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Tarkovsky's legacy

Tarkovskian inspirations in contemporary cinema

THE STORY ACCORDING TO TARKOVSKY

In his *RÉPERTOIRE*, French writer Michel Butor imagined all men to be „continuously immersed like in a washtub“ in stories (Butor 1960, 1). Everything that is „other than us“, wrote the author, is known to us not because we have seen it but because someone has told us about it, with the configurations of meaning that make every narrated event something to communicate to others. In order to exist, the story must allow itself first to be indiscriminately fragmented, and then forcibly reassembled.

If we agree with Butor that narration seems to engulf us like water in a washtub, it is also true that every story remains essentially impossible to tell: as an integral part of nature surrounding us, it is intolerant of any form of manipulation, since every manipulation is a meaningful organization of the awareness of time.

Chained to the „present“ that is brought to life in every story, the imagination seems prevalently to be subject to a time that, along the lines of Schiller, we might define as „extraneous time“ (cfr. Morelli 1995, 13); nevertheless, it is often true that the user – be he a spectator or a reader – is allowed to proceed at an uneven pace through the event in which he is partaking, thereby tailoring the experience to his own subjective needs. When this happens – for example in Sterne's *TRISTRAM SHANDY GENTLEMAN*, or Joyce's *ULYSSES* or in the films of Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky who, while at the very back of a long shot and still out of focus, is slowly moving towards these pages – a standardization occurs that for some may be the emblem of an authentic waste of time, whereas for more insight-

ful eyes, it appears as a concession: the author grants the reader or spectator, the right to experience his own excursions through time. This means that to accept the gift of the artist's time, the audience must reconsider its own concept of clock: if it doesn't, it might get the feeling that the mechanism it is holding is broken, and may have stopped forever.

However, as Giovanni Morelli observes, given that „restoring a clock to health“ cannot be given the dignity of a temporal event, in the experience of an artistic event it may be preferable to refer to a time marker that does not appear to bring order to life events.

Turning to the words of a musicologist to hear his description of clocks, at this point we can let Andrei Tarkovsky – who is now sharply in focus, framed in an American shot – carry a torch to bear witness to the profound consonance of his cinema with a concept of time that is so very far removed from an officially chronological method of storytelling.

And so Morelli speaks of devices that establish the passing of the hours in the following words:

Un orologio guasto non è morto, è *soltanto un po' morto*; potrebbe essere infatti riparato e potrebbe tornare a mettere in scala i fatti della vita di chi se lo porta al polso; ma è anche vero che se mai l'orologio riesce a mantenersi guasto, il tempo dei fatti che accadono al personaggio sono proprio tutti suoi; ed è anche vero che la guarigione di un orologio è faccenda di breve momento [...] Basta una rapida pulitura, un modesto e veloce trapianto di una rotellina, o giù di lì, e tutto è fatto per una guarigione che non ha la dignità di un evento temporale complesso o sincronizzabile, oppure un grado di interesse sufficiente a renderlo oggetto di un racconto.¹ (Morelli 1995, 18)

Going into greater detail, in Tarkovsky's hands the actual pace of the story, of the plot in every one of his films, plunges into a time that is more musical than narrative, where the clock is his metronome; and so the sound of his seconds as they pass by and change is the most interesting legacy left by the director not only to his audience but also, film after film, to himself. This is clearly a symbolic heritage, which – given that it is impossible for any of us, due to the laws that govern a lifetime, to receive our own inheritance – it might be better to define as a poetic

1 „A broken watch is not dead, it is just a *little dead*; it can in fact be repaired and once again bring order to the events in the life of the person who wears it on his wrist; but it is also true that if the watch succeeds in remaining broken, the time of the events that involve the person becomes very personal; but it is also true that healing a watch is a matter of minutes [...] All it takes is a quick cleaning, the swift and unassuming replacement of a spring, or something similar, for the recovery to be complete, though it will not have the dignity of a complex or synchronic temporal event, or a sufficient level of interest to make it a good story“ [all transl. – M. P.]

device. A device that, as the Russian director now stands in a close-up before our very eyes, Tarkovsky uses to create a distinction very similar to the one theorized by philosopher Karl Popper who, in seeking to distinguish two clearly recognizable types of time, defined the time of clocks as opposed to the time of clouds.² This association, which distinguishes two words that may clearly be recognized as being very different – the cloud is extremely disorderly or disturbed whereas the clock is exact and precise – , allows us to observe that Tarkovsky's work also features two cadenzas that may clearly be distinguished as polar opposites. The first, more similar to the way a clock works, is confined by the Russian director to the prologues that from one film to the next return as yet another echo of the poetic intensity of his cinema. On the contrary, the cadenza of the cloud, in our opinion, may be discerned in the breadth of vision that every one of this director's films requires from the eye that is watching – and this sort of breadth can stimulate thought by kindling the emotions – and in the frequent vertical pans with which the camera, tilting upwards or downwards, brings the earth in touch with the sky, or the sky in touch with the earth.³

INNER LEGACIES: FROM TARKOVSKY TO TARKOVSKY

The time of clouds

It might seem strange that a movement as easily recognizable as a vertical pan should be associated with an irregular, disorderly and more or less unpredictable time such as the time of clouds; but that is precisely what happens because Tarkovsky believes that the inestimable virtue of cinema lies in the art of poetry:

I find poetic links, the logic of poetry in cinema, extraordinarily pleasing. They seem to me perfectly appropriate to the potential of cinema as the most truthful and poetic of art forms. Certainly I am more at home with them than with traditional theatrical writing which links images through the linear rigidly logical development of the plot. That sort of fussily „correct“ way of linking events usually involves arbitrarily forcing them into

2 For further insight into this issue see Morelli 1995, 59–63.

3 To discuss the sense of time in Tarkovsky's cinema, it seems perfectly natural to borrow the term „cadenza“ from the language of music. In fact if in the language of notes the cadenza is a harmonic-melodic form that consists in a series of two or more chords and typically ends a musical work, phrase or section thereof, the prologue in the Russian director's films – while beginning, rather than ending his compositions like the cadenza in music – serves a purpose that is in many ways similar to this harmonic form. Furthermore, given that in the language of music the cadenza serves a function that is in many ways similar to that of punctuation in verbal communication, we do not believe it is mistaken to use the word cadenza to define the vertical movement on which Tarkovsky's camera often relies for its narration.

sequence in obedience to some abstract notion of order. And even when this is not so, even when the plot is governed by the characters, one finds that the links which hold it together rest on a facile interpretation of life's complexities. (Tarkovsky 1989, 17)

It is the director himself who leads us to make this comparison: the vertical pan shot is in fact one of the signals used by the Russian filmmaker to acknowledge the value of those images in which poetry appears spontaneously as a sign of „life's complexities“, like a precious crystal, simply because it is rooted in the concrete physical experience that pulsates within the characters narrated in his films. Tarkovsky, who is extraneous to the concept of poetic cinema – which, as we will later see, will attract many of his possible heirs, imprisoning them in films in which the bulwark of poetry makes every image difficult to understand – uses the vertical pan shot as a movement to trigger a mechanism that is rather similar to the one that governs a cloud: by moving the camera, the Russian director can highlight the intense vitality that cinema brings to all those experiences that are legitimated by the very fact that they are poles apart from the typical perfection of a grandfather clock.

Tarkovsky relies on rigorously vertical pan shots in certain sequences from *IVANOVO DETSTVO* („Ivan's Childhood“, 1962), *ANDREJ RUBLEV* (id., 1966), *SOLJARIS* (id. 1972), *ZERKALO* („Mirror“, 1974) and *OFFRET* („Sacrifice“, 1986). Though he has stated that he loves the earth more than the sky, when he pans the camera vertically, he seems to want to create a link between them that respects the individuality and independence that turns each of these two elements into vulnerable clouds, because they are also chronically at the mercy of atmospheric conditions.

The director's debut film, *IVANOVO DETSTVO*, opens with a vertical pan of the camera, which rises up the trunk of a birch tree to reveal its leafy crown. At the foot of the tree stands little Ivan, in ecstatic admiration of Nature's creation.

Whereas the opening sequence of Tarkovsky's first feature-length film links earth and sky by moving up from the earth, in *ANDREJ RUBLEV* the Russian master looks at the earth from the perspective of a farmer who flies through the sky in a rudimentary weather balloon.

In the opening prologue to the film dedicated by Tarkovsky to the great painter of icons, the earth is seen for the first and only time in the director's entire filmography with a bird's eye view from above, through the eyes of Efim, who will sacrifice his own life and die as he crashes to the ground.

The sequence of the flight in the weather balloon is a terrifying point-of-view shot that brutally confronts the spectator with the importance of the earth to the filmmaker: the sky is never visible and the farmer's fall at the end re-establishes the relationship of dependency between man and earth above that of man and sky.

It is not until he has understood what exists around him that Tarkovskian man can hope to achieve a union between the earthly and the celestial worlds. In *SOLJARIS* in fact, the downwards pan with which the camera reveals Kelvin's home immersed in the thinking-ocean of the planet demonstrates that until he comes to terms with his misunderstanding of the earthly world, man will never be able to understand the principle that governs any extra-terrestrial entities.

The bell maker Boriska, and Little Man in *OFFRET* after him, are the only creatures capable of maintaining a serene relationship with the celestial vault. While searching for just the right clay to make the bell he has been commissioned to fashion, Boriska watches in awe as the vital sap of a large tree rises from the roots embedded in the mud to nourish the tree's foliage: when he finally finds the right clay, the sky begins to rain on him, as if it wanted to reward him for having understood the mystery that is guarded within the bowels of the earth.

It is because they have understood the key to this enigma that Boriska will be able to hang his bell between earth and sky, and Little Man will be able to revive the dry tree under which Tarkovsky leaves him at the end of his last film.

Hence the sky is never visible in the director's films; or rather, because the spectator never sees it directly, he must settle for the reflection that Tarkovsky has relied on, ever since his medium-length thesis film *КАТОК И СКРИПКА* („The Steam Roller and the Violin“, 1960), to narrate this space which he mirrors in the water that so often saturates the earth in his films. On the other hand, when in *SOLJARIS* the authorities ask Breton, one of the characters in the film, why he filmed the clouds, it becomes obvious that this question is merely an excuse for the Russian master to rethink his art: like Breton, who not coincidentally films the clouds, Tarkovsky makes ‚cloud films‘ not only because, as we have seen, the vertical pan shot pulsates with the time of the clouds, but also because, to avoid embracing the fallacies typical of the powers to whom Breton shows his film, when observing the director's long takes, one must necessarily agree to interact with them relying on one's own memories and imagination.

The time of clocks

Tarkovsky's films often begin with a prologue, and because in the Russian director's hands the preamble becomes an announcement, with varying degrees of clarity and loquacity, of the tenor of what is to come, these short sequences are precision watches with which the filmmaker represents in images the mechanisms that govern the work and are, to say it in musical terms, the overture to the film.

Ivan's first dream, the story of Kelvin's life on earth and the hypnotic process that the therapist in *ZERKALO* uses to make a stuttering boy speak fluently, all of these episodes reflect the way that human memory constructs a temporal experi-

ence in images, and that is why they are clocks. In fact, before letting the events in the story become meaningful for their spatial configuration – for the *mise en scène* – rather than for the logic behind the story they tell, the prologue is like a beacon in the night: without indulging in ruminations that compel „the spectator from the start to knock his head against the ‚ceiling‘ of the director’s so-called thought“ (Tarkovsky *Sculpting in Time* 1989, 69), they help to ease him into the atmosphere of the story that will ensue.

Referring to the prologue of *ZERKALO*, Tarkovsky observes:

The prologue is a kind of key to the film and from the very beginning prepares the spectator to perceive the artistic meaning and the stylistics of the picture. Without the prologue the film would simply be incomprehensible. It prepares the spectator for the dramaturgical nature of the work, where the action unfolds more by associative laws of music and poetry than by the usual canons of cine-fiction. I do not even mention the fact that the episode itself bears an extremely important semantic load. It conveys the entire difficulty experienced by the hero and narrator in connection with the need to speak of things that are profoundly personal and difficult, and at the same time [it conveys] a sense of the inner liberation, illumination, benevolence towards life and other people, at which the hero arrives at the end of the film. (Tarkovsky in Bird 2008, 109)

And so, along the lines of the words that the director himself uses to explain the meaning of one of his prologues, we understand on the one hand the value of the lengthy *incipit* of *Solaris* with Kris Kelvin on Earth, and on the other – given that the title sequence to every film is always and in any case a prologue – that the beginning of *OFFRET* may also be considered as a preamble to the film. In fact the vertical pan of the camera that opens the director’s last film, ending on the leafy crown of the tree in the shadow of which Leonardo placed the Sacred Family in his *ADORAZIONE DEI MAGI*, makes it easy to establish a comparison between Baby Jesus and his secular version, Tarkovsky’s Little Man. In the final sequence of *OFFRET*, the son of Alexander takes the place of Jesus under a tree similar to the one in Leonardo’s painting; in this way, the director seeks to underscore the intrinsic resemblance between the two children, both of whom possess the key to saving the world.

A further demonstration that in Tarkovsky’s cinema the time of clocks is limited to the prologue, is again the *incipit* of *SOLJARIS* on earth. This sequence, in fact, which encompasses all of Kelvin’s nostalgia for planet Earth to which he will never be able to return, also reveals Tarkovsky’s faith in an audience that he hopes will feel engulfed in the experience of seeing his films, just as Kelvin is engulfed in the atmosphere of the planet *Solaris*. Unlike the psychologist, the main character in the film, once the film is over the audience will leave the theatre, will return

to planet Earth, with a heavy dose of nostalgia, but also with an enhanced ability to breathe and live freely.

TARKOVSKY'S LEGACY

A legacy is a pact that has been ‚signed‘ between someone who has gone and those who stay behind. In fact the verb ‚to leave‘, the key word in this passage (in Italian *lasciare*, from the Latin ‚laxus‘), contains within it the sense of something that breaks loose and moves away from us, unfolding into an embrace with future generations.

On the pages of the daily newspaper LA REPUBBLICA, Barbara Spinelli, has compared the transmission of legacies to the experience of a relay race:

Ciascun concorrente (detto frazionista) deve percorrere una frazione, e trasmettere un bastone al subentrante. Il bastone si chiama, guarda caso, testimone. La regola vieta di lanciare al compagno il testimone nelle zone di passaggio, e fissa regole precise sulla sua caduta (se cade può raccogliarlo solo chi l'ha perduto: l'incapace di tramandare). Anche nel passaggio tra generazioni è così: la consegna del testimone avviene in seguito a tocco con la mano, del corpo del concorrente in partenza da parte del concorrente in arrivo.⁴ (Spinelli, 2011, 47)

So if the baton that is passed between the runners of a relay race can be a metaphor for an inheritance, what is the legacy that the new generations of filmmakers have received from Andrei Tarkovsky? What distinguishes the legacy left by the Russian director is the hand of the receiver. In fact the handover acquires value at the very moment in which the heir, though disturbed by the sense of guilt that survival always entails, according to Lévinas (1998, 85 ff.), accepts the situation and discovers that it offers both an opportunity to incur a debt, and the possibility of accepting the invitation to make this a permanent legacy. Therefore, recognizing elements of Tarkovsky in contemporary cinema means discovering traces that are hard to discern, particularly because the impact of the Russian master's legacy on the seventh art, which left unmistakable marks and was in some cases pursued with dogged self-gratification, was often dissipated in the films of his

4 „Each competitor must run one leg of the race, and hand over the baton to the next runner. The baton in Italian is known as *il testimone*, the witness. The rules forbid the baton from being thrown to the companion in the transition zone, and establish specific rules about losing it (if it drops, it must be picked up by the person who dropped it: the person who was unable to pass it on). The same thing happens in the passage from one generation to the next: the baton is handed over when the body of the runner who must go is touched by the hand of the runner who has arrived.“

followers like an aspirin dissolving in a glass of water. In fact the influence of Andrei Tarkovsky in the hands of Lars von Trier or Terence Malick for example, sometimes results in nothing more than a rather obvious form of mannerism, which can be quite irritating. However the naïvely didactic imitation and irritatingly proselytizing tone – a tone that, as we will see, is used in *MELANCHOLIA* (id., 2011) by von Trier in a crude attempt to replicate and echo the Russian master's style – will possibly find a response in the work of his most original heirs, among the few that may be counted, Sokurov and Bellocchio.

ALEKSANDR SOKUROV

In *SCULPTING IN TIME*, in a reference to Sokurov among others, Tarkovsky observes:

There are few people of genius in cinema; look at Bresson, Mizoguchi, Sokurov, Vigo, Bunuel: not one of them can be confused with anyone else. An artist of that calibre follows one straight line, albeit at great cost; not without weaknesses or even indeed, occasionally a touch of artifice; but always in the name of the one idea, the one conception. (Tarkovsky 1989, 75)

MOSKOVSKAJA ÈLEGIJA („Moscow Elegy“), dedicated to Andrei Tarkovsky in 1987, may well be Sokurov's response to the praise of the Russian master, though it was true that over the years – and this is an impression conveyed by Tarkovsky's diaries – the two had grown apart.

The word *elegy* is linked to the term ἔλεγχος, which means ‚lamentation‘, and perhaps because the relationship between Tarkovsky and Sokurov had grown colder, it is the finest example of the value expressed by the baton that was passed between these two directors. While the conflict between generations is a natural and undoubtedly necessary event, and because nothing may be inherited without discretely recognizing the void left behind by the person who has passed away, Sokurov has proven to be one of the director's closest allies: from *MOSKOVSKAJA ÈLEGIJA* to the present, even when he has not been completely successful in capturing it and absorbing it himself, he has ensured the survival of the value of making cinema according to Andrei Tarkovsky.

MAT' I SYN

MAT' I SYN („Mother and Son“, 1997) was the first film to reveal Sokurov's talent to international audiences. This is a film reminiscent of Andrei Tarkovsky's fea-

ture-length films because of the attention it dedicates to man and to time in the alternating colour or black and white frames, that cancel the distance between the bodies and the spaces.

The main characters in this 1997 film are a mother and the son who is taking care of her: they move through a desert landscape, trapped in its chromatic density and in the spaces of their physical carnality, their soul and their spirituality.

In *MAT' I SYN* the director shows the bodies of the characters as they merge into the grass, the trees, the sand of the trails, the wheat, the skies, and attempt to live with and within the extension of the universal, narrating death as an event that carries man away from the space of the world.

This film says that if living means inhabiting the Earth, then dying means being deprived of the trails, it means leaving the three-dimensional space of movement to enter into the space with no horizon, and soon without substance, of the corpse. Hence in this film, death is a question of space rather than time and narration.

As he plays with the tones of the colours and lights and enhances the immobility of his main characters, Sokurov prepares the scene as if it were a canvas, borrowing and inverting the traditional motifs of the Pietà. It is not the mother who cries for her son, but the son who cries for his mother, with the same gestures that may be found in the paintings of the Virgin in tears, the outstretched hands and the imploring or meditative gaze.

The figure of compassion established by Sokurov is the same that Tarkovsky represents in *ANDREJ RUBLEV* and *OFFRET*. In these films it is nature that objectifies the image of the characters' innermost suffering. In Tarkovsky like in Sokurov, nature conceals the wounds and soothes the pain of the human soul, embracing the infinite anxiety of man who finds shelter within her.

MAT' I SYN is a Tarkovskian film because, as Bergman observes, while „Tarkovsky moves with absolute confidence through the space of dreams. He is an observer who has been successful in representing his visions as he makes use of the heaviest and most flexible of all media“ (Bergman 1997, 71), one can see how Sokurov too ‚tinges‘ every scene with soft colours, with a prevalence of ochre and green, and using special lenses that distort proportions, he also seems to enter the space of dreams. The embraced bodies of the mother and son are the tale of a shared dream, a dream in which the director presents separation as a necessity: the death of the mother, which the son understands as a natural biological event that is in the order of things, is accompanied however by grief on which the long fluid movements of the camera focus as the son seeks out his mother's hand with his face, hoping that this caress will reveal the reason why a bond so intense must lead to such unbearable pain, and when the man runs his fingers tirelessly through his mother's hair.

The sequence in *MAT' I SYN* when the son kneels at the foot of a tree, after he has hugged it in tears, is reminiscent of the final frame of *OFFRET*, when Little

Man stands at the foot of a dead tree seeking the same regenerating comfort that the protagonist of Sokurov's film has found. And so the tortuous bonds that the *logos* would probably be incapable of exploring with the same intensity – it is no coincidence that Tarkovsky's last film ends with the words „In the beginning was the Word. Why is that, Papa?“ with the question that Little Man asks Alexander who has already gone – leads Sokurov, who is Tarkovskian in this sense as well, to establish the supremacy of the image over discourse, using this mechanism to experiment with the effort of realigning film time with physiological time.

THE RUSSIAN ARK

If realigning film time with physiological time means, as Tarkovsky observes, „relying on the observation of life and not on the soulless and stereotypical construction of a false life in the name of cinematic expression“ (Tarkovsky, 1989, 27), *RUSKIJ KOVČEG* („Russian Ark“, 2002), which constructs the first total long take in the history of cinema inside the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, is a point-of-view promenade that lasts exactly as long as the film.⁵ Yet Sokurov, who does not wish to altogether abandon his chance to disrupt the unrelenting regular ticking of the clock, plays dialectically on several levels and constructs a film-journey that, moving across three centuries of Russian history, from the eighteenth-century to the Grand Imperial Ball in 1913 and beyond, addressing the love-hate relationship with Russia and the Country's relationship with its own past and with contemporary Europe, is once again reminiscent of Andrei Tarkovsky. This time in an ambiguous way: as he tries to penetrate the passing of time without having to reconstruct it in the editing room, he seems to be aware of Tarkovsky's desire to establish a natural collaboration with the rhythm of the seconds as they tick by; furthermore, just when for just one moment the Hermitage is transformed into the former Winter Palace of Saint Petersburg with the mass exit of the participants in the Great Ball of 1913, while the fog rises from the waters of the Neva River, the eyes of the spectator are again filled with Tarkovskian space. This space, reorganized in a new and personal way, transfers the burden of reconstructing reality onto the things that exist within it: each one, separately, tends to isolate itself, weakening the bonds that bind it to all the others, and causing the space to lose its articulated structure – just think of the Russian house placed inside the walls of an Italian cathedral in *NOSTALGHIA* (1983) – its wholeness,

5 *RUSKIJ KOVČEG* was filmed digitally with an experimental German hard disk recording system, which allows 100 min of independent filming. It is interesting to observe that, before Sokurov, Alfred Hitchcock attempted a similar experiment in *ROPE* (1948): since a conventional camera could only record 12 consecutive minutes on film, the director was forced to use a wide range of little tricks – for example the close-up of a character's back – to get to the black – and do the required editing.

and its own internal connection. In other words, like Tarkovsky, and especially in this sequence of *RUSKIJ KOVČEG*, Sokurov too explores space as an atmosphere occupied not only by liquid (the fog, the snow, the water of the Neva) or solid bodies (the participants at the Ball) but also by all the emotional states of man as they relate to reality. And they are the basis on which the two Russian directors seek to understand the space that surrounds them: what they are interested in is the capacity of a certain point of aesthetic space to refer to one factor rather than another of sensorial perception.

FAUST

Reversing the classic iconography of Goethe's eighteenth-century work, Sokurov's *FAUST* (2011), which was presented at the 2011 Venice International Film Festival, immersed the story of the legendary pact between the scientist and the devil in a muddy, rusty, earthy, brown environment crawling with rats, entrails and sewage. Even Margherita, who is usually the symbol of the fragile longing for beauty that characterizes Faust, becomes a marginal figure in Sokurov's hands to the benefit of an epilogue among the steaming craters of Iceland.

Like in Tarkovsky's cinema, in this *FAUST* the Earth appears as both a point of departure, a place of birth – because its bowels give rise to both the bell with the luminous sound forged by Boriska in *ANDREJ RUBLEV*, and the pact between Faust and Belzebub – and a point of arrival, mortified matter that witnesses not only the draught and dissolution of the world of *SOLJARIS*, but the story of the fall of the arrogant angel as well, and the plot of the most dangerous ascent of all, that of man who wants to become God.

While in Tarkovsky's takes, the slow growth of the trees and the grass on Earth, as well as the slow-burning fire – in the case of Alexander's house as it burns in *OFFRET*, or the fire in the farmhouse at the beginning of *ZERKALO* – are metaphors for the presence and the passing of time, in Sokurov's *FAUST*, the relationship with the Earth and the fall deep into its cavities is nothing but blind abandon to a matter that, by means of deformed optics and perspectives, becomes the mirror of a deformed world.

Sokurov's film begins with a downwards movement of the camera as it pans between the houses of a village reminiscent of Bosch or Bruegel, and moves from the stars down to earth, ending on the penis of a greenish corpse that lies on Doctor Faustus' anatomic table. Though it changes its sign, this motion that seems to evoke the relationship between Earth and body as experienced for example by Alexander, in Tarkovsky's *OFFRET*, as he watches his house burn down and lies flat on the wet Earth which he perceives as a vital element, this Earth that seems to give him back some of the heat from the flames he is watching as they devour his home.

So while in Tarkovsky's hands the meeting between Earth, water, fire and man is a source of wellbeing, the roots of the tree of life, as they are described in Sokurov's *FAUST*, do not burrow down in search of vitality, the vitality that on the contrary Little Man will continue to sustain as he brings water to the dry tree planted by Alexander in the *incipit* of *OFFRET*, hoping to watch its leaves grow green again some day, but to be rooted more deeply in the placenta of an unpleasant earthbound existence.

LARS VON TRIER

BREAKING THE WAVES (1996) is the feature film that revealed director Lars von Trier to the wider public. Yet since then, ever since at the end of that film the bells began to ring in a sort of desperate „howl“, the cinema of the Danish master turned out in fact to be very distant from the work of Andrei Tarkovsky, though many years later, *MELANCHOLIA* (2011) led him to be considered as a possible heir. The work of Lars von Trier reflects what the Russian master observed in reference to Raffaello's *MADONNA SISTINA*:

For the Virgin Mary, in the artist's representation, is an ordinary citizen, whose psychological state as reflected in the canvas has its foundation in real life: she is fearful of the fate of her son, given in sacrifice to man. Even though it is in the name of their salvation, he himself is being surrendered in the fight against the temptation to defend him from them. All of this is indeed vividly written into the picture – from my point of view, too vividly, for the artist's thought is there for the reading: all too unambiguous and well-defined. One is irritated by the painter's sickly allegorical tendentiousness hanging over the form and overshadowing all the purely painterly qualities of the picture. The artist has concentrated his will on clarity of thought, on the intellectual concept of his work, and paid the price: the painting is flabby and insipid. (Tarkovsky 1989, 47)

Lars von Trier's films, like Raffaello's *MADONNA SISTINA*, are weighed down by an „allegorical tendentiousness“ that diminishes the purely cinematographic value of his work and makes it insipid, perhaps even excessively sanctimonious.

MELANCHOLIA

It cannot be said that in exploring *Melancholia*, the planet of depression, Lars von Trier conceals his Tarkovskian coordinates. While on the planet *Solaris*, the vital signs that arise from the thinking-ocean derive from the astronauts' feelings

of sadness and guilt, the Danish director moves from Tarkovsky's sick incarnations to the definitive proclaimed disappearance of corrupt humanity. However in leading the viewers towards the final annihilation of the Earth, the film, in our opinion, does little to rise above a somewhat morbid story of terror in the face of the apocalypse.

Von Trier undoubtedly borrows a great deal from Tarkovsky's visual and symbolic imagery, but in doing so he never goes beyond a smug sort of citation which, far from becoming personal expression, slips away and sinks under the weight of the *significance* imposed by the director's initial intentions.

So while Tarkovsky believes the image must not pulsate with „this or that meaning expressed by the director, but with an entire world“ (Tarkovsky 1989, 104), the Danish filmmaker's evocation of the Russian master's work, while fascinating, is nothing more than a tedious series of virtuoso citations: to the hot-air balloons shown in the paintings in SOLJARIS, the images in MELANCHOLIA respond with weather balloons that drift up into the sky; THE HUNTERS IN THE SNOW by Bruegel cited by Tarkovsky in SOLJARIS and in ZERKALO, becomes an image that folds over itself as it goes up in flames; and finally while in von Trier the characters sink deeper with every step, as if they were being swallowed up by the earth, Tarkovsky's characters, from SOLJARIS to OFFRET, flutter in the air (for example Harey's levitation in SOLJARIS, or in the filmmaker's last film, the entwined bodies of Maria and Alexander floating in the air).

The figure of a horse appears rather frequently in MELANCHOLIA; this is an animal that symbolizes life for both von Trier and Tarkovsky – for example in the drawings of horses hanging on the walls of Kelvin's room on planet Solaris, and the number of steeds that appear in ANDREJ RUBLEV starting with the prologue. Furthermore, von Trier seems to build a more or less conscious bridge towards the art of the Russian filmmaker both in the prologue, which is dominated by the *overture* to Wagner's TRISTAN UND ISOLDE, and in the theme of the apocalypse which, in his latest film, seems to evoke OFFRET.

And given that for Tarkovsky, as we have shown, every prologue is a clock that marks the rhythm and breadth of the film it precedes, von Trier's use of the prologue seems to be a deliberate tribute to the Russian filmmaker. Yet because according to MELANCHOLIA's sumptuous *incipit – tableaux vivants* that slowly reveal the apocalyptic content of the film – everything has already taken place, having chosen to anticipate the events, and even the outcome, the director distracts the attention of the spectator from the development of the story by putting a timepiece in his hands that moves at breakneck speed through the first moments, only to stop and leave the public saturated, dissatisfied and disappointed.

TERRENCE MALICK

In Terrence Malick's last film, *THE TREE OF LIFE* (2011), Andrei Tarkovsky's legacy seems to shine from the opening title itself. How can we not give the tree in the film's title the same value that the Russian director attributed to the dry little tree planted by Alexander and Little Man right after the opening credits of *OFFRET*? And furthermore: how can we fail to recall the moment in which this plant, as if to reward the patience with which Little Man continues to water it, begins to blossom and reveals itself as the tree of life that not coincidentally Tarkovsky dedicates „with hope and trust“ to his son Andryushka and which, by metonymy, he leaves as a legacy to us all?

Though it is tempting, this comparison is implausible and may even appear deceitful. Not because Terrence Malick is not influenced by Tarkovsky, but because the Russian master's cinema is less an inspiration for *THE TREE OF LIFE* – the film's references to Tarkovsky are limited to the mere suggestion offered by the title, as we have shown – than for *THE THIN RED LINE*, the film for which the American director won the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1999.

THE THIN RED LINE

Terrence Malick, like Tarkovsky, is „a great myth-maker of the four elements“ (Arecco 2002, 63). *THE THIN RED LINE* feeds on earth, air, fire and water, the very matter that generates the Russian master's films. Furthermore, like Tarkovsky, who in *STALKER* (1979) uses science fiction as a vehicle to illustrate a journey into the Zone⁶, understood as every human being's conscience, so the American filmmaker, using the plot of a war film as an instrument of emotional condensation, and tracing a thin red line between World War II and the labyrinth that is every man's existence, explores human thought by objectifying it both in words that are often recited by narrative voices, and in the labyrinth of grass, blood, bullets,

6 Inspired by the science-fiction novel *PIKNIK NA OBOČINE* („Roadside Picnic“) by the brothers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, *STALKER*, like *SOLJARIS* before it, represents Tarkovsky's personal interpretation of the original text. Though it may be classified as science fiction, this film is above all a cathartic journey into the so-called Zone, which questions and transcends the guidelines of genre films. The Russian master observes that „In ‚Stalker‘ only the basic situation could strictly be called fantastic. It was convenient because it helped to delineate the central moral conflict of the film more starkly. But in terms of what actually happens to the characters, there is no element of fantasy. [...] People have often asked me what the Zone is, and what it symbolises, and have put forward wild conjectures on the subject. I'm reduced to a state of fury and despair by such questions. The Zone doesn't symbolise anything, any more than anything else does in my films: the zone is a zone, it's life, and as he makes his way across it a man may break down or he may come through“. These are the words of Andrei Tarkovsky (Tarkovsky 1989, 199).

clouds, sweat and fear that constitutes the battlefield in Guadalcanal, where the film takes place.

In *THE THIN RED LINE* Malick, like Tarkovsky in *STALKER*, tends to typologize his characters; and just as the Russian master names his characters respectively the Writer and the Professor, the American director, following the literary example of Homer's *ILIAS*, characterizes them by qualities that achieve the value of an epithet, which, as Francesco Cattaneo observes, „makes it possible, on the level of characterization, to retrieve the quotient of character recognition that has been lost with their increase in number“ (Cattaneo 2006, 146 f.). Furthermore, if for *STALKER* it is important to decide why and to what degree it may be considered a science-fiction film, Malick's film forces one to reconsider the *war movie* genre from an „existential“ point of view.

In Tarkovsky's Zone, like in Malick's war, even the simplest of things becomes difficult: the chaotic materiality of the Zone, like the battlefield, which necessarily relies on the long shot because there can be no shot from above, shows man as the one who, with his existential self-interrogation, maintains absolute primacy within the image. Furthermore, if the American director's response to the Russian master's Zone is the macro-sequence of war – the fifth scene in the film, almost a film within a film that lasts approximately an hour and a quarter –, in his use of the steadycam and the hand-held camera, with their oscillating and sometimes uncertain shots, Malick, unlike Tarkovsky, seems to participate in the tumultuous and ungainly advance of the soldiers.

It is mostly the prologue to *THE THIN RED LINE*, which takes place entirely in the light of day and is developed in airy relaxed sequences, that echoes the films of the Russian director. It is a reference to *IVANOVO DETSTVO*. Just like in Malick, where the war disturbs the subdued tranquillity of nature, so in Tarkovsky the blissful dream that shows Ivan with his mother is replaced by the danger of the chaos of war, which perennially engulfs the little scout. Careful observation of the initial sequences of the American director's film, will show a crocodile diving under the surface of the muddy, seaweed-filled water, followed by a dissolve into a view of the tropical forest: after focusing on the terrain and the roots of a group of trees, the camera moves away and frames the foliage with the rays of light breaking through it. In doing this, Malick again highlights the influence of Andrei Tarkovsky on *THE THIN RED LINE* by borrowing – before the clean cut that marks a break followed by the entrance of the two little aboriginals – that upwards movement that, looking back again to *IVANOVO DETSTVO*, pans up the trunk of a tree up to the branches silhouetted against the sky. What the two filmmakers have in common may well be the relationship that binds them to the earth and to the celestial vault.

On this subject, Tarkovsky, referring to *ANDREJ RUBLEV*, wrote:

I have to say that what interests me most is the earth. I have always been fascinated by the process of germination and the growth of everything

that is generated by the earth, the trees, grass... And all this tends towards the sky. This is the reason why in my films the sky only appears as a form of space towards which everything that bursts out of the ground reaches out. In itself, the sky has no symbolic meaning for me. I believe the sky is empty. All that interests me is its influence on the earth.⁷ (Tarkovsky in Frambosi 2004, 97)

In fact it is no coincidence that neither the Russian master's nor Malick's films allude to a world beyond, or to transcendence, because both directors believe that sky and water are interdependent and intersecting elements.

MARCO BELLOCCHIO

For Marco Bellocchio making films is a means to understand one's own essence with respect to an inevitable evolution of the self, as both an artist and a man. One of the most constant and coherent authors in the history of Italian cinema, one of the few who has remained faithful to his own self and who fought to sustain a unique, important idea of cinema, at the very moment in which he was accused of being plagiarized by the psychoanalytic thought of Massimo Fagioli, he may on the contrary be associated – in the light of his conception of the seventh art, and for some of the themes he developed in many of his films and in particular in *IL SOGNO DELLA FARFALLA* (1998) – with Andrei Tarkovsky.⁸

Bellocchio's cinema is undoubtedly very different from that of the Russian filmmaker, yet both of them consider this art as the possibility of condensing a highly personal and private world into images, a world that may have its closest points of contact in *IL SOGNO DELLA FARFALLA*, as well as in *L'ORA DI RELIGIONE* (2002) and in *SORELLE MAI* (2011).

IL SOGNO DELLA FARFALLA, L'ORA DI RELIGIONE

Like Andrei Tarkovsky, Marco Bellocchio believes that „cinema is a moral“: in the first Tarkovskian feature-length film by the Italian director, this is demon-

7 To address the relationship between Malick's *THE THIN RED LINE* and Tarkovsky's films, reference was also made to Cattaneo 2004, 145–218.

8 Concerning the relationship between *IL SOGNO DELLA FARFALLA* and the Russian director's films, in response to Aldo Tassone who asserted that „*Il sogno della farfalle* seems to be a sort of tribute to Tarkovsky“, Bellocchio said: „Tarkovsky is undoubtedly one of those authors that one admires above all for the beauty of his images and again for an approach that one might call poetic. In this sense Tarkovsky was admirable“ (Bellocchio in Marangon 2003, 69). For further exploration of these themes, see Marangon, 2003 and Rossi 2000.

strated by his aversion to any speculative image and his focus on the physical observation of reality, of the body and the gaze; in the second, it is underscored by Diana Sereni's reading to Ernesto Picciafuoco of the poem *VOT I LETO PROŠLO* („So Summer is Gone“) by Arseny Tarkovsky, also quoted in *STALKER*.

Andrei Tarkovsky writes:

For me cinema is not a profession, it is a moral that I respect to respect myself. [...] In my opinion there is a law: auteur films are films by poets. But what is a poet in cinema? He is a director who creates his own world and does not try to reproduce the reality that surrounds him. (Tarkovsky 1987, 38)

Bellocchio, though in this case he refers only to his work inspired by Massimo Fagioli, espouses the same approach when he states:

Il mio interesse e la mia partecipazione ai seminari di Fagioli sono stati prima di tutto per la totale insoddisfazione che avevo di me stesso come uomo, prima che come artista. Ma anche come artista perché non me ne fregava più nulla di rappresentarmi come un ribelle perdente.⁹ (Bellocchio 1998, 122)

If one of the strongest elements uniting Bellocchio and Fagioli is their mutual interest in images, the former from an artistic point of view, the latter from a psychological perspective,¹⁰ the most significant points of contact between *IL SOGNO DELLA FARFALLA* and Tarkovsky's cinema, from a thematic point of view, are two: the relationship between house and landscape, and the bond between silence and art.¹¹ Both directors – Tarkovsky in films such as *SOLJARIS*, *ZERKALO*

9 „My interest and participation in Fagioli's seminars were dictated primarily by the total dissatisfaction that I felt with myself as a man, more than as an artist. But also as an artist, because I could no longer care less about representing myself as a rebel and a loser.“

10 The new psychoanalytical theory based on the thought of Massimo Fagioli announces a revolutionary vision of the human unconscious, considered not only to be fathomable, but also to be the determining factor in our actions. Fagioli himself sustains that his relationship with Bellocchio, changed over time into a relationship that brought results for both of them: „Il fatto che Marco sia capitato ai seminari e poi vi sia rimasto proponendo all'interno la sua personale ricerca, provocandomi con le sue immagini, ha aggiunto un elemento fondamentale a venticinque anni di analisi collettiva, ha contribuito a costruire un discorso concreto sulle immagini, perché un conto è parlare in teoria, un conto è sperimentare la pratica“ (Fagioli 1998, 236) [„The fact that Marco happened to come to my seminars and stayed, presenting his personal research there, provoking me with his images, added a fundamental element to twenty-five years of collective analysis, helped build a concrete discourse about images because it is one thing to talk about theory, it is another to experiment with a practice“].

11 Marco Bellocchio and Andrei Tarkovsky share a concept of filmmaking poetics that is not dissimilar: both in fact choose to refuse every form of virtuosity in order to pursue an absolutely rigorous experimentation, which makes every image essential to the economy of the film, and

and OFFRET, and Bellocchio in works such as I PUGNI IN TASCA („Fists in the Pocket“), SALTO NEL VUOTO („A Leap in the Dark“), DIAVOLO IN CORPO („Devil in the Flesh“), and BUONGIORNO, NOTTE („Good Morning, Night“) – have represented the human psyche with the image of a house and its interaction with the environment, and through the relationship between silence and art.

The image of the house in IL SOGNO DELLA FARFALLA had changed with respect to the Italian director's other films, becoming one with the image of nature (the landscape symbolically connotes the dimension of the unconscious, understood as the place where man's deepest instincts and desires lie); the house is also the place in which the relationship with the Other becomes fundamental (the three female characters that Massimo will identify as the three witches in MACBETH, whose only purpose seems to be to listen to others to cure them of their anxieties, or the house in Greece in which Massimo and his girlfriend meet an elderly lady who takes them in and may possibly be linked to the mythical figure of Wisdom).

The relationship between silence and art, on the other hand, creates a similarity between two of Tarkovsky's characters and Massimo in IL SOGNO DELLA FARFALLA: the monk-painter Andrei Roublev and the main character in OFFRET, who seeks to save his family from the coming nuclear catastrophe by sacrificing his house and making a vow of silence. If both of these characters choose a wall of silence to conceal the reality of an interior life expressed in the condition of a soul that participates in the existence of the world, it is Andrei Roublev who is most akin to Bellocchio's Massimo (the fire that Alexander sets to his own home, while saving his own house-soul, suggests the destructive catastrophe to which modern man is irremediably condemned if he continues to mortify his spiritual life). Tarkovsky's painter monk, who has chosen silence after killing a soldier to save a girl from being raped during the invasion of the Tatars, and the main character in IL SOGNO DELLA FARFALLA, who is a professional theatre actor in the film and speaks only through the roles created for the stage, open up with their vow of silence towards the aspect of art that feeds on images absorbed from life.

The non-rational dimension that gives birth to art and mistrust of the *logos* are specific aspects of Tarkovsky's poetics:

Art does not think logically, nor does it formulate a logic of behaviour, it expresses its own sort of postulate of faith. That is why the artistic image can only be accepted upon faith. If in science it is possible to substantiate the truth of one's case and prove it logically to one's opponents, in art it is impossible to convince anyone of our rationale, if the images we create

never simply aestheticizing. They also share an aversion to editing, which is more obvious in Tarkovsky, but is clearly perceptible in Bellocchio's IL SOGNO DELLA FARFALLA, which – in this case similarly to Tarkovsky –, perceives editing as a device that does not allow the image to express its full potential, because it is considered to be extraneous to the revelation of the true essence of a frame.

have left the viewer cold, if they have failed to win him over as the revelation of truth about the world and man, and if in fact, face to face with the work, he was simply bored. (Tarkovsky 1989, 41/42)

And if, as Lino Micciché sustains, it is a purely irrational act and not a pondered decision that causes Andrei Rublev to break his silence¹² – he starts to speak after seeing little Boriska, sustained by passion and faith in himself, cast a bell without knowing the secrets of this art –, this reinforces the comparison between the painter monk and Bellocchio's Massimo, because the expression of his irrationality, through the channel of silence, is the *fil rouge* that runs through the entire Italian director's film.

SORELLE MAI

SORELLE MAI, presented out of competition at the 67th Venice International Film Festival, is a private diary in which the house in Bobbio, the old Bellocchio family home where forty-five years earlier he filmed *I PUGNI IN TASCA* („Fists in the Pocket“), becomes a Tarkovskian ‚House of Memory‘, a home in which the filmmaker interrogates the spaces opening up to reflections – like in the Russian director's *ZERKALO* – that prepare the task of the memory and can therefore not avoid being inspired by the house and its interior and exterior spaces.

In *SORELLE MAI*, like a Renaissance artist, Bellocchio inducts several members of his own family (his sisters, his brother Alberto and his children Elena and Piergiorgio) into his atelier, in a film that covers ten years – six episodes filmed at different times between 1999 and 2008.¹³ Seamlessly accompanied by actors such as Donatella Finocchiaro and Alba Rohrwacher, together they compose a collective story made of fragments of life. The sense of passing time is essential in *SORELLE MAI*: there are characters who grow up and change, others who remain the same. This visual symphony in six movements by the most stubborn, tenacious yet delicate and refined poet of Italian filmmaking, in whom art, life, past and present, dreams and memories overlap and chase after each other, is again strongly influenced by Tarkovsky. The central value of the Russian director's cinema is the dimension of time in every human being's process of self-awareness, which may be expressed in art, and in filmmaking in particular:

12 For further explorations of this theme, see Micciché (1987, 2–8).

13 *Sorelle Mai* is a „small“ family film that was the result of an experiment: a film workshop that generated the individual episodes that make up the film, which took place yearly in Bobbio, Marco Bellocchio's native town. The plot follows the story of a little girl (Elena Bellocchio) growing up between the ages of five and thirteen, her mother Sara (Donatella Finocchiaro), sister of Giorgio (Piergiorgio Bellocchio) and the relationships between them.

Proust also spoke of raising ‚a vast edifice of memories‘, and it seems to me that cinema is called upon to play a particular role in this process of resurrection. Cinema masters a completely new material – time – it becomes, in the fullest sense, a new muse. [...] What is the essence of the director’s work? [...] Just as a sculptor takes a lump of marble, and, inwardly conscious of the features of his finished piece, removes everything that is not part of it – so the film-maker, from a ‚lump of time‘ made up of an enormous, solid cluster of living facts, cuts off and discards whatever he does not need. (Tarkovsky 1989, 56–60)

Time makes a selection, it removes contingent residues, it refines. Working on the raw material of their own memories, Tarkovsky in *ZERKALO* and Bellocchio in *SORELLE MAI* do exactly that: they seek the essence of their own life, that of the people closest to them and finally of the entire generation, liberating them from the contingency and randomness that conceal them to themselves and to others.

While Tarkovsky ends *SOLJARIS* with the return Home to the arms of his father, and in *ZERKALO* the nostalgia for the image of the father in Alyosha’s first dream is replaced by the long hair of the mother floating in the water, while the plaster and water collapsing from the ceiling bring with them a pleasurable form of suffering¹⁴, Bellocchio also justifies his poetic inspiration with his own personal experience, and plays with the images in *SORELLE MAI* to distract the passing of time. The light transforms the plot (in one scene, the aunts emerge like phantoms from the dark hallway), while the house – a claustrophobic, seductive labyrinth that everything contains and everything renews – uncovers constant traces of a past life (this is the same house in which Lou Castel released his fury against all the members of his family).

„No one has ever come out of here, not a saint, not a scientist, not an artist“, begins Piergiorgio Bellocchio in *SORELLE MAI*; „all they do here is eat, drink, sleep, and give birth to others who will eat, drink, sleep“. And so in *SORELLE MAI*, using the seduction of memories, the director evokes Chekhov (the sisters in the title are in fact Letizia and Maria Luisa, Bellocchio’s real sisters who, like Chekhov’s *TRI SESTRY* [„Three Sisters“], remained imprisoned in this family re-

14 In Alyosha’s first dream in *ZERKALO*, the nostalgia for the image of the father seems to emerge from the water in the tub from which the man rises bare-chested for a close-up shot in profile, only to disappear right away – given that he is just an element that stimulates the child’s dreams – only to be replaced by the long hair of the mother, also immersed in the water. The oneiric and visual slowdown and the movements of the woman as she raises her hidden face are projected into the plaster crumbling and water pouring from the ceiling. The woman, abandoned to the right of the frame by the camera that slowly pans out to the left along the dark wet wall, is again revealed on the opposite side of the image with her hair drawn up and a shawl over her shoulders. For more information on this theme, see F. Borin (1989, 103) and (2004, 171/172).

lationship, which became a trap that prevented them from living¹⁵), and even Shakespeare (after selling the house in Bobbio, Piergiorgio and Sara, the two siblings in the film, recite *MACBETH* in a sequence that takes place under the rain); and characters who are more melodramatic (Gianni Schicchi Gabrieli, a key figure seen earlier in *I PUGNI IN TASCA* who witnesses the development of all the stories, summons his friends and plunges into the water of the Trebbia river dressed in a tuxedo), lyrical (the young teacher who rents a room in the aunts' house, played by Alba Rohrwacher), all contained within a film about a family that has become a work of poetry, in the purest sense of the word, thanks to a touch of improvisation and the delicate gaze of the director.

We leave the conclusion to the words of Andrei Tarkovsky:

Goethe sustained that it was just as hard to write a good book as to read it. Or rather: reading a good book is just as hard as writing it. The audience is therefore a creative principle as well. (Copello 2011, 27)

This statement partly justifies the bias with which we have addressed the theme of Tarkovsky's legacy for the very reason that the eyes of the audience, and hence those of the scholar, underlie a creative principle.

15 Bellocchio says, referring to the main characters of the sisters in *Sorelle Mai*: „The film wants to be something of an affective compensation so that their forever-obscured image may survive. This time the challenge was to involve them in their role as themselves. While we males sought salvation in leaving, our sisters Maria Luisa and Letizia stayed here. Protectors and sacrificial victims of these walls. They never married, overwhelmed by a cruel nineteenth-century logic. No one ever told them: go out into the world, take a risk. They lived through one of those periods when everything changed, but they were trapped in the past. If ever there was a pulsation, it was instantly suppressed. Sisterhood, such a highly praised condition, turned out to be a trap for them“. „Il film vuole essere quasi un risarcimento affettivo perché la loro immagine sempre oscurata resti. La sfida stavolta era di coinvolgerle nella loro stessa parte. Mentre noi maschi abbiamo cercato di salvarci andandocene via, le sorelle maria Luisa e Letizia sono rimaste qui. Custodi e vittime sacrificali di queste mura. Mai sposate, vinte da una crudele logica ottocentesca. Nessuno ha mai detto loro: vai per il mondo, prenditi un rischio. Sono vissute in uno di quei momenti dove tutto cambia, ma sono rimaste intrappolate nel passato. Se c'è stato qualche palpito è stato subito tarpato. Quella sorellanza tanto decantata per loro è stata una trappola“ (Bellocchio in Manin 2010, 42).

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