angled shot of the mother framed on a background of leaves shows her looking in the direction where we know the house should be. In the next shot, she appears as an old woman, walking with her two children, passed the ruins of where the house had once stood. Operating on various levels of time, the scene embodies either a painful premonition sensed by the young mother, or a bright memory of her old self, but more than any of these, it is an incorporation of both, a visual overlap of time layers.

Because the idea of house being was so enriched with meaning for Tarkovsky, the cinematic act of looking towards the house becomes a *time-image*<sup>33</sup>, an image infused with time, different from itself, virtual to itself, pervaded by past or by future. It is relevant to note that, when shooting *Mirror*, after having reconstructed the childhood house on the same location where it had once stood, Tarkovsky invited his mother to see it<sup>34</sup>, and witnessed an experience of "looking towards the house" which resembled cinematic *time-image* strengths:

*Mirror is also the story of the old house where the narrator spent his childhood, the farmstead where he was born and where his father and mother lived. This building, which over the years had fallen into ruins, was reconstructed, 'resurrected' from photographs just as it had been, and on the foundations which had survived. And so it stood exactly as it had forty years earlier. When we subsequently took my mother there, whose youth had been spent in that place and that house, her reaction to seeing it surpassed my boldest expectations. What she experienced was a return to her past; and then I knew we were moving in the right direction. The house awoke in her the feelings which the film was intended to express.<sup>35</sup>*

**walking away from, looking away from the house:** Scenes depicting characters moving away from the house are very rarely pictured - as the house usually functions as a magnet drawing gazes and movements towards it, rather than away from it. Whenever such moving away is represented, the images contain a sense of upcoming loss (*Sacrifice* - at the moment when Alexander decides to burn his house), of an impending departure (*Solaris* - the evening before Chris leaves his father's house), the only exception being the memories Gorchakov has of his Russian home (in *Nostalgia*), with images in which the children are running away from the house, towards the camera that we perceive as coinciding with Gorchakov's own gaze. Thus, the children seem to move away from the house only as if to welcome him home, spatially mirroring a scene from *Mirror*, when the two children, having been playing in the nearby forest, **run towards the house** upon hearing the voice of the father, who had just returned to them, on a leave from the front.<sup>36</sup> The strongest sense of deliberate avoiding looking at the house is contained in the ending of the *Mirror*, after the young mother, as described in the previous subcategory, looks towards the house and sees

<sup>33</sup> concept introduced by Gilles Deleuze in his book: Deleuze, G. (1989) *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, University of Minnesota Press (1st Edition)

<sup>34</sup> Tarkovsky's mother starring as "the old mother" in the film

<sup>35</sup> ST, p. 132

<sup>36</sup> the two scenes are "mirrored" also in the character of the father in *Mirror*/ Gorchakov in *Nostalgia*, who is played by the same actor, Oleg Yankovsky

herself as an old woman who walks around the ruins of what used to be their family's happy home. The old woman, played by Maria Ivanovna Vishniakova -Tarkovsky's own mother, leaves white clothes to dry on the remains of her house, and walk away with her two children, in a great hurry.

*She was no longer the young mother as I remember her in my childhood. Yes, of course, it is my mother, but she has aged; she is grey, as I, an adult who meets her occasionally, am now used to seeing her.<sup>37</sup>*

The camera follows them with a certain shyness, maintaining a distance and insisting on details of the rotting wood and remains of the well. In the screenplay, the narrator's gaze, which coincides with the camera's lens, enhances even more the sense of "looking away":

*I stayed behind, beneath the trees, on the bank of the little river Vorona, so that I would not see them approaching that empty spot, overgrown with nettles, where earlier, when I was a child, stood the farmhouse where we lived.<sup>38</sup>*

### LANDSCAPE

articulated; reproductions; as backdrop to scenes; **landscape verbs:** looking towards, looking from within, moving into

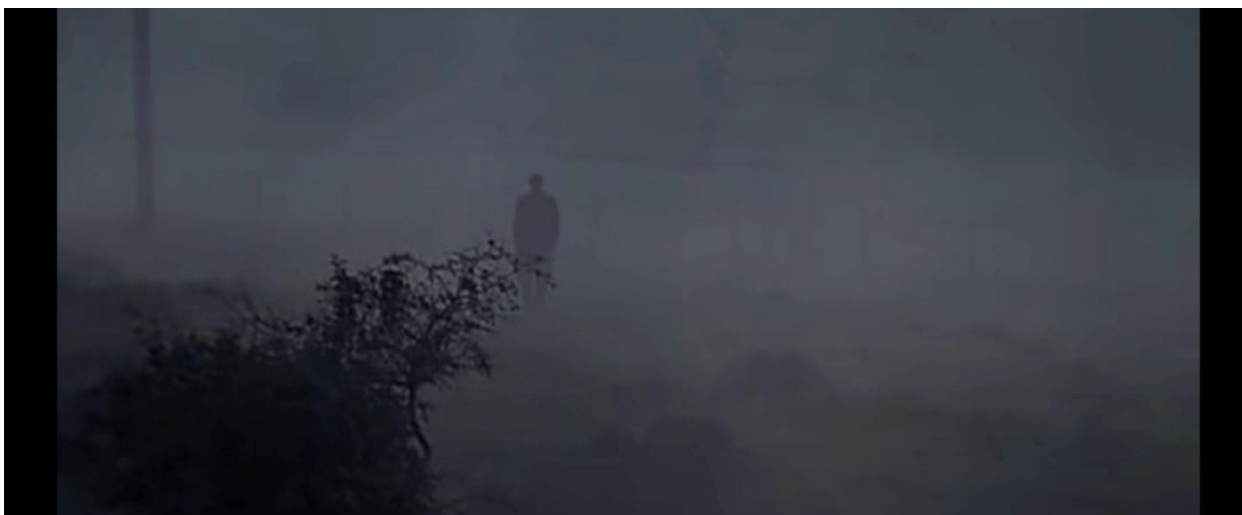


Image 6.2 Moving into the landscape - solitary figure. Film still from *Nostalghia* (1982), 0:05:13

*"Your favourite landscape?"*

*- dawn, summer, mist"*

Andrei Tarkovsky,

answer from a self-made questionnaire,  
dairy entry, 3 January 1974, Moscow

For someone whose eyes have lingered longer upon the films of Andrei Tarkovsky, the image of his landscapes illustrates faithfully the words he had scribbled in his diary in 1974. It is not so much the configuration of the land that defines Tarkovsky's use of long shots in natural settings, but rather the all enveloping mist, the half light of dawn or dusk, the

<sup>37</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 321

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*

subdued summer sounds of crickets and birdsong. As such, it is more an atmosphere than a landscape.

*I want to take a few pictures from the window at different times of day. The morning landscape at dawn. (AT diary entry, 14 August 1979, written in Bagno Vignoni, Italy)*

Landscapes seldom appear as plain backdrop to scenes unfolding in the foreground. Rather, the more common situation is that characters dissolve within the landscape, either as solitary figures, or as groups of silhouettes which do not polarize the vision, but scatter it across the features of the natural setting. Thus, it is the landscape, rather than the action or movement of characters, which gains emphasis in the scene.

While Tarkovsky was filming in Italy, he was seen looking intensely at the ploughed fields, which were reminding him of Russia, since "*the ploughed earth is the same everywhere*".<sup>39</sup> This moving gaze found its way in the screenplay of *Nostalghia*:

*This succession of light and shade on the smooth surface of the hilly ridge which ripples towards the horizon, like the very breath of life, the triumphant rhythm of nature, filled with the chirp of cicadas and the dazzling light when the sun emerges from behind a cloud. This ploughed land of Tuscany, as the shadows of the clouds drift across it, is almost as beautiful as my fields, woods and hills - distant, Russian, inaccessible, eternal...*<sup>40</sup>

Looking back on his choices for the filming locations of his first feature film, *Ivan's Childhood* (1962), Tarkovsky wrote:

*I felt all the time that for the film to be a success the texture of the scenery and the landscapes must fill me with definite memories and poetic associations. Now, more than twenty years later, I am firmly convinced of one thing (not that it can be analysed): that if an author is moved by the landscape chosen, if it brings back memories to him and suggests associations, even subjective ones, then this will in turn affect the audience with particular excitement.*<sup>41</sup>

The landscapes of Tarkovsky's films are not so much faithful portrayals of Russia's vast expanses, the only such wide shots of flat unending land being visible in the beginning of *Rublev* (1966) as the peasant Efim flies in his balloon. Neither are they portrayals of the fluid landscapes of the wide Volga banks, where the artist had spent his early childhood. Rather, memories of a familiar landscape seem to circle around a micro-level: certain types of trees, a tiny stream and the sound of flowing water, grass filled with particular types of flowers, a peculiar type of meeting between meadow and forest, between water and land. Such elements pervade and repeat themselves throughout the films, bringing a sense of "half-familiarity" even into the more distant landscapes, such as the Zone in *Stalker*.

*A country landscape, half familiar. I walked over to a stream, and washed my face. I could not understand at all how it was that I came to be there. (AT diary entry, 10 June 1980)*

In July 2013, travelling to find the filming location of the Zone in *Stalker*<sup>42</sup>, I got off the bus coming from Tallinn at a stop beside an empty motorway, and had to walk for hours

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<sup>39</sup> see page 73

<sup>40</sup> CS (*Nostalghia*), p. 485

<sup>41</sup> ST, p. 28

<sup>42</sup> Jägala-Joa Hydropower Plant, 36km outside of Tallinn, Estonia; the plant had been inaugurated in 1917 and closed down in 1970, several years before the shooting of *Stalker* there; see ANNEX booklet, pp. 58-61

along an empty road, with just momentarily traces of civilization in the half-abandoned colony where the workers of the power plant had once resided. As soon as I arrived at the filming location, before seeing the sign post indicating the cinematic memory of this place, I recognized the lush vegetation which so well defines the particular scenes of *Stalker*. But what surprised me is that the area featured in the film, stretching along the banks of Jägala river, was unexpectedly different from the landscape I had seen before, from those pine forests with few flowers growing in the shade, the wheat fields, the birch trees and flowery meadows. The film image of the Zone was thus contrasting with other sceneries of Tarkovsky's films, but the location itself was neighbouring places that seemed to have been taken right out of *Mirror*. Similarly, when travelling to see Maria's house from *Sacrifice*<sup>43</sup>, I had temporarily lost my way walking between Enköping and the Haga Castle, and took a forest footpath instead of the straight road. Suddenly, I found myself beside a wooden fence framing a view and a certain configuration of the distant forest, the meadow, the smooth fields, the proportions and colours that reminded me of the opening shots of *Mirror*, filmed in the small Russian village of Ignatievo. Was it the memory of the *Mirror* sequence that caused me to frame the photograph of this place in a strikingly similar way? More intriguing is that - as results from the filming documents of *Sacrifice* - Tarkovsky had taken this trip to the Haga Castle by car, on the road that crosses an inhabited landscape with a stronger industrial imprint.



**Image 6.3** the path between Enköping and Haga Castle, photo ©RB, July 2013 (left); film still from *Mirror* (1975) 00:05:56 (right)

It is thus possible that he might have not come across these tiny pockets of Russian countryside hidden inside the otherwise neatly laid Swedish landscape. If Tarkovsky's potential encounter with these places remains uncertain, he must have nevertheless seen the area stretching along the car road leading to the filming location of the main house in *Sacrifice*<sup>44</sup>. There too, halfway between När and the steppe-like landscape wherein the film was shot, I encountered grain fields framed by birch and pine forests, open, luminous, filled with light, birdsong and joyful cricket sounds. I was looking at this place after having cycled for 100km across the island of Gotland, and neither on my way there, nor the following day, as I was leaving När on a different route, have I spotted a location so similar to the fields of

<sup>43</sup> one of the outhouses of Haga Castle, Enköping, 100km outside of Stockholm, Sweden ; see [ANNEX booklet](#), pp. 41-49

<sup>44</sup> När Peninsula, in the S-E of the Swedish island of Gotland; the closest village is När, some 7km from the filming location; see [ANNEX booklet](#), pp. 79-91

*Mirror*. Like in the case of Jägala, coming upon this place surprised me both due to how much it resembled the locations of *Mirror*, and due to how much the topography and the vegetation was contrasting with the location that was portrayed in the film, and which was lying less than hundred meters away.

I might never find out if these topographical similarities are just simple coincidences, but I do know the strange sensation of feeling such affinity for unknown places, as springing not from my own memories and associations, but from the memories of a film that I had once visually "inhabited"; to quote Tarkovsky's diary: "*a country landscape, half familiar*".

### CONSTRUCTION IMMATERIALS

MEMORY, WORDS, SILENCE, SOUNDS, LIGHT, DARKNESS, WATER, RAIN, FOG, SMOKE, VAPOUR, STEAM, WIND, FLYING

#### MEMORY

of events; place as memory trigger; remembering home

Cinema's fluctuating representations of the material, by "*disintegrating familiar objects and bringing to the fore - often just in moving about - previously invisible interrelationships between parts of them*"<sup>45</sup> resembles from the outset the mechanisms of memory, which apply distortions to spaces and events, retaining only solitary fragments which are then re-assembled in every recollection process, through an instantaneous act of mental montage. In his writings on film theory, Tarkovsky wrote that cinema, as the "most realistic of the arts", can communicate the ineffable of memories:

*Isolated impressions of the day have set off impulses within us, evoked associations; objects and circumstances have stayed in our memory, but with no sharply defined contours, incomplete, apparently fortuitous. Can these impressions of life be conveyed through film? They undoubtedly can; indeed it is the especial virtue of cinema, as the most realistic of the arts, to be the means of such communication. Of course such reproduction of real-life sensations is not an end in itself: but it can be given meaning aesthetically, and so become a medium for deep and serious thought. To be faithful to life, intrinsically truthful, a work has for me to be at once an exact factual account and a true communication of feelings.*<sup>46</sup>

Aiming to portray such fleeting sensations as memories while constantly struggling to achieve in his films "a sense of place", Tarkovsky's works are particularly telling for a closer consideration of the interlink between place and memory, and the means through which film communicates memories of places and the place of memories.

*It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously*

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<sup>45</sup> Kracauer, S. (1960) *Nature of Film: the Redemption of Physical Reality*, Oxford University Press, p.54

<sup>46</sup> ST, p. 23

*with place, finding in it features that favour and parallel its own activities. We might even say that memory is naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported. Moreover, it is itself a place wherein the past can revive and survive; it is a place for places. Unlike site and time, memory does not thrive on the indifferently dispersed. It thrives, rather, on the persistent particularities of what is properly in place: held fast there and made one's own.*<sup>47</sup>

Although the discipline known as the "art of memory" dealt with trained memory, it nevertheless gives important insights into how the inherent spatiality of the mind works. In Frances Yates' detailed study<sup>48</sup> we find out that in *Ad Herennium*<sup>49</sup>, one of the first treatises in the Antiquity, the "art of memory" is considered "*an inner writing*", the speeches of the orators being inscribed in the mind by imagining a vast edifice of successive rooms and assigning meanings to each room. Yates summarizes the concept of *locus* from *Ad Herennium* as "*a place easily grasped by the memory, such as a house, an intercolumnar space, a corner, an arch, or the like*".<sup>50</sup> In those days, the scholar-memorizer seemed to have regarded architecture "*with the most serious thought. We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her*"<sup>51</sup> and in devising such methods of remembering, the ancient author had in mind the close observation of ways in which untrained - that is to say, natural - memory acts. Operating on fragments of places, forgetting those devoid of character and enhancing the pervasiveness of others, the "method of places" stands as a proof that "*memories are selective for place: they seek out particular places as their natural habitats, [...] place holds in by giving to memories an authentically local habitation: by being their place-holder*".<sup>52</sup> *Ad Herennium* provides several indications on how to choose places onto which to imprint things to be remembered, but it was only in Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, almost two centuries afterwards, that a more detailed account on the *loci* method was given: "*Places are chosen, and marked with the utmost possible variety, as a spacious house is divided into a number of rooms. Everything of note therein is diligently imprinted on the mind, in order that thought may be able to run through all the parts without hindrance*",<sup>53</sup> concluding that for memory to be at work, we need to "equip" ourselves with spaces, either imagined or remembered.

The method then requires to translate the ideas or words to be remembered into images, and to situate these images within the places previously called in mind. "*Images and simulacra must be invented, images as words by which we note the things we have to learn*".<sup>54</sup> One particularly striking concept is the one of *imagines agentes*, "active images", sharply defined, unusual, with the power of "*speedily encountering and penetrating the mind*". These images do not contain stillness; with the dynamics involved in their construction, the immobility of a still image slowly begins to be traversed by inner tensions and movements, which call to mind

<sup>47</sup> Casey, E. *op cit*, pp. 186-187

<sup>48</sup> Yates, F. (1966) *The Art of Memory*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

<sup>49</sup> *Ad Herennium*, Latin book of unknown authorship, dating from the late 80s BC, known to be the oldest on rhetoric source

<sup>50</sup> Yates, F. *op cit*

<sup>51</sup> Ruskin, J. (1964) *The Lamp of Memory* (1849), pp. 131-138 in J. Rosenberg (Ed.) *The Genius of John Ruskin: Selections from his Writings*, University of Virginia Press, p. 131

<sup>52</sup> Casey, E. *op cit*, p. 189

<sup>53</sup> Yates, F. *op cit*, p. 22

<sup>54</sup> *idem*, p. 23

something resembling an imaginative seed of cinema's "moving image". It is at point, concerning the *imagines agentes*, that the study will seek to understand the moving images of home in Tarkovsky's vision as characteristic slices of space onto which memories of place and memories in place became imprinted.

There are two main positions in phenomenological and architectural scholarship on place memory: of the self remembering a place, and of the place collecting and invisibly but palpably storing memories. The two positions are often confused and most of the time overlap, but in rough lines they could be separated as memory of embodiment and memory of emplacement. Respectively, they speak of in-sertion and in-taking: "*At play here is a two-fold movement. On the one hand there is an active in-sertion into a place by means of the body. On the other hand, there is an answering activity of in-taking on the part of the place, per se. When taken together, the in- of in-sertion and the in- of in-taking yield the sense of familiarity that inheres in human in-habitation – in all dwelling and being-in-the-world*".<sup>55</sup> Embodiment corporeally equates inhabiting, as Merleau-Ponty or Ricoeur assert. To be embodied, to have an embodied consciousness, means inevitably to occupy a place and a fragment of time. Any act of consciousness is thus understood as perceived by the embodied mind: oriented in place and time. Memories, therefore, are retrieved by the thinking mind through the lived body: while performing the same actions as in the past, while perceiving sounds, smells, views of the past, while the limbs move through the same places. "*Our soul and body are so linked that the thoughts that have accompanied some movements of our body since our life began still accompany them today; so that if the same movements are re-aroused by some external cause, they arouse the same thoughts; and conversely the same thoughts produce the same movements*"<sup>56</sup>, stated Descartes back in 1646.

Likewise, in the case of the orators of Antiquity, the words to be remembered inhabit the imaginary or physical place, residing in the situational relationship between body and the surrounding space. It is a matter of recreating the situational structure of the body-in-place that enables one to re-enact the meanings once inscribed in space, through the act of recalling the situatedness of the body. In processes of natural spatial memory, places are remembered by re-activating a certain embodiment that once has taken place. Neurologists believe that the same centres are activated within the brain in the moment that a space is perceived by walking through it, when viewing it projected in moving images, or when it is remembered and "walked through" in memory. Cinema operates precisely on these mind networks. When watching a film, "[v]iewers do not manufacture mental images on the basis of what they are immediately given to see, but on the basis of their memories, by themselves filling in the blanks and their minds with the images created retrospectively, as in childhood".<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Casey, E. *op cit*, p. 191

<sup>56</sup> letter of René Descartes to Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, dated May 1646, from *Correspondence between Descartes and Princess Elisabeth*, p. 44, online source: [www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/descartes1643.pdf](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/descartes1643.pdf) (last accessed May 2015)

<sup>57</sup> Virilio, P. (1994), *The Vision Machine*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 3

**memories of events.**

Tarkovsky uses sparingly memories of events and, when he does, they serve to enhance the emotional atmosphere of a particular scene in non-autobiographical film, through slight references to emotion-laden events from his own past. For instance, in the screenplay for *Mirror*, he narrates lengthily a memory of having witnessed the demolition of Semionov church in Yourevets<sup>58</sup>. Although not eventually used in this film, bits of this scene are replicated or alluded by experiential details in other films, such as water shielding the view (in *Steamroller and Violin*, *Rublev*, *Zerkalo*), spilled milk (*Rublev*, *Mirror*, *Nostalghia*, *Sacrifice*), episodes of demolition (*Steamroller and Violin*, *Rublev*, *Ivan's Childhood*).

Tarkovsky's characters are more often burdened by memories of places and people far away, rather than by singled out events. For the self-exiled Tarkovsky, time is the fluid, almost reversible dimension, while space remains ruthlessly ruptured. As such, nostalgia springs not from past momentary events, but always from lost, unattainable places. "It's wrong to keep thinking the same thing", says Domenico, the estranged mathematician from *Nostalghia* (1982), when assaulted again by the memory of his most painful event - the day that his wife and children left his house. However, this episode seems to re-play for Domenico every time that he walks through the door and down the steps where his family had last walked away from him. Place stores Domenico's memories, even the ones he would rather forget, but it does so through his own re-enactment of previous actions happened therein. It is thus a lived correlation of body and place, embodiment and emplacement.

Following this thread of thought in more applied research, neuropsychological studies on spatial memory have most often been performed on rodents and primates, with valuable results on spatial perception and improvement of orienting through spaces as a progress of spatial memory. Results of such studies offer indisputable insight into how the brain works in space, but place memory is entwined with much emotional and psychological weight that eludes and transgresses bodily confines. And since such subjective fields could hardly be assessed in quantitative methods of research, autobiographical art and literature seems to offer an operable field of further enquiry.

*Memory is a spiritual concept! [...] if somebody tells us of his impressions of childhood, we can say with certainty that we shall have enough material in our hands to form a complete picture of that person.*<sup>59</sup>

The view of embodiment as a lens of perceiving spatial memories applies when the mind recalls places that the body had already experienced. However, when perceiving a place with its own history/memory, distinct mind mechanisms apply. It is a question of letting oneself be immersed in the aura, the atmosphere, the sense of place, of letting oneself be emplaced.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> CS (*Mirror*), pp. 272-273

<sup>59</sup> ST, p. 57

<sup>60</sup> opposed to this is the situation of displacement, of not perceiving or not relating to the memory layers stored into place; when this occurs, the surrounding spaces "do not hold enough significance to be regarded as places" and turn from places into non-places; Augé, M. (1995) *Non places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Brooklyn, NY: Verso



*The trace is the appearance of a nearness, however far removed the thing that left it behind may be. The aura is the appearance of a distance, however close the thing that calls it forth. In the trace, we gain possession of the thing; in the aura, it takes possession of us.*<sup>61</sup>

To understand the aura of a place is to let oneself be immersed in that atmosphere in which the sense of place condensates, to empathize with the place. Phenomenologists call it the *visibility* or *luminosity* that radiates from within: "In this sense, places can be said to radiate out from the exact shape they possess in objective space, the spaces of sites. [...] Places possess us – in perception as in memory – by their radiant visibility insinuating themselves within our lives, seizing and surrounding us, even taking us over as we sink into their presence".<sup>62</sup> Edward Casey's eloquent study on *Remembering* dedicates an entire chapter to "Place Memory", in which he makes valuable assertions on the self's experience and recollections of a place, but does not go into much detail about the deposited memory layers that are stored in the place itself, as an invisible archive that documents the "sense of place". However, in another study, he refers to a scribbled fragment of James Joyce's writings from a preparatory notebook for *Ulysses*, a note with deep implications: *Topical history: places remember events*. Casey reads in this short statement an essential questioning of the very notion that Joyce would suggest a subversion of the classical position that memory is essentially time-bound, by implying that "the active agent is place, and not the historical events, the former actively remembering the latter".<sup>63</sup> The question of "how places remember" is more actively addressed when there is some kind of spatial alienation or an absence of the once-built past, and Joyce's note that 'places remember events' could be a starting point for an inquiry into viewing places as storages where memories "remain embedded in the form, remain to be unearthed, read and decoded, however imperfectly or incorrectly, whether they exist today as a spatial tangible remain or as a vague yet lingering mental presence".<sup>64</sup>

### place as memory trigger.

A case of "places remembering events" is depicted in several episodes of *Ivan's Childhood*, where, without a prior experience of having been in that place, characters unearth the layers of traumatic memory stored within the place itself as within a written, heard, filmed archive of pain. Here, embodiment is not anymore a precondition of inhabiting, of body remembering previous actions and its situatedness in place, but rather - the place remembers and the place speaks, not to the body, but to the perceiving mind. The required condition here is a sort of undefined empathy towards the place itself and its previous inhabitations, the acknowledgement of an Other's experience etched upon the space. Without such empathy, the enclosure might well remain an anonymous non-place. An inscription on the walls of the war bunker is visible from the very beginning of the scenes shot there: "there are eight of us, none over 19. In one hour, we're to be taken out and shot. Avenge

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<sup>61</sup> Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project* (1927) Edited by R. Tiedemann, Harvard University Press, p. 447

<sup>62</sup> Casey, E. *op cit*, p.200

<sup>63</sup> Casey E. (1993) *Getting Back into Place*, Indiana University Press, p. 277

<sup>64</sup> Treib, M. (2009) Yes, Now I Remember: An Introduction, pp. x-xv, in M. Treib (Ed.) *Spatial Recall*, London: Routledge, p. xi

us". However dramatic the message scribbled might be, the walls remain as a silent background. It is only when Ivan - himself a child of war, as the ones who had written this - remains alone in the room, that the room begins to speak. In a daytime nightmare enhanced by the darkness of the bunker, Ivan imagines himself challenging the enemy. During his imaginary fight, the small torch he is holding dynamically "unveils" one by one, portions of the room: the ceiling, the floor, the walls and vaults, the table thrown upside-down, the broken bell appear as lit circles cut out from the overall darkness. Not only is this a "description" of the room, the light of the torch listing its main spatial elements, but the ray of light breaks the silence of the walls and gives voice to the memory of this place: one can hear painful voices of children, maybe those same children that had once cried out of fear in there. Their unknown faces do not appear to Ivan, but amidst their hidden cries, in a circle of light drawn by the torch, we see Ivan's mother - herself a victim of the enemy army - sharing their pain and, ultimately, their fate.

In a mirrored episode at the end of the film, we follow Lieutenant Galtsev through the building of the army headquarters in Berlin, under Soviet occupation. Together with him we see the archival documents stating the execution of Ivan. Afterwards we walk through the ruined building - the camera preserving Galtsev's gaze and shaking at every step - of which the walls and broken floors preserve the memories of the traumatic event through the "stored" voices of the German officers who were taking Ivan to the execution room, and thus we experience audio-visually the spatial trajectory of Ivan's last journey.

A lighter and more hopeful, though less graspable, association between places and events happens at the end of *Nostalghia*, when Gorchakov, whom we had just seen dying as he was carrying a candle in Bagno-Vignoni, is now seen in front of his Russian dacha. The camera tracks backward and reveals the dacha being engulfed by the ruins of a Romanic church with missing ceiling. As it starts to snow, on the soundtrack we hear crying voices, and the subtle tune of a Russian folkloric song. The ending scene is thus charged with memories of home, and the idea that Gorchakov's death was caused by his very nostalgia<sup>65</sup> for Russia:

*Yet I would die if I never returned to Russia, if I never saw again in my life my homeland, the birches, the air of my childhood* (passage from Sosnovski's letter, read in *Nostalghia* at 01:11:30-01:12:50).

However, the scene relates to other two preceding it. : one from the same film, another one from the earlier film *Rublev*. The place inside the church, where Gorchakov rests nested together with his home and his memory, does not appear for the first time then, in the ending of the film. Half an hour before this, we had already seen Gorchakov walking through this deserted church, gazing upwards at the broken ceiling, while we hear distant cries and, in voice-over:

*"Lord, do you see how he's asking? Say something to him! Let him feel Your presence."*

*"I always do, but he's not aware of it"* (*Nostalghia*, around 01:29:00)

On a closer look on the texture of the film, therefore, the ending scene, with Gorchakov's imaginary or spiritual arrival home, appears as a response to his previous

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<sup>65</sup> in her 2001 book *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym explains that the term *nostalgia* was initially introduced in medical sciences during the 17th century, and it was initially considered a curable disease, similar to a cold

unspoken prayer. Before the end credits "dedicated to the memory of my Mother" appear on screen, snowflakes start to fall over Andrei Gorchakov and his dacha:

*Then, the odd snowflake falls through the air; it spins, slowly as though in a dream and lands on the ground...<sup>66</sup>*

The snowflakes, coming through the broken ceiling of the church, remind of another Andrei, lying on the floor of a church many years earlier, in *Rublev* (1966):

*Andrei is on his knees beside the half-burnt iconostasis, among the corpses. He is barely recognizable. The empty gaze from his sunken eyes wanders through space, not focusing, not noticing nothing. "I shall take a vow of silence before God. I shall not speak. I have nothing left to talk to people about". [...] It is starting to snow. The flakes fall slowly, singly, tentatively on to the floor of the cathedral. [...] Teophanes smiles. "Listen, you mustn't stop, it isn't you that you're depriving of joy, it's other people. Eh?" he asks quietly. "It's snowing", Andrei says instead of answering. "There is nothing more terrifying than snow falling inside a cathedral. Is there?"<sup>67</sup>*

### remembering home.

*Of course memory has to be worked upon before it can become the basis of an artistic reconstruction of the past; and here it is important not to lose the particular emotional atmosphere without which a memory evoked in every detail merely gives rise to a bitter feeling of disappointment. There's an enormous difference, after all, between the way you remember the house in which you were born and which you haven't seen for years, and the actual sight of the house after a prolonged absence. Usually the poetry of the memory is destroyed by confrontation with its origin.<sup>68</sup>*

Beyond memories of events, embodied or emplaced, the most remarkable representations and exercises in communicating memories of places are, for Tarkovsky, the memories of home. As already exposed in Chapter 2, the reality of home, whether lost, remembered, lived or dreamed of, imbues the entire life and work of the Russian author. If, as part of his biography, this concern has produced a series of particularly interesting architectural sketches, atmospheric polaroids, written descriptive fragments and a heritage of houses he had once inhabited and transformed according to his taste, throughout his filmography it gave rise to a variety of techniques for representing place memory. Therefore, as far as memories of home are involved, biography and filmography are legible through a double frame, and it is notable to observe the distinct cases of mutual infusion life-film-memory-reality which had taken place with the films *Mirror* and *Nostalghia*.

*Mirror* was the first film sprung from a longing, a nostalgia for home - the home lost under the waters of Volga, in Zavrazhe<sup>69</sup>. However, as Svetlana Boym points out, "nostalgia appears to be a longing for a place, but it is actually a yearning for a different time - the time of our

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<sup>66</sup> CS (*Nostalghia*), p. 503

<sup>67</sup> Tarkovsky, A. (1991) *Andrei Rublëv* [Literary Screenplay]. Translated by K. Hunter Blair, London: Faber and Faber, p. 130

<sup>68</sup> ST, p. 29

<sup>69</sup> see Chapter 3, pp. 73-75 and 99-100

childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams".<sup>70</sup> For this reason, the house reconstructed with much fidelity in the film is not the lost and much-dreamed-of house of Zavrazhe, but the more recent one in Ignatievo.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the rebuilt presence of the Ignatievo dacha is aimed to "cure" the nostalgia for the more distant house in Zavrazhe, not through the literal replacement within its spatial context, but through a temporary regaining of those rhythms of life in childhood, "when all still lies ahead and nothing is impossible"<sup>72</sup>. After seeing the finished movie, Tarkovsky wrote: "childhood memories which for years had given me no peace suddenly vanished, as if they had melted away, and at last I stopped dreaming about the house where I had lived so many years before".<sup>73</sup> If the dreams of the childhood home had left Tarkovsky after *Mirror*, it was the longing for home which returned as a source of the cinematic image and as emotional texture, when shooting *Nostalghia* in Italy. Andrei Gorchakov, the protagonist of the film, is "crushed by the recollections of his past, by the faces of those dear to him, which assail his memory together with the sounds and smells of home".<sup>74</sup> Gorchakov's dreams are inhabiting the landscape of Tarkovsky's own dacha is Myasnoye<sup>75</sup>, reconstructed with milimetric fidelity in a fragment of Italian landscape that was found to resemble the Russian countryside. In the case of *Nostalghia*, unlike after having seen *Mirror*, Tarkovsky did not feel "cured" of his longing, but instead, realized and visualized for the first time the extent of his own nostalgia for home:

*I have to say that when I first saw all the material shot for the film I was startled to find it was a spectacle of unrelieved gloom. The material was completely homogeneous, both in its mood and in the state of mind imprinted in it. This was not something I had set out to achieve; what was symptomatic and unique about the phenomenon before me was the fact that, irrespective of my own specific theoretical intentions, the camera was obeying first and foremost my inner state during filming: I had been worn down by my separation from my family and from the way of life I was used to, by working under quite unfamiliar conditions, even by using a foreign language. I was at once astounded and delighted, because what had been imprinted on the film, and was now revealed to me for the first time in the darkness of the cinema, proved that my reflections about how the art of the screen is able, and even called, to become a matrix of the individual soul, to convey unique human experience, were not just the fruit of idle speculation but a reality, which here was unrolling incontrovertibly before my eyes...<sup>76</sup>*

In this case, Gorchakov's experience from the screen becomes an embodiment for the displacement and nostalgia which Tarkovsky himself was feeling. Such approaches to home would be considered a case of dramatic inadaptation by human geographers, since classically, migration studies considered immigrants "expected to assimilate into their new homeland, and persistent emotional or other bonds with a former home country were regarded as obstacles to successful incorporation".<sup>77</sup> Only recently have there been introduced new ideas

<sup>70</sup> Boym, S. (2007) *Nostalgia and Its Discontents*, pp. 7-18, in *The Hedgehog Review*/ Summer 07, p. 8

<sup>71</sup> see Chapter 3, pp. 76-78 and 103-104

<sup>72</sup> *Mirror* (1:17:14)

<sup>73</sup> ST, p. 128

<sup>74</sup> ST, p. 203

<sup>75</sup> see Chapter 4, p. 84 for context

<sup>76</sup> ST, p. 203

<sup>77</sup> Gustafson, P. (2014) Place Attachment in an Age of Mobility, pp. 37-48, in Manzo L. and Devine-Wright P. *Place attachment*, London & New York: Routledge, p. 40

about mobility in relation to home, which state that migration can be understood also "as an ongoing process which often involves continuing mobility and communication between past and present home countries".<sup>78</sup> According to such ideas, migrants' profound bound to their distant home places do not necessarily pose a difficulty on their adaptation to the new environment, but rather, experience situations of multiple belonging, which "combine new and old attachment to places".<sup>79</sup> The communication between past and present, as a condition of dwelling through mobility, is commonly understood in these studies as the use of various digital prosthesis, internet and mobile devices that produce "a telescoping of near and far, a phenomenon of acceleration obliterating our experience of distances and dimensions"<sup>80</sup> and thus, a continuing attachment to people and places faraway.

In Tarkovsky's case, from the time of *Nostalghia* onwards, his autobiographical writings reveal a growing attachment to the landscapes of Italy, overlapped on a similarly growing inner attachment to the lost homeland of Russia. The remarkable aspect in his case, however, is that the means of communicating with the faraway home, and thus maintaining an awareness of multiple belonging, is not resolved through telecommunications, which were still limited at that time, but through an increasing sense of "home as inner dwelling"<sup>81</sup>. This sense of inner dwelling slips from life into films, as his characters inhabit two worlds and two places at once. It is a fluid and immaterial form of mobility, which, as Gorchakov says "destroys the borders between countries", as borders cease to exist and distances are effaced. It is the ability of switching between reality and memory where Tarkovsky's cinematic skill becomes enriched by his own experience of homesickness. He had once noted that cinema has become accustomed to represent memories or dreams as a tacit cliché, by changing the chromatic or by slowing down time within the shot, thus signalling to the viewer that images viewed belong to a different time array. Despite he also applied such means to some extent in *Mirror* and *Nostalghia*, where the colour tone changes to desaturated hues, black and white range and, respectively, sepia, the mechanisms of switching between one state and the other are those that bring an inspired novelty to the cinematic image.

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<sup>78</sup> Schiller, N. et al, *From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration*, pp. 48-63, *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Jan. 1995)

<sup>79</sup> Christensen, A. and Jensen. S. (2011) *Roots and routes: Migration, belonging and everyday life*, pp. 146-155 in *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, Vol. 1, p. 153

<sup>80</sup> Virilio, P. *op cit*, p. 4

<sup>81</sup> see chapter 4, *First Conversation about Home*

## Chapter 6 ARCHITECTURAL PHENOMENOGRAPHY

*Gorchakov's eyes are closed. Dim grey light filters into the room. His dark coat lies next to the bed where he dropped it on the floor. The quiet voices, reverberating from the well, can still be heard - even and monotonous.*

*"But don't they cure dogs in Russia?" And then it sounds like his son speaking: "Yes, but here it is with hot water. I brought him here. He's called Dak"<sup>82</sup> [...]*

*"Anything is possible... In this life, anything can happen. That's why there are no miracles, because everything is possible"*

*"There, there, good dog, there, don't get up. We're going to live here now... lie down, Dak.."*  
*You can hear the dog's quiet and mournful whimpering. Gorchakov's hand reaches out in the darkness, towards the floor, to stroke the dog, whose shadow briefly passes between the bed and the cupboard. His palm brushes against his coat, lying on the floor, and he strokes it, strokes it, catching on the buttons which shine in the darkness.<sup>83</sup>*

In many scenes of *Nostalghia*, Andrei Gorchakov looks "through" the things surrounding him, and sees the home far away. Existing in two places at once, the home far away is perceived stronger than the one close by. Sitting in the hallway of the hotel in Bagno Vignoni, waiting for the receptionist to bring the room key, Andrei plays with the keys of house in Russia.

*"Those are not the keys to another hotel?"*

*"No, they are the keys to **my** home" (Nostalghia 0:18:30 - 0:18:39)*

As we gaze and live his memory of the dacha in the countryside, with children running towards him, dogs barking and water flowing, we hear overlaid the voice of the Italian hotel receptionist, presenting the rooms: "*this is our best room*", "*the countryside's pretty too*". We thus understand that Andrei has left the hallway and is moving along the corridors of the hotel, approaching his room, but all those enclosures remain transparent, as the image of the distant home pervades through the physical reality. The screenplay for the film discloses even more this supremacy of home memory over the surrounding reality, by insisting on using possessive pronouns (my highlights):

*his Maria stands by the window and wipes a tall, slender goblet with a napkin<sup>84</sup> (a dream of home, Maria is Andrei's wife, appearing repeatedly inside or in front of their house);*

*he finally spots the entrance of his room he vanishes inside the dark hallway<sup>85</sup> (last dream of home; in the screenplay the death of Andrei was not supposed to appear on screen, rather, at the moment when he dies we were to see him reaching for his room at home);*

*the strong walls, like those of a prison, enclose his house in their embrace and clods of his homeland, covered by his grass, his mist, and illuminated by his moon<sup>86</sup> (posthumous dream of home, the fragment verbally describes the ending image of the film, Andrei in front of his Russian dacha, engulfed by the ruins of a Romanic church).*

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<sup>82</sup> the name of Tarkovsky's dog, left behind in Russia, was Dakus; see Image 3.23 on p. 107

<sup>83</sup> CS (*Nostalghia*), pp. 478-479 the fragment including Gorchakov's son's voice and the mention of the dog's name was left out of the final film version

<sup>84</sup> idem, p. 475

<sup>85</sup> idem, p. 502

<sup>86</sup> idem, pp. 502-503



Image 6.4 *Nostalgia* 01:14:24 "His Maria stands by the window" (left); *Nostalgia* 01:58:46 "clods of his homeland" (right)



Image 6.5 *Nostalgia* 02:00:11 endcredits, in Italian: "Dedicated to the memory of my mother"; Andrei in front of the dacha

## WORDS

narrations of home; senses beyond the audio-visual; belonging

*" it was like home, being next to him,  
it was this kind of interesting atmosphere.  
You can do it with walls, with constructions,  
but he could mostly manage to do it with just words"*  
Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky<sup>87</sup>, son of the director

The passage describing the dreams and memories of home as viewed through the screenplay of *Nostalghia* already points out to how **words** construct the sense of belonging to home, in the preparation of film. The screenplay thus captures some of the constituents of place experience which, despite invisible in the finished film, would construct its atmosphere.

The strength with which Tarkovsky's screenplays evoke the experience of a place reveals a prevailing clarity of the memory image from which they have developed, and onto which the place experience had written itself, much in line with the words of the ancient unknown author of *Ad Herennium*: "*for the places are very much like papyrus, the images like the letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images like the script, and the delivery is like the reading*".<sup>88</sup> Tarkovsky considered that the image of a film is born long before the shooting and sometimes long before the script is written, "*at the time when, before the interior gaze of the person making the film and known as the director, there emerges an image of the film: this might be a series of episodes worked out in perhaps the consciousness of an aesthetic texture and emotional atmosphere*".<sup>89</sup> In between these two stages - the inner birth of an image and the cinematic representation of a place experience - the screenplay serves as a mediation, a "*first step in the externalization of the image*".<sup>90</sup>

*Stalker is excited. His nostrils are flared, his eyes shining. [...]*

*"It's amazingly beautiful here - bizarre! There's no smell of flowers for some reason - or have I lost the scent? Can you smell them?"*

*"It stinks, like a marsh - that I can smell"*

*"No, no - that's a river you can smell. There's a river nearby. There used to be a very large flowerbed not far off there. Porcupine filled it in, trampled on it, levelled it, but the scent still remained for a number of years".<sup>91</sup>*

### senses beyond audio-visual [scented images of home]

One of the layers of place undoubtedly unperceivable directly in the film image is that relating to the sense of smell. However, "*volatile and invisible, odor too has strong connection to human emotions and can color the places we bring to mind*",<sup>92</sup> and olfactory cues are sometimes

<sup>87</sup> *My Father's Home*, [unpublished] interview with Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky taken by RB in Florence, 8 December 2012

<sup>88</sup> Yates, F. *op cit*, p. 6 (quoting from *Ad Herennium*)

<sup>89</sup> *Sculpting in time*, p. 60

<sup>90</sup> Synessios, N. Introduction, pp. ix-xxviii, in CS, p. xv

<sup>91</sup> CS (*Stalker*), p. 389

<sup>92</sup> de Costa Meyer, E. (2009), *The Place of Place in Memory*, in M. Trieb (Ed.) *Spatial Recall: The place of Memory in Architecture and Landscape*. London: Taylor & Francis, p. 189



more efficient than images, haptically transporting the one who remembers into a different time-space. If scent is so important in imprinting memories upon our minds, Tarkovsky finds it all the more necessary as part of the screenplay, an aid for constructing the final film image, regardless of the fact it would not literally communicate it: "*in one script that I was offered it said that the room smelt of dust, dead flowers and dried ink. I like that very much because I can begin to picture how that interior looks, feel its soul*".<sup>93</sup> In this, Tarkovsky shared the view of prestigious film theorist and psychologist of perception Rudolf Arnheim<sup>94</sup> who claimed that: "[t]here may be people who if they see a Roman Catholic service on screen imagine that they can smell incense; but no one will miss the stimulus. Sensations of smell, equilibrium, or touch are, of course, never conveyed in a film through direct stimuli, but are suggested indirectly through sight".<sup>95</sup> This approach can be found all throughout the screenplays, where scent is mentioned as a scaffolding in the construction of the film image, always linked to place memory, a reminder of a home far away.

As previously mentioned, one of the essential changes which Tarkovsky brought to the narrative of *Solaris* when adapting the science-fiction novel into a screenplay for a film, was to introduce the presence of Earth, of the home on Earth, as a recurring daydream, a humanizing and suturing memory. In one of the versions for the screenplay, Chris, the film's protagonist, dreams of returning home and meeting his mother. "*Her hands smell of earth and he feels light and calm*".<sup>96</sup> This continuity between a familiar smell transposing into another time and space and the physical distance from home is found in a similar fashion, eight years later, in the artist's personal confessions. After a few months of location shooting in Italy, in 1980, already feeling uneasily displaced, Tarkovsky writes in his diary: "*Last night I dreamt that I was in Moscow. [...] Suddenly, in the midst of the noise and rush of the city, I saw a cow, a most beautiful cow. [...] She came up to me, I stroked her, and she crossed the street and went off down the pavement. I still remember the smell she left on the palm of my hand: the penetrating, tender, homely smell of life and happiness*".<sup>97</sup>

In the last summer Tarkovsky spent at the countryside dacha, before leaving Russia for good, the pit bogs in the area were often on fire, and there was a constant smell of smoke in the air, a detail noted down in his diary. This scent seemed to linger in his memory further, after leaving Russia. In the screenplays of the next two films, *Nostalghia* (1982) and *The Sacrifice* (1985), both shot away from Russia, around the house "*smoke collects and stands, a motionless mist*".<sup>98</sup> When we first see the house of Alexander in *Sacrifice*, we might not be aware that "*there is an aroma of smoke and home baking*",<sup>99</sup> but the mention of this detail in the screenplay made easier to visualize the "soul of the place" that eventually shaped the appearance of the house and helped choosing the right model for it, enriching it with a feeling of belonging. This transposal from senses beyond the audio-visual into images is

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<sup>93</sup> ST, p. 74

<sup>94</sup> Rudolf Arnheim (1904-2007), German-born philosopher, psychologist and theorist of art and film, who made major contributions in the field of art and visual perception

<sup>95</sup> Arnheim, R. (2005) *Film as art (1933)* Oakland: University of California Press, p. 34

<sup>96</sup> CS (*Solaris*)

<sup>97</sup> diary entry, 9 June 1980

<sup>98</sup> CS (*Sacrifice*), p. 513

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

possible due to the precise nature of film's vision. For the Russian director, this vision, born "*before the interior gaze*"<sup>100</sup> is formed of images invisible to the anatomical eye, but which, when attached to places - imagined or remembered - store away not only visual qualities of that place, as a mechanically reproduced image would, but a wide sensorial spectrum, allowing to later communicate place in its synaesthetic fullness. Furthermore, and prevailing, is that these interior images, to which the eye is blind, also contain something beyond senses, and point to the idea finely captured by Derrida, that, as tears veil sight in the very moment of revelation, "*the truth of the eyes*" is then "*to address prayer, joy or sadness, rather than a look or a gaze*".<sup>101</sup> Tarkovsky considered that, when the film is done, the scenario should remain "*more like an account of something seen related to a blind man*".<sup>102</sup> But wouldn't this precisely be "*the blindness that opens the eye [...] not the one that darkens vision?*"<sup>103</sup> Once the film image has been constructed, with emotions embedded within its very visual texture, rooted in the emotional atmosphere that the filmmaker had envisaged before the very writing of the script, the screenplay remains behind to illuminate upon all those invisible and hidden layers closer to the "blindness" of revelation, of emotion, of memory.

This gives place an unutterable significance and makes the type of memory which operates with/ upon places, a form of "writing" place inwardly, complete with its experiential, psychological and emotional layers.

### narrations of home

Though the image of home is missing from the war movie *Ivan's Childhood*, there are verbal mentions to it. Inside the nurse's station, lieutenant Galtsev picks up from the floor a letter which he hands to the nurse Masha. As they stand in front of the window, as a unique source of light in the room, Galtsev asks quietly and with a certain reverence: "*is it from home?*" Masha's soft nodding is followed by a silence infused with worry and nostalgia.

In *Solaris*, we first see the house of Chris Kelvin from within, looking out over the threshold. Chris's father stands outside, on the steps, gazing upwards at the walls, while the camera rests within, behind Berton - an old friend of Chris's father. From inside, Berton says: "*how pleasant it is here!*"<sup>104</sup>. From the outside, Father replies, looking at the door: "*This house reminds me of my grandfather's house. I really liked it. So we decided to build one just like it. I don't like innovation*".<sup>105</sup> There is only one other place throughout the seven films when "grandfather's house" is mentioned: "*among the tall birch trees is a wooden, two-storey building. The house where I was born, and where my grandfather - Nikolai Matveevich, a provincial doctor - delivered me. [...] And this dream is more accurate and convincing, that it is more real than actuality*",<sup>106</sup> and another mentioning father's house, in a poem read by Gorchakov inside the

<sup>100</sup> idem, p. 60

<sup>101</sup> Derrida, J. (1993) *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 125

<sup>102</sup> ST, p. 134

<sup>103</sup> Derrida, J. *op cit* p. 126

<sup>104</sup> in the screenplay: "*You've got a nice place!*" - Collected Screenplays (*Solaris*), p. 136

<sup>105</sup> in the screenplay: "*This house is like my grandfather's. I liked it very much, and my mother and I decided to build one the same, I don't like innovation*" - *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 298

flooded church, in reality a poem by Tarkovsky's father, Arseny: "*hearing weavers for my father's house breathes distant thunder*" (*Nostalghia* 01:24:30).

Further is a selection of spoken passage referring to house/home throughout the films (with my highlights). The scenes were chosen for the particular contrast between the image represented therein and the words spoken. For instance, the scene where the narrator of *Mirror* dreams of returning home, while the voice-over mentions "*the house I where I was born*", the fragment was not selected for this word-based list, since the image of the child approaching the house was considered stronger than the words themselves. As such, the selected passages either do not include the house as a visual presence within the frame, or the focus of the action on screen is different (such as the scene where Victor, the friend of the family in *Sacrifice*, sits at the table in front of the house and speaks of Alexander and his home - here, the vision is polarized by the laid table and the characters sitting there, rather than by the dim image of the house in the background);

"*Right, we're **home!***" Stalker, reaching the Zone<sup>107</sup>

"*but now I think I'll head **home**. It's late, I must think of a gift*" Otto, speaking to Alexander in *Sacrifice* 0:14:33

*Adelaide: "It's time we went **home**"; Alexander: "Yes, all of us"* conversation between Alexander and his wife in *Sacrifice* 0:17:22

"*Go **home** now!*" Maria, speaking to Alexander, in *Sacrifice* 0:49:46; "*Go **home** now!*" Maria, speaking to Alexander, in *Sacrifice* 01:52:46; "*Something's happened at your **house** again*" Maria, speaking to Alexander, in *Sacrifice* 01:42:46

"*her **house**, a little cottage*" Alexander, talking to Maria about his mother, in *Sacrifice* 01:45:38

"*he has a family, a splendid **house***" Victor, talking about Alexander to Adelaide, Alexander's wife, in front of their house, *Sacrifice* 02:05:08

"*Have I told you how your mother and I found this place? It was the first time we were here. [...] Suddenly the sun came out. The light was dazzling. Then we saw the **house**. [...] I was sad that it wasn't I - we - who lived in that **house** under the pines so close to the sea. you were born in this **house**. Do you like it? Do you like your **house**, my boy?*" Alexander, talking to his son, under the pines, in *Sacrifice* 0:17:44 - 0:19:51

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<sup>107</sup> CS (*Stalker*), p. 389

## SILENCE

moments, textures

*"How quiet it is!**This is the quietest place in the world. You'll see!"*Stalker to his two companions, when entering the Zone, in *Stalker* 0:37:49*"How quiet it is! Do you feel it?"*Stalker to his two companions, at the threshold of the Room, in *Stalker* (part 3) 0:21:28

Both of the two instances when Stalker says "How quiet it is!" happen at the border between two spatial realms: the entrance to the Zone and, respectively, the threshold to the Room. Both spaces, the Zone and the Room, contain a promise and an aspiration that has taken the protagonists on tedious journeys over great distances. The awareness of this silence defining the border between spaces and signalling the arrivals verifies the view that "the experience of silence is essentially a space experience"<sup>108</sup>. In both moments it is also remarkable to note the perceptual regimes called upon by the stalker: seeing, feeling. Architect Jonathan Hill finds the springs of such shifts of perceiving channels in the imbedded absence through which silence operates: "Silence is immaterial visually and aurally. But, through absence, it focuses increased attention on the senses and materials present",<sup>109</sup> while film theorist Bela Balazs<sup>110</sup> asks himself: "How do we perceive silence? By hearing nothing? That is a mere negative"; his explanations call upon the spatial language of silence: "We feel the silence when we can hear the most distant sound or the slightest rustle near us. Silence is when the buzzing of a fly on the windowpane fills the whole room with sound and the ticking of a clock smashes time into fragments. The silence is greatest when we can hear very distant sounds in a very large space".<sup>111</sup> The absence of such dim sounds does not increase the feeling of silence, but only reduces the verisimilitude of the scene: "a completely soundless space [...] never appears quite concrete and quite real to our perception; we feel it to be weightless and unsubstantial, for what we merely see is only a vision".<sup>112</sup>

In cinema, dim noises translating silence are essential in constructing aural space. "The presentation of silence is one of the most specific dramatic effects of the sound film. No other art can reproduce silence neither painting nor sculpture, neither literature, nor the silent film could do so"<sup>113</sup>. As the handling of materials defines the appearance of a building, so the handling of silence can affect the aural texture of a film. "In the hands of an artist silence can be the loudest of noises, just as black, in a brilliant design, can be the brightest of colors"<sup>114</sup>. In the hand of Tarkovsky, silence as an (im)material constructing spatial experience functions on two levels: textures and moments.

<sup>108</sup> Balazs, B. (1985) Theory of the Film: Sound, pp. 116-125, in E. Weis and J. Belton (Ed.) *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*, p. 118

<sup>109</sup> Hill, J. (2006) *Immaterial Architecture*, London: Routledge, p. 182

<sup>110</sup> Béla Balázs (1884-1949), Hungarian-Jewish film critic and theorist, his *Theory of Film* was finished in 1949 and published posthumously

<sup>111</sup> Balazs, B. *op cit.*, p. 118

<sup>112</sup> Balazs, B. *op cit.*, p. 120

<sup>113</sup> Balazs, B. *op cit.*, p. 123

<sup>114</sup> Cavalcanti, A. (1985) Sound in Films, pp. 98-111, in E. Weis and J. Belton (Ed.) *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*, p. 103



**Image 6.6** silence after explosions - *Ivan's Childhood* 0:59:46 (left); silence of nature, after the city noise - *Solaris* 0:38:32 (right)

### moments

The moments of silence appear as windows or openings in the aural structure of a film, rooms and enclosures cut out and separated from the opaque fabric of sounds and music. It is the very loudness preceding them which defines the silent regime of these moments. "A structural silence occurs where sound previously present in a film is later absent at structurally corresponding points".<sup>115</sup>

In *Ivan's Childhood*, these pockets of sudden silence are all the more prominent and dramatic, as they stand against a loud background of war noises. After an extended scene of bombs exploding on the battlefield with unbearable frequencies, the noise abruptly stops, as if hearing itself had become impaired and ceased to perceive the loudness and monstrosity of war. Silence comes with sunlight, reaching through the clouds of smoke, through relics of trees, earth thrown upwards and a cross from what once used to be the graveyard around the church where now the military dugout is.

*"Suddenly, silence. All you can hear is falling earth, somewhere above. The firing has finished";*<sup>116</sup>

After the departure of Ivan in his spying mission on the enemy side of the river, his superiors, Galtsev and Kholin, having returned to the dugout and not standing the tension raised by the silence, put on a record with the voice of Chaliapin.<sup>117</sup> The timbre and words of the song ("Don't send Masha across the river") stir associative emotions and sink the dugout into a graver and deeper silence than before the music, once the song finishes. As a cut performed on the melodic substance which fills the space during the song, the silence following it seems to inscribe the position of the dugout in its wider location, giving voice to its solitude and distance from the other bank of the river, where Ivan is now.

*"The amazing, tender voice banished the silence. It is entrancing and commanding, making you forget about everything else, and awakens a deep, melancholy yearning. [...] The record finishes and the needle scratches the label with a hiss. Kholin walks over to the record player, turns it off and lifts up the horn. Kholin is silent. It is as quiet as the grave. [...] Silence";*<sup>118</sup>

*There are thousands of different sounds and voices,*

<sup>115</sup> Gorbman, C. (1987) *Unheard Melodies - Narrative Film Music*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 19

<sup>116</sup> CS (*Ivan's Childhood*), p. 106

<sup>117</sup> Feodor Chaliapin (1873-1938) Russian opera singer, acclaimed for his deep expressive voice and naturalistic acting

<sup>118</sup> CS (*Ivan's Childhood*), pp. 121-122

*but the substance of silence appears one and the same for all.  
Sound differentiates visible things,  
silence brings them closer to each other and makes them less dissimilar*<sup>119</sup>

### textures

Praising the work of his Swedish colleague, Tarkovsky wrote: "Bergman is a master with sound. it's impossible to forget what he does with the lighthouse in *Through a Glass Darkly*: a sound on the very brink of audibility";<sup>120</sup> likewise, silence as spatial texture for Tarkovsky is stitched out of similarly barely audible sounds, as Louis Kahn wrote: "silence is not very, very quiet".<sup>121</sup> Silence as construction (im)material for the film spaces of Tarkovsky designates not only a the calm quietness of space, the lack of noise sources, the secluded location of houses, or maybe a chronic solitude of the characters living therein, but it mostly enhances the auditory awareness of the viewer. In this "almost silence" state, every dim noise receives its plenitude, as if celebrating the source of its sound and the sonorous meeting between different materials.

*"there is a new, wintry **silence** in the street, and **each sound** seems light, open and vibrant";*<sup>122</sup>

*"there is **not a sound** from outside. And **this silence** evokes a quiet and joyful sense of calm";*<sup>123</sup>

*"The sound of the door slamming echoed throughout the empty flat, rolled into the stairwell, and died away in the **relative quiet** of the Moscow spring outside";*<sup>124</sup>

Water flowing through large empty halls often accompanies memories; when water drips on polished floors, the loudness of the dripping sounds enhances the silence of the room and describes aurally the texture of the floor; dogs barking, birds chirping, sea gulls crying in the distance locate the house in the landscape and in its adjacent natural surroundings; heard from inside the house, the sound of wind or rain coming from outside deepen the silence from within rooms.

*"There is nothing like silence to suggest a sense of unlimited space [...] in the silence, we are seized with the sensation of something vast and deep and boundless".*<sup>125</sup> In such silence, the child first learns to perceive the space around him as a living house, moving from bodily perception to something more emotionally palpable, more enduring. As such, first architectural memories are born and stored away, to be retraced once again later in life, in other quiet moments, as Ingmar Bergman was confessing: "today, if I am calm and just about to fall asleep, I can go from room to room and see every detail, know and feel it. In the quietness of *Grandmother's* home, my senses opened and decided to keep all this forever and ever".<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Balazs, B. *op cit.* p. 123

<sup>120</sup> ST, p. 159

<sup>121</sup> from Louis Kahn's 1969 lecture *Silence and Light*, given at the ETH Zurich School of Architecture, Switzerland

<sup>122</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 307

<sup>123</sup> idem, p. 263

<sup>124</sup> idem, p. 290

<sup>125</sup> Bachelard, G. (1994) *The Poetics of Space*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, p.43

<sup>126</sup> BoB, p. 18

Imitating the natural mind processes, silence as a catalyst for remembrance is also mentioned as working condition in the textbooks for trained memory: "[A]n extraordinary situation: the fragility of images and the silence of the memorizer combine with the stability of place to bring about a mnemotechnique so efficacious that to this day it is still being recommended in popular memory manuals".<sup>127</sup> Emmanuel Levinas asserted that "[b]y creating beauty out of nature, art calms and quietens it. All the arts, even those based on sound, create silence".<sup>128</sup> At the beginning of silent film, the process seemed to be mimicked by the cinema screen: "The silent screen was to make the surroundings speak the same way practitioners of artificial memory made the room they live in, the theatre boards they trod speak, in retrospect".<sup>129</sup> But the condition of silence remained also with the advent of sound film: "[the filmmaker's] only aspiration should be silence. He must [...] establish silence, be a perfect echo. Then the landscape will inscribe itself on his sensitive tablet".<sup>130</sup> It is important to note the idea of the echo and the distinction which it entails: the memorizer must preserve the silence, while the place will speak. Pleated with the "fragility of images" situated therein, the imprint of place will be stored as an experiential entirety.

Another texture of silence appearing throughout Tarkovsky's films is the recurring "vow of silence" which his characters assume. It is first the painter monk in *Rublev* (1966), the illness of Alexander's son and then Alexander himself, in the ending of *Sacrifice* (1985). About *Rublev*, we know that his silence had maintained even after his "vow of silence" was broken, and became a method of work when he restarted painting. Saint Joseph of Volokolamsk (1480) narrates how "at the Feast of the Luminous Resurrection of Christ, Andrei Rublev and his fellow-painter Daniil, seated on chairs before the holy icons, contemplating them ceaselessly in silence, would become filled with joy and divine light"<sup>131</sup>. This precise silence of the gaze is indissolubly related in Orthodoxy with the image of the icon: "we might even say that the icon makes the silence visible",<sup>132</sup> but we might experience slight reverberations of this ineffable silence when looking inwardly, at the "icons" of our familiar spaces: "architecture has to preserve the memory of the world of silence and to protect the existing fragments of this fundamental ontological state".<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Casey, E. *op cit*, p. 183

<sup>128</sup> Levinas, E. (1989). *The Transcendence of Words* (1949), pp. 144-149 in S. Hand, (Ed.) *The Levinas Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, p. 147

<sup>129</sup> Virilio, P. *op cit*, p. 3

<sup>130</sup> Costa, P. (2007) *A Closed Door That Leaves us Guessing*, lecture held in 2005 at the Sendhai Mediatheque, published in *Rouge Film Journal*, no. 10/ 2007

<sup>131</sup> Sfântul Iosif de Volokolamsk (2010) *Epistolă către Iconar* (Letter to the Icon Painter - my translation from Romanian language-), București: Editura Sophia

<sup>132</sup> Evdokimov, P. (1990) *The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty*, Pasadena, CA: Oakwood Publications, p. 34

<sup>133</sup> Pallasmaa, J. (1999) *Space, Place, Memory and Imagination: The Temporal Dimension of Existential Space*, pp. 16-41 in M. Treib (Ed.) *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape*, p. 19

*From the optical point of view alone, we know that the eye does not really perceive objects, but only the light reflected from the objects. An object is only visible if light makes it luminous [...] Space has no existence without light which makes it the matrix of all life.*<sup>134</sup>

## LIGHT, DARKNESS

playful light, unexpected light, dim light, darkness

### dim light, darkness

The connoisseur must remember the dark interiors that inhabit in silence the homes from Tarkovsky's films. Yet, there is some ineffable homely sense to them, which eludes direct interpretation of the audio-visual film image. Seeking to find how these images had been constructed in the screenplays, one finds the apparently uncanny features of place mentioned as associated with an almost contrary emotion of belonging: "the warm, golden darkness"; "it is dark in the hut, but [...] my eyes are used to it". Elsewhere, rooms are sunk in enduring twilight, but the feeling of calm reigns. A culmination of this strange connection can be found in a piece of dialogue from the screenplay of *The Sacrifice*:

*The room grows darker with the twilight. Marta switches on the lamp that stands on the sideboard. "Oh why do that, Marta? Turn it off!" Mrs Adelaida exclaims in alarm. Marta clicks the switch. It becomes even darker. "Look how lovely it is", Mrs Adelaida is soothed. "Light ruins everything".*<sup>135</sup>

Relating darkness to the security of a nested home is a returning motif that in the fragments of *Mirror*'s screenplay, where spaces of the childhood home appear to be atemporal and softly dark, the very entrance through a door into a vestibule of wooden darkness gives the narrator a feeling of intense and nostalgic joy of homecoming.

*And now, as I dream about the log walls blackened with age, and the white jambs, and the door, ajar, leading from the porch into the darkness of the vestibule, I already know in my dream that I am only dreaming it, and the unbearable joy of returning to my birthplace is diluted by the expectation of waking.*<sup>136</sup>

These repeated associations between darkness and home render a different meaning to ending of *Nostalgia*, as conceived in the screenplay version. In film, the protagonist dies while carrying a candle across an empty pool, but in the screenplay his death is pictured as a return to the home left behind in Russia. Probably due to a much too literal portrayal of Tarkovsky's own yearning for a return home, he later decided to change the image representation, preserving the meaning, which thus remains hidden in the screenplay:

*After the unexpected darkness of a doorway [...], he finds himself in a long, dark corridor that is luckily lit by the moon. Searing pain tears his chest. [...] He gropes for the wall, and when he finally spots the entrance of his room he vanishes inside the dark hallway".*<sup>137</sup>

The scene profoundly resembles the painful dreams of *Mirror*, where the child would eventually get past the porch inside the darkness of a dear home. In *Nostalgia*'s screenplay, this fragment was supposed to start on a street, then to cross an enumeration of anonymous

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<sup>134</sup> Evdokimov, P. *op cit*, p. 4

<sup>135</sup> CS (*Sacrifice*), p. 527

<sup>136</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 303

<sup>137</sup> CS (*Nostalgia*), p. 502



places. It is not accidental that the last one of the places traversed is the only one to hold a possessive pronoun: "his room". This possession is something which in the film would rest uncertain, distinguishable only in the fleeting emotion caught inside the image. The denouement is captured as a reflection in the film's epilogue, when the protagonist lies on the ground in front of a house caught within ruined cathedral walls, as snowflakes start to fall. For this scene, the film image closely follows the screenplay, with the exception that in the script, these possessive pronouns once again appear in words, markedly repeated, in the screenplay. They do, however, appear transposed in the "emotional atmosphere" of the film image, playing with mixtures of light and darkness, imbuing feelings of place attachment in the film surface:

*"At a small distance, the silhouette of their country cottage looms, the light from its windows dispelling the darkness of the night.*

*Gradually it seems to grow lighter. Perhaps it is the light from the moon, standing above the plain, that shows the dark arches and huge columns of the ruins of the ancient cathedral soaring into the lightening sky above the house, towering above the house and above [them] as they sit immobile under the tree. The strong walls, like those of a prison, enclose his house in their embrace, and clods of his homeland covered by his grass, his mist, and illuminated by his moon...*

*Then, the odd snowflake falls through the air; it spins, slowly as though in a dream and lands on the ground... "<sup>138</sup>*

Such examples demonstrate Tarkovsky's own thinking: "the scenario dies in the film",<sup>139</sup> and, as in the words of the Gospel, it is but a seed that dies not to disappear, but to bring forth much fruit: "Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit". (John 12:24)

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<sup>138</sup> idem, pp. 502-503

<sup>139</sup> ST, p. 134

## SPATIAL ELEMENTS

WALL, DOOR, WINDOW, FLOOR, CEILING, PORCH, SHORE, STAIRS

### WALL

forest, walls of nature; walls of logs and earth; **wall as texture:** luminous, stone-brick-concrete, smoothly rough, roughly ruined, ruin; walls as playground of light; shadows drawing walls; inhabited walls; inscriptions on walls; **wall verbs:** gathering, separating, directing

### forest, walls of nature

If tree - as singular formal element - is used with multivalent and deeply associative meanings, clusters of trees bear significantly different compositional roles in the cinematic and narrative fabric of films. Linear and transparent tree clusters are usually a curtain-like envelope for the private nature of the house-space, gradually veiling its presence from the outside world, as well as filtering with wind-shaken leaves the views towards the lands beyond the yard<sup>140</sup>. However, the peculiar spatiality inherent in deep woods is used sparingly along the seven films, and not without dwelling associations. More precisely, in both films where the image of forest depth appears inhabitable and tangibly spatial, the heroes are themselves experiencing a profound sense of homelessness. The two cases are *Ivan's Childhood* and *Andrei Rublev*. Throughout most of film's duration, Rublev is a pilgrim, and most of the feeling of depth and space, beauty and light from his paintings, will be a result of the proportions and perceptions of these travels.

In *Ivan's Childhood*, Ivan had lost his family, his childhood, his house, in a war which, in turn, had become the only situation where he can paradoxically feel at home - getting involved in dangerous spying expeditions, where often he sleeps with sky as a ceiling and earth as a bed. This sense of homelessness is heightened by the scarce and damaged architectural presence along the film. In this context, the nature itself, a nature wounded by images and sounds of war, gains architectural qualities and textures and begins to convey a sense of spatiality, of borders and enclosures. The forest is not any more simply a filter, as in the case of tree clusters surrounding houses of other films. In *Ivan's Childhood*, it becomes denser and opaque, closing the horizon of view with heavily textured walls. There is a contrasting difference between the instances of forest walls in the film, as if differentiating between the contrasting character of rooms inside a house. Therefore, the forest through which Ivan has to pass in order to cross the enemy line, is made of dead trees with opaque black bark, forming walls of darkness impeding the view and thus heightening the threatening feel of the scene. A similar murky dead forest, forming blinding walls of darkness, appears in *Andrei Rublev*, in one of the most terrifying episodes of the film, when the stone-craftsmen, who had just finished carving luminous bright walls in the mansions of the Grand-Prince, are attacked and violently blinded. The only one of them who escapes and maintains his sight, finds himself entrapped within thick walls of dark forest and loses, in turn, his voice, at the sight of his fellows' tragedy. On the opposite pole stand the bright walls of the birch forest, which serve as a luminous setting for the naively genuine

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<sup>140</sup> see "house surroundings" on page 205

encounters between Masha, Galtsev and Kholin. In these scenes, the innocence of human contact transcends war realities, and the walls of white birches cut out an impenetrable room from which war is excluded. For Tarkovsky, the character of Masha was a concentration of this innocence, entirely disproportionate and unfitting in the situation of bloodshed front, and it is particularly telling that, when constrained to renounce the initial plan of shooting a substantial bit of the film in this outdoor location, he literally transposed the forest-walled bright enclosure in Masha's room, condensing the forest into walls made up of vertical birch logs, a construction system used in none other of his films. "Another idea Tarkovsky had was to film many of the episodes in the 'wounded' and 'coolly beautiful' birch forest, to give the material 'space and breath'. However, this was not to be; even the scenes shot there between Kholin, Masha and Galtsev were severely criticized, especially by Bogomolov<sup>141</sup> and finally shortened. Yet Tarkovsky was able to capture the forest texture in the dug by constructing it from birch trunks".<sup>142</sup>

*What interests me at all times, and most of all, is precisely the earth.  
I am captivated by the process of growth of everything  
that comes from or grows on the earth: the trees, the grass...  
and all that stretches out toward the sky*<sup>143</sup>

### walls of logs and earth

Revered by Tarkovsky in poems and diary entries as portent of memory-triggering potential<sup>144</sup>, earth, soil, appears in several ways throughout the films. While earthen walls are few, it is useful drawing parallels to similar images occurring in scenes of nature. Earth appears itself in the form of wall, initially in the first dream scenes from *Ivan's Childhood*, while Ivan watches in wonder the play of light through leaves. Part of a dream's crooked logic, spatial relations are here challenged and what should be the ground appears as a vertical wall. Interestingly, the image will be reiterated later on inside the trenches, Galtsev being pictured in similar frames against a background of soil and roots. In this other case, the trench and the soil as wall is once again part of a crooked logic, but this time due to wartime, not to a luminous dream. The same composition of a character against a background of earth wall appears in *Andrei Rublev*, when Foma, one of the apprentices of the painter-monk Andrei, watches the roots of a fallen tree. Though formally similar, here the spatial logics is not challenged, the vertical soil surface being naturally encountered.

*On the well-trodden path/ through the ploughed fields  
Rain has fallen onto the earth/ Making earth mingle with sky.*<sup>145</sup>

In the last episode of *Andrei Rublev: The Bell, Spring-Summer-Winter-Spring 1423–1424*, the boy Boriska (the same actor who had played Ivan in *Ivan's Childhood*) is in charge of casting the bell for the Grand Prince, a craft which requires knowledge of the proper clay from which to build the mould wherein casted metal metamorphoses from numb material into a sounding bell. Here, the temporary wall is dug into the deepest of earth, with the craftsmanship function of "building" ethereal sounds. Apart from such artisan and

<sup>141</sup> Vladimir Bogomolov, author of the novel *Ivan*, after which the film was adapted

<sup>142</sup> Synessios, N. - introduction to the scenario of *Ivan's Childhood* in *Collected Screenplays*, p. 54

<sup>143</sup> Ciment, M., Schnitzer, L. and Schnitzer J. (2006) *The Artist in Ancient Russia and in the New USSR* (interview taken 1969), pp. 16- 31, in J. Gianvito (Ed.) *Andrei Tarkovsky Interviews*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, p. 25

<sup>144</sup> see Chapter 3, p. 83

<sup>145</sup> poem, written by Tarkovsky as a diary entry in 3 June 1973

metaphorical connotations, soil is also used literally as wall construction material throughout *Andrei Rublev*, in episodes where peasant homesteads are depicted. As precise authenticity complying to historical data was sought<sup>146</sup>, huts are built of wooden logs combined with wattle and daub sections. Long and tedious lateral tracking shots across the walls record with accuracy the construction details and the transition between earth and wood.

The log wall, in itself an expression of Russian architectural identity<sup>147</sup>, appears less frequently, but when it does, its image impacts the filmic fabric. Apart from the aforementioned peasant homesteads in *Rublev*, the long episodes of pans across and action against wooden log walls are seen in the childhood memories from *Mirror*, inside the country house whose architectural cinematic presence acquires the weight of an archetypal image for Tarkovsky. The background of wooden log walls pervades all the episodes filmed therein with a strong sensorial sense, maybe not unrelated to how the filming process had happened.

*"[W]e wanted to immerse ourselves in the sensations of the people who had once lived in that house, and had watched the same sunrises and sunsets, the same rains and mists, some forty years previously. [...]What has to be achieved is that degree of authenticity and truthfulness that will leave the audience convinced that within the walls of that set there live human souls".<sup>148</sup>*

Another poignantly inspiring architectural episode happens in *Ivan's Childhood*, not only due to its compositional and textural qualities, which had already been signaled by the screenplay, but maybe even more through the transition conceived within the filmed material. Thus, as Ivan falls asleep and drops of water are dripping from his wet hand, the camera pans upwards to unveil an ephemeral construction formed above his bed, leading towards a bright opening in the ceiling. As the camera moves closer, the uncanny construction reveals itself to be the inside of a well, into which Ivan and his mother are looking. The transition in space is thus, as in many other episodes, doubled by a transition in time and across planes of reality. A dream/ memory of pre-war times, Ivan enters a space of happy warmth, a space whose formal structure and texture is the closest to an archetypal image of home inside this film.

*The director, to build up a mise-en-scene, must work from the psychological state of the characters, through the inner dynamic of the mood of the situation, and bring it all back to the truth of the one, directly observed fact, and its unique texture. Only then will the mise-en-scene achieve the specific, many-faceted significance of actual truth<sup>149</sup>*

<sup>146</sup> Ekran, *The Burning* (interview taken 1965 and published in Ekran 154-157), pp. 12-15, in J. Gianvito (Ed.) *op cit*, p. 13

<sup>147</sup> Lowell, S. (2003) *Summerfolk, A history of the Dacha. 1710-2000*, Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press

<sup>148</sup> (about the filming of *Mirror*) in ST, pp. 136-138

<sup>149</sup> ST, p.74

**wall as texture: luminous**

Among all Tarkovsky films, in shots where the appearance of the wall as a background for a certain scene dominates the composition, the most frequent characteristic is for the wall to have a striking texture. The most common textures distinguished as such are varying in degrees of roughness, ranging from slightly rugged to decaying, ruined.

As opposed to this majority, there are only a very limited number of scenes where walls, appearing as a major compositional element, are bare, devoid of objects, lights or shadows, and have a luminous, smooth texture. Of these, the most compelling is by far the luminous interior of the Grand Prince's mansion, once the stonemasons had finished carving it in whitest marble. Among these scenes is also the one of the two shots from all Tarkovsky oeuvres where a character touches the wall with his/her palm, and the only one where this gesture is made for the simple reason of sensing its texture. The brightness of the work delivered by the stonemasons establishes the character of this sequence, and, in turn, this is enhanced by the poplar puff floating gently as snowflakes around the rooms, like specks of whiteness that had parted from the wall itself.

**wall as texture: smoothly rough, roughly ruined, ruin**

When walls are finished in plaster or render, the lighting is usually positioned as to emphasize the angle and roughness of their textures. From the perspective of wall texture alone, spaces from different films might have been shot within the same all encompassing room. A room of smoothly rough texture would extend from the kitchen in *Stalker* to the hotel room and Maria's room in the countryside cottage from *Nostalghia*, ending in Alexander's study in *Sacrifice*. Another space, of more pronounced rough, peeling, degraded walls, would extend from the narrator's apartment in *Mirror*, to Stalker's bedroom and the antechamber of the Room in *Stalker* to Domenico's house in *Nostalghia*. Finally, extending beyond plastered walls, from the ending scenes in *Ivan's Childhood* to the charred houses and churches in *Rublev*, the nightmares of a decaying house in *Mirror* and the passage towards the Room in *Stalker*, walls are crumbling and burning, pieces of wallpaper are peeling and falling off, in a nostalgic mood of progressing ruin.

The continuity from film to film was not left to chance. Members of the crew tell of how, when working on the set of *Sacrifice*, the entire team watched *Nostalghia*, while the set designer, Anna Asp, and her assistants were focusing on the finish of the walls. Tarkovsky "reminds everyone that he likes the walls to be rough, peeling, but the floors to be smooth and shiny".<sup>150</sup> In one of the versions preparing the film set, Tarkovsky envisaged the walls of Alexander's study as covered in fragments of wallpaper, resembling a quilt. The sketch hand drawn by Tarkovsky resembles closely the texture of the walls preceding the entrance to the Room in *Stalker*, a film for which the set was the direct result of his work. As such, the room in *Sacrifice* where Alexander goes through some of the most dramatic moments of the film, during his prayer for the salvation of the world, he initially visualized as an antechamber to "the Room in which, we are told, everybody's most secret wish will be granted".<sup>151</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Alexander-Garret, L. (2012) *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Collector of Dreams*, London: Glagoslav, p. 85

<sup>151</sup> ST, p. 198

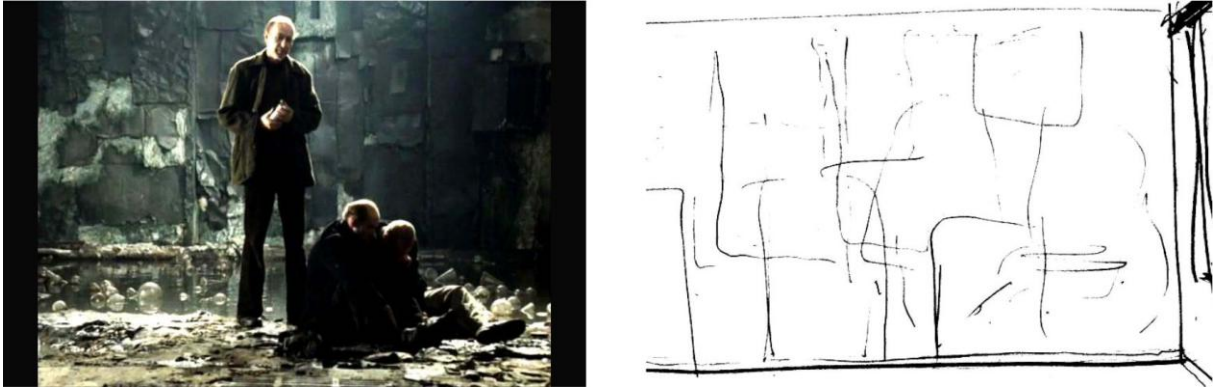


Image 6.7 the threshold of the Room, in *Stalker* (left); Tarkovsky's sketch<sup>152</sup> for the wall of Alexander's study in *Sacrifice* (right)

*"It is sometimes suggested that the actors' position makes no difference: have them standing here by the wall, and talking; take him in close-up and then her; and then they part.*

*But of course the most important thing has not been thought out; and it is not just a question of the director, but also, very often, of the screen writer. [...] One can simply write: 'The characters stop by the wall', and go on to give the dialogue.*

*But what is special about the words that are being uttered, and do they correspond with standing by the wall?*

*The meaning of the scene cannot be concentrated within the words spoken by the characters. [...]*

*As for mise-en-scene, when it corresponds precisely with the spoken word, when there is interaction, a meeting-point between them, then the image is born: the observation-image, absolute and specific".<sup>153</sup>*

### wall verbs: gathering

Beyond the structural functions which a wall might bear, supporting, separating, directing, it is relevant to observe walls as a focal point, a centred "gathering" of attention. As early as *Ivan's Childhood*, despite the previously mentioned feeling of homelessness that runs across the film, a particular scene is concentrating the entire drama of war and loss on one man's "gathered" attention on the wall of his stove. Walking across burnt hills and settlements, Ivan encounters an old man, the only survivor from his village, who is nervously moving around and singing to himself, among the remains of his house. The house had entirely burnt, all walls have crumbled, and the door stands awkwardly on its own, locked in the empty openness. Only the stove and its chimney stand, as a reminder of a wall, and the old man is trying to nail a frame onto it and prepare the house, concentrating his entire attention on it, and getting it ready while he is surreally waiting for his wife, who had been shot "in the henhouse", by a German soldier.

*"An unexceptional, rusty nail not in the least different from those offered to him. The old man picks a rock off the ground and hammers the nail into the stove, between the bricks. Then he takes a glazed frame under his arm and hangs it from the nail. [...]*

*<So Maria will come back... D'you know my old woman, Maria? I'll go get the house ready for her, perhaps she'll come today>".<sup>154</sup>*

<sup>152</sup> from the archives of Kerstin Eriksdotter, Assistant Director for the film *Sacrifice*; source available for research courtesy of the Tarkovsky-dedicated web archive [nostalghia.com](http://nostalghia.com)

<sup>153</sup> ST, pp.74-75

Wall as a focal point, gathering action and gaze onto itself, appears once later, in *Mirror*, first through the telephone hanging from one of the hallway walls, concentrating there the camera's gaze and the diegetic content of the scene, while Ignat speaks to his father. But the more striking moment is when Alexei, the narrator as a young boy, seated on a chair and looking through the room of a strange house, discovers a mirror hanging up there. The scene, unfolding on tunes of Bach, develops as a sentimental climax of the film, the moment when the child looks on himself. While the screenplay mentioned a rather brief encounter:

*"On one of the smoothly planked walls, there hung a dark picture in a heavy frame. [...]"*

*Left alone, I sat down on the chair opposite the mirror and suddenly, not even expecting it myself, saw my reflection in it. I expect I had just got unused to mirrors. They seemed a quite unnecessary item and, therefore, valuable. My reflection had nothing to do with it. It was a blatant insult to the mirror's expensive black frame. I stood up and turned my back on it".<sup>155</sup>*

the film image is, once again, more complete. After a few moments of Alexei watching his reflection in the mirror, the camera switches position, as if entering the mirror, and from within there, watching Alexei as he gazes at the wall.

In *Stalker*, after the Stalker departs, disregarding the arguing talk he had with his wife, who was begging him not to leave again to the Zone, the wife remains alone in the kitchen, sobbing in despair. As the tension is focused on her face, lamenting his departure, the attention is suddenly grasped and the tension lowered, redirected as a white kitchen towel falls on its own from the wall behind.

But it is in *Sacrifice* that walls seem to take on the most "gathering" of functions, magnetically acting upon the characters. As the war had broke and the fear and trembling are rising among the few people of the house, Adelaide, Alexander's wife, becomes increasingly unsettled and, finding no relief in the conversations with the others, moves to cry "at the wall". It is also toward a wall that Alexander face, and the camera's gaze, are directed, as he begins his prayer for a resolve of the war. On the wall, as a focal point of the scene and a gathering of attention, is the reproduction after Leonardo's *Adoration of the Magi*. In fact, during the prayer, Alexander follows a spatial trajectory, from wall to floor, moving from being entirely facing the painting, to a painful sliding down, on his knees. Later on, as Alexander wishes to secretly leave the house, he hides and finds shelter in the darkness of the wall, standing close to it, as Julia, the housemaid, passes by. It is also toward a wall that Alexander unfolds the narration of his mother's home, when visiting Maria's house. Alexander is seated at a piano, playing a tune, then stops and begins his tearful story. Meanwhile, the camera remains constantly perpendicular to the empty, half-lit wall, onto which the piano is placed, as a gathering centre of space, gaze, action and emotion in the scene.

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<sup>154</sup> CS (*Ivan's Childhood*), p. 82

<sup>155</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 286

## FURNISHING

TABLE, CHAIR, BED, CANDLE, LAMP, MIRROR, CURTAINS, HOME OBJECTS

### TABLE

as main image; **outdoor table**; close view on objects on the table; **table verbs**: bringing objects on; reading at; writing at; sitting at; eating at; sitting on; **standing near**

#### outdoor table

The starched table cloth mentioned in the description of the house in *Sacrifice*, Tarkovsky's swan-song film, is but one of the many recurring details with deeper emotional implications that trigger a feeling of belonging.

Going through the previous films, this detail appears with persistence, wherever the idea of place attachment needs to be conveyed and the fact that it was not left for the set-design stage of the film process, but was carefully mentioned in the script, makes it all the more significant. Its connection with place memory is evident all throughout, for instance, when the protagonist of *Nostalghia*, a Russian writer travelling through Italy, dreams of his home, which he visualizes in painful detail: "*the dull dawn pours through the high window with its cracked ship's windows, and rests on the starched white tablecloth*". In film, however, the table appears outside, far from the building, as he dreams of his wife looking towards their house. The table is clothed in white, and Maria, his wife, is wiping the glasses with another white cloth, as if laying the table, in expectance for everyone to come. In the words of Tarkovsky's son, in such moments, as the warmth of setting the table, the physicality of the object table acted as the support of a moment generating togetherness: "*in our house you had to always sit at the table for dinner, lunch, breakfast, he was very strict [...] all the family should be at the table at the same time, nobody could walk around, it wasn't allowed, because he was very old fashioned in this. That I remember very well! Well, this was the time for all of us to reunite and talk. Of course he was there the centre point of the thing!*"<sup>156</sup>

This association with a feeling of home which the presence of tables, particularly covered in white, is thus no more a seemingly random choice of set-design, as furthermore revealed in the screenplay of *The Mirror* (1975): "*It is as though my memory does not let me forget the most important things. Sometimes this even makes me want to revisit heart-rendingly dear places. [...] And among the tall birch trees is a wooden, two-storey building. The building where I was born, and where my father - Nikolai Mateevich, a provincial doctor - delivered me, on a starched table cloth thrown over the dining room table forty years ago*".<sup>157</sup>

However, when placed outside the house, the image of the table with its neatly arranged table cloth, produces a feeling of displacement or painful nostalgia. In *Mirror*, it appears briefly when the narrator describes his memories of home, and then returns later during the dreams/ nightmares with the child approaching the house. This time, the table is no longer set close to the house, but elsewhere, uncannily stranded in the forest, while the sudden gusts of wind swipe away from its surface the familiar home objects, the table cloth

<sup>156</sup> Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky, *quoted interview*

<sup>157</sup> CS (*Mirror*), p. 298



and pieces of bread. This distancing between the table - oddly situated in the middle of the field - and the house, is repeated in the painful reveries of Andrei, in *Nostalghia*. The familial and warm atmosphere described in the beginning of *Sacrifice*, "there are women on the planking of the terrace, spreading a white starched table cloth on a table. There is an aroma of smoke and home baking"<sup>158</sup> does not endure with the mere repetition of the element. The instances when the characters are portrayed seated at this outdoor table are two: once, in the evening following the nuclear war, as Alexander sneaks away from the house, in his visit to Maria, and later, in the following morning, when Marta reads out for Adelaide and Victor the strange letter dated June 19th 1985, written by Alexander. Both instances contain a painful disruption in the wholeness of the family, with a sense of impending catastrophe, and thus the warm, homely image of the white-laid table is but a serene counterpoint that enhances the rupture.

## CURTAIN

rain, forest, curtains of nature; dark curtains; **curtains filled with light**; **curtain verbs: breathing, shivering**

*Just now in the empty house  
The doors were gently closed.  
They've taken the lace from the window,  
And boarded up the frames  
Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry 2 June 1973*

### **curtains filled with light, curtain verbs: breathing, shivering**

Curtains populate the majority of Tarkovskian houses, either filmic or actually built and inhabited by him. But the instances of curtains bringing light within the house through their vapourous textures are peculiar two some distinct cases. The first such moment happens in *Mirror*, when the child, Alexei, sleeps and is woken up by the distant hiss of a train. Initially, the scene plays in colour mode, then, after a jump cut to the forest hedges moved by the wind, the scene replays almost identically, but this time in black and white. The only difference beside the colour range, and almost passing unnoticed, is the change in the thickness of the curtains. In the first - colour - scene, the bed wherein the child sleeps is close to a window covered by a dark heavy curtain, which leaves only rays of light to come in. In the second - black and white - scene, the heavy dark curtain had been lifted, and the window is now covered in luminous lace, which irradiates over the bed where Alexei had woken up. Against this bright background where the lacy curtain seems to absorb the light, we see Alexei standing up and, with greatest expectance, whispering "Papa!" Based on biographical facts, we can relate this episode with the years of war, when the children Andrei and Marina, and Maria, their mother, were all waiting for the return of Arseny from the front, trembling at every sound of the distant train. The image of the bright curtains, this time moving, flowing and filling the space with light, returns at the end of the film, when the child - narrator - eventually reaches the interiority of the remembered childhood house. This scene has been described at length<sup>159</sup>, explaining the connection between choice of the bright veils and the waters in which the house had been sunken.

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<sup>158</sup> CS (*Sacrifice*), p. 513

<sup>159</sup> see Chapter 3, pp. 99-100

Ten years after the filming of *Mirror*, the element of bright, floating curtains, returns in *Sacrifice*. They are a prerequisite prop element in the film set for the room of Little Man - the child of Alexander. In the call sheets made available by Kerstin Eiksdotter, assistant director for *Sacrifice*, the scenes shot in Little Man's room are divided as follows: "scenes 102-103: Little Man is sleeping. Alexander watches him. The curtain is breathing; scenes 122-123: Shivering curtain; scenes 174-176: Curtain without any movements".<sup>160</sup> The multitude of ways to represent and almost impersonate the movement of curtains is truly fascinating, and the scenes shot in Little Man's room are a veritable testimony to these "verbs" nuances of the element "curtain". "A pump is set up in the studio - an air compressor, resembling a huge intestine, to create the effect of the 'breathing curtains'. Like a conductor Andrei directs the visual and lighting effects of this 'breathing'; his hand goes up, the curtains inhale, and the light intensifies; his hand goes down, the curtains exhale and the light fades. 'The curtain swells, swells... and swells some more, and then it slowly deflates' he commands, rising up on the tips of his toes and then descending into a plié".<sup>161</sup> Moreover, the layout of the corner of the room wherein the bed of Little Man and the window are set is designed in such a way that a mirror nailed onto the adjacent wall to the window absorbs and enhances the light which these curtains are "breathing" into the room. "In order to emphasize the effect of the 'breathing' curtains, Andrei asks Kicki<sup>162</sup> to hang the mirror in such a way that it reflects their movement. The entire morning is devoted to finding the precise ideal position for the mirror".<sup>163</sup> The analogy and spatial metaphor embedded in these scenes is quite literal - as Little Man represents the one source of life and hope in Alexander's existence, and one of the main motivations for his "sacrifice". "One could imagine nothing could be simpler than this static shot - a little boy asleep, not moving at all, and the 'breathing' curtains! But here the trick was to balance out the carefree breathing of the boy with the breath of the sweet summer breeze as it wafts into the room, and with the intensity of the light, that changes in accordance with the cadence of this breath".<sup>164</sup> As such, other moments in the film when Alexander is portrayed next to light-filled curtains are related either to Little Man, or to the difficult decision which Alexander takes in order to "save the world". In the beginning of the film, in one of the first scenes shot inside the house, at one moment the long curtains are filled by a sudden gust of wind and flow, filled with light, inside the room. Just then, Alexander says to Victor, speaking of his son: "I'm very attached to him". (*Sacrifice* 0:25:27)

Viewing these two films in the light of "breathing", bright curtains, it seems relevant to notice the parallel between the child in *Mirror* waiting for his father, and the father in *Sacrifice* thinking dearly of his child. The visual element of flowing, luminous curtains therefore embodies a filial and paternal attachment and seems to be apt in doing so through the very nature of curtains, that receive both wind and light, solidifying and visualizing their effect on the inner spaces of a house. And maybe illuminating those inner rooms where longing resides.

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<sup>160</sup> call sheet 41-45 for studio 1, dated 30 May 1985, © Swedish Film Institute and K. Eiksdotter; published on [nostalghia.com](http://nostalghia.com)

<sup>161</sup> Alexander-Garret, L. *op cit*, p. 195

<sup>162</sup> Kicki Ilander, the Assistant Art Director for *Sacrifice*

<sup>163</sup> Alexander-Garret, L. *op cit*, p. 195

<sup>164</sup> *idem*, pp. 196-197

## FRAGMENTS, TRIGGERS

TREE, FIRE, CHURCH, ICONS, WELL, STOVE, BELL, **BIRD/ WINGS**, ANIMALS, FLOWERS, SNOW, MILK, BOOKS, PAINTINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, PAPER

### BIRD/ WINGS

Out of the many visual and spatial fragments that act as associative triggers, linking scenes from different films, and bringing to life distant memories, for this precise selection I have chosen the smaller category of "bird wings", due to its dual audio and visual nature, and mostly because of its occurrences inside spaces of the most diverse kind: indoor, outdoor, in between.

As a visual presence, birds flying appear first in *Rublev*. During the sacking of the medieval Vladimir town, in a long panoramic shot over the walls under siege, in the foreground some geese are seen, desperately flying. Members of the film crew were narrating afterwards that they had no idea where Tarkovsky managed to bring them from, right at the moment of shooting that scene. Another, symbolical bird appears at the end of the film, in a detail from Rublev's Annunciation icon. The dove portrayed here symbolizes the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Virgin Mary, and its depiction at the beginning of Tarkovsky's filmography seems to provide a proper key of understanding some of the other instances where birds appear throughout the other films. In *Mirror*, birds appear in some key, specific moments. As a continuation from *Rublev*, the first time we see a bird is on the windowsill of the narrator's apartment, right beside the wall on which a poster of Tarkovsky's film *Andrei Rublev*, depicting an icon of Rublev's Holy Trinity is hung. Later in the film, a bird descends and sits on the head of the orphaned and meek child, Asafiev, as a gentle protective presence; later on, another one flies above Mother who, seconds after Father had gently stroked her hand, is floating above her bed, during the levitation scene. In this latter scene, we hear Mother's voice saying: "Don't be so surprised. I love you"<sup>165</sup>, after which the bird is seen traversing the room. The bird then crosses through spaces and time frames, and is seen in the next shot flying past the wind-blown hedges surrounding the dacha, as the third dream of approaching the childhood house unfolds. It is only now, after the flight of this bird opened the way, that the child eventually succeeds in opening the door and entering this "bittersweet site". Uniting such moments from disparate films, the subtle connection which Tarkovsky makes between meekness, genuine love and the presence of God in man becomes increasingly visible. To conclude the occurrences of birds in *Mirror*, when - toward the ending of the film, after the doctor is consulting the terminally ill narrator, by his bedside, the camera moves to a medium close-up on the hand of the narrator, holding an injured bird and, eventually, setting her free. This is the first and only view of the narrator, who had constantly stayed "behind" the screen during the film: merely a hand, setting free a bird. Incidentally, it was Tarkovsky playing this scene. In later films the presence and closeness of birds in key scenes is still maintained - such as the doves on the windowsill of the Russian dacha which Andrei dreams of, in *Nostalghia*, which come as an echo of the scene in the narrator's apartment from *Mirror*. However, in the later films, these occurrences tend to subdue their visual character, as will be details in what follows.

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<sup>165</sup> *Mirror* (1:33:58)

There are a number of scenes that could pass unnoticed, since this recurring "bird flying" element is not visible on screen, the film playing with the use of off-screen sound. The term off-screen sound defines those moments when the diegetic source of the sound lies outside the boundaries of the screen space. Thus, according to the reputed film scholar Christian Metz, it is wrongly termed as off-screen sound: "*In a film a sound is considered 'off' when in fact it is the sound's source that is off the screen. We tend to forget that a sound in itself is never 'off': either it is audible or it doesn't exist. When it exists, it could not possibly be situated within the interior of the rectangle or outside it, since the nature of sounds is to diffuse themselves more or less into the entire surrounding space: sound is simultaneously 'in' the screen, in front, behind, around, and throughout the entire movie theatre. We claim that we that we are talking about sound, but we are actually thinking of the visual image of the sound's source*".<sup>166</sup> The present category of sounds, narrative articulations or associative triggers, belongs to such instances. We speak of their source, a flying bird, but it is the sound beyond the screen which we recognize from so many everyday encounters. It is not just the smooth sound of a flying bird, but that particular "beating" noise made by the action of air flow on the wing, during lifting.

This happens initially in *Stalker*, as the Writer approaches the house of the Zone, despite being warned not to proceed on his own, as dangers might lurk at any point. After the camera follows him from behind, as he moves in almost slow motion and complete silence, the viewpoint shift and we gaze at him from within the house, as wind suddenly grows louder, making grasses and tree leaves audible. Suddenly, the sound of a bird taking off is heard, as a voice - whose origin we do not know - shouts "*Stop, don't move!*" All three characters remain astonished as to where the voice might have come from, but also amazed at the fact that the Writer was thus protected from imminent peril.

In *Nostalgia*, Andrei is seen walking through the magnificent ruin of a church, as in voice over we hear the dialogue<sup>167</sup>:

"Lord, do you see how he's asking? Say something to him!"

"Let him feel Your presence."

"I always do, but he's not aware of it."

right after this, the sound of a bird taking off is heard, and the viewpoint of the camera switches upwards, towards a broken roof, from where a feather is slowly falling.

This sounds occurs once more, in *Sacrifice*, after Alexander has been telling his son about how him and his wife had found the house they live in and where him, the child was born. Alexander repeatedly and affectionately asks his son if he likes his house, then, noticing that while he was speaking, Little Man has disappeared in the pine groves, he looks around with loving searching gaze. In this Father's search for his son, a bird taking off is once more heard.

<sup>166</sup> Metz, C. (1985) Aural Objects, pp. 154-161, in E. Weis and J. Belton (Ed.) *op cit*, p. 156

<sup>167</sup> quoted also earlier in this chapter, p. 204

## SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

### TRANSITIONS THROUGH SPACE, LAYOUT, CORNERS

In the construction and organization of the film space's internal logic, some central notions are essential. First of all, there is **the shot**, the framing of a particular portion in space, **the type of gaze** which the camera employs towards this portion, a low, straight or high angle. Shots could be classified based on the distances between camera and the subject, their relation to the narrative flow of the film, the movement and action within and of the screen. The camera allows for a different manipulation of space within the shot, than as one would operate on it in design: *"the very density [...] and perspective of action-space can be altered at will by the use of a variety of camera lenses. Wide angle lenses stretch out the visible space along the axis perpendicular to the screen, create apparently greater distances and more sharply visible perspective. Motion becomes different depending upon direction, accelerating along the perpendicular axis. [...] Telephoto lenses have the opposite effect - flatten the space, squash it together along the perpendicular axis so that objects seem all on the same plane, crowded together. With very long focus lenses motion becomes almost impossible in the perpendicular axis; speeding cars hang motionless on the brow of a hill; men run forever in the same spot"*.<sup>168</sup> The shot is then further defined by the **movement of the camera** within it, whether it be static, or crossing it in a continuous tracking movement, a rotating pan, a pan from down upwards. The movement within the space given rise to the inner rhythm of each shot, and is one of the rationales for flowingly joining two shots of similar rhythm together. Finally, the space within the shot is highly defined by **the space outside** of it. *"At any moment in a film we feel sure that the camera could move and reveal further details of the world we now see. It does not end at the frame line, as the space of a painting does, or with the walls of an interior we see, as the space of a stage usually does. There is always more beyond that could be shown; our perception of a film almost includes a feeling of assurance about this. Thus a sort of implicit continuity complements the perceptual discontinuity of action-space"*.<sup>169</sup>

These essential elements of the shot are at play in **the cut**, the tool for splicing together of two subsequent shots. The masterful handling of cuts is the basis for differentiating between the approach of merely documenting spaces through film and, on the other hand, the art of creatively construction of filming space. The adjoining of shots together, also known as film **editing**, can be of several types: **continuity editing**, in which certain basic rules of maintaining spatial orientation should be followed - such as preserving a fragment of space from one shot to the next, maintaining the position of the camera in the same axis of the space, placing the characters at appropriate angles for a relation of the type shot-reverse shot; **partial discontinuity/ elliptic editing**, in which - despite not following the continuity rules, we get a strong sense of having "jumped" over a fragment of time or space, and thus can relate to the previously seen space: *"While showing a space different in every way from the space visible in shot A, shot B can show a space that is obviously in close proximity to the spatial fragment previously seen (it may, for instance, be in the same room or other closed or circumscribed space). This type of spatial discontinuity has given rise to a whole vocabulary dealing*

<sup>168</sup> Sesonske, A. (1973) Cinema Space, pp. 399-409 in D. Carr and E. Casey (Ed.) *Explorations in Phenomenology*, Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague, pp. 404-405

<sup>169</sup> idem, p. 406

*with spatial orientation*".<sup>170</sup> Some of the basic terms in this vocabulary are the match-cuts, eye-line match, matching movement direction and matching screen direction. The third type of editing, which preserves none of the continuity principles, is the **discontinuity editing**, which joins together two shots of the most diverse nature and from clearly - or not so clearly - different places, thus challenging the perception of the viewers and their orientation in space.

Discontinuity editing is one of the techniques advanced in the early Soviet film school, especially by Eisenstein, the promoter of montage, who claimed that joining together shots of diverse content, the mind of the viewer is urged to move associate intellectually the connection between shots of such different content and, in doing so, the two shots edited together create a third filmic entity, the mind association which operates beyond the visible things. Together with Eisenstein, the Russian montage theorists, and some film critics such as Béla Balázs and Rudolf Arnheim believe that the virtue of cinema lies precisely in its ability to manipulate everyday perception into an altered form of filmic perception, through montage and framing. Contrary to this trend, there are film critics such as Siegfried Kracauer and André Bazin, who consider the essence of cinema as being its ability to reproduce reality and its visible and not so visible phenomena. From this reality-focused perspective, Kracauer proposes a reconsideration of the montage effect advanced by Lev Kuleshov<sup>171</sup>; he thus sees the juxtapositions of different shots as an inherently spatial mechanism and terms it *creative geographies*: "*pictures of material phenomena taken in different places are juxtaposed in such a way that their combination evokes the illusion of a spatial continuity which of course is found nowhere in nature. The artificial space thus created is mostly intended as an excursion into the realm of fantasy, which does not imply that it might not as well be made to bring out inherent potentialities of physical reality itself*".<sup>172</sup>

Kracauer's view comes closer to the types of discontinuous spatial continuity found all throughout Tarkovsky's films. These become justified when one thinks that Tarkovsky has been seeking to portray the inner worlds of consciousness, memory and dream, that even in mind operate with precisely such unexpected juxtapositions. Tarkovsky was openly expressing his discontent with the montage theories and, despite the fact that he uses and constantly reinvents discontinuity editing, he separates himself from the thinking of Eisenstein, through the mode of applying these editing cuts: if Eisenstein and the montage theorists aim to achieve a third mental entity rising from the intellectual association of two disparate shots, Tarkovsky operates on the "sensed" logic that unites two shots, and does not seek for that third intellectual entity to arise from this association, but merely aims for a flowing of the film. "*Editing is ultimately no more than the ideal variant of the assembly of the shots, necessarily contained within the material that has been put onto the roll of film. Editing a picture correctly, competently, means allowing the separate scenes and shots to come together spontaneously, for in a sense they edit themselves; they join up according to their own intrinsic pattern. It is simply a question of recognising and following this pattern while joining and cutting. It is not always easy to sense the pattern of relationships, the articulations between the shots; moreover,*

<sup>170</sup> Burch, N. (1973) *Theory of Film Practice*, New York: Praeger Publishers, p. 9

<sup>171</sup> Lev Vladimirovich Kuleshov (1899-1970), Russian filmmaker and theorist, who, believing that the essence of cinema is in the way it joins together disjointed shots, proposed to exemplify the effect of montage through a simple exercise now known as "the Kuleshov effect", with simple juxtapositions that lead to altered sense of perceiving emotions

<sup>172</sup> Kracauer, S. *op cit*, p. 48

*if the scene has been shot inexactly, you will have not merely to join the pieces logically and naturally at the editing table, but laboriously to seek out the basic principle of the articulations. Little by little, however, you will slowly find emerging and becoming clearer the essential unity contained within the material".<sup>173</sup>*

### TRANSITIONS THROUGH SPACE

Working towards spatial coherence and orientation, the discontinuous type of editing as applied by Tarkovsky articulates interesting fluid spatial configurations, elements and transitions of the most diverse nature serving to move through or between spaces. Some of these techniques will be summarized in what follows.

#### establishing shots

In classic guidelines of filmmaking, once a new spatial layout is introduced, there should be a shot in which it should be visible the entire - or a significant part - of the inner or outer space of the scene that is about to happen. When speaking of interior spaces, this establishing shot is a means of entering inside the house, familiarizing ourselves with its layout, and then navigating through it along with the action. However, Tarkovsky maintains a distance from this technique, and constantly reinvents his own establishing shots, of entering the inside of a house through narrow views on portions and details of its space. Two significant instances of this are visible in *Sacrifice*. The film starts at the shore of the sea, then follows the characters as they move across meadows and pine groves, speaking of the house which we guess should be very near. However, we see the house neither from outside, nor from the inside, before the close-up shot of Alexander's hands flicking through an album of Orthodox icons, and speaking about their serene beauty. The aural composition of the scene signals that we are in an interior space, and in the later shot we see half of the living room, and Alexander looking at his album that lies on the windowsill. Our entrance in the house is through the pages of the book. This mechanism is maintained for Maria's house, when Alexander visits her. After the shot of the exterior of the house, Alexander knocking on the door and Maria appearing in the doorway holding a lamp, there is a jump cut inside the house, where we find ourselves alone, looking at the religious-themed embroideries on the walls, panning along the wall on a multitude of devotional objects in front of a mirror. It is through this vague, unclear mirror, behind a foreground crucifix and a vase on which we distinguish the letters "Russia...", that we see Alexander and Maria entering the room. In this case, the reinvented establishing shot were the embroidery and the mirror.

#### shot/reverse shot

The combination of shot/reverse shot is thought to ensure both spatial orientation and narrative cohesion to a scene. We see a person looking in a certain direction, then the next shot should portray what is seen, what that person looks at. The principle is so well established predominantly in dialogue scenes, that - when seeing the image of a person

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<sup>173</sup> ST, p. 116

looking intently in a direction, we automatically presume the next shot will reveal what he/she had been looking at.

Tarkovsky uses and reinvents this principle to achieve sweeping transitions between inside and outside, reality and memory, dream and reality. Some relevant episodes are seen in *Nostalghia*: at the beginning of the film, Eugenia has gone inside the church that hosts Piero della Francesca's painting *Madonna del Parto*, while Andrei refuses and waits outside. Toward the end of Eugenia's wanderings through the church, the viewer's gaze is drawn, along with Eugenia's, closer and closer to the painting. After a long contemplation of the painting, the following shot shows Andrei looking intently ahead. Rigorously following the rules of eye line matching, Andrei's gaze after the image of the painting could have been a typical case of shot/ reverse shot. However, the painting is inside the church, while Andrei is depicted against an exterior background. The next shot shows Maria, Andrei's wife, and, again in keeping with eye line match requirements, we understand that Andrei was in fact looking not at the painting, but at the recollected image of his wife. Later in the film we hear him comparing her to the Piero della Francesca's painting.

Another such play between inside and outside through shot/reverse shot happens when Andrei goes to visit Domenico, the "mad Mathematician" from Bagno Vignoni. After Domenico enters the house, we see Andrei standing in the middle of the doorway leading in. The following shot seems to be the reverse, shot from the inside looking out, and thus could have been the corresponding "reverse", as a door is seen on a wall, its position being a match with the previous shot. However, this one is closed, the previous one had been open, and, in the third shot, we see Andrei appearing in front of the camera, already inside the house. Only then do we clearly realize that the door was a different one.

### ellipses in space

Such examples prove the use of a particular ellipse in space, which are plentiful. In Domenico's house, Andrei is seen at the right edge of a wall shelf; the camera then pans leftward along the shelf, leaving Andrei behind; as it keeps moving along the shelf, we find Andrei standing at the left edge of the wall, as if he had moved, during and behind the panning motion of the camera.

### windowsill

Two ellipses in space of a peculiar type are employed in two scenes: in *Mirror* and in *Sacrifice*. During one of the dreams of return to the childhood home, in the foreground we see a windowsill on which lie a vase and a knife, a corner of a lace curtain framing the view. In the background, the child Alexei is seen moving away from the window, from the house. As the camera pans upwards, to reveal the direction toward which the child is moving, we realize our viewpoint is situated deep within the forest surrounding the house, far from the house, while the house itself is visible far in the distance, as the child slowly approaches it. The windowsill therefore embodies a dreamlike loop through and in-between spaces.

The same mechanism is applied in one of the dream sequences of *Sacrifice*. We see Alexander seated on a chair, looking out a window overlooking a snowy yard and, as the camera keeps pans upwards, we see Alexander passing in front of the window. Through the



framing tool of the windowsill, Alexander appears to be staying within, looking at himself passing by, outside, in a similar dreamlike inverted spatial logic.

### curtain

Another element of transition frequently used for smoothly jump cuts, not so much of a spatial nature, as rather a temporal order, the curtains are falling and moving by themselves in several scenes, making the transition between two different perceptual regime. In the previously mentioned scene from *Sacrifice*, as Alexander gazes out the window, a heavy, yet transparent curtain falls on its own, revealing Maria's house across the yard, and Alexander's walking by.

The mechanism is repeated in other films as well. In *Nostalghia*, Domenico approaches the door of his house, and, as he remembers the moment when his wife left him walking along the same corridor, a curtain falls, porously separating and uniting physical reality from/to the painful memory. In *Mirror*, after the initial scenes of lucid reminisces from the world of childhood, then the uncanny oneiric reconfigurations of memories, we see the image of a curtain that is gently moving, revealing the apartment of the narrator - the one who had been remembering and dreaming these moving images of before. The following shots will pan around and track through the apartment, revealing the present reality of the narrator, through his everyday environment. The curtain is thus the element smoothly "cutting" from dreaming to awaking. Circling the compositional unity, towards the ending of the film, another curtain pulls itself away from the frame of a doorway, as it reveals a luminous corner of the childhood house.

## MOVING IMAGES OF HOME. CONCLUSIONS.

The categories presented so far are but a threshold toward the fascinating world of constructing architectural experience out of - and inside - the filmic space. The selection presented in this chapter aimed to provide some glimpses into the places, construction immaterials, spatial elements, furnishing, triggers and spatial organizations that were identified over the course of this research. Having embarked upon describing all of them, the thesis would have become at least ten times lengthier than its present version.

Such an exhaustive description would have done justice to the richness in Tarkovsky's spatial universe, as inner links and connections abound in each of the categories listed in the beginning of this chapter. Such a comprehensive approach might have also better demonstrated the applicability of the phenomenographic method.

However, with the limitations of the present frame, applying an architectural phenomenographic reading to the films allowed for at least one definite conclusion to emerge: that if the filmmaker had himself finely grasped the essence of dwelling phenomena, his films will be carrying his experiences as a paper carries the inscribed meanings of a text. These meanings can, in turn, be understood, decoded and experienced by the viewer.

From the specific case of Tarkovsky's films read through the phenomenographic method, there springs the conclusion that the architectural worlds which we carry within us, constructed on the course of time from memories that we are aware or unaware of, are structured around some definite and luminously real material and spatial elements. These material elements, after having sunk in the inner worlds of our minds and souls, embody more than just the function attributed to them in pragmatic thinking; they are the carriers of experience, meaningful, genuine, awakening experience. Their images, reiterating over time, rediscovered in unknown emplacements or in some secluded corners of the memory, are moving fragments of the homes we carry within us.

They are our moving images of home.

*We carry with us the dwelling place of our soul, like the turtle carries its shell.*<sup>174</sup>  
(Andrei Tarkovsky, 1984)

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<sup>174</sup>To *Journey Within*, Tarkovsky interviewed by Gideon Bachmann in the Swedish film journal *Chaplin*, no. 193, September 1984, translated and republished on *nostalghia.com* (last accessed 20 January 2015)



**Image 6.8** Andrei Tarkovsky in Gotland, on the set of *Sacrifice*, holding a photograph of the house of the film, depicted together with its miniature model; in film, this miniature was a gift from a son to his father, while the film was dedicated by Tarkovsky to his son; image ©SFI, dated summer 1985

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Second Conversation about HOME

PHENOMENOGRAPHY, the cinematic space of APPEARANCES

Staging a Conversation between Bergman and Tarkovsky

KEY FINDINGS and CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

LIMITATIONS of the Study

FUTURE RESEARCH

LEAVING THE DOOR AJAR: CONCLUSIONS



Image 7.1 "This is home. Everything else is dreams and unreality"<sup>1</sup> Ingmar Bergman on the island of Fårö, early 1960s ©IBF

## PHENOMENOGRAPHY, the cinematic space of APPEARANCES

### Architectural Relevance of Phenomenographic Categories

In his 2003 lecture "*Atmospheres. Architectural Environments: Surrounding Objects*", Swiss architect Peter Zumthor<sup>2</sup> asks himself what is it that moves people and inspires architects, in the image of a building: "*Quality in architecture does not - not to me anyway - mean inclusion in architectural guides or histories of architecture or getting my work into this or that publication. Quality architecture to me is when a building manages to move me. What on earth is it that moves me? How can I get it into my own work? How could I design something like the room in that photograph - one of my favourite icons, a building I have never seen, in fact I think it no longer exists - a building I just love looking at? [...] One word for it is atmosphere*".<sup>3</sup> Vague as it is, the concept of *atmosphere* in architectural thinking can mostly be pinned down to some material and perceptual elements that can generate it. In the previously mentioned talk, Zumthor distinguishes nine such major chapters that have a great bearing on the atmosphere the place might have: *the body of architecture* (the material presence of things in a building); *the compatibility of materials* (sensing the presence and weight of textures); *the sound of the space*<sup>4</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> see page 143

<sup>2</sup> "I'm a great fan of Tarkovsky, of course. I like his book *Sculpting in Time* very much", Peter Zumthor in a 2009 interview by Patrick Lynch, for the *Architects Journal*: [www.architectsjournal.co.uk/the-critics/peter-zumthor-speaks-to-the-architects-journal/5200097.article](http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/the-critics/peter-zumthor-speaks-to-the-architects-journal/5200097.article) (Last accessed February 2016)

<sup>3</sup> Zumthor, P. (2005) *Atmospheres. Architectural Environments: Surrounding Objects*. Basel: Birkhäuser, p. 10

<sup>4</sup> "there are buildings that have a wonderful sound, telling me I can feel at home, I'm not alone" - Zumthor, P. *op cit*, p.32

*the temperature of a space*<sup>5</sup>; *surrounding objects*<sup>6</sup>; *between composure and seduction* (the way in which architecture involves movement and temporality); *tension between interior and exterior* (involving thresholds, crossings); *levels of intimacy* (questions of scale, or proximity and distance involved in architecture); *the light on things* (where and how the light falls on things in space). Despite when taken separately these questions can be solved, quantified, discussed as a recipe for obtaining an *atmospheric* architecture, the actual atmosphere of a place eludes discourse, remaining something only to be experienced, sensed, guessed.

Paraphrasing, in relation to Tarkovsky's films and in an effort with similar aims as Zumthor's attempt to find the roots of places' atmosphere, the previous sections tried to answer the question: "What on earth is it that moves us? How can we get it into our own work? How could we design something like the room in that film?" In other words, given a relatively spread and well-known current appreciation of Tarkovsky's oeuvre among architecture circles<sup>7</sup>, the present research zooms in on the places of these films, on the manner in which they *appear* on film, seeking to find the material, perceivable and associative patterns that create a sense of place, a sense of home. For film critics, "atmosphere is, by definition, a vague and elusive concept, denoting that which permeates the cinematic narrative while remaining invisible on-screen".<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Tarkovsky himself was against a deliberate search for this atmosphere of a picture: "it is not necessary to create atmosphere on purpose. It appears itself out of the task which the author resolves";<sup>9</sup> "it is necessary to eliminate any vague or unspoken elements, everything that is usually called the <poetic atmosphere>, [which] people usually try diligently and intentionally to create on screen".<sup>10</sup>

Due to such views, Tarkovsky's works, while infused with a profound atmosphere of home, of familiarity and belonging, are loyal radiographies of real, unmediated spatial experiences. It is because of this that the phenomenographic categories described in the previous chapter, the categories of architectural experience recurrent through his seven films, provide fruitful material for the architectural community. By thus exploring the spatial world of Tarkovsky's films, in close conjunction with his topographical biography, the elusive spatial atmospheres that charm and puzzle the viewer, comes closer to an architectural type of scrutiny, becomes tangible, more familiar, more present. The discussion envelops abstract notions of homeliness, nostalgia and memory, but is grounded in actual material elements as doors, windows, walls and floors and perceptual categories such as sound, silence, light or textures. Therefore, through the phenomenographic categories, an architect may look at these simplest elements of a building and read them in their associative and representational context. Adjoined by biographical/autobiographical information intrinsically linked to these elements, the material reality of architecture presented in film is thus transfigured, potentially shedding a new light on understanding

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<sup>5</sup> "it's in what I see, what I feel, what I touch, even with my feet" - Zumthor, P. *op cit*, p.34

<sup>6</sup> "you find things come together in a very caring, loving way" - Zumthor, P. *op cit*, p.34

<sup>7</sup> see pp. 10-11 in the Introduction for more on this topic

<sup>8</sup> Bird, R. (2008) *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema*. London: Reaktion Books, p. 211

<sup>9</sup> Verina, T. (1979) Tarkovski o Tarkovskom: pochti semeinyi razgovor (*Tarkovsky about Tarkovsky: an informal talk*), *Kultura zhizn*, no. 10/1979, p. 23

<sup>10</sup> Tarkovsky, A. (1977) *Pered novymi zadachami (Facing New Challenges)*, pp. 116-117, *Issutsvo kino*, no. 7/1977, p. 117

home-ness. It is thus another type of post-occupancy study, more narrative, more immersive and poetic, but at the same time more experiential, more palpable and real.

*Ordinary objects were at once transfigured,  
Everything - the jug, the basin - when  
Placed between us like a sentinel  
Stood water, laminary and firm.<sup>11</sup>*

### Inhabiting the space of appearances

Several paths might open up from architecturally viewing homes in these films. First of all, while, as viewers, we are immersed within their cinematic reality, a perceptual reality which transcends the narrative fabric, we recognize these home spaces as our own, something of our own past emerges, as primordial spatial experiences. We do perceive a certain unfamiliarity from the architectural enclosures we move through beyond the screen, yet, something from our own dwelling memories is activated. This interesting duality of familiarity and uncanny, mediated by the surface of moving images and by the film's gaze, is an experiential exploration of what architect and historian Anthony Vidler<sup>12</sup> was searching for through various literary and architectural examples: namely - the luminous contours of homeliness, distinguished through the gloomy shades of the uncanny. In the most recent book on the relation between place, memory and the uncanny, philosopher Dylan Trigg writes: "*The uncanny's dual nature of being hidden and familiar concurrently points to the singularly peculiar quality of the memory of place in particular. [...] A chance encounter with an unfamiliar place can invoke a manifold response in the lived-body, the origin of which is not solely traceable to the objective features of the place, such as light, heat, and atmosphere. The place arouses something in the body, an intermingling of different sensations. Unaware of the precise orientation of the body's stirrings, the visitor to the place is left with only a vague sense of uncertainty if not anxiety. In the conjunction of body and place, something of the past is invoked, but it is not quite clear what and whose past is at stake*".<sup>13</sup> All the more so when the encounter between the lived body and the unfamiliar space is mediated by a filmic representation, which, despite operating on the same perceptual regimes as an actual experience would, speaks to us through a surface of appearances.

This opens up a second path, where the discussion dwells on the priority of *appearances* in the film viewing experience. In cinema, concepts, emotions and ideas are condensed and transmitted through a finite set of signifiers that *appear* as audio-visual elements. Cinematic visible and audible *appearances* therefore have a capacity of containing an invisible complexity that lies beyond the film fabric. This quality of film seems to craftily illustrate *phenomenology* as the term was first introduced by Lambert<sup>14</sup> in 1764, to be a doctrine of appearances, which allows us to proceed from appearances to truth. The surface of moving images, then, resembles the "*space of appearance*" proposed by philosopher Hannah Arendt<sup>15</sup> as an epitome for world or the public space, a stage for life, where

<sup>11</sup> Arseni Tarkovsky, *First Meetings*, translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair, published in ST, pp. 100-101

<sup>12</sup> Vidler, A. (1992) *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

<sup>13</sup> Trigg, D. (2013) *Memory of Place: A Phenomenology of the Uncanny*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, p. 34

<sup>14</sup> see page 30

<sup>15</sup> Arendt, H. (1958) *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

individuality moves into collective togetherness and meanings turn from subjectivity into political interaction. Her thoughts on the plurality of viewpoints<sup>16</sup> embedded in this *space of appearance* through the possibility of "*seeing and being seen*", hearing and being heard are similar to the thoughts often quoted within this thesis, that equate the film experience with a public, intersubjective space: "*the film experience uniquely opens up and exposes the inhabited space of direct experience as a condition of singular embodiment and makes it accessible and visible to more than a single consciousness who lives it*".<sup>17</sup> Thus, besides the fruitful resonances that Arendt's concept of *spaces of appearance* has had in architectural research and in the thinking on public space, one could visibly trace a definition of film as a *space of appearances* where architectural experiences *appear* in a communicative, inter-subjective form, decipherable by anyone perceptually entering this space.

One of the main arguments put forth by Arendt was against the Western philosophical tradition, in which the realm of human action, appearance and presence had been subordinated to the metaphysical life that contemplates essences and the eternal. According to her, "*being and appearing coincide*"<sup>18</sup>. Following this path of thinking, the *space of appearances* embedded in the filmic representation of lived spaces causes the viewers to inhabit themselves the rooms of the houses thereby depicted.

Phenomenologically crystalline, the moving images of these cinematically represented houses contain a multiplicity of experiential qualities pleated with emotion, cultural context, significances, events. In their luminescent *appearance*, they present the inner *being* of dwelling, and expose themselves naturally to critical thinking, inviting architects towards a more sensible, more responsible view on how the buildings we design will be inhabited and remembered in time.

Cinematic space, therefore, can be seen as a *space of appearances*, through which one can visibly, audibly, haptically and authentically experience the essence of home.

*Where is the Friend I seek wherever I'm going?  
At break of dawn my need for Him is growing  
At night he is not there to still my yearning  
My heart is burning.*

*I see His footprints here in nature's power.  
The weighted wheat that bends, the scented flower.  
His love is in the very air I'm breathing,  
the sigh I'm heaving.  
I hear His voice where summer breezes quiver.*

*(1819 hymn by Swedish Johan Olof Wallin,  
fragment recited by several characters  
in Ingmar Bergman's 1957 film Wild Strawberries,  
at minute 00:45:10-00:46:00,  
in response to an abstract debate about science and religion<sup>19</sup>)*

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<sup>16</sup> idem, pp. 50-51

<sup>17</sup> Sobchack, V. (1991) *The Address of the Eye. A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton University Press, p.9

<sup>18</sup> Arendt, H. (1978) *The Life of the Mind*. New York: Harcourt

<sup>19</sup> "*The two young men, rivals for Sara's affection (one of them, in fact, is engaged to her), have been quarreling good-naturedly about theology; the fiancé is planning to become a minister. Asked by Sara to adjudicate the intellectual merits of the argument, old Isak Borg smilingly declines. After a few moments of silence, he proceeds instead to recite a beautiful poem that starts, "Where is the Friend I seek*





**Image 7.2** Viktor Sjöström (Professor Isak Borg), reciting Wallin's hymn, while bypassing the question "Are you religious, Professor?" Film still from Ingmar Bergman's film *Wild Strawberries* (1957), 0:45:39

### Staging a Conversation between Bergman and Tarkovsky

The use of spatial metaphors was common in the autobiographical writings of both Bergman and Tarkovsky. The use of "rooms", "walls" and "doors" was most often applied as a seemingly naive metaphor describing the creative process of ideas dwelling within. Tarkovsky asked himself in his diary: "How does a project mature? It is obviously a most mysterious, imperceptible process. It carries on independently of ourselves, in the subconscious, crystallizing on the walls of the soul".<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, in Bergman's phrasing, sharp poetry marries good humor: "a production stretches its tentacle roots a long way down through time and dreams. I like to imagine the roots as dwelling in that special room of the soul, where they lie maturing comfortably like mighty cheeses".<sup>21</sup> For Bergman, all throughout his writings and recorded interviews, this interior enclosure is referred to as having a secretive or utterly inaccessible nature, despite being contained within: "No form of art goes beyond ordinary consciousness as film does, straight to our emotions, deep into the twilight room of the soul [...] The mute or speaking shadows turn without evasion towards my most secret room";<sup>22</sup> "my impulses [...] inhabited a closed room".<sup>23</sup> The act of entering *this room* is alluded to only when Bergman

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where'er I'm going?" At different times in the recitation, different listeners take up the thread of the verses; evidently, among Swedes, the poem is well-known. Its author is a nineteenth-century poet-archbishop named Johan Olof Wallin (1779–1839), but we needn't be aware of this historical context to grasp and appreciate the yearning, idealistic tenor of its discourse. Harmony and peace descend, as if by a miracle, on the assembled company. It seems, momentarily, as if God himself is present in their midst! This quiet and modest scene, to my mind, belongs among the great epiphanies of cinema". - Mark le Fanu, "Wild Strawberries - Where is the Friend I Seek?", online essay published by Criterion: [www.criterion.com/current/posts/2795-wild-strawberries-where-is-the-friend-i-seek](http://www.criterion.com/current/posts/2795-wild-strawberries-where-is-the-friend-i-seek) (Last accessed February 2016)

<sup>20</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry, 3 July 1975 - the year when his first openly autobiographic film, *Mirror*, was completed

<sup>21</sup> LM, p. 202

<sup>22</sup> LM, p. 74

<sup>23</sup> LM, p. 117

mentions his first encounter with Tarkovsky's work<sup>24</sup>. In later writings from the '80s, looking back at his young artistic attempts from early '30s, when he was struggling to find a film language of his own, Bergman says: "Now that I have the key in my hand, I know that more than forty years were to go by before my emotions were released from that closed room where they had been imprisoned. I existed on the memory of feelings".<sup>25</sup> Should it be merely coincidental that the hiatus of 40 years ended around 1971, the year in which Bergman first saw Tarkovsky's *Rublev* (1966), an experience described, as previously mentioned, in the same metaphoric register of doors, keys and rooms? Up to his late days, Bergman still told the story: "At about 2:30 a.m. we came out of the screening room with gaunt eyes, completely moved, enthusiastic and shaken. I will never forget it. What was remarkable is that there were no Swedish subtitles. We didn't understand a word of the dialogue, but we were nonetheless overwhelmed".<sup>26</sup> Members of his filming crew confessed that from that moment on, Bergman kept as a ritual the habit of watching *Andrei Rublev* before setting to work for any new film production, sensations from this film appearing through his later writings<sup>27</sup>:

Briefly remembering the fragments of incongruent interaction between the two filmmakers, it should be said that Bergman was born in 1918, 14 years before Tarkovsky, and outlived him by 21 years. They were contemporarily active for only 24 years. In 1964, two years after the release of *Ivan's Childhood*, Tarkovsky's first internationally award-winning film, Bergman, already an accomplished figure in the world of film, having been asked in an interview if he enjoyed any new Russian films, answered: "Very much, I think something very good will come from there soon. I don't know why, but I feel it. Have you seen *Ivan's Childhood*? There are extraordinary things in it".<sup>28</sup> Two years later, Tarkovsky's *Rublev* was released, but its international distribution was delayed, so Bergman only came across it in 1971. The encounter was overwhelming.

Tarkovsky was already a great admirer of Bergman and there are many entries from his published diaries which shed light upon the non-verbal and indirect dialogue that stretched over twelve years between them. They also expose the fluctuating reciprocal interest in setting up a collaboration. Selected diary entries, from 1972 to 1980, divulge: "Apparently Bergman called *Andrei Rublev* the best film he has ever seen";<sup>29</sup> "Someone says there is an interview somewhere with Bergman, who considers me the best contemporary director, I wonder if it can be true. It doesn't sound right";<sup>30</sup> "Bergman invited me a few times to stay with him in Sweden. I was told nothing about it verbally";<sup>31</sup> "I asked to pass on to Bergman the idea of a collaboration between the three of us: Bergman, Antonioni and myself";<sup>32</sup> "Bergman was very interested in our idea

<sup>24</sup> see Preamble: "My first discovery of Tarkovsky's films was like a miracle. Suddenly, I found myself standing at the door of a room the keys of which had, until then, never been given to me. It was a room I had always wanted to enter and where he was moving freely and fully at ease" (Bergman, uncredited quotation)

<sup>25</sup> LM, p. 118

<sup>26</sup> Aghed, J. (2007) Encounter with Ingmar Bergman (interview taken 2002), pp. 190-200, in R. Shargel (Ed.) *Ingmar Bergman: Interviews*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, p. 197

<sup>27</sup> In a recurrent nightmare concerning professional anxieties, Bergman dreams that in the moment of uttermost conflict he finds relief taking off and flying, with arms as wings, passing above a large field ("it's bound to be Russia") – an image mirroring the beginning of *Andrei Rublev* (LM, p. 174)

<sup>28</sup> Grenier, C. (2007) Playboy Interview: Ingmar Bergman (interview taken 1966), pp. 35-48, in R. Shargel, *op cit*, p. 42

<sup>29</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry, 17 June 1972, Moscow

<sup>30</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry 7 January 1974, Moscow

<sup>31</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry 14 September 1975, Moscow

<sup>32</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry 13 May 1980, Rome

*of working together on a film, only unfortunately he is completely booked up until 1983. He very much wants to meet me. [...] he has seen Andrei Rublev ten times".<sup>33</sup>*

In the light of these entries, it is more revealing to look at Tarkovsky's choice for the Swedish island of Gotland - Bergman's adoptive home - as a setting for *Sacrifice* (1985). However, as it would soon be shown, this was not the case of a simple mutual admiration: two artists clearly praising each other's work and, in little steps, coming closer to a point of convergence from which a magnificent collaboration would emerge. It has been repeatedly and primitively assumed that *Sacrifice* is an homage to the Swedish titan. But if one chooses to look closer at the last remains of their fragmentary indirect dialogue, conclusions might essentially differ. During the time spent in Sweden, Tarkovsky's diaries record again a mentioning of Bergman's name: "*Saw Bergman for the first time in person today. [...] He made an odd impression on me. Self-centered, cold, superficial, both toward the children and the audience*".<sup>34</sup>

Even if all previous entries traced a mutual desire to interact once geographically close, employees from the Swedish Film Institute recalled how, while both of them were in Stockholm, it happened they were walking towards each other on a corridor, and, when realizing it, they both turned around and walked in opposite directions, to avoid meeting each other. After the completion of *Sacrifice*, Tarkovsky abruptly dismissed all assumptions that his work had bergmanesque elements, while Bergman publicly declared it "*a hopeless waste*".<sup>35</sup>

Later, after Tarkovsky had moved away from Sweden and lived between Germany, Italy and France, seized by a galloping lung cancer, he seemed to revisit his earlier opinions: "*only later I understood that he is a very good man [...] Besides, Bergman is much more important than we usually think. I have read a lot of books written about him, in English. The authors do not understand they are dealing with a great artist. They think they write about the first, second, third, fifth director of the world; they dissect and label without understanding that for him, cinema is the way to express his spiritual conceptions of the world - not to exercise the director's job*".<sup>36</sup>

Bergman too seemed to reconsider his opinions. After having mercilessly criticized Tarkovsky's last film, he would add, after the death of the Russian master: "*I still think he is a wonderful human being. But let me tell you of the strange relationship I had with him. One day he was in Gotland. It would have taken me twenty minutes to go there, but I didn't go. I thought about it a number of times. Here is someone who meant so much to me, who influenced me decisively - perhaps more because of his attitude about life than as a film director. So why didn't I visit him when he was so close? I think it was the issue of language [...] we would have to communicate through an interpreter. But for the matters I wanted to discuss with him, I could not use an interpreter. It would have been impossible. Thus, we never met. I regret it now*".<sup>37</sup>

Chronology would have it that Bergman had the last word in this conversation. But Tarkovsky's *Sacrifice*, despite not being a tribute, and not being a bergmanesque-influenced picture, proposes some intriguing threads of conversation, that keep unfolding over time. To mention but a few of these: the location of *Sacrifice* was 100km south from Bergman's house

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<sup>33</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry 16/17 May 1980, Rome

<sup>34</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry 15 September 1984, Stockholm

<sup>35</sup> Aghed, J. *op cit*, p. 197

<sup>36</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry 13 February 1986, Germany

<sup>37</sup> Aghed, J. *op cit*, p. 198

that we have already encountered in chapter 3. As if anachronically responding to Bergman's confession: "*One day he was in Gotland. It would have taken me twenty minutes to go there, but I didn't go. I thought about it a number of times*", in *Sacrifice*, as the nuclear war begins and the characters pondering over their means of escape, one of them says: "*we could go up north, but now there is no point*". The records of the filming crew do not mention any desire of Tarkovsky to actually go up north and visit Bergman, despite other members of the crew, close collaborators of Bergman, had done so in breaks during the filming. The mere pondering over this thought is thus limited to the characters, speaking in the film.

More direct and less debatable parallels are traced with Bergman's film *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), the film for which he initially visited Gotland and encountered the fascinating landscape of Fårö island. In this film, as in Tarkovsky's *Sacrifice*, there are a very limited number of characters, inhabiting a house at the edge of the sea, on an empty island. No other topographies populate the film, but the house and its surroundings. *Through a Glass Darkly* was Bergman's first film from what he thought as a trilogy, from which *Winter Light* and *Silence* followed, embodying the filmmaker's desperate search for God. In interviews, he was saying that *Through a Glass Darkly* was too naive, its ending - in which the son of a cold and distant father exclaims in wonder "Papa spoke to me" - far too hopeful. He later "repaired" these bursts of naivety, as he called them, and the following two works are more severe, insisting on the futility of faith and speaking of the silence of a god who does not care for people's prayers.

In *Sacrifice*, there is a painting which opens the film credits with close pans over its surface, disclosing details of its representations, and appears at key moments during the film. It is Leonardo's *Adoration of the Magi*, depicting the Nativity of Christ and the offering of gifts to him, by the wise men. After the beginning of the nuclear war, the first scene inside the house is showing Alexander's son sleeping, while the curtain is "breathing"<sup>38</sup> - the element of the breathing curtain appearing here for the first time. Immediately after this static camera scene, there is a jump cut to a close up on Leonardo's painting, showing the child Christ sitting in the lap of his Mother. In the shot, the glass of the painting reflects two figures approaching it and the next reverse shot shows Alexander and Otto looking at it intently and almost frightened:

[Otto:] "What is that?"

[Alexander:] "I can't see anything clearly. It's behind a glass. And it's so dark."

Incidentally, when Alexander later hesitantly decides there is nothing he can do for his family, his loved ones, for the entire world, in the face of these impending war, but pray, his shyly uttered prayer unfolds in front of this very painting, as if now he would begin to discern What, or Who is behind the glass. The previous mention - "*and it's so dark*", however, is a clear reference to Bergman's first film on Gotland, *Through a Glass Darkly*. Bergman had given the film's title based on the words of Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, a paragraph<sup>39</sup> at the end of a chapter known as "the chapter of Love".<sup>40</sup> Tarkovsky would

<sup>38</sup> see earlier in this chapter, pp. 239-240

<sup>39</sup> "*When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love*" (1 Cor. 13: 11-13)

therefore revert Bergman's conversation about God to this initial attempt of his trilogy, the more hopeful one.

*Through a Glass Darkly* ends with the father talking to his son about love and hope, in front of an open window that overlooks an infinite and luminous sea. After the father leaves, his son remains amazed in front of the window: "Papa spoke to me!" In *Sacrifice*, when Alexander is taken away in an ambulance, his son continues to water the withered pine tree that they had planted together at the shore of the sea. The son, who was unable to speak all throughout the film, now mutters as he looks upwards toward the pine tree stretching up in the sky: "<In the beginning was the Word<sup>41</sup>>. Why is that, Papa?". The camera then pans up on the stem of the tree and ends in the luminous waters of the Baltic sea that encircles and caresses Gotland shores. The Gotland shores were thus, despite no physical actual encounter had taken place, the stage for a gripping conversation between the two filmmakers. A conversation that needed no common spoken language, no translator, no physical presence.

As wonderfully intuited in spatially captivating metaphors by a simple Russian girl: "There's another kind of language, by means of feeling and images. That is the contact which stops people being separated from each other, which brings down barriers. Will, feeling, emotion - these remove obstacles from between people who otherwise stand on opposite sides of a mirror, on opposite sides of a door... The frames of the screen move out, and the world which used to be partitioned off comes into us, becomes something real".<sup>42</sup>

### KEY FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The thesis was designed as an interwoven quest through theories and through empirical research data. As a consequence, the findings and the contributions are of a dual nature, both theoretical and with direct applications on empirical knowledge.

1) The thesis proposes a **re-contextualization of the classical unsolved debate about the similarities, differences and mutual infusions between architecture and film**. It does this by introducing the phenomenological notions of lived space, place experience, dwelling and home-ness at the core of the discussion and, in doing so, aims to **inject new life in the weary dialogue between architecture and phenomenology**. Through this triple correspondence, the present thesis therefore brings these fields in a point of encounter, which, if not yielding a new solution to the old debates, at least proposes a new set of questions: how is the

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<sup>40</sup> Saint John of Damascus (c. 675-749) quotes this passage in his *Second Apology Against those who Decry Holy Images* (8th C AD), using it as a source of extolling the representational quality of images/icons to grasp the ineffable, the invisible: "For in making the image of God, who became incarnate and visible on earth, a man amongst men through His unspeakable goodness, taking upon Him shape and form and flesh, we are not misled. We long to see how He was like. As the divine apostle says, 'We see now through a glass, darkly.' (1 Cor. 13:12) The image, too, is a dark glass, according to the denseness of our bodies". St. John of Damascus (1898) *Apologia Against those who Decry Holy Images*, London: Thomas Baker, p. 20; re-published online at [www.ccel.org/ccel/damascus/icons.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/damascus/icons.html) (Last accessed July 2015)

<sup>41</sup>"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:1-5)

<sup>42</sup> ST, pp. 12-13 Tarkovsky introduces the text of the letter with the words: "One woman sent me a letter written to her by her daughter, and the young girl's words are a remarkable statement about artistic creation as an infinitely versatile and subtle form of communication."

experience of home communicated through film? how does film achieve a phenomenological description of spatial experiences? what new understandings about dwelling, space and place can we read from the moving images of a film?

2) From the outset, the thesis is set on responding to questions about home and place. By bringing views from a variety of fields and aspiring to relate these views to actual case studies of outstanding originality, the study proposes some new concepts better fit for describing the particular relations to home-place observed in the case studies and potentially applicable to other cases, such as **place affinity**, **inner dwelling**, **placefying**; it also proposes a redefined view, based on the case study findings, on the notions of **place attachment** and **place elasticity**.

3) The study proposes a new methodology: **architectural phenomenography, a method that describes the variation in spatial experience and its representations**. This is achieved by a thorough review of the contextual and methodological grounds, the careful listing of the ingredients involved, the **phenomenon** and the **graphein**, and the development and adaptation of the classical form of phenomenography. Imported from humanities and educational studies, which operate on verbal material as research data, the method was thus transplanted and adapted to the field of architecture and to audiovisual material as research data. The method was applied on the given films, with exemplifications of the variation in spatial experience as represented in the films of Andrei Tarkovsky.

4) On a more empirical level, the thesis, through the phenomenographic method employed, displays a **closer, unprecedented look on the spatial universe of Andrei Tarkovsky's films**. There have been numerous scholarly works on the quality of his cinematic universe, many of them advancing pertinent observations on the recurrence of certain visual and spatial elements, but - to our knowledge - there has been none to follow exhaustively such a particular given spatial element in all the hypostases in which it metamorphoses along the films. This recurrence of particular elements has been noticed as a filmic method, a sort of key into the "language of dreams" developed by the filmmaker who is known to have said "I leave nothing to chance in my films". However, there are a multitude of instances in these scholarly works when, if such a repetition of a particular element is noticed, there are some other equally relevant repetitions of the same element which the author had missed, but which would crystallized new, more suitable connections and understandings. This omissions are nevertheless defensible, since the cinematic universe is particularly fleeting and the film viewing experience tributary to temporal limitations. The architectural phenomenographic reading of the films, however, allowed a singling out of each spatial element identified as relevant, and, through the method of cards with film stills and digitized archives, allowed the concomitant viewing of any spatial element in the overall context of variations of experiences and representations along the seven films. The advantages of these results are that the tarkovskian spatial universe, so fascinating and at the same time eluding grasp, is in this way open for reading as a book, disclosing ever new connections and parallels. And not in the least less fascinating.

5) Equally, one of the more "applied" results of the thesis was to research, order, and render in a logical, organized form the **topographical biography** of Andrei Tarkovsky. Since the notion of home was identified by many authors as the central theme of Tarkovsky's films, this thesis considered that a proper understanding of his filmic spatiality could only be achieved in the light of his biography - as told through houses and places. However, despite there are some good biographical sources, the available literature offers vague, incomplete or contradictory information about the residencies of the filmmaker. Therefore, a tedious effort was to put together, compare, correct and complete the found information. This was done through comparing sources among them and confronting English-language sources with Russian-language and French-language available material. Precious information was obtained through personal interviews conducted with the filmmaker's sister, Marina Tarkovskaya, and with his son, Andrei Andreevich Tarkovsky. Archival materials from the Andrei Tarkovsky International Institute was also particularly relevant in the shaping of the topographical biography. Finally, inspired by the initiative of the Swedish Ingmar Bergman Foundation, who had created an online timeline-mapping of the places where Bergman had lived or filmed, I attempted to correct the lack of a similar one for Tarkovsky. In the case of "placing" Tarkovsky's places on the map, the situation was particularly difficult, mainly because of the strange transliteration of Russian name-places to English, which does not allow a reverse search, but also since the majority of the place-names involved were designating more than one village, some of them being in the same areas. With the help of archival material from the Tarkovsky Institute, I managed to locate these otherwise obscure localities and to elaborate a map that might one day be useful to those who would wish to visit them.

6) In addition to the phenomenographic analysis performed on Tarkovsky's films, the thesis contains an **architectural "chronotopic" mapping for his autobiographical film *Mirror* (1975)**, a film which many critics term as the best film of all time, while many others characterize as the least comprehensible film of all of Tarkovsky's. Regardless the views on the film, it contains therein Tarkovsky's quintessentially autobiographical spaces: the dacha and the Moscow apartment. Due to the cryptic and elusive nature of the film editing, these spaces are portrayed as labyrinthic, to the extent that some books on Tarkovsky even speak of two or three apartments and several country houses. The Mosfilm studios did not release any document about the floor-plan of these film sets, as they neither appear in dedicated publications, nor in the Tarkovsky archives. Incidentally, the Mosfilm studios did not reply to my request of visiting their archives, therefore, attempting to understand how these spaces are in fact, I preceded in drawing them myself. To redraw the spatial configuration wherein such labyrinthic images were shot and to understand the manner in which they were filmed was a particularly challenging architectural exercise. To our knowledge, no such drawings of the film sets for *Mirror* exist to this date - neither of the dacha, nor of the Moscow apartment - despite some brilliant<sup>43</sup> current attempts of retracing the space of films through architectural drawings. Thus, I believe this drawings could be a relevant additional study tool in the Tarkovsky scholarship.

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<sup>43</sup> Interior Journal, [www.intjournal.com](http://www.intjournal.com) (Last accessed June 2015)

7) For the case of Ingmar Bergman, the archival documents included in the elaboration of this thesis have not yet been published, therefore the research has a potential of further publication. Unlike Tarkovsky's case, in the scholarly literature on Bergman there has been little emphasis on his filmic use of space and the communication of spatial experience through his films. However, as his autobiographical writings are showing, there is immense potential in the closer analysis of his works, and thus, this thesis brings **an innovative space-centred gaze on Bergman's universe**. Moreover, despite many articles have mentioned his solitary residence on the island of Fårö, there hasn't been a thorough study from an architectural point of view on his spatial and residential preferences. Having travelled and resided myself in Bergman's dwelling on Fårö, I was struck by the exceptional quality of the architecture and, moreover, by the subtle blend between the lived house, the lived nature and the spatial appetencies which I had known from Bergman's works. The thesis therefore presents for the first time the documents preceding the building of the house on Fårö, in the context of his previous autobiographic writings about space, his views on dwelling and the description of the house and of the island.

8) Stemming from a previously observed convergence between the spatial worlds of Bergman's and Tarkovsky's films, the thesis - through direct and indirect spatial references - aims to deepen the hitherto unexplored topic of a potential **spatial filmic dialogue** between them.

9) Lastly, through the constant referencing to the world and the techniques of filmmaking, but mainly through practical information about how space had been portrayed in film, the study wishes to bring some new **inspiring views from practical filmmaking** into the thinking of architecture.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite benefiting from precious travel grants from the AHRC, the University of Sheffield and an Erasmus scholarship which permitted a longer stay in Sweden, due to the fact that the locations taken into discussion were considerably far away from each other and from my home institution (Russia, Italy, Estonia, Sweden), the site visits were usually restricted to one occasion, which often proved too little for understanding the complexities of location's particular context. Some locations (such as Ignatievo and Myasnoye in Russia, Roccalbegna in Italy and Dalarna in Sweden) remained outside the possibilities of this research. Since each of the previous visits opened new paths for understanding the spatial sensibilities of these two artists, it is expected that additional travels to the mentioned locations would have yielded new, better, deeper perceptions of their comprehension of home.

Apart from geographical distances, language differences were also a major hindrance in the research. Despite having learned Russian up to a beginner level for the purpose and over the course of this PhD, and - through exercise - reaching a beginner level in reading



Swedish, the efforts in identifying and translating these foreign sources were tedious, consuming much of the time which could have otherwise contributed toward an earlier submission; it is also likely that precious material published in Russian/Swedish might have missed the negligent attention of a beginner-level reader.

The space limitations of the thesis itself and the time limitations of the research did not allow for what was initially intended as the main contribution: a more in-depth, exhaustive dialogical presentation of the two filmmakers told through their identified spatial categories. An initial aim would have been to discuss in writing all these identified categories, and thus to provide a comprehensive picture of the architectural worlds as they are constructed through memories and filmic experience. For necessity reasons, however, I opted for exemplifying the phenomenographic method through a presentation of a selected portion from the categories of only one filmmaker, Tarkovsky, while the proposed dialogue between the two of them remains as glimpses scattered across the text.

Another weakness of this final version of the thesis, as opposed to versions planned earlier, is the lack of video material in the exemplification of the discourse. The categories presented in chapter 6 are, in fact, collections of clips selected from the films, and it is an assumption of this thesis that, through a live projection of these recombined clips, the awareness of this *inner dwelling* communicated through film could have been experience in its lived form. The dialogue between Tarkovsky and Bergman, mentioned in the previous chapter, was at one point designed to "take place" via a parallel video-projection of their spatial worlds.

During the visits taken to the locations of Bergman and Tarkovsky, hours of video was recorded, which aspired to grasp the unmediated perception of experiencing those places. As a PhD-related training, I have also taken a course in filmmaking, with the ambition to edit these videos in the form of a lyrical documentary that would cinematically bring closer the geographically remote locations wherein these outstanding artists had dwelt in, and, through this attempt that had focused on similarities of atmospheres, to contribute in "staging" their imaginary conversation. Unfortunately, due to the volume of the work, this has so far remained an ambition.

Lastly, by striving to balance between theory and the phenomenographic reading of the films, the thesis lent itself vulnerable from two sides: inclining too much in presenting the theories which seemed to be of utmost importance in understanding properly the value of the concepts involved in the study, the space available for the reading of films could suffer - and thus this core finding of the research could end up being misrepresented. Similarly, there was a constant temptation to delve ever deeper in describing the richness of these architectural phenomenographies, which, if followed, could create a disequilibrium on the part of theoretical and critical thinking about the notions thus unearthed. To harmonize these sides of the discourse thus resembled a tightrope walking and whether or not the thesis managed to keep the healthy balance, or plunged in either of the sides, remains to be seen.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Some future directions of research would include the finalization of the description of architectural categories, both for the films of Andrei Tarkovsky and of Ingmar Bergman. This could take the shape of monograph publications or several shorter publications, with selected categories each time.

Another aim is to reconstruct these categories cinematically, in a 4-walled video installation that would architecturally adjoin film clips from Tarkovsky, Bergman and, respectively, videos that I had recorded during my visits to their locations and thus, quite literally, constructing a room for their spatial conversation. This video installation is currently under consideration to be designed and set up in the near future at the Bergmancenter on Fårö, Gotland. A bi-dimensional version of this video-installation would take shape as documentary.

A potential side result of the thesis would be to publish an interactive online version of the static maps and timelines that were produced for Andrei Tarkovsky and to build an online platform comparable to the one already available for Ingmar Bergman<sup>44</sup>.

The application of the architectural phenomenographic method in the future could be manifold. From analyzing other filmmaker's work, to appropriate adaptations on other art forms. Maintaining the focus on the experience of space-place-home, each of these analyses could render new and valuable understandings on the nature of home-ness, with flavours and particularities pertaining to the particular culture to which the film or its maker originate, and could therefore meaningfully contribute to the growing body of literature concerned with these issues.

Additionally, the method of architectural phenomenography could be creatively applied in the design studio, enabling students to better grasp complexities of architectural experience.

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<sup>44</sup> [ingmarbergman.se](http://ingmarbergman.se)

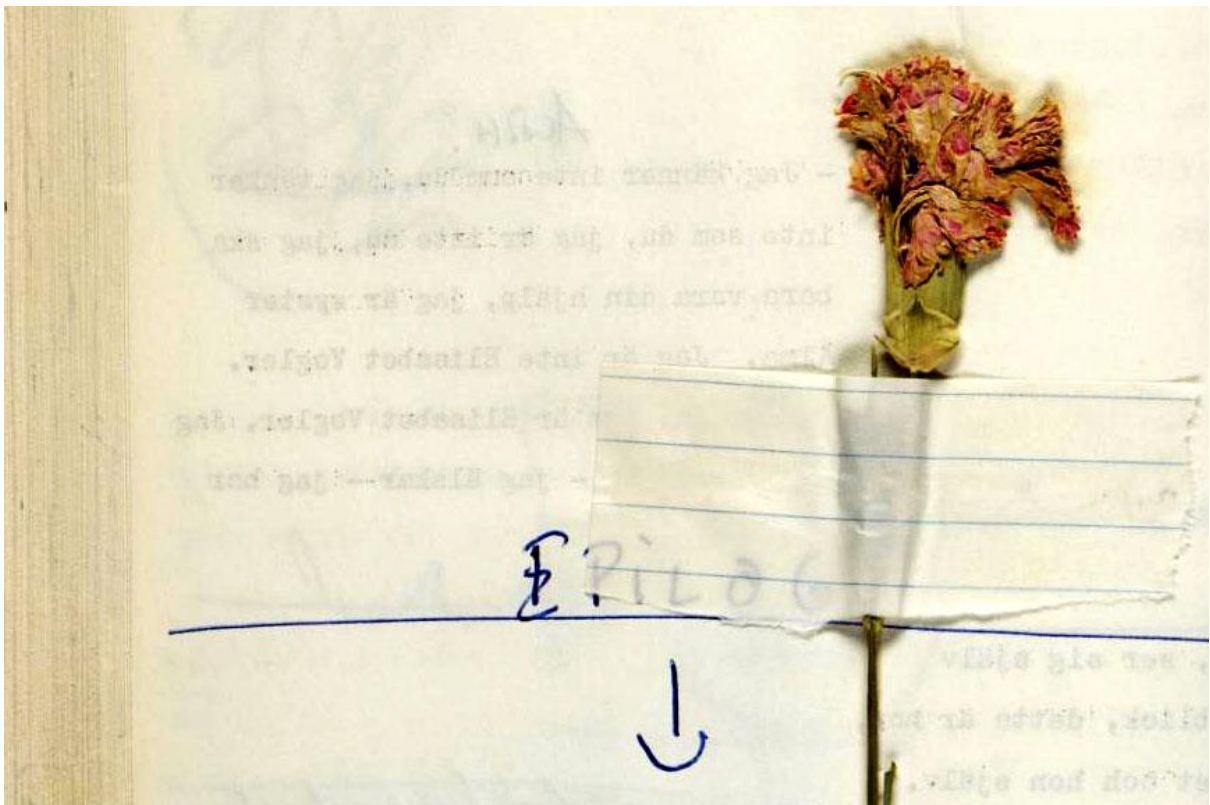


Image 7.3 Page from Ingmar Bergman's workbook on his 1966 film *Persona*, ©IBF

### LEAVING THE DOOR AJAR: CONCLUDING REFLECTION

Approaching the completion of this study, I became increasingly aware of a thread running invisibly through the thesis, a sort of resistance to the thought that precious and dear memories of childhood, places that remained temporally or spatially far away, would stay conclusively separated from us, lying inert in a lifeless past. Rather, acutely believing in their endurance as part and abode of our innermost being, it seemed that the entire endeavour of this thesis was a long path to prove - to others? I would say mostly to myself - the more comforting belief in "*the persistence in the human soul of a nucleus of childhood, of a motionless but enduring childhood, outside of history, hidden from others, disguised as history when it is narrated, but having real existence only in its moments of illumination - which is to say in its moments of poetic existence*"<sup>45</sup>.

During the course of this PhD, I was at many times concerned about the fact that my topic had no real, pragmatic benefit for anyone in this world. I would then look with professional envy, on all the research projects that tackled real problems, emergency shelters, sustainability or housing in critical areas, yearning for the type of genuine motivation which such urgent and practical topics undoubtedly provide. Compared to them, my obscure immaterial architectures of the soul, as portrayed through film, seemed of very little - if any - usefulness.

Only recently I stumbled upon the thought that, if all the buildings of the world would crumble, if there would be no construction materials left on the surface of Earth to resurrect them, we would still be left in full possession of the radiant edifices that have been silently built day by day in our minds, hearts, memories. This inner home is built while we unwarily dwell in our houses, growing imperceptibly around that enduring "nucleus of childhood".

Another realization which came the deeper I went with in work was that the description of these categories of experiences could continue endlessly, new rooms, new spaces, new architectural patterns could be identified as one proceeds in this reading. Approaching the completion of the work I began to comprehend why this might be. While built architecture is limited in space and time, while we live in it and it starts to settle in our minds, the memory of this architecture turns immaterial, free from spatial and temporal limitation and thus, endless.

And any attempt to describe it,  
however thorough, might still remain only  
the beginning.

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<sup>45</sup> Bachelard, G. (1987) *On Poetic Imagination and Reverie*. Translated by C. Gaudin, Dallas: Spring Publications, pp. 95-96

*sunt țări, dar mai ales locuri  
așezări la marginea apelor  
un om  
gata să intre  
și-n casă  
icoana  
sau numai un gest  
o mirare*

*numai descrierea  
întregii lumi  
ar putea fi  
începutul  
(Daniel Turcea<sup>46</sup>)*

*there are lands, but mostly places  
dwellings on brinks of waters  
a man  
about to enter  
within the house  
the icon  
or merely a gesture  
a wonderment*

*the simple description  
of the entire world  
could be  
the beginning  
(Daniel Turcea<sup>47</sup>)*

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<sup>46</sup> from the poem *Suferința* (The Suffering) - Romanian version; English version (translation RB) on the right

<sup>47</sup> Daniel Turcea (1945-1979), Romanian poet, graduated as an architect from Bucharest, then dedicated his life to Poetry

## EPILOGUE: " across thresholds and through opened doors. Joy"

Shortly before his death, Tarkovsky wrote: "*Bergman is conceptual and at the same time, a true cineaste, he bases his conceptions on both a reality and a naturalism, and that combination of a perfectly truthful surface and a perfectly conventional content - a Nordic conventional, à la Kierkegaard<sup>1</sup> - gives a particular resonance to the whole. On the inside, between these two walls that form the space wherein the film lives, arises an astonishing resonance, a world entirely new*".<sup>2</sup> Between these walls, the lived space of the film was opening a room, much like the quote from Ingmar Bergman, the one adorning a vast number of books or articles about Tarkovsky: "*My first discovery of Tarkovsky's films was like a miracle. Suddenly, I found myself standing at the door of a room the keys of which had, until then, never been given to me. It was a room I had always wanted to enter and where he was moving freely and fully at ease*".<sup>3</sup>

When reading Bergman's statement, one of the very first questions coming to mind is: what is this room? The connoisseur would perhaps instantly connect it to the destination of the journey in *Stalker* (1979), the cinematic adaptation of the *Roadside Picnic* sci-fi novel (1971). When adapting it for film, aside from the shifts in emphasis, one crucial change brought by Tarkovsky was upon the very nature of the destination: the novel's Golden Sphere (in front of which to pause would have temporal resonance), became The Room in film. As the three men arrive in the antechamber of the Room, the stop to consider crossing its threshold, their act has spatial significance, the same ontological dwelling significance which enables the Russian master to accentuate the existential crux of the film through spatial means. The threshold here metaphorically condenses and magnifies the intensity of interior conflicts which crush down the three characters in that moment: "*they haven't the courage to step across the threshold into the room which they have risked their lives to reach. They have become conscious that at the tragic, deepest level of awareness they are imperfect*".<sup>4</sup> Intensifying the metaphysical function of thresholds, we never see the interior of The Room; instead, we have a view from within it, overlooking the three men resting outside of it, a cinematic device which subtly hints that the essence of The Room lies in its interiority, in its potency to contain, to embrace; it is not a material place, but rather an interior enclosure, where man dwells inwardly. Having kept the novel's initial Golden Sphere, such complexities would have been lost: an object, however magic, hardly defines matters of the soul, while inhabiting a place is so profoundly imbued with meaning.

Bergman had said that Tarkovsky was for him a decisive influence more because of his attitude towards life than as a filmmaker. If the discussion encircles once again the imagery of doors and thresholds, letting the discourse be protruded by memories and dream images which both filmmakers did not shy away from, the most eloquent and profound example is, for both of them, the childhood home, the place which holds the roots of the first spatial intuitions and of the first "*attitudes about life*". Telling the story of his family and the failures of communication among them, *Mirror* (1975) was for Tarkovsky an attempt to say

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<sup>1</sup> Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) - Danish philosopher and theologian

<sup>2</sup> Andrei Tarkovsky, diary entry 13 February 1986 (my translation from French language)

<sup>3</sup> see also Preamble

<sup>4</sup> ST, p. 198

those things that were never said before, to ask forgiveness and seek some filial repentance. Speaking the very same language of regrets, Bergman recounted how one Sunday afternoon, years after both his parents had died, he was sitting in a church across the street from his childhood home, listening to Bach's Christmas Oratorio, and, sinking in a reverie, he imagined going to the house and finding his parents spending quiet afternoon hours in silence, his Mother reading, and him gently approaching her, to filially kiss her forehead. *"Now I'll make an attempt, this time it will be successful"*.<sup>5</sup> The narration goes on with an image resembling the moment when the child, in Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, returns through time and through the waters, and enters the vestibule of his childhood's house, moving slowly among floating curtains<sup>6</sup>: *"Bach's chorale was still moving like colorful floating veils in my consciousness, flitting back and forth across thresholds and through opened doors. Joy"*.<sup>7</sup> After numerous instances of "closed doors" and "locked doors" in Bergman's writings, this was to be the first mention of metaphoric doors as "open", in any of his autobiographical writings. The doors to that room which had been closed in him for over forty years and which he had glimpsed when first watching Tarkovsky's *Rublev*... now opened into joy?

Tarkovsky's attitude to life, at least towards the dwelling life, was - as we had seen - focused inwardly, towards the inner realms that grow in time inside a person's soul, the edifice of images and memories, and, not in the least, the immortality of these inner rooms. *"There is no death"*, he would constantly say in interviews and strive to show it in his films. In the context of absent direct dialogue between Bergman and Tarkovsky, one might guess, then, that Bergman perceived Tarkovsky's film images in which the same language in which Tarkovsky had conceived them: *"an image is an impression of Truth, which God has allowed us to glimpse with our sightless eyes"*. It might not be too far from truth to assume that for both Tarkovsky and Bergman, *"the most secret room"*<sup>8</sup>, or that room *"in which everyone's most secret wish is granted"* are one and the same place, where man meets God, where silence speaks louder than language, where death does not exist, where there is forgiveness, where memories and emotions reside and grow into thoughts, where images are born. *"Come and abide in us"*.<sup>9</sup> It is the spiritual dwelling place experienced on some invisible layers by the child, and thus merges in recollecting perceptions with the childhood home, making it linger in memory as a nostalgia for Eden. Approaching it, some - many - might not have *"the courage to step into the room which they have risked their lives to reach"*; indeed, it takes an act of courage to bow down and humbly cross its threshold.

But at some points in history, some people have done just that, they entered and dwelt in this room, and from there, they opened its doors unto others, to viewers, to us.

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<sup>5</sup> LM, p. 282

<sup>6</sup> see chapter 3, pp. 99-100

<sup>7</sup> LM, p. 282

<sup>8</sup> LM, p. 74

<sup>9</sup> line from the Christian Orthodox prayer "O heavenly King"

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