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THE ETHICS OF MOURNING IN THE NARRATION OF THE SELF IN THE WORKS
OF MARCEL PROUST AND ANDREI TARKOVSKY

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Irena Artemenko
D.Phil. Candidate
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This thesis gives a new reading of the works of Marcel Proust and Andrei Tarkovsky. First, this intention originates in the apparent oversight in Proustian studies with regard to the ethical dimension of *A la recherche du temps perdu*: the narrator's relationship with the other is predominantly given a psychoanalytic interpretation. Second, the research is driven by the misrepresentation of Tarkovsky's philosophy that is reflected in the emphasis often placed on the religious aspect of his artistic output. Instead, my research explores the nature and importance of ethics in the works of Proust and Tarkovsky and, for that reason, looks at the themes of death in the Proustian novel and a number of Tarkovsky's films: the thesis posits that our awareness of mortality and meditations on death stem from our encounters with the death of the other and thus are essentially reflections on alterity that, in turn, impact our relationship with it. The study of the philosophical works of Jankélévitch, Levinas, Derrida and Deleuze is undertaken to elaborate these ideas and help understand the meaning behind the aesthetic choices of the artists. Finally, the research employs a phenomenological approach to exploring the works of Proust and Tarkovsky as it appears to fit best the format and objectives of the thesis. In addition to the novelty of attempting the concurrent research of the oeuvre of the artists who lived and created in different periods, cultures and genres, studying Proust and Tarkovsky together within the same theoretical framework and from the same thematic perspective enables us to compare the two artists in a way that exposes and corrects the present misconceptions and misrepresentations about their works and contributes to both Proustian and Tarkovskian scholarship.

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This thesis aims to give a new reading of the works of Marcel Proust and Andrei Tarkovsky. The intention originates in the apparent oversight of the significant ethical dimension to the oeuvre of the French novelist and the Russian film director. Firstly, in Proustian studies, the narrator's relationship with the other in *A la recherche du temps perdu* is predominantly given a psychoanalytic reading. Secondly, there is a strong tendency among Tarkovsky's scholars to interpret his artistic output in theological terms. The idea of studying Marcel Proust and Andrei Tarkovsky together, as well as the choice of methodology and thematics, is supported by the parallels in their works: The narrative strategies that depict mourning are similar in nature as they privilege such phenomenal experiences as sensations, memories and dreams in the construction of images and organise the narration according to a particular non-linear understanding of time. We employ a phenomenological approach to exploring the works of Proust and Tarkovsky as it appears to fit best the format and objectives of the thesis. Indeed, the oeuvre of both artists lends itself well to phenomenological treatment; our phenomenological approach allows us to see how the characters' experiences of death and mourning appear to them regardless of what they may or may not be in reality; and, importantly, phenomenology is helpful in challenging both psychoanalysis and theology in order to emphasise the ethics of mourning. In our research, we study the expression of ethics in the works of Proust and Tarkovsky within a theoretical framework that integrates philosophical writings on death and alterity (the philosophy of death) by Vladimir Jankélévitch, Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of difference and repetition (Deleuzian repetition). The philosophy of death helps us explore the relationship between mortality and otherness in Proust's *Recherche* and Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and *Mirror*, whereas Deleuzian repetition challenges the psychoanalytic interpretations of their characters' recurrent mourning experiences and introduces a new reading of the philosophy behind the aesthetic choices of the artists. In addition to the novelty of attempting the concurrent research of the oeuvre of the artists who lived and created in different periods, cultures and genres, studying Proust and Tarkovsky together within the same theoretical framework and from the same thematic perspective enables us to compare the two artists in a way that exposes and corrects the present misconceptions and misrepresentations about their works and equally contributes to the Proustian and Tarkovskian scholarship.

Mourning is given plenty of consideration in *La Recherche* and Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and *Mirror*. The ethics of mourning are considered primarily in relation to the meditation on the mortality of a loved other. This is true for the Proustian narrator when he mourns the loss of his beloved grandmother, his lover Albertine or, anticipatorily, his mother. It is also the case for Tarkovsky's Chris, grieving for his wife Hari, or Alexei, foreboding the death of his mother Maria. However, *Solaris* and *Mirror* suggest that the discussion should be extended to include mourning for the self, lost ideals, aspirations and possibilities and our collective past. For that reason, we use Jankélévitch's tripartite classification of deaths to differentiate between representations of mortality and expressions of sorrow in Proust's novel and Tarkovsky's films, we examine Levinas's ethics to emphasise the importance of the other in them and we explore Derrida's philosophy of mourning to explain Marcel's, Chris's and Alexei's experiences of grief. As a result, we note that narration of mourning

in *La Recherche*, *Solaris* and *Mirror* resonates with Derrida's irreconcilable task of internalisation and respect for alterity (best illustrated by Marcel's recurrent contradiction of affection and alienation) and his notion of melancholia as a moral imperative that Marcel in *La Recherche* and Chris in *Solaris* seek to endure indefinitely. Also, we observe that the Proustian narrator is confronted with the Derridean notion of posthumous infidelity when he fears that his mourning for Albertine repeats his mourning for his grandmother while Tarkovsky anticipates Derrida's belief in the singularity of every loss when he undertakes in *Mirror* to show the uniqueness and irreplaceability of his mother. Last but not least, we find that both Proust and Tarkovsky foreground anticipatory mourning for their loved ones: Marcel's sentiment of unintentional parricide that he first discovers during his bedtime drama, or Alexei's desire to immortalise his mother when she is still alive prove their mourning to be inherent, permanent and independent from the facticity of death.

The narration of mourning in the works of both Proust and Tarkovsky underlines the significance of the other and the pathos of loss and at the same time looks for a means of recovery and renewal. Both artists refuse to conceptualise death or vulgarise the death of their loved ones in performance-like mourning and look for a genuine expression of love and loss instead. Their narratives show that their concept of mourning is Derridean in essence: It is intermittent yet continuous, it can affect one prior to or after the actual loss of the loved one, it recognises and prophesies the singularity of the loss. Though replete with death and sorrow, these narratives do not communicate defeatism or pessimism but promote positivity and hope. Deleuzian repetition suggests that both Proust and Tarkovsky treat time as a constant superimposition of past, present and future experiences so that they are always implicated in one another. Such conception of time makes Proust's intermittent sensations, multiple selves and involuntary memory, as well as Tarkovsky's doubling of characters, mirroring of fate and childhood impressions, more intelligible: All of these subjective phenomena produce an experience of time in a multidimensional fashion similar to Bergsonian coexistence and contemporaneity. Though these are representations of transience, discontinuity and fragmentation, they allow the characters in the novel and the films to re-experience events in their lives and thus gain access to non-chronological time. The Deleuzian recurrent character of time is especially manifest in the return of the spectre of Hari in *Solaris* and the idea of doubling of characters and their fates in *Mirror*. Tarkovsky, like Deleuze, argues that our experiences may look similar or echo one another, yet there is always an experiential difference that renders each of them unique and special. For Tarkovsky, the experiential difference can be determined by our conscious effort to reverse time in order to reconcile with our past. Furthermore, Tarkovsky conceives sacrifice for the sake of the other as another kind of difference that separates our experiences and ensures the immortality of humankind. In this sense, Tarkovsky's philosophy of repetition in time allows for spiritual and moral improvement and therefore progress. Deleuzian repetition in love and loss is also evident in Marcel's relationships. Marcel observes that all his love and mourning experiences begin, unfold and fade away in the same manner. For instance, in both his mourning for his grandmother and Albertine, he encounters the contradiction of survival and nothingness, oscillates between forgetting and remembering, hopes to establish a genuine bond with the dead and feels guilty for their deaths. Deleuzian repetition sheds a new light on Marcel's self-plagiarism: love can be experienced through repetition and must be repeated while death perpetuates the very process of repetition. Levinas's ethical philosophy of responsibility for the other and Derrida's philosophy of fidelity in melancholia together with Deleuzian repetition and difference show mourning to be inherent, recurrent and progressive in the sense that sorrow and remembrance continue to transfigure the living by keeping their dead loved ones alive.

In addition to giving a compelling explanation of Proust's and Tarkovsky's unconventional understanding of time, Deleuze's theory of difference and repetition offers great insights into the artists' philosophy with regard to their ethics. In their works, Proust and Tarkovsky suggest that we all belong to and leave our trace in non-chronological time and thus contribute to our immortality when we join the eternal return of the same. Arguably, the central philosophical statement of Proust's and Tarkovsky's oeuvre is that as long as we participate in the eternal and universal recurrence, we can not only escape self-plagiarism by bringing our instantaneous, singular and remarkable experiential differences into the process but also recover what we lose to time when we relive our experiences as a result of it. In their search for a reliable means to regain their experiences, both artists reconnect to non-chronological time and immortalise their loved ones in it with the help of the signs of art.

In conclusion, the philosophy of difference and repetition that can be traced in the works of Proust and Tarkovsky produces positive effect on their art and creates an optimistic outlook on the issues of death and mortality in their aesthetic philosophies. The themes of repetition and death thus interact to affirm progress in life. Finally, intentionally or not, Proust and Tarkovsky use self-narration to elaborate their personal experiences of love and loss in order to make amends for their mistakes and alleviate their anxiety and pain, so the artists themselves go on a transforming and transfiguring journey. Thus, *La Recherche*, *Solaris* and *Mirror* as works of mourning, in addition to the task of immortalising the dead loved ones, also represent an attempt at a kind of self-therapy that heals and therefore changes the mourner/ narrator/ artist.

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Abbreviations

The following offers a key to references of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* given within the text.

I, DCS - *Du côté de chez Swann* (1987);

III, SG - *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (1988);

III, P - *La Prisonnière* (1988);

IV, AD - *Albertine Disparue* (1989);

IV, TR - *Le Temps Retrouvé* (1989).

INTRODUCTION

This thesis intends to give a new reading of the works of Marcel Proust and Andrei Tarkovsky. First, this intention originates in the apparent oversight in Proustian studies with regard to the ethical dimension of *A la recherche du temps perdu*: the narrator's relationship with the other is predominantly given a psychoanalytic interpretation (Kristeva, Klein, Bersani, Moorjani). Second, the research is driven by the existent misrepresentation of Tarkovsky's philosophy that is reflected in the emphasis often placed on the religious aspect of his artistic output (Robinson, Redwood, Jónsson and Óttarsson). Instead, this research will explore the nature and importance of ethics in the works of Proust and Tarkovsky and, for that reason, look at the themes of death in the Proustian novel and a number of Tarkovsky's films: the thesis will posit that our awareness of mortality and meditations on death stem from our encounters with the death of the other and thus are essentially reflections on alterity that, in turn, impact our relationship with it. The study of the philosophical works of Jankélévitch, Levinas, Derrida and Deleuze is undertaken to elaborate these ideas and help understand the meaning behind the aesthetic choices of the artists. In addition to the novelty of attempting the concurrent research of the oeuvre of the French novelist and the Russian film director, studying Proust and Tarkovsky together within the same theoretical framework and from the same thematic perspective will enable us to compare the two artists in a way that exposes and corrects the present misconceptions and misrepresentations about their works and equally contributes to the Proustian and Tarkovskian scholarship.

The works of Proust and Tarkovsky are not entirely fictional: many of the characters in *La Recherche* and Tarkovsky's films and their peripeteia are inspired by their authors' real-life events. Then, the literary and cinematic worlds created by Proust and Tarkovsky

exist at the intersection of life and fiction and require a special investigatory approach that will suit best their binary nature. In this thesis, we are interested in personal experiences of death and mourning and their aesthetic expression in the artists' works: we will see that, for Proust and Tarkovsky, mourning is felt as perturbations in the sensorial world of the principal characters, as the utterly intimate and singular experience that is made highly subjective through personal sensations, recollections and dreams. Also, mourning in *La Recherche* or Tarkovsky's *Mirror* represents a phenomenon that provokes a genuine rumination about the self and the other and is described, as opposed to analysed or explained, without any impediment of habits, clichés and presumptions or societal influences. We will observe that in Proust's and Tarkovsky's works mourning for the loved other is rather depicted as physical suffering, nostalgia for sensorial experiences once shared with the loved one and a powerful yet insatiable desire to reverse the loss. Hence, this research employs a phenomenological approach to exploring the works of these artists as it appears to fit best the format and objectives of the thesis.

Indeed, the oeuvre of both artists lends itself well to phenomenological treatment: their works abound in descriptions of subjective experiences and favour such phenomena as sensations, memories and dreams in their narration. Adopted as our investigatory approach, phenomenology produces novel insights into existent readings of Proust's *Recherche* and allows for a critical assessment of current interpretations of Tarkovsky's films. Importantly, the phenomenological approach is helpful in challenging the psychoanalytic reading of mourning that relies on the analysis of behavioural manifestations of the unconscious and in confronting the spiritual take on mourning that is associated with idealism and transcendentalism and bypasses the immediate contact with the material reality of the death of the other and the impact it has on the survivor. In addition, phenomenology plays a significant part in our elaboration of the artists' aesthetic philosophies: the thinkers whose works lay a foundation to our conceptual framework take their early inspiration in Edmund

Husserl's phenomenology and could be described as post-phenomenologists for phenomenology occupies a central place in their philosophical evolution.

Phenomenology as 'a pure descriptive science of consciousness in general, which presupposes nothing about what it is describing other than what is directly given in intuitive evidence'¹ is arguably a feature of the narrative aesthetics of both Proust and Tarkovsky. Besides, imagination akin to Husserl's phenomenological reduction rather than perception drives phenomenological description that becomes a key element of the artists' narrative style. However, in our analysis, we do not strictly adhere to Husserl's method of *epoché* or 'bracketing out' both preconceived ideas and emotional associations in order to suspend our judgment about the world and capture the barest intuitive experiences. Instead, we use phenomenology in a broad sense of the term and focus on the artists' descriptions of various phenomena in their characters' lives to see how a thing or an event *appears* to the characters in spite of what it may or may not be in reality. Husserl thinks of phenomenology as a means of access to the pre-predicative human experience. And phenomenology is therefore mainly interested in the solipsistic experience of the *pure* self, or in any experience of living body 'as the only one which is actually given [to me as such] in perception: my own living body'², before this experience becomes intersubjective. Though reality is conceptualised by means of intersubjective notions, subjective experience remains at the root of it. Then, from the phenomenological point of view, a subjective perspective on any experience becomes a personal story that is as real as a historical testimony (intersubjective in its nature), and the significance of such a perspective cannot be undermined by any possible errors of description or recollection. Following this phenomenological tradition, we will treat the characters' experiences of death and mourning as real regardless of how representative, valid or accurate their

¹ See Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 106.

² See Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 105.

accounts of such events are. In our phenomenological approach to the narration of characters, their behaviour and psychological states we tend to adopt Merleau-Ponty's notion of the 'natural subject' in which body and soul are not distinguished but integrated in the function that represents the existence of a person in the world. In this sense, all bodily phenomena are an intrinsic part of consciousness and affect the perspective that consciousness has of the world.

Thus, this research will apply the phenomenological approach to the reading of the works of Proust and Tarkovsky with a special interest in the description of experiences that bear on the ethics of death and mourning in Chapters II and III. And we will use phenomenology to the most extensive degree while reinforcing our argument with the help of the works by Merleau-Ponty, Ricœur and Deleuze in our discussion of the narrative strategies of mourning in Chapter IV. For now, in the introductory chapter, we will begin by expounding and developing Deleuze's ideas on the existent philosophical and aesthetic parallels between Marcel Proust and Andrei Tarkovsky with his particular focus on the similarities in their treatment of time and space in their creations, and then we will proceed by delineating our own methodology that will help us expand on Deleuze's conclusions in our study of the ethics of mourning in the works of Proust and Tarkovsky.

Deleuze on Proust and Tarkovsky

In one of his interviews broadcast on *France-Culture* in January 1986, Tarkovsky answers a question about how his film *Mirror* 'reminds the French of the universe of Proust, the universe of memory':

For Proust, time is more than time. For a Russian, all of that isn't a problem. We Russians have to protect ourselves. For Proust, the issue was rather to propagate himself. There is a very strong tradition in Russian literature centred precisely on

childhood and adolescent remembrances, on this attempt to settle accounts with one's past, a kind of repentance.³

Not only was Andrei Tarkovsky acquainted with Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* but also read it very thoroughly. Tarkovsky's knowledgeable comments on Proustian philosophy and his precise references to Proust's oeuvre in his films and film theory works show Tarkovsky as an astute reader of the French writer. When beginning to film his second feature *Andrei Rublev* (1966), Tarkovsky's lengthy and inspired conversations with Anatoly Solonitsyn, the then unknown provincial actor he cast for the title role of the greatest medieval Russian painter of Orthodox icons and frescoes, frequently refer to Proust. Solonitsyn recollects how Tarkovsky brings up an episode from Proust's *Du côté de chez Swann* in order to elaborate on his theory that art is interesting only when it touches some mystery.⁴ Tarkovsky recounts the scene of Marcel returning home late and contemplating the steeples of three distinct churches in the distance. As the boy travels along the road, he notices that the steeples turn, then move out in different directions or all converge to become one. This observation makes him feel uneasy and causes anxiety that does not go away even when he finally gets home. 'But why? What is it that troubles him?' Tarkovsky asks Solonitsyn excitedly and then goes on with the story. Marcel writes down his impressions, and his soul calms down. 'Do you understand, Anatoly?' Tarkovsky continues passionately, 'this is about something that words cannot express. And, in our film [*Andrei Rublev*], we will attempt to do the same'.

This anecdote told by the director's long-time collaborator and friend is one of many examples of Tarkovsky's intellectual and spiritual engagement with Proust. Though their philosophies, like the above-mentioned Proustian steeples, seem to either diverge from one

³ See *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, ed. John Gianvito (University Press of Mississippi, 2006), p. 167.

⁴ See *About Tarkovsky*, ed. M. Tarkovskaya (Moscow: Progress, 1989), p. 121 [In Russian]; *О Тарковском*, сост., авт. предисл. М. А. Тарковская (Москва: Прогресс, 1989), с. 121.

another or converge into the same, they gravitate towards, as Gilles Deleuze claims in *Cinéma 2* (1985), the matters of time and space and man, limited and interiorized within them. In fact, the two artists who created in different genres and belonged to different eras share many similarities: they both privilege subjective experiences in their narration, they show preference for memory as a means of learning about the self, they believe in works of art as essential signs. Finally, according to Deleuze, both Proust and Tarkovsky conceive time in Bergsonian terms as ‘l'intériorité dans laquelle nous sommes, nous nous mouvons, vivons et changeons’⁵. The Deleuzean theory does not only draw parallels between the aesthetic philosophies of Proust and Tarkovsky but can also guide and enlighten our understanding of the artists' attitude towards our time-limited existence, our own mortality and the mortality of our loved ones.

Gilles Deleuze shows clearly how Proust and Tarkovsky approach the subject of time and space in their work in similar ways. In his seminal work on film theory *Cinéma 2*, Deleuze proposes that there are artists who think of time as non-chronological and of space as non-hodological and thus apply what he calls the rule of impossible continuity and aberrant movement in their creations. To explain this idea, Deleuze discusses the Proustian dimension where people and things occupy a place in time which is incommensurable with the one they have in space and Tarkovsky's *time-image* that shows relationships of time which cannot be seen in the represented object and do not allow themselves to be reduced to the present. Deleuze's claim with regard to these artists' treatment of time is simultaneously based on philosophical ideas that transpire in their creative aesthetics and his own observations of how the two artists employ the concept of time as their expressive means. Proust makes his appearance in Deleuze's work on film theory because Deleuze believes the French novelist's narrative style is cinematic in its essence: ‘Proust indeed speaks in terms of cinema, time mounting its magic lantern on bodies and making the shots

⁵ See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2 L'image-temps* (Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1985), p. 110.

coexist in depth'⁶. This 'magic lantern' is also of significance to Tarkovsky, Deleuze notes, as the Russian director tries to dethrone montage as the principal means of recreating the flow of time on the screen and replace it with the internal rhythm dictated by time pressure. Deleuze comments on the way Tarkovsky challenges the distinction between montage and shot when the film director defines cinema by the 'pressure of time' in the shot and quotes Tarkovsky's article 'De la figure cinématographique': 'Le temps au cinéma devient la base des bases, comme le son dans la musique, la couleur dans la peinture'⁷. According to Deleuze, for Tarkovsky, 'l'essentiel, c'est la manière dont le temps s'écoule dans le plan, sa tension ou sa raréfaction, "la pression du temps dans le plan"'⁸.

In this chapter, we will expand on Deleuze's reflections on Proust and Tarkovsky's treatment of time in *Cinéma 2* through the reading of Deleuze's other theoretical and philosophical works.

Proust, Tarkovsky and Bergsonism

The construct of time that Deleuze discusses in *Différence et répétition* (1968) and then analyses further in *Cinéma 2* is based on the philosophy of Henri Bergson. Bergson's three 'imperfect' images to illustrate what duration of time is (because none of them could do justice to the phenomenon of duration on its own) are those of the unrolling spool, the stretchable elastic and the spreading-out colour spectrum:

Et pourtant cette image sera incomplète encore, et toute comparaison sera d'ailleurs insuffisante, parce que le déroulement de notre durée ressemble par certains cotés à l'unité d'un mouvement qui progresse, par d'autres à une multiplicité d'états qui s'étalent, et qu'aucune métaphore ne peut rendre un des deux aspects sans sacrifier l'autre. Si j'évoque un spectre aux mille nuances, j'ai devant moi une chose toute faite, tandis que la durée se fait continuellement. Si je pense à un élastique qui s'allonge, à un ressort qui se tend ou se détend, j'oublie la richesse de coloris qui est

⁶ See Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p. 37.

⁷ Andrei Tarkovsky, 'De la figure cinématographique', *Positif* vol. 249 (décembre 1981), p. 60.

⁸ Tarkovsky, 'De la figure cinématographique', p. 60.

caractéristique de la durée vécue pour ne plus voir que le mouvement simple par lequel la conscience passe d'une nuance à l'autre. La vie intérieure est tout cela à la fois, variété de qualités, continuité de progrès, unité de direction. On ne saurait la représenter par des images.⁹

So, for Bergson, the unrolling of our duration (the spool) in certain aspects resembles the unity of a movement that progresses (the elastic), in others, a multiplicity of states spreading out (the colour-spectrum). When considered together, these images give duration the essential characteristics of unity and qualitative multiplicity. The latter characteristic, according to Bergson's theory, implies that duration can be described as continuous, interpenetrable, doubling and irreversible since it consists of heterogeneous events that cannot be juxtaposed. Deleuze summarises Bergson's major theses on time in *Cinéma 2* as follows: 'le passé coexiste avec le présent qu'il a été; le passé se conserve en soi, comme passé en général (non-chronologique); le temps se dédouble à chaque instant en présent et passé, présent qui passe et passé qui conserve'¹⁰. Also, Deleuze rectifies what he believes to be the oversimplification and thus misconception of Bergsonism:

On a souvent réduit le bergsonisme à l'idée suivante: la durée serait subjective, et constituerait notre vie intérieure. Et sans doute fallait-il que Bergson s'exprime ainsi, du moins au début. Mais, de plus en plus, il dira tout autre chose: la seule subjectivité, c'est le temps, le temps non-chronologique saisi dans sa fondation, et c'est nous qui sommes intérieurs au temps, non pas l'inverse.¹¹

For Deleuze, Proust provides us with the best case in point for this philosophy, though in the form of fiction: 'Dans le roman, c'est Proust qui saura dire que le temps ne nous est pas intérieur, mais nous intérieurs au temps qui se dédouble, qui se perd lui-même et se retrouve en lui-même, qui fait passer le présent et conserver le passé'¹². The influence of Bergson's philosophy on Proust and his aesthetics is often assumed because of their family

⁹ See Henri Bergson, *La pensée et le mouvant. Essais et conférences* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1969) [Online], p. 102. Available from: http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/bergson_henri/pensee_mouvant/bergson_pensee_mouvant.pdf

¹⁰ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 110.

¹¹ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 110.

¹² See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 110.

ties¹³, and the link between Bergsonism and the literary work of the French novelist may seem obvious to make due to their shared interest in such philosophical concepts as time and memory. However, Deleuze specifically pinpoints the significance of Bergson's idea that man exists within time as opposed to that of time enclosed within man and cites Proust's novel to illustrate it. Indeed, Proust offers the most illustrative examples of the Bergsonian philosophy of time in his novel when the narrator Marcel realises the independent and random nature of his involuntary memories even though, at some point, Marcel criticises the Bergsonian idea of *la durée*. (III, SG II, III: 374)

In the world of cinema, Deleuze identifies three films that, in his opinion, put Bergson's philosophy into practice best by showing how we inhabit time - *Zvenigora* by Dovzhenko, Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and *Je t'aime je t'aime* by Resnais - and so none of Tarkovsky's films makes this short list. Yet, we will see that Tarkovsky's films, in particular *Mirror* and *Solaris*, demonstrate a similar philosophy of time. Though Deleuze does not attempt a detailed analysis of Tarkovsky's films, his discussions of such concepts as *crystal-image* and *time-image* in relation to the Russian filmmaker's work make it clear that Tarkovsky belongs to the list of artists that, perhaps unbeknownst to themselves, espouse Bergsonism. For instance, Tarkovsky's concept of *mirroring* that becomes the focal point of one of his films (*Mirror*) presupposes the notion of selfhood where the I is reflected as the other and, inversely, the other becomes the I. This concept, translated by Tarkovsky into the language of cinema with help of characters who look in various actual mirrors only to recognise themselves as someone else, enables us to perceive correspondences in events that are removed from one another in time and space and therefore appear incomparable and incompatible. In *Mirror*, the narrator's wife and mother are shown to look in the mirror and see each other instead of their own reflections. Thus, the wife sees her future in the image of the mother while the mother recognises her past

¹³ See Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).

when looking at the narrator's wife. The past and the present appear identical. In this way, the scene of the mother reflected as the wife and the wife as the mother evokes the Bergsonian image of time that doubles itself - it recovers what it has lost to oblivion only to lose it again and sets to search for it anew, and so it goes on in the continuous recurring process similar to that of stumbling onto involuntary memories in Proust's *Recherche*.

In addition, according to Bergson's theory, when an actual object gets reflected in the mirror, its reflection becomes its virtual image. The interaction between the object and its virtuality then produces, Deleuze says, coalescence between the two that results in an image with two sides, actual and virtual. Deleuze elaborates on the Bergsonian idea: 'Quand les images virtuelles prolifèrent ainsi, leur ensemble absorbe toute l'actualité du personnage, en même temps que le personnage n'est plus qu'une virtualité parmi les autres'¹⁴. So, in *Mirror*, the narrator's mother becomes a virtual image of his wife whereas the narrator's wife similarly provides his mother with her own virtual image. However, for Tarkovsky, a character becomes no more than a virtuality amongst others not to obliterate itself or simply substitute itself for another; on the contrary, this rather underlines how much the I and the other have in common without undermining the singularity of either of them. In one of such mirroring scenes, the wife and the mother look at one another through a Renaissance landscape: Tarkovsky seems to invoke the history of humanity and art in order to suggest the possibility of the Bergsonian proliferation of virtual images across generations, and therefore across time and space. Thus, Tarkovsky's emphasis, like Proust's, always remains on exploring the subjective experience of what Bergson defines as *le passé en soi*, i.e., non-chronological time.

¹⁴ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 95.

Repetition

Another common theme that runs through the work of Proust and Tarkovsky that Deleuze writes on in *Différence et répétition* is that of repetition. For Deleuze, repetition applies only to singularities that cannot be exchanged or substituted such as reflections, echoes, doubles and souls because they do not belong to the realm of resemblance or equivalence and essentially defy replaceability.¹⁵ Deleuze sets repetition against generality: ‘Si la répétition existe, elle exprime à la fois une singularité contre le général, une universalité contre le particulier, un remarquable contre l'ordinaire, une instantanéité contre la variation, une éternité contre la permanence’¹⁶. And if, for Deleuze, exchange is a criterion that implies generality, then the notions that resist exchange, like theft and gift, are those that belong to the realm of repetition.¹⁷ Deleuze claims: ‘La tête est l'organe des échanges, mais le coeur, l'organe amoureux de la répétition’¹⁸. The Proustian narrator with the repetitive character of his infatuations illustrates the Deleuzean idea best: we can identify that all Marcel's love relationships, beginning with his longing for his mother's affection when he was a child, follow the same pattern when he grows up. However, Marcel's love for his mother is not what Deleuze calls *le premier terme qui soit répété* because repetition never has a first term:

Il n'y a pas de premier terme qui soit répété; et même notre amour d'enfants pour la mère répète d'autres amours d'adultes à l'égard d'autres femmes, un peu comme le héros de la Recherche rejoue avec sa mère la passion de Swann pour Odette. Il n'y a donc rien de répété qui puisse être isolé ou abstrait de la répétition dans laquelle il se forme, mais aussi dans laquelle il se cache.¹⁹

¹⁵ See Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1981), p. 7.

¹⁶ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 9.

¹⁷ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 7.

¹⁸ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 8.

¹⁹ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 28.

In Tarkovsky's films, such as *Ivan's Childhood*, *Solaris*, and *Mirror*, the character of mother does not only have a physical resemblance to Tarkovsky's own mother, Maria Vishnyakova, but also to the character of the wife in these films and to Tarkovsky's real life wife Larissa. Tarkovsky never denies this; in fact, the idea that wives resemble mothers is recurrent in his story lines and dialogues (for instance, in *Solaris* and *Mirror*) and is made explicit in his interviews (see below). Some critics suggest that for Tarkovsky 'the mother and the wife become literally interchangeable'²⁰ and find the expression of the Oedipal theme in this idea²¹. But it is doubtful that Tarkovsky who claims that 'psychoanalysis [is] the key species of modern charlatanism, the enemy of the spirit'²² intends to evoke psychoanalytical associations. Instead, Tarkovsky says: '*Mirror* is not a casual title. The storyteller perceives his wife as the continuation of his mother, because wives resemble mothers, and errors repeat themselves - a strange reflection. Repetition is a law, experience does not get transmitted, everyone has to live it'²³. This philosophy is consistent with the rest of Tarkovsky's creative output and is much closer to Deleuze's theory of repetition and difference than to psychoanalysis.

Deleuze continues: 'Eros et Thanatos se distinguent en ceci qu'Eros doit être répété, ne peut être vécu que dans la répétition, mais que Thanatos (comme principe transcendantal) est ce qui donne la répétition à Eros, ce qui soumet Eros à la répétition'²⁴. Interestingly, according to Tarkovsky's own admission, it was the thought of his mother's finitude that sparked his desire to make *Mirror* in order to immortalise her by means of cinema.²⁵ Indeed, the idea of repetition is also at the heart of the expression of mourning: mourning is one of the particular revelations of love and passion when their object is lost, according

²⁰ See Mark Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky* (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), p. 66.

²¹ See Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 67.

²² See Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 67.

²³ See *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, ed. Gianvito, p. 44.

²⁴ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 29.

²⁵ Tarkovsky quoted in: See Maya Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, trans. Natasha Ward (London-Boston: Faber & Faber, 1989), p. 61.

to the Freudian psychoanalytic reading, or when their object has not been yet lost but is being mourned in anticipation of it, as in case of the Derridean *anticipatory mourning* that he also calls ‘l’appréhension angoissée du deuil’²⁶ and which disregards the difference between what has already taken place in actuality and what is yet to come: ‘Fragile et poreuse paraît, ici encore, la différence entre l’effectif et le virtuel, entre le deuil et la possibilité du deuil’²⁷. If mourning is still love, then it will also get repeated every time we experience the loss of what we love. And if we can consider the idea of faithfulness towards the object of our love, we can similarly find grounds, together with Derrida, for a philosophical discussion of the possibility and/or impossibility of remaining faithful to the object of our mourning that is absolutely singular and irreplaceable to us.²⁸ The repetition in the way we experience mourning is something that the Proustian narrator Marcel struggles to understand in the aftermath of the loss of his beloved grandmother and his lover Albertine.

The Significance of Remembering / Forgetting

Deleuze emphasises that the phenomenon of repetition is in opposition to both habit and memory.²⁹ Drawing on his reading of Nietzsche's exploration of the eternal recurrence of the same that stresses that only what has been fully given to oblivion can come back to life in the process of repetition, Deleuze interprets oblivion (*l'oubli*) as a positive force, an integral part of the lived experience (*l'expérience vécue*) of the eternal return: ‘Le génie de l'éternel retour n'est pas dans la mémoire, mais dans le gaspillage, dans l'oubli devenu actif’³⁰. For Deleuze, the phenomenon of repetition in life is inherent in non-chronological

²⁶ See Jacques Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), p. 31.

²⁷ See Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié*, p. 31.

²⁸ See Jacques Derrida, *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde* (Paris: Galilée, 2003).

²⁹ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 15.

³⁰ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 77.

time that he understands along the same lines as Bergson: it can be defined as the past in general that comprises all the past and preserves it in itself - *le passé en soi* - and to which we have very little and very restricted access due to our inevitable tendency to reduce it either to the ancient present that this past once was or to the actual present in relation to which this past is now past (*l'ancien présent qu'il a été* and *l'actuel présent par rapport auquel il est passé*).³¹ Like Bergson, Deleuze contends that time never leaves the present; and yet the present never stops moving and keeps on passing within time that it also constitutes.³² According to this perspective, the ancient present and the actual present are not instants that succeed one another on the timeline but the actual present has another dimension in which it *re-presents*, in other words, it acts for the ancient present in addition to standing for itself.³³ In *Cinéma 2*, Deleuze continues to explore the subject of the past in general (*le passé en soi*) but now in terms of virtual imagery and pure memory (*le souvenir pur*) as phenomena that exist outside consciousness but inside time³⁴ and that preserve *le passé en soi* while enabling our perception of non-chronological time. Deleuze says: 'C'est dans le passé tel qu'il est en soi, tel qu'il se conserve en soi, que nous allons chercher nos rêves ou nos souvenirs, et non l'inverse'³⁵. For Deleuze, Marcel's involuntary memories in Proust's *Recherche* originate in this *passé en soi*:

Combray ne resurgit pas comme il fut présent, ni comme il pourrait l'être, mais dans une splendeur qui ne fut jamais vécue, comme un passé pur qui révèle enfin sa double irréductibilité au présent qu'il a été, mais aussi à l'actuel présent qu'il pourrait être, à la faveur d'un télescopage entre les deux.³⁶

Indeed, the opposition between repetition and habit / memory is well exemplified in Proust: though the narrator desires and awaits the repetition of his lived experiences in his involuntary recollections, he will never get what he wants. As Martin Hägglund puts it:

³¹ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 115.

³² See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 108.

³³ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 109.

³⁴ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 107.

³⁵ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 107.

³⁶ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 115.

‘Involuntary memory is “extra-temporal” not because it transcends time (as Marcel sometimes claims) but because it intensifies the experience of time’³⁷. And, therefore, ‘the past can be recalled, remembered, and even relived, but in all these repetitions there is an experience of temporal difference that cannot be sublated’³⁸. According to Deleuze, an attempt at reliving the past would be an enterprise destined for failure: experiences cannot be lived again in the same fashion they were originally lived; repetition will bring about a difference. Deleuze explains:

Mais là, c'est *dans l'Oubli*, et comme immémorial, que Combray surgit sous forme d'un passé qui ne fut jamais présent: *l'en-soi de Combray*. S'il y a un en-soi du passé, la réminiscence est son noumène ou la pensée qui l'investit. La réminiscence ne nous renvoie pas simplement d'un présent actuel à d'anciens présents, nos amours récentes à des amours infantiles, nos amantes à nos mères. Là encore, le rapport des présents qui passent ne rend pas compte du passé pur qui en profite, à leur faveur, pour surgir sous la représentation: la Vierge, celle qui ne fut jamais vécue, au-delà de l'amante et au-delà de la mère, coexistant avec l'une et contemporaine de l'autre. Le présent existe, mais seul le passé insiste, et fournit l'élément dans lequel le présent passe et les présents se télescopent. L'écho de deux présents forme seulement une question persistante, qui se développe dans la représentation comme un champ de problème, avec l'impératif rigoureux de chercher, de répondre, de résoudre. Mais la réponse vient toujours d'ailleurs: toute réminiscence est érotique, qu'il s'agisse d'une ville ou d'une femme. C'est toujours Eros, le noumène, qui nous fait pénétrer dans ce passé pur en soi, dans cette répétition virginale, Mnémosyne.³⁹

Building on Bergson's notion of non-chronological time and Nietzsche's theorisations of the eternal return of the same, Deleuze then claims that what has been consciously lived and what has not are essentially our intuitive understanding of ourselves within time and space which is perfectly reflected in our experiences of such phenomenon as déjà-vu: ‘Et le “jamais-vu” n'y est pas le contraire du “déjà-vu”, tous deux signifient la même chose et sont vécus l'un dans l'autre’⁴⁰. So, it is plausible that the Deleuzean *différence* that considers repetition as the phenomenon of the return of the singular, universal and eternal possible is at the same time what makes every lived experience unique and unrepeatable.

³⁷ See Martin Hägglund, *Dying for Time: Proust, Woolf, Nabokov* (Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 32.

³⁸ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 33.

³⁹ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 115.

⁴⁰ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 28.

Therefore, in quantitative terms, everything gets repeated again and again, however, every repetition of the same is lived differently in terms of quality.

In *Mirror*, it might look like the narrator's wife Natalia is bound to repeat the fate of the narrator's mother Maria and his young son Ignat is predestined to follow in his footsteps; however, their life experiences remain non-transferable and non-exchangeable, they all have to live them in their own qualitatively different ways. Allegorically speaking, in Tarkovsky's philosophical parable *Stalker*, the path to the Room - where, allegedly, people's most genuine wishes come true - cannot be taken twice: the Zone, a kind of prohibited land in which the Room is hidden, does not allow repetition and punishes cheats for it mercilessly, sometimes even by death. The Zone thus guards the singularity of every man's experience and wards off those who attempt to get to the Room relying on their previous experiential capital such as memory or knowledge. It appears that one can realise one's dreams and desires while, solely and exclusively, in some state of empirical purity and naiveté in which the Deleuzian *oubli* seems to play a decisive and positive part. Finally, in Tarkovsky's science fiction film *Solaris*, it is the same spectre of the protagonist's dead wife Hari in the same physical form that reappears to Chris on the space station a number of times, and yet on each and every occasion she comes back to him as a new Hari: there is a difference 'in spirit' among her multiple hypostases that Chris must discover for himself.

Deleuze understands the eternal recurrence of the same as a selective and liberating process of 'affirmation of affirmation':

Ce qui ne revient pas, c'est ce qui nie l'éternel retour, ce qui ne supporte pas l'épreuve. Ce qui ne revient pas, c'est la qualité, c'est l'étendue - parce que la différence comme condition de l'éternel retour s'y annule.⁴¹

And Deleuze further emphasises the significance of difference that not only makes eternal return progressive, so to speak, as it becomes productive of the new but also provides it

⁴¹ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 313.

with intensity: 'L'éternel retour n'est ni qualitatif ni extensif, il est intensif, purement intensif. C'est-à-dire: il se dit de la différence'⁴². To recapitulate Deleuze's point vis-à-vis the eternal recurrence of the same:

Quand nous disons que l'éternel retour n'est pas le retour du Même, du Semblable ou de l'Egal, nous voulons dire qu'il ne présuppose aucune identité. Au contraire, il se dit d'un monde *sans identité*, sans ressemblance comme sans égalité. Il se dit d'un monde dont le fond même est la différence, où tout repose sur des disparités, des différences de différences qui se répercutent à l'infini (le monde de l'intensité). Lui-même, l'éternel retour, est l'Identique, le semblable et l'égal.⁴³

One major implication of such perspective is that the eternal recurrence, though based on the presumption of immobility and constancy, is in actuality orientated towards development and the future in general. Then, any attempts to penetrate *le passé en soi* or form an idea of non-chronological time would by the same token represent simultaneous venturing into the domain of the past and the realm of the future. This explains why Deleuze makes the following claim about the Proustian novel: 'La mémoire n'intervient que comme le moyen d'un apprentissage qui la dépasse à la fois par ses buts et ses principes. *La Recherche* est tournée vers le futur, non vers le passé'⁴⁴.

The Three Paradoxes of Time

Tarkovsky opens Chapter III entitled *Imprinted Time* of his film theory book *Sculpting in Time* (1986) with the citation from Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*:

Stavrogin: [...] in the Apocalypse the angel swears that there'll be no more time.
Kirillov: I know. It's quite true, it's said very clearly and exactly. When the whole of man has achieved happiness, there won't be any time, because it won't be needed. It's perfectly true.
Stavrogin: Where will they put it then?

⁴² See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 313.

⁴³ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 311.

⁴⁴ See Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964), p. 10.

Kirillov: They won't put it anywhere. Time isn't a thing, it's an idea. It'll die out in the mind.⁴⁵

Tarkovsky elaborates on Dostoyevsky's characters' claims about the status of time as an ideality that rules the mind and as a necessity that gives meaning and structure to human existence. For Tarkovsky, time is, first and foremost, a condition for the existence and development of man as a personality. According to Tarkovsky, though the idea of time stimulates our moving forward and being result-orientated, time in itself is not linear and should be understood rather as a state than as a simple process of change. It is true, Tarkovsky says, that the transition from cause to effect is the form of existence of time which also helps represent the idea of time in material terms as time leaves physical traces and gets embodied in objects. Yet, Tarkovsky insists, 'History is still not Time, nor is evolution'⁴⁶ and suggests that there is more to time. Tarkovsky emphasises that he is interested in 'the inner, moral qualities essentially inherent in time itself'⁴⁷ because 'the time in which a person lives gives him the opportunity of knowing himself as a moral being'⁴⁸. Furthermore, 'the rigid frame into which it [human existence] is thrust [...] makes our responsibility to ourselves and others all the more starkly obvious'⁴⁹. This is why Tarkovsky undermines the conventional idea of time as something consistently progressing and productive. Indeed, if time can be conceived as the continuous flow from cause to effect, then Tarkovsky argues that the identification and comprehension of what the cause is remains far more significant and consequential to man than the result that this cause produces. Because, Tarkovsky believes, when man searches for the cause, he gets an opportunity of 'turning time back through conscience'⁵⁰. *Solaris*, *Mirror* and *Nostalghia*

⁴⁵ See Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), p. 57.

⁴⁶ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 57.

⁴⁷ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 58.

⁴⁸ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 58.

⁴⁹ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 58.

⁵⁰ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 59.

are essentially Tarkovsky's exploration of this idea: the main characters in these films are facing moral dilemmas that demand their conscious engagement with the past in order to be able to live with themselves as moral beings. 'Cause and effect may, in a moral sense, be linked retroactively; and then a person does, as it were, return to his past'.⁵¹ Thus, Tarkovsky's notion of time, in addition to being non-chronological, is a highly ethical category that enables the existence of conscience and human memory. The notion of individual time, i.e., the time frame for a human existence, is here intermingled with the idea of time in general because the former is said to be conditioned by the latter whereas the latter cannot be conceived without the former. Also, for Tarkovsky, individual time, conscience and memory are neatly interwoven with collective time and the conscience and memory of the entire humankind - this philosophy is, as Deleuze notes, reflected in the director's aesthetic of crystal-images that resist reduction to the present and offer the experience of time in motion yet as a state:

Ce qu'on voit à travers la vitre ou dans le cristal, c'est le temps, dans son double mouvement de faire passer les présents, d'en remplacer l'un par l'autre en allant vers l'avenir, mais aussi de conserver tout le passé, de le faire tomber dans une profondeur obscure.⁵²

The aesthetic of mirroring and crystal-imagery are therefore the corollary of Tarkovsky's particular concept of time. The director's cinematic time (especially in *Mirror*) is layered and appears similar to what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1994) define as *stratigraphic*. Making their argument in the debate on philosophy versus history, Deleuze and Guattari propose that *stratified* time best describes the field of philosophical thought whereas *chronological* time fits the sphere of historical inquiry.⁵³ The stratigraphic concept of time implies the superimposition of 'before' and 'after' instead of their simple temporal succession or, so to speak, the coexistence of various moments of the present and the past

⁵¹ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 59.

⁵² See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 116.

⁵³ See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

in one. Indeed, the sequentiality and directionality of events in Tarkovsky's film narratives are mostly suspended: the past tends to inconspicuously infiltrate the present and the present slip into the past. Such abandonment of spatiotemporal order and delimitations presupposes an unhindered transfer of experience across times, distances and cultures and gives rise to the stratified time. In *Mirror*, for instance, there is an episode with the narrator's son Ignat alone in his father's flat. A mysterious woman and her maid appear out of nowhere. The woman invites Ignat to read her some excerpts from the epistolary exchanges between Pushkin and Chaadayev (both names are of paramount importance to the Russian psyche) on the subject of Russia's significance and mission in world history and politics. The woman disappears shortly afterwards but her teacup leaves a steam mark on the varnished table that dissipates little by little before Ignat's eyes. Tarkovsky implies, in this cryptic way, that an uninterrupted dialogue between generations, removed in time and space, is not a purely subjective psychological phenomenon but a tangible reality.

Tarkovsky's stratified time is also reminiscent of another of Deleuze's concepts of time that the French philosopher discusses in *Différence et répétition* long before his collaborative work with Guattari. Deleuze refers once again to Bergson's theory and evokes three paradoxes of time - contemporaneity, coexistence and pre-existence:

Tel est le premier paradoxe: celui de la contemporanéité du passé avec le présent qu'il a été. Il nous donne la raison du présent qui passe. C'est parce que le passé est contemporain de soi comme présent, que tout présent passe, et passe au profit d'un nouveau présent. Un second paradoxe en sort, paradoxe de la coexistence. Car si chaque passé est contemporain du présent qu'il a été, tout le passé coexiste avec le nouveau présent par rapport auquel il est maintenant passé. Le passé n'est pas plus "dans" ce second présent, qu'il n'est "après" le premier. D'où l'idée bergsonienne que chaque actuel présent n'est que le passé tout entier dans son état le plus contracté.⁵⁴

And further:

Le paradoxe de la préexistence complète donc les deux autres: chaque passé est contemporain du présent qu'il a été, tout le passé coexiste avec le présent par rapport

⁵⁴ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 111.

auquel il est passé, mais l'élément pur du passé en général préexiste au présent qui passe.⁵⁵

In *Cinéma 2*, Deleuze writes the following as if he were explicitly commenting on

Tarkovsky's treatment of time in his films (which is not the case, although he compares

Tarkovsky's *Mirror* to a turning crystal a few pages earlier)⁵⁶:

Il faut que le temps se scinde en même temps qu'il se pose ou se déroule: il se scinde en deux jets dissymétriques dont l'un fait passer tout le présent, et dont l'autre conserve tout le passé. Le temps consiste dans cette scission, et c'est elle, c'est lui qu'on voit dans le cristal. L'image-cristal n'était pas le temps, mais on voit le temps dans le cristal. On voit dans le cristal la perpétuelle fondation du temps, le temps non-chronologique, Chronos et non pas Chronos. C'est la puissante Vie non-organique qui enserme le monde. Le visionnaire, le voyant, c'est celui qui voit dans le cristal, et, ce qu'il voit, c'est le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission.⁵⁷

The Proustian narrator Marcel also seems to distinguish between individual time, which appears in the text of *La Recherche* with a lower-case letter *t* (le temps), and Time, written with a capital *T* (le Temps), according to which life realises itself:

[D]ans un livre qui voudrait en raconter une, il faudrait user, par opposition à la psychologie plane dont on use d'ordinaire, d'une sorte de psychologie dans l'espace, ajoutaient une beauté nouvelle à ces résurrections que ma mémoire opérait tant que je songeais seul dans la bibliothèque, puisque la mémoire, en introduisant le passé dans le présent sans le modifier, tel qu'il était au moment où il était le présent, supprime précisément cette grande dimension du Temps suivant laquelle la vie se réalise. (IV, TR: 608)

Malcolm Bowie finds that Marcel achieves the effect of separating Time and time: 'His last word ("Temps") distils an immutable quintessence from the imperfect world of temporal process to which his first word ("Longtemps") had referred'⁵⁸. In *Le Temps retrouvé*, Marcel appears overwhelmed by the idea of Time. It becomes his *dernier prix*, his *aiguillon* that spur him to creative action (IV, TR: 609). In the citation below, we can see how the idea of Time as the law that structures our existence weighs on Marcel's mind

⁵⁵ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 111.

⁵⁶ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 101.

⁵⁷ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 109.

⁵⁸ See Malcolm Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 31.

which Proust wittily conveys with help of idiomatic expressions containing the very same word 'time' (*il est temps, il est grand temps*) before moving on to emotionally charged expressions of anxiety, disillusionment and self-doubt (*temps perdu* and an interrogatory *était-il temps encore*):

Oui, à cette oeuvre, cette idée du Temps que je venais de former disait qu'il était temps de me mettre. Il était grand temps; mais, et cela justifiait l'anxiété qui s'était emparée de moi dès mon entrée dans le salon, quand les visages grimés m'avaient donné la notion du temps perdu, était-il temps encore et même étais-je encore en état? (IV, TR: 612)

The Proustian narrator does not pursue the idea of time that is given for our existence in order to achieve his moral ideals or to reconcile with his past like Tarkovsky's characters do; instead, Marcel observes time with almost scientific curiosity searching for its material traces and trying to regain his past selves that have been lost to time. The Tarkovskian ethical dimension of time escapes Marcel, though he does acknowledge not only physical but also psychological effects that time produces in him and his surroundings:

Le temps incolore et insaisissable s'était, pour que pour ainsi dire je puisse le voir et le toucher, matérialisé en elle [Gilberte], il l'avait pétrie comme un chef-d'oeuvre, tandis que parallèlement sur moi, hélas! il n'avait fait que son oeuvre. (IV, TR: 608-9)

With regard to the creative work of both Tarkovsky and Proust, their narratives and imagery defy determinism and, therefore timelines in their stories are not usually constructed as a succession from one present moment to the next but rather imply links between various events that span temporal and spatial distances, events that can be characterised by Deleuzian repetition as they echo one another, become signs of and for one another, and occur by pure chance or due to the phenomenon of the recurrence of the same. Both artists are interested in *le souvenir pur* that preserves the past in itself and, according to the definition that Deleuze borrows from Péguy, bring forward *l'internel* as opposed to *l'éternel*:

C'est plutôt comme chez Péguy, où la succession horizontale des présents qui passent dessine une course à la mort, tandis qu'à chaque présent correspond une ligne verticale

qui l'unit en profondeur à son propre passé, comme au passé des autres présents, constituant entre eux tous une seule et même coexistence, une seule et même contemporanéité, l'«internel» plutôt que l'éternel. Ce n'est pas dans l'image-souvenir, c'est dans le souvenir pur que nous restons contemporains de l'enfant que nous avons été, comme le croyant se sent contemporain du Christ.⁵⁹

Indeed, in Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, the narrator who is on his deathbed and at the same time overcome with the anticipatory mourning for his mother recollects his past; however, his personal memories are here infused with his reconstructions of his mother's past and selected collective memories so that, on the one hand, the narrator is shown coming to terms with mortality and sorrow, while, on the other hand, the film conveys the idea of coexistence and contemporaneity that is encapsulated by *l'internel*.

The Philosophy of Death in the Works of Proust and Tarkovsky

The treatment of time in the works of Proust and Tarkovsky is certainly reflective of their respective contributions to a philosophy of death. However, in order to fully understand these contributions, we should turn to philosophers whose theories on the subject of death resonate with the ideas on mortality propagated by the two artists. In fact, the primary reason for our inquiry into the works of Proust and Tarkovsky can be formulated by restating the questions raised by Deleuze in relation to the possible link between his own positive concept of repetition and Freud's concept of the death drive:

La première question serait donc: comment le thème de la mort, qui semble recueillir le plus négatif dans la vie psychologique, peut-il être en soi le plus positif, transcendentalement positif, au point d'affirmer la répétition? Comment peut-il être rapporté à un instinct primordial? Mais une seconde question recoupe immédiatement celle-là. Sous quelle forme la répétition est-elle affirmée et prescrite par l'instinct de mort?⁶⁰

⁵⁹ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 121.

⁶⁰ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 27.

Indeed, we intend to show that the philosophy of difference and repetition that can be traced in the works of Proust and Tarkovsky produces positive effect on their art and creates an optimistic outlook on the issues of death and mortality in their aesthetic philosophies. We will explore how the themes of repetition and death work symbiotically to affirm life and progress in the creations of both artists, Proust and Tarkovsky. Tarkovsky actually states outright that art is always optimistic regardless of its subject matter or its manner of expression:

Whatever it expresses – even destruction and ruin – the artistic image is by definition an embodiment of hope, it is inspired by faith. Artistic creation is by definition a denial of death. Therefore it is optimistic, even if in an ultimate sense the artist is tragic. And so there can never be optimistic artists and pessimistic artists.⁶¹

In the following chapter, we will discuss the concepts of death, mortality and mourning in the philosophical writings by Vladimir Jankélévitch, Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida since we find the literary and cinematic echoes of these concepts in *La Recherche* and Tarkovsky's films, respectively. For instance, Jankélévitch's tripartite classification of deaths will be helpful to differentiate various Proustian and Tarkovskian representations of mortality such as the general notion of death, the death of the self as imagined by their narrators and the actual or anticipated deaths of their loved ones. Levinas's ethical philosophy will shed light on the significance of alterity in Proust's and Tarkovsky's characters' physically and emotionally intense mourning experiences ridden with culpable memory and the sense of unappeasable responsibility for the other. And Derrida's philosophy of mourning will be useful to appreciate the narrators' search for the authenticity and singularity of remembering their dead loved ones as well as to sympathise with their hopes for interminable melancholia. In addition, we will see that mourning, which is an utterly private experience for both Proust and Tarkovsky, endures in an intermittent mode throughout the lifetime of their characters. Finally, we will analyse how

⁶¹ *Instant Light. Tarkovsky Polaroids* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006).

Levinas's and Derrida's ethics of mourning integrated into Deleuze's theory of repetition show mourning to be inherent, recurrent and progressive in the sense that death is never definitive as sorrow and remembrance continue to transfigure the living by keeping their dead loved ones alive.

I

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH

This chapter will look at the notion of death and the idea of otherness as they are understood within the modern French philosophical tradition as well as investigate the interplay between the main philosophical conceptions of being and mortality and discuss how our understanding of death can enlighten our relationship with the other and establish or reinforce our sense of responsibility and respect towards alterity. In particular, we propose to ask whether the reduction of otherness to the same is necessary and warranted, whether it should be recognised as unjust and limiting and whether there are alternative, more ethical ways to be with the other, ways that would therefore allow us to gain new perspectives on ourselves and our being. Considering the scope and the objectives of the thesis, we have chosen to turn to the works of Vladimir Jankélévitch, Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida. The key goal of the chapter is to prepare the theoretical framework, and inform and enrich our philosophical reading of the aesthetics of mourning in the works of Marcel Proust and Andrei Tarkovsky.

In the first section of this chapter, we will discuss Jankélévitch's claim that we learn about death by extrapolating our interpretation and knowledge of life to our discourse on death. Here we will explore the philosopher's ideas of death as the ultimate other, the unthinkable and unspeakable of death, the three kinds of death as three distinct ways of encountering death, and the ethics of our mourning discourse. The purpose of this section is also to provide us with the theoretical foundation, i.e. conceptual framework and terminology, for our inquiry.

The second section will explore Levinasian ethics as a 'first philosophy' that comes before and goes beyond ontology and that regards the other as always superior to the self and thus deserving only deference and admiration. The focus of this section will be

Levinas's debate with Martin Heidegger with regard to the meaning of being and death for the self, the French philosopher's formulation of *election by subjection* and, crucial for our future analysis, his conclusion that, for the self, the death of the other is the first death.

The third section of the chapter will look at the moral aspects of our reflection on mortality and alterity. First, we will accept Levinas's claim that we need the other, be it living or dead, and we benefit greatly from the otherness. Then, we will reiterate Levinas's concerns about the moral weight and value of the relationship between the self and the other: Do we reciprocate, do we give back enough, and could this *enough* ever be enough? We will aim at addressing these concerns by engaging in the discussion of Derrida's aporia: is it possible to be ethically responsible before the other? As we will see from our analysis, the same paradox applies to our relations with the other after the other's death. Here we will begin by collating the psychoanalytic and deconstructionist approaches to mourning and melancholia as two distinct responses to the loss of the other, proceed by elucidating Derrida's notion of the *deuil originaire* and the problem of the object in mourning - the other, the self, or both at the same time.

VLADIMIR JANKELEVITCH: THE VITALITY AND FAMILIARITY OF THE DISCOURSE ON DEATH

The Paradox of Death: The Omnipresent Nothingness

Death is beyond this world, it is entirely other than this world and is absolutely elsewhere than here and yet it is paradoxically omnipresent⁶², it permeates our *être* without being implied in it. When death happens, it does not simply modify our being in all its modes, transform it in all its forms, alter all its ways of *être* but it fully negates our being - death is

⁶² See Vladimir Jankélévitch, *La Mort* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977), p. 9.

the nothingness that devours our being totally and irrevocably.⁶³ A person exists but is constantly surprised by her own carefree existence: Everybody knows the final day is coming, the clock is ticking, the hours are counted, but the idea of our own death seems so absurd and unjustified that it allows us to go on non-stop with our mundane futile tasks. And, only from time to time, we get a reminder of our own mortality, and then we start realising the irreversibility of our becoming and begin feeling something impalpable; we learn to appreciate the true value of our lived experiences and come to uncover the unknown depths of our being. Death gives an end to life and her finitude to a person; in other words, it provides us with spatiotemporal limits, a liveable structure that requires planning, organising and taking responsibility. Furthermore, it gives meaning to life because without death, as Vladimir Jankélévitch puts it, ‘l’homme ne serait même pas un homme’ because ‘c’est la présence latente de cette mort qui fait les grandes existences, qui leur donne leur ferveur, leur ardeur, leur tonus’⁶⁴. The awareness of our mortality compels us to search for meaning in life while the senselessness of our death revokes the opportunity to pursue it.

For Jankélévitch, death is the absolute unknown and the ultimate other ‘sans aucun point de repère, sans aucune référence à rien dans l’en-deçà, c’est une sorte d’au-delà absolu’⁶⁵: As the ultimate other, death is unthinkable, *impensable*, as well as unspeakable, *indicible*. *L’indicible* of death indicates that there is absolutely nothing that could be said about it, that death leaves us blind, deaf and mute with regard to it and terrified by its unknown:

L’indicible de la mort est sans analogue sans égard ni rapport à rien, sans commune mesure avec aucune expérience finie; ni de près ni de loin, la mort n’est ‘suggérable’ à partir de la vie; rien ne l’annonce, rien ne la rappelle; de cette incomparable, nous n’avons ni pressentiment ni ressentiment, ni avant-goût ni arrière-goût.⁶⁶

⁶³ See Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Le Je-ne-sais-quoi et le Presque-rien. La Méconnaissance* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980), p. 26.

⁶⁴ See Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?* (Paris: Éditions Liana Levi, 1994), p. 20.

⁶⁵ See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 106.

⁶⁶ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 88.

According to Jankélévitch, even though it is impossible to think or speak of the other, we still attempt to think and speak of death as if this would help us rid of our terror and anxiety before it, make the ungraspable concrete, the incomprehensible clear and the meaningless meaningful. To think and speak of the other, to give it some substance and significance is to reduce its difference to the sameness of the self, to bring the other from beyond meaning to the norm. Therefore, without any knowledge or least idea of it, we try to think death and depict it in familiar terms, and so we base our mental or verbal representations of it on what we seem to know better – life. ‘La philosophie de la mort c’est une méditation de la vie’, Jankélévitch claims, it is simply another allegorical philosophy of life⁶⁷ that reflects an attitude one adopts in life. It cannot be otherwise: To think about death without being dead means to be outside death and therefore to think about life. Jankélévitch explains this phenomenon:

La mort ressemble à un astre qu'on cesse de voir quand on le fixe directement: on ne l'entrevoit qu'en promenant le regard à droite et à gauche. Telle est l'alternative: trouver quelque chose à dire en acceptant de penser à autre chose, penser la mort elle-même, *mors ipsa*, sans rien trouver à dire; ou par rapport à la mort propre: penser commodément à la mort sans mourir soi-même, et par conséquent penser à la vie [...].⁶⁸

Indeed, death could not be described in terms that would not be founded on life. Since we think that death is the negation of life and the complete opposite to what life stands for, whenever we speak of death, we use the language antonymous to the language of life. It is also evident in the use of approximations, comparisons, metaphors and allegories that spring from our lived physical or spiritual experiences; for instance, we compare death to the dark of the night, the dreamlike state, the somnolence, the eternal silence, the other life or the after-life. When applying adjectives to describe what we imagine death is like, we use the prefixes that negate the original meaning of words: invisible, impalpable,

⁶⁷ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 37.

⁶⁸ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 38.

irreversible, immemorial, and unknown and, finally, Jankélévitch's *indicible*. Our discourse is also abundant in periphrases and euphemisms that are meant to conceal the hideous nature of death, to downplay its powerful impact on one's *being*, to alleviate the dread it incites in people. By diluting it in familiar concepts and images, we make death inoffensive and anodyne⁶⁹ and the idea of death and mortality more bearable and liveable, we rob it of its tragic character. In fact, despite their opposite definitions, life and death become alike and end up interpreting one another: life is said to be a continuous death, whereas death is often referred to as another life.

Death Comes in Three Persons: the Third, the First and the Second

Human encounters with death can be divided into three groups unequal in the emotional, intellectual and physical impact that each of them has on one's existence. In *La Mort* (1966), Vladimir Jankélévitch proposes that there are three kinds of death depending on who is the subject of the permanent discontinuation of life - an anonymous *she, he* or *they*; a well known *You*; or, finally, *I* that represents our own personal being – and names them *Death in the Third Person*, *Death in the Second Person* and *Death in the First Person*, respectively. Actually, we come into contact, indirectly (quite regularly) or directly (more rarely), with death all the time: We hear about it, we think about it, we talk about it, and we sometimes witness it with or without paying it significant attention in our life. Jankélévitch then reflects on when and why death has a profound effect on us, shakes us to the core and makes us re-evaluate our beliefs and aspirations.

From the biological viewpoint, death is the definite state of a body that stops living and therefore exhibits signs of irreversible cessation of vital processes necessary for its integrity, such as nutrition and breathing. Semantically, the notion of death refers to either

⁶⁹ See Jankélévitch, *Le Je-ne-sais-quoi*, p. 25.

a specific instant of a person dying or to the condition that directly follows this instant and is often described as beyond grave or after life. These dictionary-like definitions of death are common knowledge and do not cause panic attacks in a mentally healthy reader. In fact, as a medical or demographic phenomenon, death is an everyday occurrence, so usual and banal in its essence that it even sounds vulgar and definitely not worthy of any special consideration. Such is Death in the Third Person. It happens to a stranger, of whom we know nothing, about whom we care very little or not at all, and whom we will forget the next second or so. In Jankélévitch's words, it is 'la mort de n'importe qui'⁷⁰, or death that translates so easily into 'l'impersonnalité des statistiques et des moyennes'⁷¹ which in turn denies it any aspect of tragedy. This is from where the idea of replaceability and worthlessness of human life stems: A dead person is disposable, as 'tout le monde est remplaçable'⁷². This helps desensitise us against the news of horrid numbers of casualties in the world and prevents us from collapsing from mind-bending despair and heart-tearing sorrow every time we are exposed to any evidence of human mortality. Although abstract and anonymous, this 'death-in-general' seems natural, appears familiar and is unmistakably universal.⁷³ Death in the Third Person has nothing odd or puzzling about it, 'c'est la mort sans mystère'⁷⁴. It is ordinary:

La mort en troisième personne est la mort-en-général, la mort abstraite et anonyme, ou bien la mort-propre, en tant que celle-ci est impersonnellement et conceptuellement envisagée, à la manière, par exemple, dont un médecin envisage sa propre maladie ou étudie son propre cas ou fait son propre diagnostic [...].⁷⁵

Death in the First Person concerns the death of my very own person, the instant when I die and my intimate lived experience of it. This is the death that puts an end to the existence that is 'de l'ordre de l'irremplaçable et de l'incomparable' and that cannot be

⁷⁰ See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 16.

⁷¹ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 5.

⁷² See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 16.

⁷³ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 25.

⁷⁴ See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 16.

⁷⁵ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 25.

compensated to the self.⁷⁶ In this kind of death, according to Jankélévitch, the object of consciousness and the subject of death coincide in the same self⁷⁷ which allows, on the one hand, for the awareness of one's own mortality and for metaphysical thinking and, on the other hand, accounts for one's absolute lack of empirical knowledge about the event.

Jankélévitch refers to this death as to *l'expérience vécue de la mort-propre*:

[L]a première personne qui est le point de vue du moi sur moi, du toi sur toi, et en général le point de vue 'réfléchi' de chacun sur soi-même: ce point de vue, qui est à peine un 'point de vue' puisqu'il renonce à la perspective et à la distance optique, c'est en fait l'expérience vécue de la mort-propre, où coïncident l'objet de la conscience et le sujet du 'Mourir'.⁷⁸

The lived experience of our own death is impossible: a second before your death you are still alive and a flash after you are already dead – there is nothing in between. The event of death is 'entre le grand jour de la vie et la grande nuit de la mort déjà morte'.⁷⁹ This is why, Jankélévitch says, I never die for myself; for myself, death does not exist; I only die for others. The impossibility of our conscious experience of our own death places the instant of death outside any worldly physical or mental categories and pushes this instant into the domain of the unknown future where it remains: 'L'extrême future de la mort est un après-demain qui ne sera jamais Aujourd'hui, un avenir qui ne sera jamais présent, mais toujours à venir, et ne cessera jamais d'advenir et de s'approcher [...]'.⁸⁰ In the First Person, I always am *before* my own death and I can only have a presentiment of it but never a memory or a reminiscence of it.⁸¹ My own death has no present or past, it is always in my future. Furthermore, the ungraspable instant of death is the reason why we cannot learn about our own death: 'la mort ne s'apprend pas'⁸² as there is no continuation in the instant of our own death, there is no possibility of acquisition, accumulation and progress. Why

⁷⁶ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 24.

⁷⁷ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 25.

⁷⁸ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 25.

⁷⁹ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 219.

⁸⁰ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 18.

⁸¹ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 32.

⁸² See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 34.

then do we feel so anxious about our death, so vulnerable before it? Jankélévitch suggests that this is, perhaps, because our own death is unimaginable and unrepresentable, because it is an experience that we have never lived before, an experience that we live once and for all.⁸³ The self can no longer speak of it because it is her own death. This utterly personal character of Death in the First Person makes death a problem and mystery for the self. It is a complete unknown. For the self, the future of death is what Jankélévitch calls a ‘je-ne-sais-quoi’, both in the sense of its *hora incerta* and its content.⁸⁴ According to Jankélévitch, ‘the uncertain certainty’ of this kind of death is ‘our knowledge of our mortality coupled with our ignorance of the hour of our death’.⁸⁵ This death seems accidental, strange and scandalous. It is out of ordinary.

Death in the Second Person reconciles in a way the anonymous triviality and the subjective tragedy of the other two kinds of deaths. It is the death of the other who is ontologically unique and autonomous from the self, and yet it is the death of the other who is very close to the self and takes up a significant amount of time and space in the being (*l'être*) of the self. The Second Person is the immediate other, *the first other* that the self knows and cares about.⁸⁶ This kind of death appears personal and tragic to the self but still distant and natural at the same time. Jankélévitch insists that Death of the First Other is *almost* like our own death because it means the disappearance of someone irreplaceable (*‘L’ipséité aimée est comme moi-même’, ‘nous vivons la mort du proche comme notre propre mort’*) and affects all aspects of the being of the self.⁸⁷ Yet, in this case, the subject of death (You, my close one) and the object that thinks death (I, the self) do not coincide, there is a distance, although minimal, between the first other and the self that allows the self to be a mourning, empathetic witness of the death of the other. Jankélévitch calls this

⁸³ See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 105.

⁸⁴ See Jankélévitch, *Le Je-ne-sais-quoi*, p. 81.

⁸⁵ See Christina Howells, *Mortal Subjects: Passions of the Soul in Late Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), p. 104.

⁸⁶ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 29.

⁸⁷ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 30.

distance *la proximité sans coïncidence* or *le voisinage sans identification*⁸⁸: ‘Elle [Death in the Second Person] ressemble le plus à la mienne sans être la mienne, et sans être non plus la mort impersonnelle et anonyme du phénomène social’⁸⁹. Death of the First Other, the experience of mourning of the close one becomes an event that makes the self conscious of death (*réaliser la mort*). The *banalisation* of the phenomenon is no longer possible, the self in mourning, ‘meurtri dans ses attachements, revit pour sa part la vérité inouïe et déchirante de la mort, ravive pour sa part la pathétique absurdité de la mort, éprouve douloureusement et de l’intérieur le tragique de la mort’⁹⁰. The self becomes at once threatened by the imminence and inevitability of death and personally concerned by it. At the same time, Death in the Second Person enables the self to think about death and to speak of it, which is impossible to do for Death in the Third Person and Death in The First Person due to the impersonal nature of the former and the lack of experiential knowledge of the latter, thus transforming the experience of death into a philosophical experience. This is when the self arrives at the intense realisation of the passage from the notional to the effective and starts taking death seriously.⁹¹

The Dead Come Alive Again: The Voice of the Silence

Arguably, any conversation about death, any discussion on the subject is mainly informed by our encounters with Death in the Second Person because it is the only kind of death that can be an object of our learning, given our psychological involvement in it and minimal temporal and spatial distance from it. The question is what we think of this kind of death and in what way we speak of it. If speaking of death implies speaking of life, then speaking of the dead implies speaking of the living. When we think of those who have past away, no

⁸⁸ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 30.

⁸⁹ See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 17.

⁹⁰ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 17.

⁹¹ See Jankélévitch, *Le Je-ne-sais-quoi*, p. 26.

matter whether they have been dead for seconds, days or decades, we bring them back to life again. We imagine them to be the same way they used to be in life: speaking, looking and behaving in the exact same way when they were alive, as if they did not change at all when they died. Jankélévitch points out:

[O]n ne pense jamais la mort (en tant que la mort est l'accusatif de l'acte pensant, en tant que la mort est l'objet immédiat d'une visée et le complément direct d'une opération transitive appelée Pensée), car la mort est proprement impensable; par contre, on peut penser des êtres mortels, et ces êtres, à quelque moment qu'on les pense, sont des êtres vivants. Et ainsi, qui pense la mort pense la vie.⁹²

Besides, a dead person is as unknown and terrifying to us as death itself. Similarly, a dead person is also unthinkable and unspeakable, 'muet et sourd, le mort ne fait pas écho à nos appels, et le dialogue retombe aussitôt dans la solitude désespérante du monologue'⁹³.

Being the other to the self already, a deceased person becomes the dead other and acquires another layer of alterity - her otherness doubles. This further amplifies fear and anxiety the other provokes in the self. Through thinking and talking of the dead as if they were alive, we bring them from the domain of the dead, unknown and threatening, into the domain of the living, familiar and safe; in the process, the dead become progressively 'speakable' and take up their place in the chain of commonplace analogies. The transformation of the dead into the living, of the other into the same, presupposes that the dead/the other receives and becomes the voice that the self gives to the silence of death/the other in order that everything has meaning. Thus, the desperate and solitary monologue becomes the promising and engaging dialogue again.

Jankélévitch suggests that the dead come to speak with the voice that the living can hear and the language that the living can understand. 'Les morts sont très obéissants, ils disent tout ce qu'on leur fait dire',⁹⁴ Jankélévitch asserts; and, indeed, the living will not let their dead simply be dead, non-qualifiable nonentities suspended in nothingness; instead,

⁹² See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 42.

⁹³ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 85.

⁹⁴ See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 111.

the living insist on including the dead in their everyday lives, on rendering the dead the subject of their conventional discourse with such ardent determination and scrupulosity as if life could not possibly go on otherwise. Jankélévitch makes a humorous observation: 'Il n'y aucun lieu dans la cité humaine qui ne soit plus ordonné qu'un cimetière'⁹⁵. But how ethical is our intrusion into the domain of the dead? Does our simplification, sublimation, stylisation of the dead other's biography, in any commemorative or simply retrospective form, do justice or disservice to her authentic life story? Is our 'passionate crystallisation' of the dead other's image the right way to learn from and about death? What is the role of the other in this narrative? Is her silence being selfishly taken advantage of, otherness abused and sovereignty violated? As Jankélévitch justly notes, before death, there is always time to acknowledge the unknown, the otherness, to realise that soon it will be too late to do so because when it is too late, then our mourning discourse gets overwhelmed by intense regret and delayed recognition that posthumously endow the life of the other with life-affirming and edifying continuity, coherence and meaning⁹⁶:

[S]implification ou sublimation, stylisation en général, ce processus rétrospectif qui est à l'oeuvre aussitôt après la mort parmi les survivants est en tous points analogue à la cristallisation amoureuse, la cristallisation posthume est le symétrique tardif de la véritable cristallisation passionnelle [...] La mort fait en un instant cette image exemplaire, cette image *ne varietur* qu'on appelle une biographie. Tout y est cohérence, édifiante continuité.⁹⁷

All questions about the ethical aspect of our discourse on the dead aside, Jankélévitch concludes after a deliberation that death does not represent an enigma or a problem to be solved. Christina Howells comments on Jankélévitch's verdict in relation to the role of death in life: 'Death brings life to an end, but it also gives life its value, and it cannot take away the fact of having lived. He [Jankélévitch] takes the example of the return of the Prodigal son to illustrate the way in which, even having come full circle, nothing is ever

⁹⁵ See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 111.

⁹⁶ See Jankélévitch, *Le Je-ne-sais-quoi*, p. 151.

⁹⁷ See Jankélévitch, *Le Je-ne-sais-quoi*, p. 136.

quite the same again. Life is irremediably changed because I have lived it'⁹⁸. In fact, the parable of the Prodigal son as an allegory of life and death is not specific to Jankélévitch's philosophy: as we will see in our discussion of Proust's and Tarkovsky's works, this image is representative of their aesthetic philosophies as well.

EMMANUEL LEVINAS: BEING, DEATH AND INFINITY

The truism of no contact between life and death implies that it is impossible for us to experience our own death and that the only relation we can have with death is built out of emotional and intellectual repercussions after the death of the other⁹⁹ and provides a rich matrix for a philosophical reflection on the role of ethics in the quest for meaning.

Emmanuel Levinas reiterates Vladimir Jankélévitch¹⁰⁰ when he claims that we gain knowledge about death from our experiences and observations of the behaviour of others near death or simply from the behaviour of the other as mortal who is aware of her finitude and oblivious to it at the same time. However, the awareness of our own finitude implicates the idea of time which leads Levinas to pose a question about the function and significance of time in our *being* - now from the vantage point of the involvement of the self with the other. Because, for Levinas, if the only way we can be affected by death is through the death of the other, the notion of finitude translates into the realisation of time not as the limitation or annihilation of our own being but, first and foremost, into the understanding of time as the experience that is attainable solely through the other and, only then, as the context within which the relationship of the self with the other unfolds. Should we accept this proposition, it does not matter whether time indeed organises, totalises or

⁹⁸ See Howells, *Mortal Subjects*, p. 109.

⁹⁹ See Emmanuel Levinas, *La Mort et le temps* (Éditions de l'Herne, 1991), p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Christina Howells summarises the intellectual relationship between Jankélévitch and Levinas: 'Jankélévitch acknowledges Levinas as a source of his ideas on alterity, just as Levinas frequently refers to Jankélévitch's magnum opus on death and, in his obituary essay, praises him as an ethical thinker who recognises that all duties are mine, all rights belong to the other'. See Howells, *Mortal Subjects*, p. 109.

gives continuity and meaning to our own finite existence as long as it allows us to exit our self-centred, self-enclosed being and try to aim beyond it – at infinity.

From Being to Otherwise than Being

L'angoisse devant l'être – l'horreur de l'être – n'est-elle pas aussi originelle que l'angoisse devant la mort? La peur d'être aussi originelle que la peur pour l'être? Plus originelle même [...].¹⁰¹

In his work *De l'existence à l'existant* (1947), Emmanuel Levinas introduces and develops the notion of the *il y a* that becomes a key concept in his philosophy. By proposing this concept, Levinas challenges the Heideggerian interpretation of human existence, i.e., the event of one's being as an ecstasy towards the end, namely death. Furthermore, the Lithuanian philosopher refuses to see the true tragedy of existence in this gradual, yet steady, being toward its finitude and nothingness that Heidegger proposes¹⁰². Instead, Levinas states that being itself is far more dreadful and devastating to man than death and that it represents the main threat and the most difficult obstacle for man to overcome and yet, at the same time, contains the hope and promise of deliverance. The philosophy of the *il y a* helps explain what the self (*le soi*) is like in her state of radical separation from others, how this self transforms into the knowing *I* (*le Moi de connaissance*) and why this *I* aspires to disrupt his/her ontology in order to face the Other (*l'Autre*). According to Levinas, the *il y a* represents the ultimate horror of our being, brings to the fore our absolute solitude and therefore becomes the primary reason for us to evade it.

¹⁰¹ See Emmanuel Levinas, *De l'existence à l'existant* (Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1990), p. 20.

¹⁰² Heidegger explains his position on death in these words: 'This past [death], as to which I run ahead, here makes a discovery in my running ahead to it: it is *my* past. As this past it uncovers my Dasein as suddenly no longer there; suddenly I am no longer there alongside such and such things, alongside such and such people, alongside these vanities, these tricks, this chattering. The past scatters all secretiveness and busyness, the past takes everything with it into the Nothing'. See Martin Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*, trans. William McNeill (Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1992), p. 12E.

The *il y a* is the constant presence of being (*l'exister*) depicted by Levinas as a place of dark and silent indeterminacy. The experience of this being resembles the experience of insomnia when the awake self, although still sensorially active, is no longer in charge but is reduced to passivity: the impossibility to leave the wakeful state is beyond his initiative or intention, and this imposed passivity depersonalises his consciousness and fills it with the neutrality and anonymity of the *il y a*. The *il y a* turns the black void into chaotic visions and the dead silence into cacophonous noises – yet, it is *ni néant, ni être*, unidentifiable - it crushes and horrifies us by its absolute alterity:

Les choses du monde diurne ne deviennent donc pas dans la nuit la source de l'horreur des ténèbres' parce que le regard n'arriverait pas à guetter leurs 'irréversibles desseins', c'est tout au contraire à cette horreur qu'elles empruntent leurs caractère fantastique. L'obscurité ne modifie pas seulement leurs contours pour la vision, mais les ramène à l'être indéterminé, anonyme qu'elles suintent.¹⁰³

As a result, the self feels suspended in the indeterminate and ambiguous without any hope of evasion. Levinas insists on the impersonal character of this being that has neither the author nor the agent: '*il y a*, comme "il pleut" ou comme "il fait nuit"'.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the maddening and obsessive impact of the *il y a* consists especially in the impossibility to locate neither its beginning nor its ending: It represents something unknown, ungraspable and fully independent from us. The apathetic impersonality of this *being* renders us impotent and vulnerable, strips us of our authority and, consequently, of our subjectivity. Such as it is, the *il y a* does not contain *ni joie ni abondance* for the self: It is but the horror bereft of meaning that lasts forever – alien, all encompassing and intolerable - it appears to precede and follow the world, and the self therefore always strives to escape it.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ See Levinas, *De l'existence à l'existant*, pp. 96-7.

¹⁰⁴ See Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethique et infini. Dialogues avec Philippe Nemo* (Librairie Artheme Fayard et Radio France, 1982), p. 38.

¹⁰⁵ See Levinas, *Ethique et infini*, p. 38.

To be embodied means to be limited by our own materiality which introduces a paradox: 'Un être libre n'est déjà plus libre parce qu'il est responsable de lui-même'¹⁰⁶, says Levinas. The self soon discovers that it is impossible to communicate his being as well as the concern and responsibility for his being (*l'existant*) to anyone; indeed, the self is able to recount his being to the other but could never share it with anyone.¹⁰⁷ Levinas refers to our being as *absolutely intransitive* and *fixedly monadic*:

Par la vue, par le toucher, par la sympathie, par le travail en commun, nous sommes avec les autres. Toutes ces relations sont transitives: je touche un objet, je vois l'Autre. Mais je ne *suis* pas l'Autre. Je suis tout seul. C'est donc l'être en moi, le fait que j'existe, mon *exister* qui constitue l'élément absolument intransitif, quelque chose sans intentionnalité, sans rapport. On peut tout échanger entre êtres sauf l'exister. Dans ce sens, être, c'est s'isoler par l'exister. Je suis *monade* en tant que je suis.¹⁰⁸

For Levinas, the self is singular and unrelatable, refusing any multiplicity or transitivity - a transcendence. This monadic way of being is oppressive to the self as it implies an unconditional confinement in our own infinite solitude. And, according to Levinas, this solitude is neither a romantic, mysterious feature of being nor any simple deprivation of social interaction. Moreover, the philosopher claims that solitude is not some superior disturbance which reveals itself to us when all our needs are satisfied and that it is definitely not (and Levinas tries to pre-empt any potential parallels between his notion of solitude and the Heideggerian idea of anxiety as a basic state of mind of *Dasein* in the face of death¹⁰⁹) the experience which is privileged to the *being towards death*, but that, instead, solitude is the companion of everyday existence haunted by matter:

La solitude n'est pas une inquiétude supérieure qui se révèle à un être quand tous ses besoins sont satisfaits. Elle n'est pas l'expérience privilégiée de l'être pour la mort, mais la compagne, si l'on peut dire, de l'existence quotidienne hantée par la matière.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ See Emmanuel Levinas, *Le Temps et l'autre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983), p. 36.

¹⁰⁷ See Levinas, *Ethique et infini*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁸ See Levinas, *Le Temps et l'autre*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie, Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 295.

¹¹⁰ See Levinas, *Le Temps et l'autre*, p. 39.

It is this inherent solitude that firmly ties the self to the factual presence of *being* (*l'exister*), to the *il y a*, thereby disallows consciousness, discards the notion of time along with impressions of the past and intimations of the future and thus feels like the absence of time. We can trick solitude with worldly *jouissances*, notes Levinas, but they would not make it disappear and could only provide a temporary relief, an illusion of escape. The true task of escaping this solitude still amounts to the task of escaping our being and the infamous *il y a*.

When being frees up from its condition of materiality, it abandons its ontological condition, manifests itself as a *dés-inter-essement* and transforms into *autrement qu'être*, *otherwise than being*. In fact, Levinas prescribes a *deposition* of one's sovereignty, 'au sens où l'on parle de rois déposés'¹¹¹, and a *relation dés-inter-essée* with the other as a remedy in the belief that the de-centring from the self and focusing on the other would bring about the deliverance from the overwhelming and meaningless entrapment of human spirit by the *il y a*. Only through relating to and living in a *dia-chrony* with the other, the solitary self that is initially no more than a self with no identity, no origin and no homeland becomes the site from which transcendence as *l'oubli de soi* and *l'ouverture sur autrui* first arises. Levinas emphasises that 'autrement' in the expression 'autrement qu'être' alludes to another difference than the one that separates being and non-being: this is precisely the difference of the *beyond* (*de l'au-delà*), the difference of transcendence.¹¹² Therefore, the desire to evade one's monadism, solitude and the nightmare of the *il y a* transforms into the constant and insatiable pursuit of the other, the relationship with the other that is based on deference and a new different way of being - *autrement qu'être*.

¹¹¹ See Levinas, *Ethique et infini*, p. 42.

¹¹² See Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1974), p. 14.

Élection par Sujétion

According to Levinas, the other is absolutely singular, unknown and limitless while impossible to grasp or comprehend – the other is mysterious and transcendent. Levinas emphasises that the alterity of the other is so infinite that one could not possibly speak of the other, present the other as a theme or an object in one's discourse. Jacques Derrida notes that the alterity of the other in Levinasian terms is so absolute that it emerges as an exteriority that could not be derived, engendered or constituted of anything else but itself.¹¹³ However, Levinas claims, the appeal of the other is deeply ingrained in our nature, and we all possess a preconscious and pre-theoretical desire for the other. This desire is much more than a need because it does not simply stem out of our lack of something that can be easily satisfied¹¹⁴ but rather flows from our longing for something that is outside and beyond our *being*: 'Désir – aspiration qui ne procède pas d'un manque – métaphysique – désir d'une personne'¹¹⁵. Levinas posits that the desire for the other represents an attempt to transcend our being and, therefore, it is antecedent to and much greater than our own sensorial, affective and intellectual capacity; for instance, the philosopher explains the desire for the other by comparing it to a thought: 'Le Désir est comme une pensée qui pense plus qu'elle ne pense, ou plus que ce qu'elle pense'¹¹⁶. According to Levinas, in the desire for the other, inherent and transcendent, interiority constantly reaches out to exteriority while exteriority makes a genuine appeal to interiority. The encounter with the other is always face-to-face, and it is the face of the other that initiates and animates the further relationship. The face here is not a metaphor or a figure of speech, it announces the other not as the sum total of physical features but as the presence of meaning and truth:

¹¹³ See Jacques Derrida, *L'Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), p. 156.

¹¹⁴ See Levinas, *Ethique et infini*, p. 86.

¹¹⁵ See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini* (La Haye/ Boston/ Londres: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1980), p. 275.

¹¹⁶ See Levinas, *Ethique et infini*, p. 87.

‘L’homme en tant qu’Autrui nous arrive du dehors, séparé – ou saint – visage. Son intériorité – c’est-à-dire son appel à moi, est sa vérité’¹¹⁷. The face is present before us, which means that we can see it, but, at the same time, it can also see us; as Derrida explains this Levinasian idea: ‘Le visage [...] c’est aussi ce qui voit’ and ‘ce qui échange son regard’¹¹⁸. It is the look on the other’s face that carries significance, appeals to us and awaits our response. Simon Critchley suggests that this very relationship between interiority and exteriority represents the core of Levinasian ethics:

For Levinas, then, the ethical relation – and ethics is simply and entirely the event of this relation – is one in which I am related to the face of the Other (*le visage d’autrui*), where the French word ‘autrui’ refers to the other human being, whom I cannot evade, comprehend, or kill and before whom I am called to justice, to justify myself.¹¹⁹

The idea of transcendence presupposes the impossibility to think *being* and God together, says Levinas, and the same verity applies to the relation between the *I* (*le Moi*) and the other: Exteriority is immensely superior and infinitely other to interiority, and it cannot therefore be encompassed or become a theme in thought¹²⁰; then, the relation between the two should be akin to the ‘rapport sans rapport’¹²¹, a relation that does not aspire to overcome the abyss of separation between two beings but triumphantly confirms it instead and, consequently, elevates the other in the eyes of the *I*. Hence, exteriority here does not try to assimilate or negate interiority – exteriority does rather appear as a marvel before it. This is why, the intersubjective relationship, according to Levinas, will always be non-symmetrical – *l’un-pour-l’autre* – wherein the *I* lives for and remains responsible before the other and does not hope for or expect the responsibility to be ever required.¹²² Levinas proposes that this responsibility should go beyond one’s responsibility for one’s

¹¹⁷ See Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, p. 267.

¹¹⁸ See Derrida, *L’Écriture et la différence*, p. 146.

¹¹⁹ See Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (Oxford UK/ Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), p. 5.

¹²⁰ See Levinas, *Ethique et infini*, p. 72.

¹²¹ See Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, p. 271.

¹²² See Levinas, *Ethique et infini*, p. 95.

own deeds before the other and that it is fundamentally the responsibility for the other, *un pour autrui*. It means that the *I* takes responsibility for the responsibility of the other and the other's deeds too: The Levinasian *I* therefore bears some kind of total responsibility that always makes the *I* more responsible than anyone else and even *more* responsible than all. Besides, it is incumbent on the *I* to be responsible for the other in order to achieve subjectivity because, for Levinas, subjectivity is not *un pour soi* but *pour un autre* because 'c'est précisément dans la mesure où entre autrui et moi la relation n'est pas réciproque, que je suis sujétion à autrui; et je suis "sujet" essentiellement en ce sens'¹²³. Thus, for Levinas, the self is never self-sufficient and can be interpreted as contingent on the other or, as Howells writes:

The subject similarly [to true temporality] does not exist as a substantive, self-identical 'soi', but rather as a 'departure from self', and identity is envisaged not as a simple self-relationship but rather as limit to freedom.¹²⁴

Subjectivity is understood by Levinas in ethical terms, put forward as the *substitution for the other* and, as such, assumes *the condition of a hostage* and reaches as far as the expiation for others: '*L'un-pour-l'autre jusqu'à l'un-otage-de-l'autre: dans son identité d'appelé irremplaçable, sans retour à soi; dans son port de soi-même, expiation pour autrui; dans son "essence", ex-ception à l'essence ou substitution*'¹²⁵. 'Dans l'expiation, responsabilité pour les autres, le rapport avec le non-moi précède tout rapport du *Moi* avec lui-même'¹²⁶ because, according to Levinas, the responsibility for the other cannot originate in my engagement and in my decision, it comes from outside my liberty – from an 'antérieur-à-tout-souvenir' and an 'ultérieur-à-tout-accomplissement'¹²⁷. Otherwise - if subjectivity began in the *I* - any communication with the other would be impossible, as the

¹²³ See Levinas, *Ethique et infini*, p. 95.

¹²⁴ See Howells, *Mortal Subjects*, p. 111.

¹²⁵ See Levinas, *Autrement qu'être*, p. 220.

¹²⁶ See Levinas, *Autrement qu'être*, p. 189.

¹²⁷ See Levinas, *Autrement qu'être*, p. 24.

other would represent to the *I* a limitation to overcome and dominate¹²⁸ and thus incite violence towards it. For Levinas, my responsibility is incessant and invariable, and nobody can take it on instead of me; no replacement is possible as *le Moi* is non-interchangeable. In other words, I can substitute myself for all, but nobody can substitute for me¹²⁹: My inalienable subjectivity therein resides, thereby separates me from the other and unequivocally establishes that I am not the other, that I am unique and chosen – this is *élection par sujétion*, claims Levinas.¹³⁰

The Death of the Other is the First Death

For Levinas, we do not know and cannot possibly know what death is. No relation with the event of our death is possible for us; as the living, we can only be in relation with the mystery of death throughout our lifetime, but when death actually comes, it can never be assumed because we are no longer there in order to catch the sight, the sound, the scent or the touch of its presence. Like Jankélévitch, Levinas believes that death could never be our *now* and we could never live the present of our death: ‘Quand la mort est là, je ne suis plus là, non point parce que je suis néant, mais parce que je ne suis pas à même de saisir’¹³¹.

Therefore, Levinas asserts, the subjects of our being that ceases to *be* with the advent of our death, we can no longer remain subjects as our experiential ability abandons us. This is how we lose the mastery over our *now* and over everything that is possible in our *now* – we are no longer masters to seize the possible or, as Levinas puts it, ‘nous ne pouvons plus pouvoir’¹³². To possess, to know, to seize are synonymous with power, and as death divests us of all of the above at our own first and last encounter with it, it reveals itself as

¹²⁸ See Levinas, *Autrement qu’être*, p. 189.

¹²⁹ See Levinas, *Ethique et infini*, p. 92.

¹³⁰ See Levinas, *Autrement qu’être*, p. 201.

¹³¹ See Levinas, *Le Temps et l’autre*, p. 59.

¹³² See Levinas, *Le Temps et l’autre*, p. 62.

completely alien to our being. Death also represents the impossibility to have plans, endeavours, future and indicates that we are in relation with something that is infinitely other, something that bears absolute alterity. Although death liberates us from the incessant and intolerable *bourdonnement* of the *il y a* and puts an end to our haunting solitude of being, it arrives uninvited and uncalled for and thus, once again, denies us any responsibility or control, any chance or right to help it or fight it: ‘L’avenir de la mort, son étrangeté ne laisse au sujet aucune initiative’¹³³. It is impossible for us to be affected by our own death: the very moment of death is ungraspable physically, emotionally or mentally and cannot be lived authentically or induced as an experience even in a suicide attempt. All we could genuinely experience is the process of our dying. But, accompanied by physical and/or emotional suffering, dying only helps expand our subjectivity by means of the amplification and intensification of our senses and thus binds us to our *now* and our presence in this world more than ever. So, indeed, death cannot ever be our own experience, death can never be appropriated or *mine*. Should we then be concerned about death, should we feel anxiety about it as our *ownmost*, *non-relational* and imminent possibility as Heidegger suggests in his *Being and Time* ¹³⁴? Levinas is doubtful about it and wants to inquire further: ‘L’impossibilité de réduire la mort à une expérience, ce truisme de l’impossibilité d’une expérience de la mort [...] ne signifient-ils pas une affection plus passive qu’un traumatisme?’¹³⁵. Death is more significant to us when it is the death of the other, suggests Levinas, even though it acquires a different meaning than our own lived experience of death.

¹³³ See Levinas, *Le Temps et l’autre*, p. 73.

¹³⁴ See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 294. In fact, according to Heidegger, our own death as an experience is also unknowable and impossible, however our death (even as negation of possibility, or as impossibility) is meaningful because it gives us our finitude and singularity. As Heidegger explains it in one of his lectures: ‘What is *to have one’s own death in each case*? It is *Dasein’s running ahead to its past, to an extreme possibility of itself that stands before it in certainty and utter indeterminacy*. *Dasein* as human life is *primarily being possible*, the Being of the possibility of its certain yet indeterminate past’. See Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*, p. 12E.

¹³⁵ See Levinas, *La Mort et le temps*, p. 11.

The only death that is accessible to us, the only death that can truly affect us is the death of the other, says Levinas: 'Le mourir, comme le mourir de l'autre, affecte mon identité de Moi, il est sensé dans sa rupture du Même, sa rupture de mon Moi, sa rupture du Même dans mon Moi'¹³⁶. This is why the death of the other could not simply be defined as an empirical facticity and our relation with the death of the other as either second hand knowledge or our privileged experience of death. For Levinas, as Christina Howells comments:

Death puts me in relation with the radically other and unknowable, and this alienation fractures my self-sufficient solitude. Death does not confirm my solitude but rather breaks it down. This is the moment at which a relationship with an other becomes possible, and in particular, the erotic relationship which is the relationship with the Other par excellence.¹³⁷

Indeed, the living other plays an essential role in the constitution of the *I* as it lays the foundation for and enables the structure of subjectivity through irrupting into the sameness of the *I*, disrupting the *pour soi* mode of being and forcing the *soi* out of his/her selfish autonomy while maintaining the status of absolute transcendence; the dead other would then introduce the idea of even more radical alterity (if it is at all possible) by completely eliminating any possibility of the encounter or communication with the other because death is both *without response* and *without return*, a departure to the unknown without leaving an address - death is the 'question d'une indétermination'¹³⁸. Although our pure knowledge retains of the death of the other but the appearance of the body that becomes immobile and the face that transforms into an expressionless mask, our affective relation with the death of the other entails, in addition to fear or courage, compassion and solidarity with the other and, through these feelings, the responsibility for the other, who is entrusted to us, in the

¹³⁶ See Emmanuel Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps* (Paris: Éditions Bernard Grasset et Fasquelle, 1993), p. 22.

¹³⁷ See Howells, *Mortal Subjects*, p. 113.

¹³⁸ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 23.

unknown.¹³⁹ And, if the desire for the other and the substitution for the other are inherent and *malgré nous*, impossible for us to refuse or deny, they will carry on and survive the death of the other - now, they will find their expression in our culpable memory and mourning as our duty and our debt before the other cannot be exhausted or terminated. 'Le du est impayable: on n'est jamais quitte', claims Levinas:

C'est cela, mon affection par la mort d'autrui, ma relation avec sa mort. Elle est, dans ma relation, ma déférence à quelqu'un qui ne répond plus, déjà une culpabilité – une culpabilité de survivant.¹⁴⁰

The death of the other and the guilt of the survivor raise our awareness of the mortality of the other and make us value our relation with the other. Therefore, 'la mort n'est pas anéantissement mais question nécessaire pour que cette relation avec l'infini ou temps se produise'¹⁴¹. And in this sense too, according to Levinas, the death of the other is always the first death.¹⁴²

'La mort n'est-elle pas autre chose que la dialectique *être - néant* dans le flux du temps?'¹⁴³ asks Levinas rhetorically. Death is an emotion, a movement, and *inquiétude* in the unknown, affectivity without intentionality¹⁴⁴, and it thus prompts our understanding of time in terms of our relation with the other instead of our relation with our end. In fact, for Levinas, it is perfectly sensible to have no lived experience or no knowledge of our own death and to be unable to see meaning in its eventuality; the philosopher claims that our ignorance and insouciance with regard to our death are necessary in order to preserve the unity and the intrigue of the unity of our *I*.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, it is the non-sense of our own finitude that should primarily interest us because, says Levinas: 'Le point qu'elle [la mort] semble marquer dans notre temps (= notre relation à l'infini) est pur point d'interrogation:

¹³⁹ See Levinas, *La Mort et le temps*, p. 26.

¹⁴⁰ See Levinas, *La Mort et le temps*, pp. 14-5.

¹⁴¹ See Levinas, *La Mort et le temps*, p. 21.

¹⁴² See Levinas, *La Mort et le temps*, p. 54.

¹⁴³ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 23.

¹⁴⁴ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 26.

¹⁴⁵ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 30.

ouverture sur ce qui n'apporte aucune possibilité de réponse'¹⁴⁶. So, death stands for absolute ambiguity that may hint at a different dimension of meaning than the conventional understanding of death as the only alternative or the opposite to being, that is non-being.¹⁴⁷ Levinas insists that death is not of this world, it is always a scandal and, in this sense, it is always transcendent to the world.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, death has an important function – it raises the question *sans donnée ni réponse* that makes us realise that even the possibility to pose this question becomes reality only within our relation with the other.¹⁴⁹ Finally, it is *my* mortality, *my* death sentence, *my* time foreshadowed by the imminence of *my* death and *my* actual death that reveal the absurdity of my situation:

La mortalité rend insensé tout souci que le Moi voudrait prendre de son existence et de sa destinée. Ce ne serait qu'une évasion dans un monde sans issue et toujours ridicule. Rien, sans doute, n'est plus comique que le souci qu'un être prend d'une existence qu'il ne pourrait arracher à sa destruction [...].¹⁵⁰

Then, it would be logical to conclude that the true meaning of our being does not revolve around the *I* but should lie elsewhere, and maybe this elsewhere is the other since what makes my preoccupation with my own being absurd and comical, and consequently tragic, also renders possible the gratuitousness of my responsibility for the other, my unconditional gift of myself to the other.¹⁵¹

In his works, Levinas tirelessly advances the idea of ethics preceding and disrupting ontology, as he believes that our relation with the other is paramount to our being. Being must not determine meaning; on the contrary, meaning should define and illuminate our being, and this meaning, conferred on us by death and our mortality, is found in our deference to the other.¹⁵² Thus, Levinas asserts:

¹⁴⁶ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 30.

¹⁴⁷ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 23.

¹⁴⁸ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 130.

¹⁴⁹ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 131.

¹⁵⁰ See Levinas, *Autrement qu'être*, p. 204.

¹⁵¹ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 134.

¹⁵² See Levinas, *Autrement qu'être*, p. 205.

Personne n'est assez hypocrite pour prétendre qu'il a enlevé à la mort son dard – pas même les prometteurs des religions – mais nous pouvons avoir des responsabilités et des attachements par lesquels la mort prend un sens – c'est que, dès le départ, Autrui nous affecte malgré nous.¹⁵³

Although it seems like a very humanistic commandment, it brings up a kind of moral dilemma: The problem lies not in the contention that it is difficult to practice subjection to the other in everyday life (as it should come about naturally, according to Levinas) but in the objection, justly raised by Derrida¹⁵⁴, that when one is to desire, to respond to the appeal, obligation or even love of another, one is to sacrifice another other in this task. Without the slightest intent to undermine Levinas's philosophy, the question stands whether it is possible to be responsible before one and not fail at your responsibilities before another. It does not matter for the time being. Levinas achieves a new philosophy that challenges our self-centred way of thinking, guides us into *otherwise than being* and offers us means and meaning to relate with infinity.

JACQUES DERRIDA: MOURNING FOR THE OTHER

Death, the Other and Responsibility

For Derrida, death is a law that governs being rather than an accident that puts an end to it¹⁵⁵, it is also an inherent and integral part of being that makes the self aware of and liable to time and, pace Heidegger, puts the self in the position of extreme vulnerability in any relations with the other. According to Derrida, death is inseparable from being in the same way the other is inseparable from the self: they have a relationship, which is complicated by both interdependence that is constitutive and necessary and by estrangement that is driven by excessive and inassimilable alterity. For Derrida, the other is an essential, yet

¹⁵³ See Levinas, *Autrement qu'être*, p. 205.

¹⁵⁴ See Jacques Derrida, *Donner la mort* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1999), p. 98.

¹⁵⁵ See Howells, *Mortal Subjects*, p. 182.

wholly other, part of the self. In *De l'hospitalité* (1997), for instance, in order to show how the relationship between the self and the other is founded and structured and how the self becomes *ipse* as a result of this relationship, Derrida compares interiority to a house that always has windows and doors to welcome and receive the outside world:

Il n'y a pas de maison ou d'intériorité sans porte ni fenêtres. La monade du chez-soi doit être hospitalière pour être *ipse*, soi-même chez soi, chez soi habitable dans le rapport à soi du soi.¹⁵⁶

According to Derrida, the self must possess a sense of absolute hospitality with regard to any manifestation of alterity and therefore be friendly and generous to the unknown and anonymous other without an expectation of reciprocity or even asking for the other's name.¹⁵⁷

In *Donner la mort* (1999), Derrida discusses the Heideggerian concept of death as our ownmost and non-relational possibility in terms of the unique phenomenon that gives the meaning of irreplaceability to the self: 'Or l'irremplaçabilité à partir de laquelle seule on peut parler du sujet responsable, d'âme comme conscience de soi, de moi, etc., seule la mort, ou plutôt l'appréhension de la mort peut la donner'¹⁵⁸. Then, Derrida links the notions of the self and singularity, which are conferred on us by death, to responsibility and, further, to the responsibility and guilt before the other that stands as infinitely other in 'sa singularité absolue, inaccessible, solitaire, transcendante, non manifeste, non présente originairement à mon ego'¹⁵⁹. This link becomes transparent in his reflection on the philosophical writings of Jan Patočka:

En tant que responsable je suis coupable. Ce qui me donne la singularité, à savoir la mort et la finitude, c'est cela même qui me rend inégal à la bonté infinie du don qui est aussi le premier appel à la responsabilité. La culpabilité est inhérente à la

¹⁵⁶ See Jacques Derrida, *De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre* (Calmann-Lévy, 1997), p. 59.

¹⁵⁷ See Derrida, *De l'hospitalité*, p. 29.

¹⁵⁸ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁹ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 110.

responsabilité parce que la responsabilité est toujours inégale à elle-même: on n'est jamais assez responsable.¹⁶⁰

Though reminiscent of Levinas's philosophy of responsibility and guilt before the other, Derrida's position on the relationship between the self and the other is different. Whereas Levinas calls for some sort of absolute responsibility before the other and thus some unconditional 'subjection' of the self to the other, Derrida finds limitations to the feasibility and ethicality of Levinas's command. First, Derrida doubts the very possibility of such responsibility wherein antithetical conditions must be satisfied:

La responsabilité exige deux mouvements contradictoires: qu'on réponde, en tant que soi-même et en tant que singularité irremplaçable, de ce qu'on fait, dit, donne; mais aussi, en tant que bon et par bonté, qu'on oublie ou efface l'origine de ce qu'on donne.¹⁶¹

Second, Derrida discusses another aporia that undermines the idea of total substitution of the self for the other and that turns Levinas's ethics into a series of never-ending dilemmas:

Je ne peux répondre à l'appel, à la demande, à l'obligation, ni même à l'amour d'un autre sans lui sacrifier l'autre autre, les autres autres. Tout autre est tout autre.¹⁶²

Instead, Derrida offers a dictum 'tout autre est tout autre' which underlines the singularity and exceptionality of any other and therefore refutes any infinite responsibility that can be inferred from Levinas's ethical philosophy. Infinite responsibility does not make provisions for the constant necessity of choosing among different others who require our undivided attention and making a decision through selecting one while neglecting another or others: 'Je ne suis responsable devant l'un (c'est-à-dire l'autre) qu'en manquant à mes responsabilités devant tous les autres, devant la généralité de l'éthique ou de la politique'¹⁶³. Martin Hägglund argues that Levinas's injunction of unconditional

¹⁶⁰ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 77.

¹⁶¹ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 78.

¹⁶² See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 98.

¹⁶³ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 101.

submission before the other cannot be sustained¹⁶⁴ because ‘whenever I turn toward another, I turn away from yet another and thus exercise discrimination’¹⁶⁵. Hägglund then interprets Derrida's response to the Levinasian infinite responsibility in the following way: ‘the relation to the other cannot be ethical as such, but is a non-ethical opening that cannot be appropriated by any ethics’¹⁶⁶. Indeed, for Derrida, infinite responsibility is impossible because it inevitably entails exclusion and discrimination.¹⁶⁷ Hence, Derrida suggests, since our responsibility to the other cannot be but finite and unfair, we must strive not for the elimination of discrimination and injustice in general, as this is an unattainable ideal, but for lesser violence and more respect towards alterity. As Critchley justly notes, ‘ethics is the goal, or horizon, towards which Derrida’s work tends’¹⁶⁸.

The Beginnings of Mourning

According to Heidegger, ‘my death’ carries the greatest ontological significance for Dasein. However, for Derrida, ‘my death’ is as unliveable and unimaginable as it is for Jankélévitch and as secondary and meaningless as it is for Levinas. In his response to Heidegger, Derrida emphasises that the meaning of the syntagma ‘my death’ can only be understood in terms of the death of the other *in me* as it does not make sense otherwise: ‘La mort de l'autre, cette mort de l'autre en ‘moi’ est au fond la seule mort nommée dans le syntagme “ma mort”, avec toutes les conséquences qu'on peut en tirer’¹⁶⁹. Derrida believes that there is no spatial separation between the self and the other and that the other, living or dead, always inhabits the self without conceding its otherness. For Derrida, the death of the

¹⁶⁴ See Martin Hägglund, *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 89.

¹⁶⁵ See Hägglund, *Radical Atheism*, p. 94.

¹⁶⁶ See Hägglund, *Radical Atheism*, p. 84.

¹⁶⁷ See Hägglund, *Radical Atheism*, p. 94.

¹⁶⁸ See Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁹ See Jacques Derrida, *Apories* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), p. 133.

other is the first and most important death to the self because this is where we can recognise our own death. When we become aware of our mortality, we learn responsibility to the other, and in that responsibility to the other we find and establish our self.

In *Apories* (1996), Derrida comments on Heidegger's idea of the immanence of death and our duty of anticipating it, as death can happen to us at any moment: 'Il faut s'y attendre, je m'y attends, nous nous y attendons'¹⁷⁰. Derrida creates some ambiguity when he chooses the French reflexive verb *s'attendre* to give the meaning of expectation or waiting for something to happen. On the one hand, the verb translates the idea that one (I or you, we) must expect death to come at some point; on the other hand, the reflexivity of the verb emphasises that one must wait for her own death as in 'I must wait for my death' and 'we must wait for our death'. It is indeed true to Heidegger's stance on death as one's *ownmost* possibility that must be appropriated and anticipated. Later on, in the same text, as if his thought got interrupted by a sudden revelation, Derrida says: 'On peut s'attendre l'un l'autre, l'une l'autre [...]'¹⁷¹. The meaning and the tone of this sentence are now radically different due to the simple substitution of reflexivity with reciprocity: We now can wait for *one another*. We still do not know when death happens and to whom of us it will happen first, and therefore all we can do is live in anticipation as one of us inevitably dies before another. Therefore, now we anticipate not our own death but the death of the other instead:

Quand le s'attendre l'un l'autre a rapport à la mort, aux frontières de la mort, là où l'on s'attend l'un l'autre en sachant a priori, de façon absolument indéniable que, la vie étant toujours trop courte, l'un y attend l'autre, car l'un et l'autre n'arrivent jamais ensemble, à ce rendez-vous; la mort est au fond le nom de la simultanéité impossible et d'une impossibilité que nous savons simultanément [...].¹⁷²

Derrida refers to this anticipation of another's death as *le deuil originaire*. This kind of mourning can also be called anticipatory because it is a sentiment, he believes, that settles

¹⁷⁰ See Derrida, *Apories*, p. 113.

¹⁷¹ See Derrida, *Apories*, p. 117.

¹⁷² See Derrida, *Apories*, p. 117.

within us long before the event of death takes place in actuality, it thus precedes death. It appears that for Derrida mourning is brought about by love and it coincides with love because both of these psychological states deal with the heightened fear of loss no matter if loss is only a possibility or an actual fact:

Elle [*la philia*] ne peut pas se survivre comme acte, mais elle peut survivre à son objet, elle peut aimer l'inanimé.¹⁷³

The sentiment of mourning does not have to wait for the death of the loved one to take place: *le deuil originaire*, Derrida says in one of his interviews, ‘celui-ci n'attend pas la mort dite “effective”’¹⁷⁴. Knowing a priori and with absolute certitude that one will have to survive one's loved one, according to Derrida, helps instil the pain of loss and sorrow in us from the start:

To have a friend, to look at him, to follow him with your eyes, to admire him in friendship, is to know in a more intense way, already injured, always insistent, and more and more unforgettable, that one of the two of you will inevitably see the other die.¹⁷⁵

This passage from Derrida's speech written in memory of one of his friends Jean-Marie Benoist captures best the feeling of morbid apprehension that marks friendship, or any loving relationship, from its inception, basically from the first time we hear the name of our loved one. In fact, Derrida claims that any name in itself acts as a monument, an epitaph, or a tomb from the moment it is given and every time it is pronounced in the absence of its bearer:

[S]on nom peut lui survivre et lui survit déjà, commence dès son vivant à se passer de lui, disant et portant sa mort chaque fois qu'il est prononcé [...].¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ See Jacques Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), p. 30.

¹⁷⁴ See Jacques Derrida, *Apprendre à vivre enfin: entretien avec Jean Birnbaum* (Paris: Galilée, 2005), p. 26.

¹⁷⁵ See Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 107.

¹⁷⁶ See Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires pour Paul de Man* (Paris: Galilée, 1988), p. 63.

In *Politiques de l'amitié* (1994), when Derrida describes originary mourning as one of the essential features of friendship, he actually calls this kind of mourning 'the anxious apprehension of mourning' and points out that it lasts the relationship and then survives it if broken by the death of one of the friends. Death, Derrida insists, waives the right of the two to arrive in it simultaneously, and this is why, as the impossible simultaneity, death makes the living mourn still living loved ones. Certainly, such Derridean apprehension of mourning does not only involve mental comprehension of what is to come in the future but also implies the fear of this future event, foreboding:

L'appréhension angoissée du deuil [...] s'insinue a priori, elle s'anticipe, elle hante, elle endeuille l'ami avant le deuil. Et elle pleure avant la déploration, elle pleure la mort avant la mort [...].¹⁷⁷

Melancholia: from Pathology to Ethics

Survivre, voilà, l'autre nom d'un deuil dont la possibilité au moins ne se fait jamais attendre. Car on ne survit pas sans porter le deuil.¹⁷⁸

Derrida is equally interested in our psychological and physiological response to the actual death of our loved ones. And it is Sigmund Freud's theory of mourning and melancholia that draws Derrida's attention as it provides an elaborate speculative study on the subject. In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), Freud makes a clear distinction between mourning and melancholia. Both are understood to be the reaction to the loss of something one loves. However, in the case of mourning this reaction together with its psychosomatic manifestations is considered to be healthy, and it inevitably fades away with the passing of time. In melancholia though, this reaction is characterised as pathological, and it can have long-lasting detrimental effects on one's emotional, mental and physical state. The essential differences between mourning and melancholia, according to Freud, can be narrowed

¹⁷⁷ See Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié*, p. 31.

¹⁷⁸ See Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié*, p. 31.

down to two symptoms that are absent in mourning but are pronounced in melancholia: first, the nature of loss in melancholia, unlike in mourning, is unconscious; second, melancholia, in contrast to mourning, is accompanied with self-torment that is often expressed through sadism and hatred. Yet, Freud claims, both mourning and melancholia pass after a certain amount of time ‘without leaving any broad or demonstrable changes’¹⁷⁹ because, ultimately, ‘just as mourning impels the ego to renounce the object [of love] by declaring its death, and offers the ego the reward of staying alive, each individual battle of ambivalence [which is melancholia] loosens the fixation of the libido upon the object by devaluing, disparaging and, so to speak, even killing it’¹⁸⁰. In short, Freud views mourning and melancholia as slightly different ways ‘of coming to terms with loss and grief by means of an internalisation of the loved one and a detachment of libido from him or her’¹⁸¹. This is where Derrida strongly disagrees with Freud.

For Derrida, unlike for Freud, ‘mourning is interminable. inconsolable. irreconcilable’¹⁸². Derrida distances himself from the psychoanalytic model of mourning mainly because his views on otherness as the principal structural part in subjectivity are different from those espoused by the Freudians. Colin Davis explains:

There is in Derrida's account no separation between my relation to myself and my relation to the other, because the other is always already *part of, prior to, and in excess of* the subject: ‘in me before me and stronger than me’.¹⁸³

Indeed, as the part of the self that founds it and keeps on constituting it throughout, the other cannot be separated from the self or internalised by the self: the Derridean other refuses both psychoanalytic solutions to grief - incorporation and introjection:

¹⁷⁹ See Sigmund Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (Penguin Books, 2005), p. 212.

¹⁸⁰ See Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 217.

¹⁸¹ See Howells, *Mortal Subjects*, p. 191.

¹⁸² See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p.143.

¹⁸³ See Colin Davis, *Haunted Subjects. Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 143.

Upon the death of the other we are given to *memory*, and thus to *interiorisation* [internalisation], since the other, outside us, is now nothing. And with the dark light of this nothing, we learn that the other resists the closure of our interiorising memory.¹⁸⁴

Derrida believes that internalisation/ interiorisation is impossible because ‘death constitutes and makes manifest the limits of a *me* or an *us* who are obliged to harbour something that is greater and other than them; something *outside of them within them*’¹⁸⁵. In his remembrance speech for Louis Althusser, Derrida says that his dead friend is now at once too absent and too close: in him, inside him.¹⁸⁶ If we are reminded of Derrida's concept of the other that ascribes to alterity such characteristics as absolute and inaccessible singularity, transcendence and solitariness¹⁸⁷, we will attest to the incompatibility of the two processes that, in combination, would represent what Derrida views as the true mourning of a loved one: internalisation and respect for alterity. Christina Howells notes:

This is what makes ‘true mourning’ impossible for Derrida: the possibility of internalising what can never be internalised because of the infinite alterity of the other. Essentially, authentic responsibility to the other demands that s/he remain other, as Derrida states in *Donner la mort*: ‘Tout autre est tout autre’.¹⁸⁸

Then, indeed, for Derrida, mourning cannot be terminated with time because the infinite other is always inside the self without any possibility of being expunged or internalised. Also, mourning cannot be consoled because the death of a loved one brings about another drama besides the drama of loss, and that Derrida describes in these words:

The drama, it seems, is not so much that we lose the friend after death but that we can no longer lose them; they who were once so distant become all too close, too close because now only within us - in us as a part of us and of history and no longer as the singularity that called us out of ourselves and first made us responsible before them.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 11.

¹⁸⁵ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 11.

¹⁸⁶ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 114.

¹⁸⁷ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 110.

¹⁸⁸ See Howells, *Mortal Subjects*, p. 192-3.

¹⁸⁹ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 27.

And, finally, mourning cannot be reconcilable because internalisation and preservation of otherness are mutually exclusive. Therefore, mourning for Derrida does not only represent a way of dealing with the loss of something you love, but it is also a certain necessity that reveals our indebtedness and responsibility to the other. In a way, according to Derrida, we do not choose to mourn or not to mourn, rather we must mourn:

We must, but we must not like it - mourning, that is, mourning itself, if such a thing exists: not to like or love through one's own tear but only through the other, and every tear is from the other, the friend, the living, as long as we ourselves are living, reminding us, in holding life, to hold on to it.¹⁹⁰

At first glance, these words taken from yet another of Derrida's commemorative speeches emphasise the priority that the other must have in our memorial practices after her death in order to avoid degrading ourselves and the other with bemoaning and self-pity. However, after rereading the passage it becomes obvious that Derrida's principal concern here is to prioritise anticipatory mourning for a loved one to the sorrow we experience after her actual death. In fact, in *Béliers* (2003) Derrida talks about 'a terrifying hypothesis'¹⁹¹ that we might be more attentive to our loved ones when they are dead than when they were still alive. In this sense, anticipatory mourning is indeed more necessary and ethical. In any case, 'true' mourning for the dead other shares the same problematic with responsibility to the living other: Derrida raises the question of seriality in mourning that neglects to give the respect and attention that the singularity of every other merits:

Each time we mourn, then, we add another name to the series of singular mournings and so commit what may be called a sort of 'posthumous infidelity' with regard to the others.¹⁹²

It appears that this Derridean posthumous infidelity echoes the discriminatory nature of our responsibility to the other: it also cannot be but unfair and neglectful of the absolute

¹⁹⁰ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 110.

¹⁹¹ See Jacques Derrida, *Béliers. Le dialogue ininterrompu entre deux infinis, le poème* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), p. 20.

¹⁹² See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 16.

uniqueness of any other. For Colin Davis, this tension between singularity and seriality, 'between the desire to mourn each loss in its own way and the anxiety that mourning is always too much the same' is not resolved and possibly not resolvable.¹⁹³ However, in his writings, Derrida attempts to diminish the impact of our propensity for unfaithfulness and therefore for violence towards the other. For instance, when remembering Barthes, Derrida writes that he wants to avoid doubly wounding his friend by speaking of him as one speaks either of one of the living or of one of the dead. 'In both cases, I disfigure, I wound, I put to sleep, or I kill'¹⁹⁴, says Derrida. So the idea of preserving the dead loved one's otherness and singularity sets Derrida in search of the right linguistic means to express mourning, and such means, according to Derrida, should allow the dead themselves to speak and should not take up speech in their place.¹⁹⁵ Christina Howells comments:

Derrida continually asks: how can the I ever speak of the other - or indeed, not speak of the other - when the voice of the I is not distinct from the other's voice and yet is not the other's voice? In each of his various texts on mourning Derrida employs an intense and even uncanny form of intertextuality, where direct citation is interwoven within his own, intimate, elegiac writing.¹⁹⁶

Derrida's task is not only to preserve the otherness of his dead friends but also to testify to the singularity of each and every one of them because each death is 'nothing less than an origin of the world, each time the sole world, the unique world, which, in its end, appears to us as it was at the origin - sole and unique [...]'¹⁹⁷. This task is indeed impossible to carry out as, according to Derrida's concept, the self is inhabited with his dead and eventually-to-be-dead loved others and therefore would find itself in the state of permanent mourning that has no resolution. Colin Davis suggests that such position is 'melancholic because any temporal process leading to recovery is blocked, the subject will never succeed in dissociating itself from the loss or losses by which it is afflicted and

¹⁹³ See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, p. 145.

¹⁹⁴ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 44.

¹⁹⁵ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 95.

¹⁹⁶ See Howells, *Mortal Subjects*, p. 192.

¹⁹⁷ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 95.

constituted'¹⁹⁸. Yet, whereas Freud's melancholia, which represents a pathological deviation from the normal process of mourning, can and must be healed with time, Derrida's melancholia is rather a refusal to terminate mourning and thus forget the other. Derrida's argument renders Freud's position ethically unacceptable:

But if I *must* (it's the very core of ethics) carry the other in myself to remain faithful to him, to respect his singular alterity, a certain melancholia must still protest against normal mourning. It must never be resigned to idealising introjection. It must be enraged against what Freud says about it with calm assurance, as if to confirm the norm of normality. The 'norm' is no more than the good conscience of amnesia. It allows us to *forget* that to keep the other within oneself, *as oneself*, is already to *forget* him. So there *must be* melancholia.¹⁹⁹

For Derrida, to internalise the other is to turn her otherness into the sameness of the self and thus to forget her which amounts to killing the already dead other again. Therefore, Derrida claims, melancholia for the other is our ethical responsibility to those we lose to death.

Finally, Derrida's philosophy of responsibility to the other extends to additional manifestations of alterity. These also include the yet unborn and those who are suspended between life and death or whom Derrida calls *spectres*. Hence, the Derridean ethical philosophy attempts to bring forth another discipline - Derrida names it 'hauntology' - that is to supersede ontology and find ethical solutions to optimise our relations with such less conventional forms of alterity. For Derrida, 'hauntology supplants its near-homonym ontology, replacing the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive'²⁰⁰:

Cela ne peut se passer, si cela reste à faire, apprendre à vivre, qu'entre vie et mort. Ni dans la vie ni dans la mort *seules*. Ce qui se passe entre deux, et entre tous les 'deux' qu'on voudra, comme entre vie et mort, cela ne peut que *s'entretenir* de quelque fantôme. Il faudrait alors apprendre les esprits. Même et surtout si cela, le spectral, *n'est pas*. Même et surtout si cela, ni substance ni essence ni existence, *n'est jamais présent comme tel*.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, p. 145.

¹⁹⁹ Derrida quoted in See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, pp. 147-8.

²⁰⁰ See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, p. 9.

²⁰¹ See Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1993), pp. 14-5.

Ultimately, Derrida's *deuil originaire* or philosophy of living in anxiety towards the death of the other and thus assuming the responsibility for and to the other *appears notionally and structurally analogous* to Heidegger's philosophy of living in anxiety towards one's own death. Except that the truth of Derrida's being in anxiety is measured by one's relations with the other while the authenticity of Heidegger's being in anxiety is dependent on one's relations with oneself. In the end, it appears that for Derrida the idea of the phantom gathers and represents various manifestations of otherness that come to 'haunt' the living only to show that life is not complete without them. Thus, according to Derrida, the dialogue with the other often initiated when in mourning must never stop or get disrupted: in this continuous conversation lies our moral duty to the other and thereby to ourselves:

Il faut parler *du* fantôme, voire *au* fantôme et *avec* lui, dès lors qu'aucune éthique, aucune politique, révolutionnaire ou non, ne paraît possible et pensable et *juste*, qui ne reconnaisse à son principe le respect pour ces autres qui ne sont plus ou pour ces autres qui ne sont pas encore *là*, *présentement vivants*, qu'ils soient déjà morts ou qu'ils ne soient pas encore nés.²⁰²

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Death cannot be learned, say Jankélévitch and Levinas in unison. Life cannot be learned either, adds Derrida. Indeed, it is impossible to learn death by dying; it is equally impossible to learn life by living. Yet, Jankélévitch notes that life informs us about death by extrapolating our interpretation and knowledge of life to our discourse on death, while Levinas observes that death teaches us life by presenting us with means and a meaning to live. Thus, we can learn to live, to *be*, through death and through understanding the role and significance of death in our life, but since there is no lived experience of death in our own being, we have to learn to live through what is the closest and most accessible notion

²⁰² See Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, p. 15.

of death to us, namely the death of the other. The hardships of learning from the death of the other, their emotional and intellectual effects on us, translate into new ways of recounting life and accounting for life as death features a constant warning with implacable certainty: One will die, one is dying and one may already be dead although still living. The three philosophers, Jankélévitch, Levinas and Derrida, concur that the task of learning life through death would be insurmountable and even unthinkable without the other, without the haunting presence of the other in our being. Derrida claims that the other as mortal raises the demand of responsibility because there is always a threat of violence or annihilation and that mortality is the precondition for any relationship to begin with. So, we need the other, we use the other and we benefit greatly from otherness. But do we reciprocate, do we give back *enough*, and could this *enough* be ever enough? Vladimir Jankélévitch remains sceptical about the ethicality of our intrusion into the domain of the other and considers the conventionalising of our discourse on alterity to be often disrespectful, betraying and even violent. Emmanuel Levinas, in turn, believes that ‘the radical alterity of the ethical relationship is only conceivable on the basis of the absolute separation between self and other’²⁰³ and that ethics is a ‘first philosophy’ that comes before and goes beyond ontology and that regards the other as immensely superior to us, be the other alive or dead. Jacques Derrida, however, argues with Levinas that the relation to the other cannot be ethical as such and that responsibility is always discriminating because the encounter between the two gets interrupted by the third, *le tiers*, who wants to be considered as well. Also, Derrida insists, we must learn to mourn, in anticipation, for every other as for a unique world that disappears with death and, moreover, we must learn to live better and justly but necessarily together with all forms of alterity and particularly with those suspended between life and death. Most importantly, the works of Jankélévitch, Levinas, and Derrida suggest that death cannot be incorporated by life and, similarly, the

²⁰³ See Simon Critchley, *Ethics-Politics-Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought* (London-New York: Verso, 1999), p. 264.

other cannot be assimilated by the self: it appears that for these three thinkers, in Critchley's words, 'the ethical is therefore the location of a point of alterity, or what Levinas also calls "exteriority" (*extériorité*), that cannot be reduced to the same'²⁰⁴. The philosophers thus encourage us to call into question our orthodox and formulaic beliefs about death and alterity and, by means of this questioning, help us realise the extra-dimensions and extra-significance to our being and our selves.

Finally, the philosophical theories and concepts discussed in this chapter provide us with a framework and analytical means to explore the themes of death and mourning in Proust's *Recherche* and Tarkovsky's films and guide our reading of the philosophy behind the aesthetic choices of these artists. For instance, Jankélévitch's classification of deaths will help us understand different attitudes that the main protagonists have towards death in various circumstances and at various points of time. Levinas's account of the ultimate other and the death of the other as the first death will bring out the ethical dimension to the narration of mourning in *La Recherche*, *Solaris* and *Mirror*. And, Derrida's notions of melancholia and hauntology as an ethical duty to the dead other will shed light on the particularity of mourning experiences depicted in these works. Hence, our reading of Proust and Tarkovsky from the perspective of the ethics discussed above will allow us to question psychoanalytic interpretations that view mourning as a healthy response of the ego to the loss of a loved object that terminates with the passing of time as the libido gets detached from the object and is directed to another. In psychoanalysis, if the detachment of the affect does not occur, it can be an instance of the pathological response to the death of a loved one – melancholia. In either case, for the self to come to terms with grief, the self must internalise/assimilate the other and thus eliminate it. The task of this thesis is to show the ethical side of Proust's and Tarkovsky's works that focuses on the importance of otherness and prioritises the other, that refuses to assimilate but seeks to preserve the other

²⁰⁴ See Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, p. 5.

and that proves the mourning experiences of their characters to be interminable, inconsolable, irreconcilable and often preceding the event of the factual death of a loved one.

II

THE ETHICS OF MOURNING IN THE NARRATION OF THE SELF:

MARCEL PROUST

In *Le Temps retrouvé*, the Proustian narrator claims that ‘le plagiat humain auquel il est le plus difficile d’échapper, pour les individus (et même pour les peuples qui persévèrent dans leurs fautes et vont les aggravant), c’est le plagiat de soi-même’ (IV, AD I: 19). Marcel is not referring to stealing others’ ideas or words and passing them off as the product of his own imagination and creative work without crediting their source. He speaks of believing in the uniqueness and originality of his feelings towards different people throughout his lifetime only to realise at some point that these feelings are common and derivative and that they develop and operate in identical fashion. In Marcel’s story, the repetitive pattern is prominent in his relationships with his loved ones: His infantile attachment to his mother, his adolescent closeness to his grandmother, his adult infatuations (with Gilberte, Mme de Guermantes and Albertine) and, finally, his mourning for his loved ones - they all begin, progress and fade away in the same manner. Marcel makes this observation when he realises that his mourning for Albertine is over, just as his mourning for his grandmother was over before. It is quite simple to understand, according to Marcel: ‘Un homme a presque toujours la même manière de s’enrhumer, de tomber malade, c’est-à-dire qu’il lui faut pour cela un certain concours de circonstances’ (IV, AD I: 84). Falling in love is then like catching a cold: in the beginning of every relationship, Marcel thinks that his new experience is unique and transfiguring but, alas, he discovers later that the object of his affection is numerous and replaceable while the way in which he loves remains the same. The analogy between a minor common illness (that cold is) and a strong constant affection (that love is usually thought to be) does not only disregard and challenge any differences between physiological processes and psychological states but also attributes such characteristics as transience, insignificance and inconsequentiality to

both. At the same time, both are unarguably natural and common experiences that recur intermittently. Furthermore, Marcel conjectures that what is needed to get sick, and by the same token to fall in love, is a certain concurrence of circumstances, which then denies him any agency or volition in these cases and ultimately proves him to be an involuntary recipient, almost a victim, of these experiences. Emmanuel Levinas would agree with Marcel that love is involuntary as it does occur unexpectedly, without reason, it invades and wounds but, in the end, everyone survives it.²⁰⁵ Likening falling in love to catching a cold may sound cynical or at least pragmatic to some, Marcel's comparison however does not undermine human emotions but rather brings human sensations to the fore in a way which does not come as a surprise to those familiar with his theory of involuntary memory that relies heavily on the recurrence of sensations. Also, this comparison captures best his idea of behavioural self-plagiarism and gives a definite clue to the understanding of his philosophy. Marcel for instance admits that he could have never imagined that the evening in Combray when he anxiously awaited his mother's goodnight kiss would repeat itself again and again, and that one day he would experience the same melancholy and longing but now for a young girl, Albertine: 'Oui, c'est le bonsoir, le baiser d'une telle étrangère pour lequel je devais, au bout de quelques années, souffrir autant qu'enfant quand ma mère ne devait pas venir me voir' (IV, AD I: 83).

The psychoanalytic reading of the Proustian narrator's relationships with the other attempts to explain the repetitive force of the themes of love and death that dominate Marcel's social life by focussing on his experiences of anxiety, loss and guilt. For instance, Melanie Klein finds that all object relations past early childhood mimic interactions of a child with an original object, that is with the mother's body, and the narrator in *La Recherche* thus re-experiences in a spectral or fantasm-like fashion his original anxieties, grief and guilt in his

²⁰⁵ See Emmanuel Levinas, *Le Temps et l'autre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979), p. 82.

subsequent adult relationships. Klein proposes that Marcel's relations with his loved ones are distinctively sadistic but his sadistic impulses emerge as a positive defence mechanism against the fears and anxieties that are associated with his mother. However, while they help Marcel quell his sorrows, they also destroy his loved object, the mother, and therefore result in guilt. Klein thus puts Marcel in an unending circular relationship where the fantasmatic loss of self because of a destructive other is followed by the loss of the other because of a destructive self. Angela Moorjani adds a layer of Abraham and Torok's cryptanalysis to her psychoanalytic interpretation of Proust's novel and claims that there is indeed the sadism underlying idealisation, and the idealisation underlying sadism in Marcel's cyclical relationships with his loved ones, and she blames it on the ghost of the earliest fantasies of loss that inhabits Marcel's inner crypt or, in Abraham and Torok's terms, his unconscious carrying of some ancestral transgenerational trauma. Leo Bersani argues that Marcel's guilt is produced by his individuality that is at odds with the personality that his grandmother and mother passed on to him and by the feeling that any deviation from this 'inherited' personality is a desacralisation of their memory²⁰⁶. In his later work *The Culture of Redemption*, Bersani suggests that the narrator's aim in others is their annihilation because he wishes to possess them fully, and the total possession of others, which is the prerequisite to his subjectivity, is possible only when they are lost or dead. In one of the recent studies of Proust's novel, Alessia Ricciardi gives preference to Lacan's psychoanalytic take on mourning in her reading of *La Recherche* and claims that the narrator's mourning certainly affects his aesthetics but bears no ethical implications for him or his loved ones.²⁰⁷ Finally, Anna Magdalena Elsner draws on the works of Freud and Derrida to develop her own theory that links mourning and creativity in *La Recherche*. She believes that 'the multifaceted quality of Freudian mourning' turns Freud into 'a fertile

²⁰⁶ See Leo Bersani, *Cahiers Marcel Proust 7. Études proustiennes II* (Éditions Gallimard, 1975), p. 47.

²⁰⁷ See Alessia Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Film* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

interlocutor for Proust²⁰⁸ and seeks to ‘rethink not only the significance of mourning for a variety of scenes in the *Recherche*, but equally how the ancient connection between melancholia and creativity, what psychoanalysis rephrases as sublimation, is reframed and given a new ethical significance in Proust’s novel’²⁰⁹.

In fact, Marcel’s story of loss and repetition in love lends itself equally well to a discussion in psychoanalytic terms and to a philosophical theorisation. Klein reads *La Recherche* as a story of the repetition compulsion set in motion by the narrator’s earliest experiences of trauma and grief that seek reparation and find redemption through his artistic endeavours later in life.²¹⁰ Moorjani employs the psychoanalytic theory of crypts based on the idea of the unconscious traumatic presence of dead loved ones in our psyche.²¹¹ She puts Marcel’s encrypted phantasms related to the earliest illusions of loss at the core of the fugitiveness and repetitiveness of experiences in his narrative that also give rise to partial resurrections of time and space. Bersani interprets Marcel’s story as a paradigm of serial and systematic annihilation and appropriation of others, in particular dead others, in the process of constructing his own subjectivity.²¹² Giving the problematic of *La Recherche* a philosophical angle, Martin Hägglund proposes that Marcel’s propensity for reiterating his experiences is due not to his ambition to self-propagate but to his desire to make his temporal and mortal affective life last forever.²¹³ Malcolm Bowie, in his turn, observes recurrence in *La Recherche* as a fixated quality of Proust’s narrative style: ‘[A] desolate pattern of recurrence, a sense of pre-ordained pain and dissatisfaction, governs the procession of its narrative episodes. All love affairs fail, and fail in the same way. All

²⁰⁸ See Anna Magdalena Elsner, *Mourning and Creativity in Proust* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 11.

²⁰⁹ See Elsner, *Mourning and Creativity*, p. 29.

²¹⁰ See Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921-45* (Vintage Classics, 1998).

²¹¹ Angela Moorjani, ‘A Cryptanalysis of Proust’s “Les Intermittences du coeur”’, *MLN* Vol. 105, No. 4, French Issue (Sep., 1990), 875-888.

²¹² See Leo Bersani, *The Culture of Redemption* (Harvard University Press, 1990).

²¹³ See Martin Hägglund, *Dying for Time: Proust, Woolf, Nabokov* (Harvard University Press, 2012).

journeys end in disappointment. All satisfactions are too little and too late. Death picks off the narrator's admired mentors one by one, rekindling and reinforcing his childhood feelings of abandonment'²¹⁴. However, Bowie discusses recurrence as the narrative syntax of *La Recherche* rather than the philosophy that underlies it.

This chapter aims to explore the narrator's self-plagiarism in his experiences of love and loss from the perspective of Gilles Deleuze's theory of difference and repetition that will give a new interpretation of Marcel's philosophy especially with regard to its ethics. The main argument of the proposed discussion is that Marcel's love relationships, which also comprise his relationships with his dead loved ones, may reflect or echo but cannot substitute for one another in their repetitive cycles because there is an experiential difference that renders each of them singular, remarkable, instantaneous and, even if it sounds paradoxical, universal and eternal.

²¹⁴ See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. xviii.

Marcel's Theory of Multiple Selves and The Recurrence of Psychological Death

For the narrator of *La Recherche*, his self is very complex; it is neither steady nor continuous. Instead, the narrator's self is multiple in the here and now because there are 'des séries différentes et parallèles du moi', and it is also constantly changing and becoming other over time so that it always gets to comprise numerous past and present selves that *j'étais alors* and multiple selves that *je suis* now. Joshua Landy describes Marcel's self as 'a complex geological structure of several superposed strata' where a triad of the main discordant synchronic elements such as will, sensibility and intellect, by changing their position of dominance within the self, impose a quality of inconsistency on it; moreover, by varying over time, the self undergoes diachronic alterations so radical and intense in nature that the self feels as if it suffers multiple deaths and rebirths throughout its lifetime.²¹⁵ So, Marcel's self is fragmented and dispersed in consciousness, without any unity or continuity, and yet with an allusion to some order and coherence because, even though the narrator admits that 'Je n'étais pas un seul homme', he still compares his multitude of various selves to a massive organised procession, 'le défilé d'une armée composite' (IV, AD I: 71). This suggests that despite all the drastic change and variance of many selves there is still something that underlies or connects them all.²¹⁶

In Marcel's narrative, his theory of multiple selves is corroborated by the history of his many psychological deaths that usually coincide with the imminent closures of his turbulent relationships. Marcel's self agonises and dies with every loss of love to give way to another self to be born and live until the next rupture: 'Nous-mêmes mourions en

²¹⁵ See Joshua Landy, *Philosophy as Fiction: Self, Deception, and Knowledge in Proust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 101-5.

²¹⁶ Bowie believes that 'the centralised and resolved self on which the novel ends may be seen not as a redemption but as one momentary geometry among many others'. See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 29.

épuisant toutes les souffrances' (IV, TR: 615), Marcel says, and he is 'maintes fois mort [...] depuis son enfance: mort à chaque rupture, à chaque séparation'²¹⁷. Marcel's numerous psychological deaths that predictably recur at every heartbreak eventually render the idea of death as a phenomenon decipherable and prosaic in his mind: A death of one of Marcel's selves is immediately neutralised by a birth of his other self. If, previously, the narrator was terrified by the idea of death, now he understands all the futility and foolishness of such fears. To illustrate, Marcel tells us that his thoughts of not being the person who loves Gilberte or Albertine used to terrify him because they meant that this self did no longer exist. However, he continues, 'à force de se renouveler, cette crainte s'était naturellement changée en un calme confiant' (IV, TR: 614). Indeed, the narrator admits in *Le Temps retrouvé*:

[D]epuis longtemps déjà le souvenir de l'amour m'aidait à ne pas craindre la mort. Car je comprenais que mourir n'était pas quelque chose de nouveau, mais qu'au contraire depuis mon enfance, j'étais déjà mort bien de fois. Pour prendre la période la moins ancienne, n'avais-je pas tenu à Albertine plus qu'à ma vie? Pouvais-je alors concevoir ma personne sans qu'y continuât mon amour pour elle? Or je ne l'aimais plus, j'étais, non plus l'être qui l'aimait, mais un être différent qui ne l'aimait pas, j'avais cessé de l'aimer quand j'étais devenu autre. Or je ne souffrais pas d'être devenu cet autre, de ne plus aimer Albertine [...]. (IV, TR: 615)

Marcel admits that he is no longer afraid to lose one of his past selves and no longer attached to his past selves as his new and completely other self has replaced them. Besides undermining in this way the solemn and tragic character of death, the idea of his successive deaths has made Marcel realise that death does not portend pain and suffering to his present self since his dead self is no longer there to have any relation to it. Death becomes indifferent and unthreatening to the narrator:

Ces morts successives, si redoutées du moi qu'elles devaient anéantir, si indifférentes, si douces une fois accomplies, et quand celui qui les craignait n'était plus là pour les sentir, m'avaient fait depuis quelque temps comprendre comment il serait peu sage de m'effrayer de la mort. (IV, TR: 615)

²¹⁷ See Julia Kristeva, *Le Temps sensible: Proust et l'expérience littéraire* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), p. 301.

The narrator of *La Recherche* appears if not to equate psychological death and biological death, then at least to attempt to transfer his experiences of the former to the latter and thus render the idea of his impending natural death more acceptable. According to Marcel's theorisations on his multiple psychological deaths, both kinds of death share a few common characteristics: the time and place of death remains unknown in either case, and the self is no longer there to feel death when it happens. However, if we consider Jankélévitch's tripartite classification of deaths that can be encountered in life, Marcel's psychological death of the self is by definition closer to what Jankélévitch calls a biological *death in the second person* than to an actual demise of the self or, in Jankélévitch's words, *death in the first person*. Indeed, Marcel mourns for the death of his self that was dependent on his beloved grandmother or grieves for his other self that suffered so much because of Albertine in the way that betrays Jankélévitch's *voisinage sans identification* - these are the deaths of his selves at various points of the narrator's life without being the death of his self in the proper sense. These psychological deaths allow Marcel to empathise with his past selves and philosophise about death as a notion. In Marcel's case, a psychological death puts an end to an emotionally charged period of his life.

Even though the repetitive character of Marcel's loves and losses in his mind frees his psychological lives and deaths of mystery and tragedy and make them appear identical, the recurrence of experiences here can be rather defined in quantitative terms than equated in terms of their quality. Jankélévitch argues that, in addition to nostalgia and regret that the passing of time often entails, the irreversibility of time contributes to the sense of the irrevocability of experiences in life and may consequently lead to feeling guilt and remorse.²¹⁸ This appears to be the case with Marcel's involuntary memory of his late grandmother that leaves him consumed with the thoughts of utter culpability and

²¹⁸ See Vladimir Jankélévitch, *L'Irréversible et la nostalgie* (Flammarion, 1974).

impossible reconciliation. Jankélévitch pinpoints the same idea of repetition in life by referencing the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The biblical story reads as an allegory of the circular return to the same, however, the ending of the story does not exactly re-establish the status quo of its beginning, Jankélévitch argues, because of what happens in between. Deleuze would call this instance of the irremediable aspect of an experience *difference* that reveals itself in repetition. For Deleuze then, Marcel's claims that his various affections follow the same course are not unexpected or unusual, instead they are rather symptomatic of repetition and difference that underlie all love relationships because it is the heart (le coeur), contrary to the mind (la tête), that is the amorous organ of repetition.²¹⁹ Moreover, for Deleuze, love can be experienced only through repetition and thus must be repeated while death and the awareness of mortality perpetuate this very process of repetition:

Eros et Thanatos se distinguent en ceci qu'Eros doit être répété, ne peut être vécu que dans la répétition, mais que Thanatos (comme principe transcendantal) est ce qui donne la répétition à Eros, ce qui soumet Eros à la répétition.²²⁰

Memory and Repetition

Deleuze's philosophy of repetition posits that in order for something to be repeated it first has to be fully forgotten or, so to speak, lost to oblivion. Since repetition, for Deleuze, ultimately represents progress and acts as an agent of both the past and the future, forgetting becomes an essential and necessary force that promotes positivity and hope. Deleuze refutes the idea that repetition is founded on habit and memory. Habit and memory, Deleuze argues, feature generality, ordinariness and permanence that are antagonistic to what repetition stands for and thus cannot afford any access to the past-in-itself, *le passé-en-soi*, that backgrounds the cycle of repetition. Deleuze proposes that reminiscence can link more recent love experiences with infantile affections, lovers with

²¹⁹ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 8.

²²⁰ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 29.

mothers and go beyond them to some sort of virginal representation of love that is at the same time coexistent with the lover and contemporary of the mother.²²¹ For Deleuze, any reminiscence is related to eroticism, and Eros is what gives access to the past-in-itself within repetition that would be forever forgotten otherwise.²²²

In addition to the narrator's self-plagiarism in love that fits with Deleuze's philosophy, Marcel's notion of the intermittences of the heart and his theory of involuntary memory also correspond with Deleuze's canons of repetition and difference. Marcel's intermittences, for instance, are rather on-and-off and recurrent than continual and periodic, and they appear to be governed by the same Deleuzian principles of love and death (Eros and Thanatos) as Marcel intuitively perceives a strong affective nature to them. The narrator of *La Recherche* suggests that our selves are intermittent as they are susceptible to repetitive psychological deaths while the intermittences of the heart allow us for some partial and temporary recurrence of what has died as they isolate and recapture forgotten sensations.²²³ When such recurrence happens, the repeated sensations pervade us, in Marcel's words, 'de la même façon qu'opère l'amour' and fill us with 'une essence précieuse' so that this essence is not in us, but it is us (I, DCS I, I: 44). Later in the novel, the narrator formulates his theory of two distinct kinds of memory, involuntary and voluntary, that serve two different functions. Whereas involuntary memory, based on intermittent sensations, occurs by pure chance and looks for intangibles that could possibly connect the selves that are dispersed in space and detached by the passing of time; voluntary memory, triggered by intellect, can only reach the so-called biographical self, or a fictionalised image of the self. It seems that involuntary memory tends to evoke the self

²²¹ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 115.

²²² See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 115.

²²³ Walter Benjamin comments on this interesting aspect of Proust's involuntary memory: 'Or should one call it, rather, a Penelope work of forgetting? Is not the involuntary recollection, Proust's *mémoire involontaire*, much closer to forgetting than what is usually called memory?' See Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), p. 198.

while voluntary memory attempts to explain it. Merleau-Ponty comments on this differentiation in the Proustian notion of memory in relation to the distinct ways in which voluntary and involuntary memory recover the past and justly points out the communicative, or what can also be called ideological, power of the first type of memory. Indeed, voluntary memory dependent on our intellectual abilities helps us construct our stories based on ideas about the past that we produce in our mind:

Tout souvenir rouvre le temps perdu et nous invite à reprendre la situation qu'il évoque. La mémoire intellectuelle, au sens de Proust, se contente d'un signalement du passé, d'un passé en idée, elle en extrait les 'caractères' ou la signification communicable plutôt qu'elle n'en retrouve la structure, mais enfin elle ne serait pas mémoire si l'objet qu'elle construit ne tenait encore par quelques fils intentionnels à l'horizon du passé vécu et à ce passé même tel que nous le retrouverions en nous enfonçant dans ces horizons et en rouvrant le temps.²²⁴

Marcel's voluntary memory appears close to what Deleuze puts together in the combination of habit and memory and that he describes as inimical to repetition. Voluntary memory can produce the Deleuzean *image-souvenir* by means of active synthesis:

Mais à partir de l'impression qualitative de l'imagination, la mémoire reconstitue les cas particuliers comme distincts, les conservant dans l'espace de temps qui lui est propre. Le passé n'est plus alors le passé immédiat de la rétention, mais le passé réflexif de la représentation, la particularité réfléchie et reproduite.²²⁵

Voluntary memory, however imaginative or intellectual it may be, is not capable of fully recreating the past that it invokes; *le passé-en-soi* remains inaccessible for the narrator.

Involuntary memory, on the contrary, is similar to the Deleuzean notion of reminiscence or what he also refers to as *le souvenir pur* created by means of passive synthesis, which excludes any intellectual intervention on our part:

Tout le passé se conserve en soi, mais comment le sauver pour nous, comment pénétrer dans cet en-soi sans le réduire à l'ancien présent qu'il a été, ou à l'actuel présent par rapport auquel il est passé. Comment le sauver *pour nous*? C'est à peu près le point où Proust reprend, relaie Bergson. Or il semble que la réponse a été donnée depuis très longtemps: reminiscence. Celle-ci désigne en effet une synthèse passive ou

²²⁴ See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1976), p. 115.

²²⁵ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 98.

une mémoire involontaire, qui diffère en nature de toute synthèse active de la mémoire volontaire.²²⁶

For Deleuze, Proust's notion of involuntary memory provides us with the positive answer to the question of the accessibility and penetrability of the past-in-itself and, by extension, of understanding what non-chronological time is. According to Deleuze, involuntary memory, in contrast to voluntary memory, illustrates best the idea of *memory* that we do not possess and that does not inhabit us; instead, involuntary memory demonstrates that we live and change within some universal memory that precedes and succeeds us and is much greater than us:

La mémoire n'est pas en nous, c'est nous qui nous mouvons dans une mémoire-Être, dans une mémoire-monde. Bref, le passé apparaît comme la forme la plus générale d'un déjà-là, d'une préexistence en général, que nos souvenirs supposent, même notre premier souvenir s'il y en avait un, et que nos perceptions, même la première, utilisent. De ce point de vue, le présent lui-même n'existe que comme un passé infiniment contracté qui se constitue à l'extrême pointe du déjà-là.²²⁷

In addition to the underlying affective theme that recurs in involuntary evocations and thus evinces the Deleuzean argument about the inherent eroticism of repetition, involuntary memory also amplifies experiential differences within time that cannot be sublated. There is indeed a strong affective dimension to all Marcel's involuntary memories²²⁸. In fact, the defining moments in his narrative are described as powerful affective states: 'cette

²²⁶ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 115.

²²⁷ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, pp. 129-30.

²²⁸ The research by Luckhurst and Wimmers is among the recent affective and cognitive accounts of *La Recherche*. Luckhurst explores how cognition and the scientific view of the world reveal the affective connections of the narrator's self and thus yield the sententious mode of the Proustian 'je'. According to Luckhurst, what happens is '[F]rom these cognitive themata, in Proust's shorthand, "puissantes intuitions", "mort", "principe de renouvellement", "vérité", grows a new hybrid form – a novel of non-linearity, which repeats and regenerates itself, performing taxonomic and moralistic variations, retelling old stories and revisiting and uncovering new maxims, a text which is at once encyclopaedia and commonplace book, *science et méthode*'. See Nicola Luckhurst, *Science and Structure in Proust's A la recherche du temps perdu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 244. Wimmers, on the other hand, focuses her research on the representation of emotions in the novel and how they shape our reading and response to the inner life of its principal character Marcel. See Inge Crosman Wimmers, *Proust and Emotion. The Importance of Affect in A la recherche du temps perdu* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

puissante joie' (the episode with the madeleine), 'ce désir de vivre qui renaît en nous chaque fois que nous prenons de nouveau conscience de la beauté et du bonheur' (meeting the young milkmaid), 'ce prolongement, cette multiplication possible de soi-même, qui est le bonheur' (the desire that Marcel feels when observing *les jeunes filles en fleurs*), and 'la félicité, l'énigme du bonheur' (the experience with the cobblestones of Guermantes' courtyard). These recurrent moments of bliss and happiness result in the narrator feeling some deliverance from his present worries and anxieties. In the episode with the madeleine, for instance, Marcel comments on his state: 'Il [a delicious pleasure produced by the pastry] m'avait aussitôt rendu les vicissitudes de la vie indifférentes, ses désastres inoffensifs, sa brièveté illusoire'. He adds: 'J'avais cessé de me sentir médiocre, contingent, mortel' (I, DCS I, I: 44). Or the narrator's experience with the cobblestones dissipates 'toute inquiétude sur l'avenir, toute doute intellectuel', and he feels as 'les difficultés, insolubles tout à l'heure, avaient perdu toute importance' (IV, TR: 445).

Apparently, Marcel does not relive the exact same emotions and sensations as in the past but rather comes to experience affective changes in his present self.²²⁹ Martin Hägglund suggests that affective differences in Marcel's repeated experiences are due to 'a constitutive temporal difference at the heart of the self' that cannot be annihilated or transcended even by involuntary memory.²³⁰ Involuntary memory produces an affective experience associated with an event that happened to the past self in the present self, it

²²⁹ Rosa Slegers offers her interpretation of the narrator's affective metamorphoses as a result of involuntary evocations. According to Slegers, the past is not relived in these experiences but regained in what she refers to as 'felt knowledge': 'what was known already on a factual, intellectual, level, is now *felt* as well, thus making the knowledge of the situation gain in depth and significance'. See Rosa Slegers, *Courageous Vulnerability: Ethics and Knowledge in Proust, Bergson, Marcel, and James* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), p. 44. Leo Bersani, on the contrary, believes that Marcel's senses don't create anything new there and that whenever Marcel experiences involuntary memory, 'Marcel semble vivre "entre" le présent et le passé, ou plus exactement, dans la ressemblance entre les deux – une ressemblance qui est à vrai dire une abstraction de l'expérience concrète, mais qui est vécue de manière fugace par les sens. Or ces sens ne créent rien'. See Bersani, *Cahiers*, p. 51.

²³⁰ See Martin Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 23.

however does not precisely resurrect the past self or his experiences. Instead, to recapitulate Deleuze, involuntary memory brings back to life what is lost to oblivion or what has never been consciously lived, or as Benjamin metaphorically puts it: 'For here the day unravels what the night was woven. When we awake each morning, we hold in our hands, usually weakly and loosely, but a few fringes of the tapestry of lived life, as loomed for us by forgetting'²³¹. Often, the temporal distance between the intellectual experience of an event and the affect of the same event brings out a difference between the original event and its repetition. This phenomenon is best exemplified by the narrator's confession with regard to the death of his grandmother. The involuntary memory of his beloved grandmother that the narrator experiences in Balbec a year after her death makes him realise how disparate time and affect are in his consciousness. 'Je venais d'apprendre qu'elle était morte', Marcel admits to himself heavy-heartedly, 'Plus d'une année après son enterrement, à cause de cet anachronisme qui empêche si souvent le calendrier des faits de coïncider avec celui des sentiments' (III, SG II, I: 153). Involuntary memory in this case shows all the complexity behind the notion of time and the present in particular because, just as Deleuze suggests, it makes the actual present act like the ancient present in addition to simply standing for itself.²³² Thus, the narrator's involuntary memory evocations, like Deleuze's *souvenir pur*, can be said to produce the situation of *l'internel* where time is neither obliterated nor resurrected but experienced in a multidimensional fashion through coexistence and contemporaneity. We can extrapolate from this, in line with Proust's theory of involuntary memory, that the actual present together with the ancient present that it re-presents also carries within itself the anticipation of the future present that is bound to come about due to the very law of repetition.²³³

²³¹ See Benjamin, *Illuminations. The Image of Proust*, p. 198.

²³² See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 109.

²³³ Bowie observes the same idea at the level of the syntactical organisation in the novel: 'There is no need to wait for the future, for the future is already here', and 'Past, present and future are intricately conjoined within sentences, and reconnected still more intricately

According to Deleuze, it is thanks to involuntary reminiscences of experiences that were never lived in actuality that ‘nous restons contemporains de l’enfant que nous avons été’²³⁴. It explains Marcel’s insistence on the fragmentation of his self: The narrator of *La Recherche* feels as though his multiple selves are dispersed in time because he experiences time not rationally, or historically, in the sense of a linear succession of events but emotionally, or a-historically, as a constant superimposition of experiences in his life. The narrator appears to share Deleuze’s conviction that we experience the affect in time first, and only then the affect enables us to experience time itself. Therefore, Deleuze’s claim that subjectivity is never ours explains the extreme fluidity of the narrator’s self:

Subjectivity is never ours, it is time, that is, the soul or the spirit, the virtual. The actual is always objective, but the virtual is subjective: it was initially the affect, that which we experience in time; then time itself, pure virtuality which divides itself in two as affecter and affected, ‘the affection of self by self’ as definition of time.²³⁵

The Bedtime Drama and Repetition

The childhood wish of the narrator in *La Recherche* to keep his mother by his bedside at night gets imprinted on his memory in the way that he always recollects his room in Combray as seen at the same hour, ‘comme s’il n’y avait jamais été que sept heures du soir’ (I, DCS I, I: 43). Gaston Bachelard would say that such thrills of a day, an hour, and an instant unfold and take root in memory like ‘la récompense d’un refus préalable de vivre autre chose que ce qu’on désire’²³⁶. Marcel admits: ‘Il y avait déjà bien des années que, de Combray, tout ce qui n’était pas le théâtre et le drame de mon coucher n’existait plus pour moi’ (I, DCS I, I: 44). In like manner, things that constituted at that time the

during extended narrative sequences’. See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 58 and p. 65, respectively.

²³⁴ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 121.

²³⁵ See Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p. 80.

²³⁶ See Gaston Bachelard, *La Dialectique de la durée* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), p. 48.

stage where the drama of the narrator's life played out do not exist any longer; in him too, things that he believed would last forever are destroyed, and new things now give birth to new pains and joys that he could have not foreseen and replace the old ones that have already become difficult for him to feel and understand (I, DCS I, I: 36). Marcel's insistence on the fragmentation, inconstancy and extreme sensitivity of his self, his discovery of the intermittences of the heart and his radical preference for involuntary memory tell the story of the narrator's many selves rendered heteroclit and detached by the flight of time and related to one another solely by sets of various circumstances that however originate in his childhood and then recur for the rest of his life.

The narrator's memory of the bedtime drama illustrates the idea of 'le souvenir des événements qui nous ont créés aux instants décisifs'²³⁷ because Marcel believes that he has modelled all his adult relationships on the relational pattern created on the night when his mother conceded to his emotional demands. Importantly, this night is the first time when Marcel's nervous condition is 'officially' accepted by his family and understood as an involuntary psychological issue rather than a whim of a spoiled child. Marcel recollects:

Ma tristesse n'était plus considérée comme une faute punissable mais comme un mal involontaire [...], comme un état nerveux dont je n'étais pas responsable; j'avais le soulagement de n'avoir plus à mêler de scrupules à l'amertume de mes larmes, je pouvais pleurer sans péché. (I, DCS I, I: 38-9)

This childhood episode thus normalises Marcel's sensitivity, increases his vulnerability and, in this way, exposes him to the stubborn repetition of the same relational patterns in his future.

We can distinguish three crucial aspects of the relational pattern that applies to Marcel's matters of the heart. The first aspect is associated with the anticipation of an event, which is the moment of Marcel's mother's goodnight kiss in this case. The kiss represents an event that is anxiously awaited by the child and gets emotionally marked

²³⁷ See Bachelard, *La Dialectique de la durée*, p. 34.

afterwards because, in Bachelard's words, 'rien ne se passe comme on l'avait prévu; l'événement vient donc à la fois satisfaire et décevoir notre attente'²³⁸. A highly sensitive child, Marcel suffers from bouts of inexplicable sadness and anxiety that are especially acute in the nighttime before he goes to bed. Then, he recalls, his mother's goodnight kiss becomes his only consolation as it brings peace to his mind, uneasy and distraught over an unknown, yet impending and inevitable, ill. Marcel understands that the moment of the kiss, essential to him at this point of life, is so brief and fleeting that it is impossible to grasp. And he therefore tries to obtain his mother's kiss, capture it with all his senses and make its magical properties last for as long as they can. Although it is an unfeasible enterprise to transport the kiss, so precious and fragile, 'sans que se brisât sa douceur, sans que se répandit et s'évaporât sa vertu volatile' (I, DCS I, I: 23) from the dining room to his bedroom, the child attempts all necessary preparations in order to make it happen and seize the moment while still savouring the anticipation:

Aussi je me promettais, dans la salle à manger, pendant qu'on commencerait à dîner et que je sentirais approcher l'heure, de faire d'avance de ce baiser qui serait si court et furtif, tout ce que j'en pouvais faire seul, de choisir avec mon regard la place de la joue que j'embrasserais, de préparer ma pensée pour pouvoir grâce à ce commencement mental de baiser consacrer toute la minute que m'accorderait maman à sentir sa joue contre mes lèvres, comme un peintre qui ne peut obtenir que de courtes séances de pose, prépare sa palette, et a fait d'avance de souvenir, d'après ses notes, tout ce pour quoi il pouvais à la rigueur se passer de présence du modèle. (I, DCS I, I: 27)

But this time, the child's efforts are offset by, in Marcel's words, his father's unconscious ferocity to send him to bed before he has a chance to execute his preparations. So, for this reason too, Marcel begins to prefer the anticipation of the moment to the moment itself. Indeed, even though this anticipation of the momentary affection and intimacy between him and his mother is filled with terrible anxiety - first of all, a separation anxiety from the loved one that is already in place to begin with; second, an anxiety over the uncertainty of what the future brings (whether his wish will be fulfilled or not); and, third, even if his

²³⁸ See Bachelard, *La Dialectique de la durée*, p. 47.

wish is fulfilled and the goodnight kiss is granted, it will still be followed by another separation and more suffering in solitude - for Marcel, the pains and fears of this longing for the kiss outweigh the moment of the kiss itself because the latter is always overshadowed by the unbearable agony of separation that succeeds it:

Mais ce bonsoir durait si peu de temps, elle redescendait si vite, que le moment où je l'entendais monter, puis où passait dans le couloir à double porte le bruit léger de sa robe de jardin en mousseline bleue, à laquelle pendaient de petits cordons de paille tressée, était pour moi un moment douloureux. Il annonçait celui qui allait le suivre, où elle m'aurait quitté, où elle serait redescendue. De sorte que ce bonsoir que j'aimais tant, j'en arrivais à souhaiter qu'il vint le plus tard possible, à ce que se prolongeât le temps de répit où maman n'était pas encore venue. (I, DCS I, I: 13)

Therefore, Marcel prefers the anticipation of the moment to the moment itself because the brief and illusory possession of his mother prefaces separation, estrangement, and loss. Marcel wants separation and loss to remain removed in the future even though it means that the goodnight kiss is also pushed away in time. It appears that, hit with the realisation of the finite nature of his experiences, Marcel learns to anticipate sorrow. To paraphrase Derrida, the narrator's drama here consists not in the loss of what he loves but in the sentiment that such loss can no longer be possible.²³⁹

The second aspect of the pattern revealed by the bedtime drama is related to anticipatory mourning in the sense put forward by Derrida. This particular night, when his mother succumbs to Marcel's desire and stays in his room to console him, marks 'une triste date' in Marcel's consciousness. He says:

J'aurais dû être heureux: je ne l'étais pas. Il me semblait que ma mère venait de me faire une première concession qui devait lui être douloureuse, que c'était une première abdication de sa part devant l'idéal qu'elle avait conçu pour moi, et que pour la première fois elle, si courageuse, s'avouait vaincue. (I, DCS I, I: 38)

The boy suddenly understands how much suffering, physical and emotional, he inflicts on his beloved mother, and he regrets it: 'Si j'avais osé maintenant, j'aurais dit à maman:

"Non je ne veux pas, ne couche pas ici"' (I, DCS I, I: 38). Marcel likens the effects of his

²³⁹ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 27.

behaviour on his mother to those of illness, chagrin, or ageing and apprehends his mother being unhappier and getting older because of him. He believes himself to be cruel and sacrilegious: 'Il me semblait que je venais d'une main impie et secrète de tracer dans son âme une première ride et d'y faire apparaître un premier cheveu blanc' (I, DCS I, I: 38), and Marcel's young heart begins to grieve at the sudden realisation of his mother's mortality:

Cette pensée redoubla mes sanglots et alors je vis maman, qui jamais ne se laissait aller à aucun attendrissement avec moi, être tout d'un coup gagnée par le mien et essayer de retenir une envie de pleurer. (I, DCS I, I: 38)

Marcel's feelings resemble Derridean anticipatory mourning as they conflate anxiety, apprehension and grief associated with the foreboding of someone else's death. Marcel's thoughts about his mother's possible death which is in his anxious mind precipitated by the troubles and sorrows he himself causes reflect Proust's own belief that we all are guilty of the premature death of our mothers by the cares we heap on them:

'Qu'as-tu fait de moi! qu'as tu fait de moi!' Si nous voulions y penser, il n'y a peut-être pas une mère vraiment aimante qui ne pourrait, à son dernier jour, souvent bien avant, adresser ce reproche à son fils. Au fond, nous vieillissons, nous tuons tout ce qui nous aime par les soucis que nous lui donnons, par l'inquiète tendresse elle-même que nous inspirons et mettons sans cesse en alarme. Si nous savions voir dans un corps chéri le lent travail de destruction poursuivi par la douloureuse tendresse qui l'anime, voir les yeux flétris, les cheveux longtemps restés indomptablement noirs, ensuite vaincus comme le reste et blanchissants, les artères durcies, les reins bouchés, le cœur forcé, vaincu le courage devant la vie, la marche alentie, alourdie, l'esprit qui sait qu'il n'a plus à espérer, alors qu'il rebondissait si inlassablement en invincibles espérances, la gaieté même, la gaieté innée et semblait-il immortelle, qui faisait si aimable compagnie avec la tristesse, à jamais tarie [...].²⁴⁰

Thirdly, as his story unfolds, the narrator admits to experiencing the same mix of anxiety, regret and guilt after the death of his grandmother and later after the fatal accident with his lover Albertine. In his mourning for Albertine, for instance, Marcel often gets

²⁴⁰ Marcel Proust, 'Sentiments filiaux d'un parricide' in: See Marcel Proust, *Pastiches et mélanges* (Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1921 (7e éd.), pp. 211-224 [Online]. Available from: http://www.ebooks-bnr.com/ebooks/pdf4/proust_pastiches_et_melanges.pdf

overwhelmed with pity towards her, and he then feels ashamed of surviving her, stricken by the idea that he somehow benefited from Albertine's death. Indeed, Marcel retrospects that his possessiveness and jealousy of Albertine might have been the cause of their conflicts, led to her departure and thereby precipitated her death. He blames himself for making Albertine's life with him insufferable and believes that only his pity can now match the extent of her pain then:

[Q]uand nous croyons seulement recréer les douleurs d'un être cher, notre pitié les exagère; mais peut-être est-ce elle qui est dans le vrai, plus que la conscience qu'ont de ces douleurs ceux qui les souffrent, et auxquels est cachée cette tristesse de leur vie, que la pitié, elle, voit, dont elle se désespère. (III, SG II, I: 171-2)

Again, just like in his infantile relationship with his mother, Marcel believes that his love makes his close ones suffer because, in its selfishness, it completely disregards the other's vulnerability. Only the acute realisation of the other's mortality, which can occur before (as in the bedtime drama) or after the death of the loved other (which is the case with his grandmother and Albertine) sensitises Marcel to the other and then makes him feel regret and guilt. The child's presentiment of a parricide which is brought about by the anticipatory mourning for his mother thus develops into the profound remorse of a premeditating murderer after the actual deaths of his grandmother and his lover. This is how Marcel finds himself guilty of having committed a so-called double assassination, of his grandmother and Albertine:

Dans ces moments-là, rapprochant la mort de ma grand-mère et celle d'Albertine, il me semblait que ma vie était souillée d'un double assassinat que seule la lâcheté du monde pouvait me pardonner. (IV, AD I: 78)

Thus, the plagiarism of the self that the narrator regrets in *Le Temps retrouvé* stems from his memory of the bedtime episode. Indeed, this childhood bedtime scene with its anxieties, longings, cruelties and mournful regrets appears to set the tone for all Marcel's future attachments and relationships. The psychoanalytic interpretation of this childhood episode is precisely that: the relationship of the child with the (m)other becomes the

epitome for all close/intimate relationships with the other in adult life (Klein, Moorjani).²⁴¹ However, in Deleuze's view, it is a mistake to think of Marcel's infantile relationship with his mother as the prototype of his adult relationships because such a prototype is impossible in love. According to Deleuze, in his anxious need of his mother's affection, Marcel re-enacts Swann's passion for Odette, Swann and Odette replay the story of other lovers before them, and so on.²⁴² In the following citation, Deleuze paraphrases Saint Augustine to explicate the notions of coexistence and contemporaneity that characterise the Deleuzian philosophy of time and that incidentally shed light on the significance of Marcel's retelling of his childhood bedtime drama:

D'après la belle formule de Saint Augustin, il y a *un présent du futur, un présent du présent, un présent du passé*, tous impliqués dans l'événement, enroulés dans l'événement, donc simultanés, inexplicables. De l'affect au temps: on découvre un temps intérieur à l'événement, qui est fait de la simultanéité de ces trois présents impliqués, de ces *pointes de présent* désactualisées.²⁴³

Deleuze seems to suggest that Saint Augustine's formula of the past, the present and the future simultaneously implicated in any experience can be illuminative of Marcel's story. For instance, if the bedtime drama is in Marcel's present, it simultaneously holds within itself the past of the likes of Swann and Odette and intimates the future of Marcel and Albertine.²⁴⁴ Indeed, Marcel has a clear preference for the superimposition of his experiences rather than their orderly succession in his narration. Marcel lets his story be constructed *in memory* instead of using his (voluntary) memory to construct his story. As a result, his story reads as if it is his childhood, his adolescence, and his adulthood at the same time. In this light, the narrator's apparent disillusionment with his plagiarism of

²⁴¹ For Bowie, 'Proust echoes Freud's account of child's wish to know about sex as the prototypical form of all later intellectual endeavour'. See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 44.

²⁴² See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 28.

²⁴³ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 132.

²⁴⁴ Similarly, Bowie notes: 'Odette as Miss Sacripant prefigures Albertine, just as Swann in the guise of jealous lover prefigures the adult narrator'. See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 58.

himself in the matters of love appears shortsighted. Deleuze explains this phenomenon with a reference to Bergsonism:

Bien sûr, ces régions (mon enfance, mon adolescence, ma maturité, etc.) ont l'air de se succéder. Mais elles ne se succèdent que du point de vue des anciens présents qui marquèrent la limite de chacune. Elles coexistent au contraire du point de vue de l'actuel présent qui représente chaque fois leur limite commune ou la plus contractée d'entre elles. Ce que dit Fellini est bergsonien: 'nous sommes construits en mémoire, nous sommes *à la fois* l'enfance, l'adolescence, la vieillesse et la maturité'.²⁴⁵

Finally, what Marcel might have learned from his bedtime drama and kept on unintentionally implementing in his further relational experiences is that: first, his desire of the other would always be bound with anxiety and melancholy; second, the satisfaction of this desire is fleeting and treacherous as it does not procure relief but more distress; and, last but not least, his desires are inherently selfish and cruel because what brings joy to him, brings pain to the other. Therefore, every time his wish comes true, it comes with regret and guilt.²⁴⁶

Repetition in Mourning

La mort de Swann! Swann ne joue pas dans cette phrase le rôle d'un simple génitif. J'entends par là la mort particulière, la mort envoyée par le destin au service de Swann. Car nous disons la mort pour simplifier, mais il y en a presque autant que de personnes. (III, P: 703)

Marcel's assertion that there are almost as many deaths as persons, in contrast to his acquired detached attitude towards the repetitiveness of psychological death, shows his

²⁴⁵ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 130.

²⁴⁶ Elsner gives a psychoanalytic reading of the bedtime scene and concludes: 'The *drame du coucher* constitutes a primal scene of mourning that anticipates subsequent scenes of mourning as well as the very end of the *Recherche*'. See Elsner, *Mourning and Creativity*, p. 29. Bowie observes that, on the plane of Proust's narrative strategy, such episodes as the bedtime drama function as literary templates: 'Templates are being created, and futures foretold, throughout the first two volumes of the novel. The scene of voyeurism at Montjouvain, the episode of the withheld goodnight kiss, the first ecstatic experience of involuntary memory'. See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 57.

refusal to banalise the phenomenon of death when it concerns the other in his life.

Certainly, the other here implies someone dear and close, otherwise the death of another would not be special and the other in this phrase would play ‘le rôle d’un simple génitif’. Marcel therefore distinguishes between the notion of death that is used to simplify and generalise and a particular death that is sent to somebody that one loves. This outlook on the death of the other (or the first other, in Jankelevitch’s terms) echoes the Derridean belief that every death is unique and meaningful as, in each and every case, it stands for an end of the whole world in itself: ‘The sole world, the unique world, which, in its end, appears to us as it was at the origin – sole and unique – and shows us what it owes to the origin, that is to say, what it will have been, beyond every future anterior’²⁴⁷. When in grief for Albertine, Marcel reflects: ‘L’idée qu’on mourra est plus cruelle que mourir, mais moins que l’idée qu’un autre est mort’ (IV, AD I: 90). There is a clear shift in the narrator’s consciousness from toying with the idea of psychological death, be it his own or someone else’s (we recollect Marcel’s talk of multiple Albertines that were similarly susceptible to the recurrence of psychological death), to taking biological death seriously. Paired with his guilt of unintentional parricide and of the assassination of his grandmother and his lover, Marcel’s sudden apprehension of mortality does not come from his meditations on psychological death or his own finitude but lies in the stark realisation that, in Levinas’s words²⁴⁸, death, source of all myths, is *present* only in the other.

There are two significant encounters of the narrator with actual death that find their reflection in the story - the death of his grandmother and the death of Albertine - and both of them are instances of death in the second person according to Jankelevitch’s classification which implies the loss of someone close and entails intense mourning and philosophical rumination. Interestingly, in spite of the consequential magnitude - foremost

²⁴⁷ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 95.

²⁴⁸ See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et Infini* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), p. 153-4.

psychological - of either of these deaths in Marcel's life, there are no traditional observances for the dead or funerals in his narrative, the performance of any customary formalities associated with the passing of someone close to the narrator is omitted. According to Alessia Ricciardi, Walter Benjamin notes this peculiarity in the Proustian narrative and reads it as a sign of non-reconciliation between the individual past/memory and the collective past/memory due to the experience of an event (the death of the grandmother or Albertine's death in Marcel's case) being still alive in the narrator's consciousness.²⁴⁹ Ricciardi however blames 'Proust's distrust of voluntary memory' for the absence of a ceremony or ritual that would accomplish the unification of the individual and collective memory in the story. Moreover, Ricciardi senses Proust's disdain for any such event and comments sarcastically: 'Sincere and dignified grief is not to be sullied by the banality of social custom, by the rigidity of devoting a prescribed period to commemoration. Time, the artist, must always have the last word'²⁵⁰. Indeed, the narrator's silence on the subject of any funereal routine is telling: it does not necessarily mean Marcel's refusal to take part in social rituals but it rather shows how little importance he gives to them. Perhaps, in his mind, such practices held for the dead do not offer any real closure to the living, as they do not put to rest any private psychological experiences with the dead that continue to agitate those who lost their loved ones. The most perspicuous argument for the latter position would be Marcel's realisation that his grandmother is dead that overwhelms him a year after her burial. The realisation comes to the narrator in the guise of involuntary memory and thus highlights his preference for utterly private experience, it is not however intended to condemn or shun any public display and acceptance of grief as Ricciardi suggests but rather to look for the purest and possibly most singular form of recollection of the dead loved one.

²⁴⁹ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 87.

²⁵⁰ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 87.

As Ricciardi justly notes, the Proustian narrator equates love and mourning, but unlike Ricciardi's interpretation that attributes to Marcel 'new heights of solipsism' with a further slide into 'the nihilistic conviction that melancholia is impossible'²⁵¹ resulting from this equivalence, the Deleuzean approach of difference and repetition allows for a different perspective on the issue. The narrator does indeed show great interest in the effects of the general law of oblivion as he notices how forgetting can slowly take over any remembering, he however also concerns himself with the problems of originality and uniqueness of his repeated experiences of grief to the same extent as in his recurrent matters of love. Therefore, even after the realisation that his grandmother is dead seems to have settled in Marcel's grieving mind and he begins to forget her again, his mourning for his beloved grandmother never ends in actuality, it lingers in an intermittent mode and fuses with his later mourning for Albertine. Deleuze's repetition thus reveals itself in Marcel's story through the similar patterns in his mourning for his grandmother and Albertine (for instance, the return of *la contradiction de la survivance et du néant* or the same feeling of guilt in both) and the persistent oscillation between remembrance and forgetting which renders his mourning intermittent in essence. Also, Deleuze's coexistence and contemporaneity find their reflection in the fusion or overlapping of Marcel's mourning experiences while his preoccupation with *l'originalité de la souffrance* (III, SG II, I: 156) in his search to establish a genuine bond with the dead loved one resonates with the Derridean problem of fidelity in mourning. In addition, Marcel experiences something similar to Derrida's anticipatory mourning in his relationship with his mother: this anxiety over his mother's mortality can be traced back to the bedtime drama and intimated in the scenes from Balbec where he observes his mother mourn for her own mother.

²⁵¹ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 96.

Mourning for the Grandmother

The involuntary memory that occurs to Marcel when he bends down to take off his shoes and barely touches the first button of his boot is unarguably the most important and revealing of the narrator's philosophy with regard to the part that the other takes in his life and the significance it carries for his self. This involuntary memory, on the one hand, is like any other involuntary memory experienced and described by Marcel before or after this particular occurrence: first, its evocation happens absolutely unprovoked or sought by the efforts of his intellect; second, it brings about a sudden physiological response in Marcel's body that is accompanied by intense emotions and, finally, it results in an authentic, as Marcel believes it to be, remembrance of the past. On the other hand, the feelings that this memory provokes in Marcel are far from, if not opposite to, the sentiments of inner joy, bliss and happiness induced by his other involuntary evocations. In addition, it is no longer Marcel that becomes the main subject in this experience, it is an other; and, instead of making Marcel feel good about himself, this other appears only to challenge and undermine Marcel's notions of purpose and self-worth.

Marcel describes the beginning of this experience of involuntary memory in a simple phrase - '*bouleversement de toute ma personne*' (III, SG II, I: 152). There is no subject and no verb in the phrase: the lack of agency, the absence of cause and the emphasis on the effect seem to make a victim out of Marcel himself. Indeed, Marcel has no idea where the violent sensation comes from and what particular forces leave him in the state he is in. But, at that moment, he appears overcome with physical and psychological distress: '*Ma poitrine s'enfla, remplie d'une essence inconnue, divine, des sanglots me secouèrent, des larmes ruisselèrent de mes yeux*' (III, SG II, I: 152-3); he simultaneously feels despair, solitude and fatigue. However, the same involuntary memory that brings this misery upon Marcel also offers him deliverance: The sudden memory of a being that came to his rescue

in many identical instances before, ‘qui me sauvait de la sécheresse de l’âme’ (III, SG II, I: 153), says Marcel, gives him the promise of peace and refuge. In this memory, when his grandmother leans over to help Marcel with his shoes, Marcel notices the expression on her face - tender, concerned and disillusioned - and this momentary evocation makes Marcel feel a strong desire to throw himself into his grandmother’s arms. But at the very instant when the urgent need of closeness to his grandmother stirs him up again, the brutal and unforgiving realisation that she is forever lost enters his consciousness:

Ce n’était qu’à l’instant - plus d’une année après son enterrement, à cause de cet anachronisme qui empêche si souvent le calendrier des faits de coïncider avec celui des sentiments - que je venais d’apprendre qu’elle était morte. (III, SG II, I: 153)

This involuntary memory episode feels like a re-enactment of Marcel’s bedtime drama with its overpowering anxious anticipation and hope that are immediately followed by the narrator’s desperation with the finitude and irreversibility of experiences. There are signs of the fusion of the grandmother and the mother into one person that manifest themselves regularly throughout the narrative. Here, the grandmother plays the part of a saviour that was assumed by the narrator’s mother in the goodnight kiss scene and who was called for to bring peace to the distraught Marcel.²⁵²

Unlike his other involuntary memories, this one does not result in Marcel feeling relieved of his current worries and anxieties, it does not improve his affective state of the moment in the same way that the episode with the madeleine or his experience with the cobblestones in Guermantes’ court do - Marcel does not stop feeling mediocre, contingent, mortal, disturbed by his present or unquiet about the future. Instead, Marcel now gets consumed by feelings of the opposite sign that are brought about by his discovery of this

²⁵² Bowie describes the same effect of the dead grandmother on Marcel in these words: ‘The authority that the narrator ascribes to his grandmother is such that she is summoned up in fantasy to console him for the pain her own death has caused; in an uncanny revision of the traditional *pietà* the dead maternal figure provides comfort for the still-living son. And the narrator’s simple speech is part of the same process of resurrection: he catches her voice into his and speaks as she would have spoken’. See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 275.

anachronism. The notes of guilt before his grandmother echo Marcel's remorse before his mother in the bedtime drama. Marcel laments:

Au lieu des plaisirs que j'avais eus depuis quelque temps, le seul qu'il m'eût été possible de goûter en ce moment c'eût été, retouchant le passé, de diminuer les douleurs que ma grand-mère avait autrefois ressenties. (III, SG II, I: 155)

So, more than a year after her burial, Marcel finally learns of his grandmother's death. The reality of her death has not caught up with him emotionally until this instant, and Marcel feels chronologically out of place due to the phenomenon of anachronism. As Miguel de Beistegui points out after Walter Benjamin, involuntary memory unveils another meaning of experience that exists alongside the experience that was consciously lived - *l'expérience de l'invécu* - it is the experience of what is still to come and what still remains to be lived.²⁵³ According to de Beistegui, involuntary memory allows for the restitution of the 'unlived' experience of the past, 'la vie en invécu', because not everything from the past is recalled.²⁵⁴ In Marcel's case, the unlived experience is the experience of his grandmother's death that this involuntary memory makes him live with a one-year delay. The notion of *l'expérience de l'invécu* here is not only consistent with Benjamin's suggestion that the event of his grandmother's death is still alive in the narrator's mind but it is also reminiscent of Deleuze's theory of the past-in-general. The unlived experience can be said to represent a particle of the Deleuzean *passé-en-soi* that comes through to Marcel solely in the form of *le souvenir pur*, i.e. the involuntary recollection of the past that was never consciously lived by Marcel, yet which existed outside his consciousness and outside his biographical voluntary memory.

The immediate impression this involuntary memory gives Marcel is that he is now able to recall his *real* grandmother. But the image of his real grandmother appears to be

²⁵³ See Miguel de Beistegui, *Jouissance de Proust* (Éditions Michalon, 2007), p. 78.

²⁵⁴ See de Beistegui, *Jouissance de Proust*, pp. 92-3.

radically distinct from the image of his grandmother supplied by his voluntary memory before:

Je venais d'apercevoir, dans ma mémoire, penché sur ma fatigue, le visage tendre, préoccupé et déçu de ma grand-mère, telle qu'elle avait été ce premier soir d'arrivée; le visage de ma grand-mère, non pas de celle que je m'étais étonné et reproché de si peu regretter et qui n'avait d'elle que le nom, mais de ma grand-mère véritable dont, pour la première fois depuis les Champs-Élysées où elle avait eu son attaque, je retrouvais dans un souvenir involontaire et complet la réalité vivante. (III, SG II, I: 153)

Up until this moment Marcel's recollections of his grandmother not only show Marcel to be an ungrateful, selfish and cruel young man that he now genuinely believes himself to be, but, above it all, it means that Marcel has been betraying his grandmother as she was when alive. '[D]ans ma légèreté, mon amour du plaisir, mon accoutumance à la voir malade, je ne contenais en moi qu'à l'état virtuel le souvenir de ce qu'elle avait été' (III, SG II, I: 155), Marcel reproaches himself. Most importantly, this involuntary memory leads to the beginning of the mourning period for Marcel as soon as he experiences, in his own terms, 'la contradiction de la survivance et du néant':

Perdue pour toujours; je ne pouvais comprendre et je m'exerçais à subir la souffrance de cette contradiction: d'une part, une existence, une tendresse, survivantes en moi telles que je les avais connues, c'est-à-dire faites pour moi, un amour où tout trouvait tellement en moi son complément, son but, sa constante direction, que le génie de grands hommes, tous les génies qui avaient pu exister depuis le commencement du monde n'eussent pas valu pour ma grand-mère un seul de mes défauts; et d'autre part, aussitôt que j'avais revécu, comme présente, cette félicité, la sentir traversée par la certitude, s'élançant comme une douleur physique à répétition, d'un néant qui avait effacé mon image de cette tendresse, qui avait détruit cette existence, aboli rétrospectivement notre mutuelle prédestination, fait de ma grand-mère, au moment où je la retrouvais comme dans le miroir, une simple étrangère qu'un hasard a fait passer quelques années auprès de moi, comme cela aurait pu être auprès de tout autre, mais pour qui, avant et après, je n'étais rien, je ne serais rien. (III, SG II, I: 155)

Marcel finds himself overwhelmed by two contradictory feelings disclosed by the involuntary memory. On the one hand, he still feels his grandmother's love and tenderness even in the aftermath of her death, and this helps perpetuate his idea that she lives on but now within him. On the other hand, he apprehends the void between the two of them that

came into existence after her death and has been expanding since. Indeed, in Marcel, the fond memories of his grandmother when she was alive tend to alternate with the feelings of abandonment and, worst of all, estrangement by her now when she is dead. Thus, his grandmother appears to have assumed two antithetical hypostases. One represents his beloved grandmother who means everything to Marcel: for him, the world exists only through the prism of her perceptions and conceptions; moreover, there is a pervasive idea that he and his grandmother are created singularly for each other - so mutually dependent and predetermined they appear in Marcel's mind. The other hypostasis is his dead grandmother. Her death erases and negates all affection and intimacy that previously underlay their relationship. Her death casts doubt over their entire past by making their relations before her death look accidental, fake and meaningless. Furthermore, her death disables any future relations between them too: Marcel regrets that his grandmother knows him no longer and he will never see her again. In short, and this thought terrifies Marcel, his grandmother's death makes her a complete stranger to him. Marcel's innermost hopes and fears emphasised by this contradiction transpire through his dream:

Mais j'avais beau l'embrasser, je ne pouvais pas arriver à éveiller un regard d'affection dans ses yeux, un peu de couleur sur ses joues. Absente d'elle-même, elle avait l'air de ne pas m'aimer, de ne pas me connaître, peut-être de ne pas me voir. Je ne pouvais pas deviner le secret de son indifférence, de son abattement, de son mécontentement silencieux. (III, SG II, I: 175)

Marcel says to his father in this dream: 'Il n'est pas possible qu'elle ne m'aime plus.

J'aurai beau l'embrasser, est-ce qu'elle ne me sourira plus jamais?' And his father replies:

'Que veux-tu, les morts sont les morts' (III, SG II, I: 176).

In Marcel's dream too, death transforms his grandmother, caring and affectionate, into a simple stranger, distant and indifferent. Although she is still the same beloved grandmother in his involuntary memory, and as such she continues to exist within Marcel: the reality of her death is implacable, it disrupts and annihilates any life's attachments.

Martin Hägglund notes the tragic character of Marcel's state at this point, 'the memory that

reawakens the proximity of the beloved is powerless to make the beloved come back to life. Rather, the memory that recalls a certain life also recalls that the same life has been irredeemably lost'²⁵⁵.

The involuntary memory of his late grandmother gives the narrator a glimpse at the mysterious alterity of the other, and this alterity is radicalised by the fact that the other is dead. It is precisely death, in this particular case the death of his grandmother, which makes Marcel intuit and ponder the absolute unknown that the other represents to his self. Marcel thinks that the 'good' hypostasis of his grandmother - affectionate, caring and very familiar - is his 'real' grandmother that he recollects from their shared past while the 'bad' hypostasis - the indifferent and emotionless stranger - is his dead grandmother that he does not know at all. Marcel's distinction between the real grandmother that he knew when she was alive and the unknown stranger that the dead grandmother has now become illustrates the Levinasian idea that the dead other brings a rupture to the identity of the I in the similar manner that the living other does when it irrupts into the sameness of the I in the ongoing process of changing and restructuring it. However, there is a caveat: according to Levinas, the dead other represents a more extreme alterity that is 'without response' and 'without return' because death eliminates any possibility of an encounter or communication with the other.²⁵⁶ In both his involuntary memory and his dream, Marcel's attention is drawn to the face of his grandmother: Marcel carefully reads his grandmother's face where affection and liveliness alternate with an expressionless mask. Levinas emphasises that the encounter with the other always takes place face-to-face as the face of the other reflects meaning and invites response, Marcel is therefore taken aback by the emptiness and coolness of his dead grandmother's image in his involuntary evocation. And his father's matter-of-factly explanation to this revelation of nothingness (*du néant*) in Marcel's dream 'les morts sont les morts' only underscores the indeterminate and unknown nature of death,

²⁵⁵ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 33.

²⁵⁶ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 23.

la question d'une indétermination, in Levinas's words²⁵⁷, that death is. Commenting on Levinas's reading of Proust as an artist of alterity in *Noms propres*, Edith Wyschogrod notes: 'For Levinas, Proust is the writer who shows the inescapability of the other within solitude, an intrusion of the other distinguishable from the understanding of the other in collective solidarity', and "'Genuine" alterity is an absence that rends the psyche, worms its way into the self, and prevents the ego from losing track of the other, who, in her absence, fissures the self in its interiority'²⁵⁸.

There is another dimension to this particular involuntary memory. If Marcel's grandmother lives on within him, then her old joys and pains will become his. Therefore, Marcel figures, all his hurtful words directed at her with so much impatience and nonchalance then will now be hurting him from within - becoming his own pain and suffering. Also, 'les morts sont les morts' means no more shared past, present or future. No response, no communication, no affection. Marcel realises that it is no longer possible to erase all the suffering he inflicted, willingly and unwillingly, on his grandmother when she was alive with kisses like he used to - because she is dead. Death ascertains that no apology or consolation can any longer be possible:

Mais jamais je ne pourrais plus effacer cette contraction de sa figure, et cette souffrance de son coeur ou plutôt du mien; car comme les morts n'existent plus qu'en nous, c'est nous-mêmes que nous frappons sans relâche quand nous nous obstinons à nous souvenir des coups que nous leur avons assenés. (III, SG II, I: 156)

From the Levinasian ethical perspective, the Proustian narrator thus assumes the responsibility for his grandmother in death by means of compassion and solidarity that manifest themselves in his culpable memory and mourning. Levinas aptly calls the psychological experience of unappeasable guilt and indebtedness before the dead other *la*

²⁵⁷ See Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps*, p. 23.

²⁵⁸ See Edith Wyschogrod, 'The Art in Ethics', *Crossover Queries: Dwelling with Negatives, Embodying Philosophy's Others* (Fordham University Press, 2006), p. 393.

culpabilité de survivant.²⁵⁹ According to a Levinasian reading, Marcel's period of acute mourning for his grandmother reflects the establishment of his relationship with the death of the other. In his culpable mourning, Marcel believes that his dead grandmother now exists within him, and the only way for him to connect to her, to genuinely remember her is through the pain that they now have in common. This pain but also regret and guilt that ensue now span the gap between him and his grandmother and seem to give authenticity and veracity to his memories of grandmother that were previously lacking. Marcel does not only embrace these painful memories but craves more, he says, 'Je sentais que je ne me la rappelais vraiment que par la douleur et j'aurais voulu que s'enfonçassent plus solidement encore en moi ces clous qui y rivaient sa mémoire' (III, SG II, I: 156). For Marcel, remembering through suffering that he invites so enthusiastically upon himself, no matter how painful it is, is not only justified but also necessary since it represents the only way to redeem and absolve himself of all acts of cruelty and indifference that he has ever committed towards his loved one and thereby undermine the estrangement caused by her death.²⁶⁰ The allusion to the suffering of Christ cannot be accidental. He goes on:

Je ne cherchais pas à rendre la souffrance plus douce, à l'embellir, à feindre que ma grand-mère ne fût qu'absente et momentanément invisible [...]. Jamais je ne le fis, car je ne tenais pas seulement à souffrir, mais à respecter l'originalité de ma souffrance telle que je l'avais subie tout d'un coup sans le vouloir, et je voulais continuer à la subir, suivant ses lois à elle, à chaque fois que revenait cette contradiction si étrange de la survivance et du néant entrecroisés en moi. (III, SG II, I: 156)

Marcel thus wishes to endure the unprecedented impression of the contradiction between survival and nothingness that the involuntary evocation of his grandmother gives him. Ricciardi suggests that the narrator feels impelled to do so by the temporary shock of

²⁵⁹ See Levinas, *La Mort et le temps*, p. 15.

²⁶⁰ Slegers notes that 'the narrator uses his *intellect* in order to pursue the feeling of sorrow experienced in the involuntary memory of his grandmother'. Furthermore, she argues, Marcel requires the attitude of 'courageous vulnerability' to face the reality found in involuntary memory as it 'upsets one's self-image, because a forgotten part of the past makes one question the veridicality of the personality constructed based on voluntary memories (the loving grandson has to recognize himself as a selfish and petty child)'. See Slegers, *Courageous Vulnerability*, p. 27, p. 47.

the loss which makes his unconscious unveil ‘the signs of his desires, his imaginings, and his dreams’²⁶¹ while conflating mourning and involuntary memory. In turn, for Bersani, the ‘living reality’ of his grandmother at the moment of involuntary memory represents her ‘ideal penetrability’ that the narrator uses to possess his grandmother when she is dead as ‘the posthumous possession of others is always an unprecedented self-possession’, which is the aim of Marcel’s interest in others.²⁶² Bowie finds a different explanation: ‘He [the narrator] finds compassion with a cruel edge to it; tenderness which shades into revulsion, and an identification with the sufferer which gradually leads to an appropriation of her pain. Watch the victim closely, he seems to murmur to himself, and become a victim in your own right’²⁶³. Moorjani believes that Marcel wants to intensify his suffering since the pain is a sign of his grandmother’s living death within him, and ‘out of this cruel reiteration of loss, for which he does not want to be consoled, his book will be written’²⁶⁴.

It is apparent that Marcel mistrusts voluntary memory to provide him with such an image of his late grandmother that would also retrieve the forgotten moments of their shared past in purity and sincerity. Marcel wants to resist the destructive impact of *la loi générale de l’oubli* (IV, AD III: 223) by holding on to his involuntary memory for as long as possible - a task which is similar in its genuine naïveté and impossibility to Marcel’s attempt to capture and transport his mother’s goodnight kiss in the bedtime scene. Thus, contrary to Ricciardi’s claim²⁶⁵ that the Proustian narrator is guilty of cynicism or pessimism with regard to the possibility of pure, intact, and lasting memories, Martin Hägglund argues²⁶⁶ convincingly that Marcel is in fact terrified by the violence of death and forgetting that he finds not only in the treatment of others in his book but also in the treatment of himself. For Hägglund, Marcel craves to arrest this sensation of the

²⁶¹ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 83.

²⁶² See Bersani, *The Culture of Redemption*, pp. 7-8.

²⁶³ See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 279.

²⁶⁴ See Moorjani, ‘A Cryptanalysis’, p. 882.

²⁶⁵ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 85.

²⁶⁶ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 53.

contradiction between survival and nothingness (or *extinction* in Hägglund's terms) because 'without extinction, nothing would pass away, and without survival, nothing would relate the past to the future'²⁶⁷. This is the reason why Marcel is wary of both forgetting and remembering: he understands very well that memories are equally prone to decay and distortion and therefore relies on involuntary memory to overcome these natural processes. The delay between his grandmother's burial and Marcel's realisation of her death becomes the necessary condition for the involuntary memory to occur: 'It is "thanks to forgetting" that involuntary memory can give rise to a sense of renewal. Furthermore, it is the intensified sense of temporal disjunction that reinvigorates Marcel's commitment to life'²⁶⁸, comments Hägglund.

Marcel turns to his dreams once again because, he believes, the world of sleep intensifies hundredfold our sensations and emotions. The world of sleep, Marcel says, makes sombre and solemn figures from the past arise from our own internal oblivion to pay us a brief unexpected visit and then abandon us in tears as suddenly as they appeared (III, SG II, I: 157). Then, we try to find our close ones amongst them but often in vain; yet, these visions still shake us to the core by reminding us of our failed humanity, as evidenced by our unfulfilled responsibilities and undelivered promises. In his dream, Marcel remembers that he has forgotten to write to his grandmother. He imagines his grandmother feeling forlorn: he vividly sees her face so subdued, unhappy but sweet at the same time, and he hears her plea to come see her. He is ready to run to her and scream, 'Mais, grand-mère, tu me verras autant que tu voudras, je n'ai que toi au monde, je ne te quitterai plus jamais' (III, SG II, I: 158). He begs his father to take him to her promptly, without delay, but his father comes up with excuses not to do it. First, he says that she is too weak to receive visitors. Then, he claims that he does not remember her street number. Finally, he insists that she does not need anything, and that Marcel's visit will only make

²⁶⁷ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 50.

²⁶⁸ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 154.

her suffer more. Marcel asks his father in return: 'Mais dis-moi, toi qui sais, ce n'est pas vrai que les morts ne vivent plus. Ce n'est pas vrai tout de même, malgré ce qu'on dit, puisque grand-mère existe encore' (III, SG II, I: 158).

The theme of a letter, a symbol of invisible and impalpable bond between two people, re-emerges from the bedtime scene. As Marcel passes his note to his mother in hopes that she will get it and come kiss him goodnight, imagining his mother reading his letter calms Marcel's anxieties and reassures him of their love for each other: 'Maintenant je n'étais plus séparé d'elle; les barrières étaient tombées, un fil délicieux nous réunissait' (I, DCS I, I: 30). But now, in his dream, Marcel interrupts his communication with his grandmother by forgetting to write to her, and he therefore separates himself from her and betrays their mutual predestination. Marcel immediately recognises his fault and, overcome with regret, rushes to undo the damage, but his most genuine and passionate desire to reconnect with his grandmother is met with the most impersonal and indomitable resistance: death means irreversibility, indifference and the absolute unknown.

When Marcel wakes up, he cannot stand the marine landscapes that open up before his eyes because 'l'image nouvelle de leur beauté indifférente se complétait aussitôt par l'idée qu'elle ne les voyait pas' (III, SG II, I: 159). He is still there but she is not. This realisation comes as a sensory overload: the luminous plenitude of the beach is creasing a void in his heart. He tries to stop this powerful stream of awareness: he wants to plug his ears not to hear the waves; he turns away to face the wall not to see them. His efforts to end this pain are futile: he turns away to face the wall, but his eyes immediately stumble upon a partition that served them both as a messenger in the mornings. And Marcel swears that, in that instant, he will not ask God for anything else in the world, if there is a paradise, but for himself to be able to knock on this partition three times and for his grandmother, who would definitely recognise these sounds, to respond to him with her own knocking that usually translated into 'Ne t'agite pas, petite souris, je comprends que tu es impatient, mais

je vais venir' (III, SG II, I: 160). Marcel says that he would stay there with her for eternity, and that eternity would never be too long for the two of them.

According to Ricciardi, Marcel's involuntary memory of his grandmother and related dreams 'outline a heroic descent into the underworld' because 'as if acting out a latter-day version of the myth of Orpheus, the narrator loses his beloved grandmother for good precisely when he indulges his desire to gaze on her face once more'.²⁶⁹ Ricciardi makes a case that the way in which Marcel talks about his relationships points towards 'a startlingly cynical point of view', according to which everything and everybody, his grandmother and Albertine, may be considered forgettable.²⁷⁰ However, Marcel's mourning for his grandmother, though having lost its acuteness and intensity, never stops: for instance, we will see its traces recur in his grief for Albertine and in his presentiment of mourning for his mother that though unwritten is intimated within his narrative.

In spite of his belief in the fragmentation and annihilation of his various selves and his loved others, Marcel sincerely hopes that the dead continue to live within us. But being inhabited by the dead others leads to the state of permanent mourning. The narrator's theory of the extreme fluidity of the self that produces forgetting and Derridean interminable melancholia that implies remembering appear incompatible. Here, the philosophy of repetition helps to reconcile the two seemingly contradictory ideas. In his disheartened reflections on infidelity and the division of love between a number of women, Marcel admits that he has suffered successively for Gilberte, for Mme de Guermantes, for Albertine and that successively he has also forgotten them. And only the love, according to Marcel, that he dedicated to different women has lasted (IV, TR: 481). The same goes for mourning: Mourning like love lasts too because it is subject to Deleuzian repetition.

²⁶⁹ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 86.

²⁷⁰ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 77.

The Cult of Regret for the Dead

Leo Bersani suggests that ‘death experienced within an involuntary memory thus helps to define involuntary memory as a kind of death. For if such memories revive the past as nothing more than the self that lived it (“le moi qui le vécut”), they also effect, belatedly and retroactively, a radical separation of the self from the world’²⁷¹. It means that while resurrecting his beloved grandmother in Marcel, the involuntary memory is simultaneously erasing Marcel’s own presence in the world. Bersani points out that, as a result of such experience, when a possession of a past self and an annihilation of a present self coincide, there is a threat of the loss of the self. However, L. Scott Lerner, who offers a more straightforward reading of the passage, sees the threat of the loss of the self not in the redemptive return of a former self but in the realised loss of his loved other.²⁷² The dead loved other must somehow be preserved so that the complete loss of the other does not bring about the loss of the self. In contrast to Bersani, Lerner insists that we do not seek the annihilation of our loved others in our relations with them. We seek their enduring presence instead, which is, in Lerner’s words, ‘our only buffer against le néant’²⁷³. In Lerner’s view, loss and mourning of the Proustian narrator are thus conformable to the late Freudian (*The Ego and the Id*) and Kleinian theory on preservation and incorporation in the work of mourning, according to which only after having formed an identification with his lost loved one and being himself structurally changed Marcel feels ready to give his late grandmother up and move on.²⁷⁴ Marcel does indeed appear to have completed his belated mourning for his grandmother by the time he is able to refer to his psychological state of that period as his *chagrin passager* (III, SG II, I: 165). But the narrator also offers us a

²⁷¹ Leo Bersani, “‘The Culture of Redemption’: Marcel Proust and Melanie Klein’, *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 12, No. 2 (Winter, 1986), pp. 399-421, p. 401.

²⁷² L. Scott Lerner, ‘Mourning and Subjectivity: From Bersani to Proust, Klein, and Freud’, *Diacritics* Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring, 2007), pp. 40-53, p. 46.

²⁷³ Lerner, ‘Mourning and Subjectivity’, p. 51.

²⁷⁴ Lerner, ‘Mourning and Subjectivity’, p. 47.

glance at a probably more profound experience of sorrow - the experience that is not his own at the moment of the narration and yet that carries the possibility of becoming his at some point in the future:

Quant à un chagrin aussi profond que celui de ma mère, je devais le connaître un jour, on le verra dans la suite de ce récit, mais ce n'était pas maintenant, ni ainsi que je me le figurais. (III, SG II, I: 165)

The narrator does not only describe his own moments of grief but also observes how his mother deals with the loss of her loved one. Marcel notices that he is not the only one to grieve for his grandmother in Balbec a year after her death, his mother is also gripped by chagrin and mournful memories which are however manifested differently from Marcel's. Marcel watches his mother adopt his late grandmother's habits and tastes and faithfully follow her daily routine as if either his mother wants to live in his grandmother's stead or his grandmother lives on within his mother:

Tenant à la main l'«en-tout-cas de sa mère», je la vis de la fenêtre s'avancer toute noire, à pas timides, pieux, sur le sable que des pieds chéris avaient foulé avant elle, et elle avait l'air d'aller à la recherche d'une morte que les flots devaient ramener. (III, SG II, I: 167)

Marcel's mother now wears her mother's clothes and carries her bag; moreover, she reads her favourite books and, most surprisingly, cites his grandmother's favourite authors in her letters to Marcel. Ricciardi finds that the quoting of Mme de Sévigné brilliantly illustrates the mechanism of incorporation at work in the mother's behaviour and represents a case of 'the ventriloquisation of the living by the dead'²⁷⁵. The mother's acquired behaviour in fact makes a strong case for the psychoanalytic concept of identification. In his essay from 1921, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud discusses identification as the earliest and original form of emotional tie that manifests itself in the ego's attempts to

²⁷⁵ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 90.

assume the characteristics of or copy the one who is loved.²⁷⁶ Importantly, Freud stresses that the object of identification does not have to be sexually desired:

It [identification] may arise with any new perception of a common quality shared with some other person who is not an object of the sexual instinct. The more important this common quality is, the more successful may this partial identification become, and it may thus represent the beginning of a new tie.²⁷⁷

Marcel's mother's identification with her dead mother is most apparent in the expression of her social character, in her relations with others and Marcel in particular. Indeed, the concept of identification is based on the child's ability to internalise others in his/her immediate social environment and is therefore responsible for the social character of the self later in life. But instead of borrowing only a single trait or a quality from the grandmother, as it usually happens in a partial identification according to Freud, Marcel's mother fully dissolves herself into her mother. Stupefied by this transformation in his mother, Marcel realises that 'ce n'était plus ma mère que j'avais sous les yeux, mais ma grand-mère' (III, SG II, I: 166). Her resemblance in appearance and thought to her mother, her imitations of her mother's lifestyle evidence her full identification with her mother's social personality. This is why Marcel likens his mother's internalisation of the grandmother to the transfer of aristocratic titles and social positions. In his mind, this change in his mother's attitude and behaviour that happened after his grandmother's death is though premature but natural: it is similar to succeeding someone in their role as the assumption of their title comes with the responsibility of continuation. In Marcel's understanding, it seems unavoidable and all-consuming:

[L]e mort saisit le vif qui devient son successeur ressemblant, le continueur de sa vie interrompue. Peut-être le grand chagrin qui suit chez une fille telle qu'était maman, la mort de sa mère, ne fait-il que briser plus tôt la chrysalide, hâter la métamorphose et l'apparition d'un être qu'on porte en soi et qui, sans cette crise qui fait brûler les

²⁷⁶ See Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XVIII (1920 – 1922), Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works*, trans., ed. James Strachey (Vintage, 2001), p. 107.

²⁷⁷ See Freud, *The Complete Psychological Works*, p. 108.

étapes et sauter d'un seul coup des périodes, ne fût survenu que plus lentement. (III, SG II, I: 166)

Here Marcel speculates that his mother's great chagrin at his grandmother's death makes the other that she has been carrying within break through and take over her own identity. He does not fail to notice how much the loss of her mother makes her suffer. But what strikes him most in his mother's transformation is that she now seems to be afraid to disturb or offend, with a brusque movement or a high sound of voice, *la présence douloureuse* that is permanently there (III, SG II, I: 166). Marcel understands for the first time then that since his grandmother's death his mother's look, fixed and without a trace of tears, must have been contemplating this incomprehensible *contradiction du souvenir et du néant* (III, SG II, I: 165) that he himself has just discovered by means of involuntary memory one year after his grandmother's burial. Perhaps, the Proustian contradiction of survival and nothingness that strikes those in times of sorrow is the experience that represents the Deleuzean *difference* in the repetitive pattern of similar mournings carried out by different people for different people as in each case it produces *l'originalité de la souffrance* which Marcel seeks so effortfully to endure following his involuntary evocation. The culpable memory and regret that accompany the revelatory contradiction bring about the idolatry of what the dead others, who now live on solely within us, used to love and enjoy when they were alive. Thus, Marcel comes to realise that he also takes part in what he describes as *ce culte du regret* (III, SG II, I: 166) for his dead grandmother, perhaps in a somewhat milder form than his mother, when he finds the piano his grandmother used to play, the landscapes she used to admire or the partition they used to employ as a messenger so painfully dear and special. Judith Butler calls this phenomenon *melancholic identification* that 'permits the loss of the object in the external world

precisely because it provides a way to preserve the object as part of the ego and, hence, to avert the loss as a complete loss'²⁷⁸.

We do not know from the narrative if Marcel's mother ever comes to terms with her loss: after her mother's death she first dissolves into her and behaves like her ghost, and then she completely fades away without any further mention. Her mourning is thus open-ended. However, Marcel's reflections on her part as the continuator of his grandmother's interrupted life make Marcel conclude that 'ce dans ce sens-là (et non dans celui si vague, si faux où on l'entend généralement) qu'on peut dire que la mort n'est pas inutile, que le mort continue à agir sur nous' (III, SG II, I: 166) and suggest that this particular expression of mourning is inherent, repetitive and progressive. Marcel admits that, in spite of his most tender affection and deepest regret for his lost grandmother, his very own hour of such transfiguring mourning is yet to come. Then, we can speculate that his mother's mourning for her mother presages Marcel's own mourning, most likely for his mother, and that his mourning will be as painful and self-effacing as hers. In the story, his mother's mourning remains open-ended because Marcel is yet to have his personal experience of it, and he therefore cannot say whether he will be able to eventually terminate it or whether he will have to live with his grief forever.

Certainly, this is only a hypothesis that is however strongly suggested in the narrative and can be deduced from Proust's mentions of his personal experiences of grief. For instance, Moorjani, in her discussion of Marcel's dreams following his involuntary memory of his grandmother, is convinced that these oneiric revelations are based on autobiographical dreams about Proust's dead mother and father that the novelist jotted in his notebook.²⁷⁹ Also, in his letter to Robert de Montesquiou, Proust writes that with the death of his mother his life has now lost 'son seul but, sa seule douceur, son seul amour, sa

²⁷⁸ See Judith Butler, *Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 134.

²⁷⁹ See Moorjani, 'A Cryptanalysis', p. 883.

seule consolation'²⁸⁰. Furthermore, in his famous article on parricide for Figaro, Proust shows the same signs of identification with his dead parents (taking on their social obligations) that his narrator observes in his grieving mother:

Depuis la mort de mes parents je suis (dans un sens qu'il serait hors de propos de préciser ici) moins moi-même, davantage leur fils. Sans me détourner de mes amis, plus volontiers je me retourne vers les leurs. Et les lettres que j'écris maintenant, ce sont pour la plupart celles que je crois qu'ils auraient écrites, celles qu'ils ne peuvent plus écrire et que j'écris à leur place, félicitations, condoléances surtout à des amis à eux que souvent je ne connais presque pas.²⁸¹

It is logical that, though outside the confines of his story, the narrator of *La Recherche* will experience his transfiguring mourning upon the death of his beloved mother at some point in the future, and we are certainly given a clear idea of what his mourning will be like.

Mourning for Albertine

For Marcel, the day of Francoise's announcement 'Mademoiselle Albertine est partie' (IV, AD I: 88) becomes the trope for any separation from a loved one. It replicates Marcel's anxiety of the bedtime drama and evokes his loss of the grandmother. Marcel does not simply miss Albertine but must have her back to quell his fears and sorrows in the same way he used to desperately need his mother or his grandmother to regain his peace of mind. Marcel's attitude and behaviour are similar to the fits of the little nervous boy in the goodnight kiss scene and to the panic of the adult Marcel gripped by the culpable memory of his grandmother. Still in the very beginning of his narrative, Marcel suggests that the absence of a thing is not simply a partial lack but a new unforeseen state that disrupts everything (I, DCS II: 300). Now, after Albertine's sudden departure, Marcel compares his new pain with *l'inimaginable enfer* (IV, AD I: 8) that cannot match in its intensity and

²⁸⁰ See Marcel Proust, *Correspondance*, ed. Philip Kolb, 21 vols (Paris: Plon, 1970-93), vol. 5, p. 348.

²⁸¹ Proust, 'Sentiments filiaux d'un parricide', p. 213.

quality any of his worst expectations; moreover, though he has definitely suffered the absence of a loved one before (for instance, his mother), he emphasises the novelty of the experience:

Pour se représenter une situation inconnue l'imagination emprunte des éléments connus et à cause de cela ne se la représente pas. Mais la sensibilité, même la plus physique, reçoit comme le sillon de la foudre, la signature originale et longtemps indélébile de l'événement nouveau. (IV, AD I: 8)

When Albertine disappears, the perplexed narrator repeats to himself: 'On part pour un motif. On le dit. On vous donne le droit de répondre. On ne part pas comme cela' (IV, AD I: 15). Marcel is condemned to the endless questioning of himself and interpretive work without any possibility of response that is usually the lot of those in mourning. In this sense, Albertine's disappearance falls along the lines of the Levinasian definition of death: it is an absurd sudden departure without response and without return, an indeterminate question, that suspends the survivor in a cognitive limbo. Albertine's absence, just as her death would, confronts Marcel with, to paraphrase Jean Laplanche²⁸², the ultimate enigma of the other and thereby with questions that must be left forever unsettled. So Albertine's disappearance bears some characteristics of death but it is Albertine's actual death that will trick Marcel into mistaking death for absence.

The impersonal telegraphic message from Mme Bontemps and Marcel's remoteness from the event of Albertine's death make her absence and her death become synonymous and therefore difficult to tell apart in Marcel's distraught mind. The irresolution between absence and death in Marcel's understanding allow their transition into and out of one another.²⁸³ However, the news of Albertine's death crushes him with a new kind of

²⁸² See Jean Laplanche, *La révolution copernicienne inachevée* (Paris: Aubier, 1992), p. 379.

²⁸³ Bowie observes how the narrator's confusion between Albertine's absence and death is conveyed in the narrative: 'Albertine gone is uncannily similar to Albertine present and threatening to go. Albertine dead is brought back to life not simply by chance memories and associations, but by a vigorous resurrectionist tendency of the narrator's imagination: he exhumes her in order to have her die again. The whole thing is the chronicle of a loss that

suffering, previously unknown to Marcel, to learn that she will never be back. Marcel realises that though 'la mort n'agit que comme l'absence' (IV, AD III: 222), in reality Albertine's death feels like 'toute ma vie à venir se trouvait arrachée de mon coeur' (IV, AD I: 59). Just as after his grandmother's death, Marcel cannot feign that Albertine is absent and only momentarily invisible. He recalls:

Instinctivement je passai ma main sur mon cou, sur mes lèvres qui se voyaient embrassés par elle depuis qu'elle était partie, et qui ne le seraient jamais plus; je passai ma main sur eux, comme maman m'avait caressé à la mort de ma grand-mère en disant: 'Mon pauvre petit, ta grand-mère qui t'aimait tant ne t'embrassera plus'. (IV, AD I: 59)

When Marcel remembers Albertine or thinks about their relationship, he often draws parallels between the effect he had on her life and that he had on his grandmother's. He certainly loved them both. As his grandmother provided young Marcel with the mental representation of the world around him, Albertine filled his world with sensuality. In fact, when Albertine was alive, Marcel often viewed her as an obstacle that hindered him in his pursuit of life's sensual pleasures. But now, when she is dead, he thinks that she is actually the one who could have satisfied all his desires:

Albertine m'avait semblé un obstacle interposé entre moi et toutes choses, parce qu'elle était pour moi leur contenant et que c'est d'elle, comme d'un vase, que je pouvais les recevoir. Maintenant que ce vase était détruit, je ne me sentais plus le courage de les saisir, il n'y en avait plus une seule dont je ne me détournasse, abattu, préférant n'y pas goûter. (IV, AD I: 65)

Similarly to his regret for the loss of his grandmother and his intense, yet unrealisable, desire for her return, Marcel's need for Albertine is marked by the same, in Freud's terms, *transience value* which shows that 'limitation in the possibility of an enjoyment raises the value of the enjoyment'²⁸⁴. Like Freud, the Proustian narrator seems to associate loss with

perpetually stops short of completion, of an absence that is never absence enough, and of a narrative structure that constantly threatens to dissolve into a plotless pattern of vanishings and reappearances'. See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 290.

²⁸⁴ See Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, 24 vol., trans., ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-74), Vol. 14, p. 305.

an increase in aesthetic, sensual and ethical value since Marcel now realises how irremediable the emptiness created by the deaths of the grandmother and Albertine is. Marcel, who once already fought the sensations brought about by the marine scenery in Balbec after his grandmother's death, now struggles with his sensory world and therefore the thought of Albertine again:

Ce n'était plus assez de fermer les rideaux, je tachais de boucher les yeux et les oreilles de ma mémoire, pour ne pas revoir cette bande orangée du couchant, pour ne pas entendre ces invisibles oiseaux qui se répondaient d'un arbre à l'autre de chaque côté de moi qu'embrassait alors si tendrement celle qui maintenant était morte. Je tachais d'éviter ces sensations que donnent l'humidité des feuilles dans le soir, la montée et la descente des routes en dos d'âne. Mais déjà ces sensations m'avaient ressaisi, ramené assez loin du moment actuel, afin qu'eût tout le recul, tout l'élan nécessaire pour me frapper de nouveau, l'idée qu'Albertine était morte. (IV, AD I: 62)

As if to emphasise the similarities in his mourning experiences for these women, Marcel's dreams often link them together, and, thus, in these dreams, while he chats with Albertine, his grandmother walks back and forth in the background. In his mourning for Albertine, Marcel is afflicted by the same strange, according to Marcel, contradiction of remembrance and nothingness that shocked him in the involuntary memory of his grandmother and that he later recognised in the facial expression of his grieving mother. Marcel knows that Albertine now lives on solely within him, and she has never been more alive: 'Pour que la mort d'Albertine eût pu supprimer mes souffrances, il eût fallu que le choc l'eût tuée non seulement en Touraine, mais en moi' (IV, AD I: 60). The Proustian narrator refers to this phenomenon as to 'une survie très païenne':

C'est que l'être ne meurt pas tout de suite pour nous, il reste baigné d'une espèce d'aura de vie qui n'a rien d'une immortalité véritable mais qui fait qu'il continue à occuper nos pensées de la même manière que quand il vivait. (IV, AD I: 92)

Marcel realises that he must endure his mourning for as long as all his present selves learn through suffering followed by estrangement that Albertine will never be back:

[I]l y avait quelqu'un des innombrables et humbles moi qui nous composent qui était ignorant encore du départ d'Albertine et à qui il fallait le notifier; il fallait - ce qui était plus cruel que s'ils avaient été des étrangers et n'avaient pas emprunté ma sensibilité

pour souffrir - annoncer le malheur qui venait d'arriver à tous ces êtres, à tous ces moi qui ne le savaient encore [...]. A chacun j'avais à apprendre mon chagrin, le chagrin qui n'est nullement une conclusion pessimiste librement tirée d'un ensemble de circonstances funestes, mais la reviviscence intermittente et involontaire d'une impression spécifique, venue du dehors, et que nous n'avons pas choisie. (IV, AD I: 14)

After all his selves learn about Albertine's death, they will have to forget multiple

Albertines that existed in Marcel's mind in order for Marcel to be consoled:

Pour me consoler, ce n'est pas une, c'est d'innombrables Albertine que j'aurais dû oublier. Quand j'étais arrivé à supporter le chagrin d'avoir perdu celle-ci, c'était à recommencer avec une autre, avec cent autres. (IV, AD I: 60)

For the time being, Marcel grieves for every Albertine that his memory evokes, and his every reminiscence is associated with some part of the world around him so that, in the end, Marcel comes to think that to forget Albertine would mean to renounce the entire universe. So, he begins to believe that only his own actual death would be able to cure his immense grief (IV, AD I: 66). But, after all, it does not require Marcel's actual death for him to forget Albertine just as he previously forgot Gilberte, Madame de Guermantes or his grandmother. His other self that could easily go on living without Albertine makes its appearance within him one day. This self would no longer suffer when hearing her name or talking about her, it would believe itself to know, remember or even love Albertine but, in Marcel's words, with 'une tendresse de second main' (IV, AD II: 175). He speaks of the other grieving self as of his old friend but his present self is now indifferent to his past mourning and feels no more than 'la tristesse convenable' (IV, AD II: 175). Thus, Marcel contends: 'Ce n'est pas parce que les autres sont morts que notre affection pour eux s'affaiblit, c'est parce que nous mourons nous-mêmes' (IV, AD II: 175). Consequently, Marcel cannot suffer from the thought that Albertine is dead any longer for the same reason he cannot rejoice in the news that she can possibly be still living: 'J'aurais été incapable de ressusciter Albertine parce que je l'étais de me ressusciter moi-même, de ressusciter mon moi d'alors' (IV, AD III: 221).

Ricciardi notes that Marcel is not only very quick to forget his old attachments, but he also shows too much insouciance and even sadistic cruelty towards them. Here Ricciardi cites Marcel's behaviour after the death of his aunt Leonie who used to treat him with those famous madeleines when he was a child and who made him an inheritor of her significant fortune.²⁸⁵ Among his other abominable acts of disregard, Marcel gives some of his aunt's furniture to a brothel. In another example, Marcel's romantic involvement with Albertine begins shortly after his grandmother's death, and therefore, instead of mourning for a loved one, the narrator finds himself pursuing sensual pleasures. Some time will have passed before his involuntary memory of his dead grandmother makes him plunge into sorrow and regret. The juxtaposition of the two events in Marcel's unfolding of the story - the death of a loved one and the beginning of a new love relationship - with the latter completely eclipsing the former, though it gives an honest and unfettered account of the narrator's inner life, also makes a compelling argument in favour of his selfishness and cynicism.²⁸⁶ It appears that the narrator's theory of multiple psychological deaths together with the general law of oblivion can be held responsible for such lapses in morals. Nobody and nothing is unforgettable: neither his dear grandmother nor his beloved Albertine. However, the narrator's shameful deeds have a tendency to catch up with his conscience and make him feel guilty. It was the case with his mother in the bedtime drama (the sentiment of unintentional parricide), it is the case with his grandmother during his delayed mourning for her and with Albertine after her sudden death (the guilt of double assassination).

At first glance, the Proustian narrator seems to have once again successfully completed his mourning when he fully detaches his libido from the lost object to direct it elsewhere. After all, even according to Levinas's ethics, the self continues through the

²⁸⁵ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 78.

²⁸⁶ Bowie also points out Proust's insistence 'on a large comic discrepancy: while one person faces extinction, another devotes himself with deranged intensity to his latest leisure-time pursuit'. See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 312.

other that we encounter or engender.²⁸⁷ However, at a closer look, Marcel's love and therefore mourning for Albertine survives in his painful experience of the phantom limb phenomenon (IV, AD I: 73) and his being 'fidèle même dans l'infidélité' (IV, TR: 487). Jennifer Rushworth argues that Marcel's mourning for Albertine, just like his grief for the grandmother's death, remains intermittent but unending and is thus similar to Derrida's concept of *demi-deuil* which mediates between the two poles of mourning and melancholia, between seeming finished and seeming interminable.²⁸⁸ Rushworth gives a detailed account of Marcel's oscillation between remembering and forgetting. Firstly, Rushworth notes that the narrator's idea of oblivion is 'continually undermined by the unpredictable potential of involuntary memory to reinstate old attachments'²⁸⁹. And, secondly, 'though Albertine is forgotten in so much as a replacement is sought, this quest at the same time reveals the protagonist's inevitable faithful remembrance of Albertine's unique, irreplaceable qualities'²⁹⁰ because Marcel unconsciously tries to model his new relationships on some aspects of his relationship with Albertine.

Marcel comes to believe that his mourning for Albertine is over as his mourning for his grandmother was over before and that he can now move on and love someone else. He also realises that his anxiety and sorrows will renew too. These experiences support Marcel's point that self-plagiarism is the kind of human plagiarism that is the most difficult to avoid. However, they inadvertently cater to Deleuze's theory of repetition: Marcel senses that love must be repeated, that love is forced to be repeated by death, and yet every repeated experience carries 'la signature originale et longtemps indélébile' of a new event (IV, AD I: 8). There are essential similarities in Marcel's experiences of grief for his loved

²⁸⁷ See Howells, *Mortal Subjects*, p. 124.

²⁸⁸ See Jennifer Rushworth, *Discourses of Mourning in Dante, Petrarch, and Proust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) [Online]. Available from: <http://ezproxyprd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2153/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198790877.001.0001/acprof-9780198790877>.

²⁸⁹ See Rushworth, *Discourses of Mourning*, p. 91.

²⁹⁰ See Rushworth, *Discourses of Mourning*, p. 93.

ones: first, Marcel confuses death and absence; second, he gets struck by the same contradiction of affection and alienation, survival and nothingness that provokes the sentiment of deep regret, guilt and, at the same time, the desire of full forgetfulness; and, last, he appears to be doomed to the constant oscillation between forgetting and remembering, oblivion and repetition, not least thanks to the potential of involuntary memory to unexpectedly reproduce some aspects of the past-in-general.

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[E]t cet amour pour un être devenu si lointain était comme une religion, mes pensées montaient vers elle comme des prières. (IV, AD I: 93)

Marcel's love for someone close who suddenly becomes very distant is like a religion. Even if briefly, dead Albertine and his dead grandmother are sanctified in his eyes, and his suffering when mourning for them is his cross to bear. The dead loved ones come to represent a paradise lost for Marcel and, therefore, all he desires at his anguished times of bereavement is to reunite with them after his own death in the eternity that would resemble his life with them before.²⁹¹ However, time passes, memories fade away, and indifference replaces passion. Marcel learns that he will forget his current sorrows, that he will love again and that his new love will bring about new pains and new anxieties and so on. Marcel feels himself responsible for how his loved ones lived and died, and this feeling translates into guilt and regret that overcomes Marcel whenever he is reminded of their

²⁹¹ Benjamin in fact distinguishes two forms of happiness – hymnic and elegiac – that exist side by side in the Proustian world: ‘There is a dual will to happiness, a dialectics of happiness: a hymnic and an elegiac form. The one is the unheard-of, the unprecedented, the height of bliss; the other, the eternal repetition, the eternal restoration of the original, the first happiness. It is this elegiac idea of happiness – it could also be called Eleatic – which for Proust transforms existence into a preserve of memory. To it he sacrificed in his life friends and companionship, in his works plot, unity of characters, the flow of the narration, the play of imagination’. See Benjamin, *Illuminations. The Image of Proust*, p. 199-200.

mortality, but then this feeling gets forgotten as totally and peacefully as the dead

themselves:

Et c'est notre plus juste et plus cruel châtement de l'oubli si total, paisible comme ceux des cimetières, par quoi nous nous sommes détachés de ceux que nous n'aimons plus, que nous entrevoyions ce même oubli comme inévitable à l'égard de ceux que nous aimons encore. (IV, AD I: 64)

In his literary ambition, Marcel is genuinely worried that his writing does not offer any redemption to the dead:

Et certes il n'y aurait pas que ma grand-mère, pas qu'Albertine, mais bien d'autres encore dont j'avais pu assimiler une parole, un regard, mais qu'en tant que créatures individuelles je ne me rappelais plus; un livre est un grand cimetière où sur la plupart des tombes on ne peut plus lire les noms effacés. (IV, TR: 482)

But, in his sorrow, Marcel is also consumed with fear that if the dead continue to live somewhere, they will know how cruelly and selfishly they are both remembered and forgotten (IV, AD I: 92). Here Marcel's reflection echoes both Derrida's concern about faithfulness in mourning and Jankélévitch's problem with how the living take care to possess the lives of their dead when their stories are posthumously rearranged and explained to conform to the understanding and to suit the sensibilities of the living. Indeed, like Derrida, whose belief in the singularity of every loss sets him in search for the right means to preserve the otherness of the dead loved ones, the Proustian narrator ponders the same questions of the seriality, the finiteness and therefore the unfaithfulness of his mourning experiences. Proust in *La Recherche*, like Jankélévitch in his philosophical magnum opus on death, refuses to exclude the dead loved ones from the mourning process, and the phenomenon of involuntary mourning demonstrates Proust's contempt for performance-like grief that is more related to custom and habit than the genuine expression of loss.

Nevertheless, according to Deleuze, there is more to love, life and death than the eternal repetition of the same, but it might be that the only means to capture it is

involuntary memory with its rich and intense emotions and sensations. Deleuze's theory of repetition and difference provides a compelling explanation of Marcel's philosophy with regard to history and the conventional understanding of time. For the Proustian narrator, involuntary memory is not a moral barometer - it is just what it is: it offers a rare glimpse of the past-in-general, i.e. non-chronological time, that is absolutely inaccessible otherwise.

III

**THE ETHICS OF MOURNING IN THE NARRATION OF THE SELF: ANDREI
TARKOVSKY**

Andrei Tarkovsky conceives memory as a derivative of conscience and complements his Bergsonism with a morality that, he claims, is inherent in time: what many of Tarkovsky's characters recollect and re-experience in their present is produced by the guilt for their actions in the past. In his creative and theoretical works, Tarkovsky insists that memories can and sometimes must remain the function of conscience while time is an ethical realm that both enables the existence of conscience and memory and ensures that they interact with each other. For instance, in *Sculpting in Time* (1986), Tarkovsky talks about time in a manner that binds these three notions - time, conscience and memory - together: 'Bereft of memory, a person becomes the prisoner of an illusory existence; falling out of time he is unable to seize his own link with the outside world - in other words he is doomed to madness'²⁹². For Tarkovsky, time, conscience and memory merge or even dissolve in one another so that we learn, feel and behave as beings capable of morality: 'Time in which a person lives gives him an opportunity of knowing himself as a moral being, engaged in the search for the truth'²⁹³. Therefore, it is usually either the past that chases Tarkovsky's characters to confront them with their moral flaws and depravities as it happens in *Solaris*, or his characters peruse their past in search of atonement in the present as in *Mirror*. Either way, the characters' recollections and reconstructions of the past are stimulated by their conscience because, according to Tarkovsky, when we turn time back through conscience, we realise ourselves as moral beings: 'Given any effect, we constantly go back to its

²⁹² See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, pp. 57-8.

²⁹³ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 58.

source, its causes - in other words, we could be said to be turning time back through conscience'²⁹⁴.

In this chapter, we will discuss how Tarkovsky's characters do not simply recollect their past experiences but grieve for them as if their past is forever lost to them, as if it can never be recovered and relived. For instance, in *Solaris*, the past seems to come back and offer reconciliation, but it slips away unchanged while the main character is still left to mourn for his loved ones abandoned by him *then* and for those forsaken by him *now*. In *Mirror*, whereas the narrator's childhood memories and dreams become the expression of his mourning for the blissful times of innocence, promise and endless possibilities, the narrator's reconstruction of his mother's past in his imagination anticipates the mourning for the loved one that is yet to come. Similarly, we will show how the collective past that is summoned by Tarkovsky's characters from the citations of works of art or documentary footage speaks of perpetual suffering, death, sorrow and the eternal return but only in terms of sacrifice and immortality. In Tarkovsky's oeuvre, though the lyricism of memories, dreams and sensations is always accompanied by the intimation of death and mourning, it is still replete with hope and optimism. We selected *Solaris* and *Mirror* for our discussion because these two films are arguably the most comprehensive artistic representation of their author's philosophy on the significance of mourning in the way we relate to the other.

²⁹⁴ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, pp. 57-9.

Solaris

The screenplay for *Solaris* (1972) is an adaptation of the science fiction novel *Solaris* (1961) by Polish author Stanislaw Lem. Andrei Tarkovsky collaborated with Fridrikh Gorenshiteyn on changing Lem's narrative to better fit his own understanding of the main idea in the novel. As a result, the setting and unfolding of the story in Tarkovsky's film version differ from those of its literary counterpart. In the film, the main protagonist, psychologist Chris Kelvin, spends his last day on Earth before embarking on an interstellar journey to the scientific station orbiting a planet in the form of an ocean of liquid gas, Solaris. *Solaristics*, a science created to investigate this strange intruder into the solar system, has barely made any progress, and Chris is called to determine whether the mission should continue. Before his departure, Chris visits his father's dacha where another cosmonaut, Burton, is invited to give Chris his account of the events. During Burton's mission to Solaris some time before, two of his co-pilots did not return from their descent into the ocean, and while attempting to rescue them, Burton encountered sights of an enchanted garden and a monstrously big replica of a baby. Chris appears sceptical about Burton's report and the entire mission in general.

On the station, Chris meets the two scientists, Snaut and Sartorius and learns that the third scientist and his old friend, Gibarian, has committed suicide. The station is run-down and desolate, Snaut and Sartorius seem cold and secretive, and the videotape left by Gibarian is full of premonitions. Soon, to his horror, Chris's late wife Hari emerges from nowhere. Chris attempts to send her off in a rocket, but she reappears. When Chris locks her in his room to go meet with his colleagues, she badly injures herself but then heals her wounds before his eyes. Snaut and Sartorius explain that she is composed of neutrinos. She is the exact copy of Chris's dead wife except for her atomic constitution and amnesia.

Chris's private conversations with Hari give us details of their life together with bouts of quarrels, unhappiness, Chris's eventual departure, and Hari's suicide. Whereas the other scientists on the station are hostile and even cruel towards Hari, Chris adopts a very different attitude: He recognises his dead wife in Hari and vows to stay with her forever. Hari tries to kill herself to free Chris but comes back to life. Finally, Chris gets ill, and when he wakes up after a delirious dream, Snaut tells him that Hari is no more and reads out her farewell letter. The film ends with a vision of Chris's return home, but the camera glides to reveal his father's house on an island surrounded by the ocean of Solaris.

Repetition and Conscience: Memory founded on Guilt

In his interview given in the early stages of making *Solaris*, Tarkovsky explains his understanding of Chris as a character: The filmmaker says that he is interested in telling the story of a man who repents his past and therefore wishes to relive it in order to mend it.²⁹⁵ Chris seems to find himself in the same situation and posed with the same question as Sartre's characters in *Les Jeux sont faits* (1943): 'If we were given a second chance, could we revisit the scenes of our failures and transform them into successes, could we learn from our mistakes and lucidly re-model the world in the form of our desires, or are we condemned only to fail again, to make the same mistakes twice over?'²⁹⁶. Tarkovsky's film sets out the same challenge for his main character Chris Kelvin and, Le Fanu suggests, 'dreams a kind of utopian reconciliation between Kelvin and [his dead wife] Hari'²⁹⁷. The science-fictional figure of Solaris, an external or *other* power that accelerates and intensifies mnemonic processes in the characters, seems to be employed by Tarkovsky to

²⁹⁵ See Olga Surkova, *With Tarkovsky and About Tarkovsky* (Moscow: Raduga, 2005), p. 40 [In Russian]; Ольга Суркова, *С Тарковским и о Тарковском* (Москва: Радуга, 2005), с. 40.

²⁹⁶ See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, p. 44.

²⁹⁷ See Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 59.

defy the physical laws of time and space and, above all, to create an allegory of ever present ethical tension between the self and alterity.

The power of *Solaris* makes the innermost traumatic fantasies of the station inhabitants materialise, roam freely within the spacecraft and psychologically harass them, offenders now turned victims. Chris, Snaut and Sartorius see their own traumas and those of one another take on a human form. Their personal traumas are thus exposed to the public eye, but this is not what renders them unbearable to their owners. Skakov notes that ‘the phantoms on the planet Solaris do not follow the well-trodden path of the science-fiction genre and are not presented as monstrous figures’²⁹⁸. He further suggests that if there is monstrosity, it lies in their resemblance to humans and their unbearable presence around their victims. Reminiscent of the setup in Sartre’s *Huis Clos* (1944) where everyone falls prey to the insufferable judgment by the look of the other, the drama of *Solaris* is nevertheless different. The horror that these fantasies produce in Gibarian, who consequently kills himself, and initially in Chris are due to the situation of no exit from their own internal judge that Solaris transforms into a constant and pitiless censor. As Skakov points out, ‘[t]here is no blood spilt or violence committed by the creatures - that is, created beings - of Solaris, since their cruelty lies in the mere fact of their existence’²⁹⁹. Chris suggests that Gibarian is dead not because of fear but because of his shame. Chris doubts that his friend’s death is prompted by the dread of being persecuted by his fantasy but thinks that his suicide is motivated by his guilt instead. In the film, Tarkovsky takes the liberty of replacing the over-sexualised image of a woman as Gibarian’s haunting fantasy in Stanislaw Lem’s original with the image of an innocent little girl.³⁰⁰ Gibarian may be punished by his remorseful conscience according to the proverbial ‘Woe to the man who

²⁹⁸ See Nariman Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky* (London - New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), p. 89.

²⁹⁹ See Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky*, p. 89.

³⁰⁰ Perhaps, in addition to not fitting the general philosophical idea behind his film, Tarkovsky did not believe that being haunted by a fantasy of an exaggeratedly sensual, physically grotesque woman could push one over the edge to take one’s own life.

offends a small child'. The narrative does not give any straightforward answers with regard to the nature of Gibarian's offence; it however strongly suggests some act of great shame that lurks in his conscience.

Chris believes that when faced with his shame, reminded of it every second, one can no longer bear it, one cannot live with it. It appears that the energy of Solaris evokes in those exposed to it the fantasies that cannot be forgotten, repressed, pushed away from consciousness, or replaced by some guilt-suppressing euphemisms. The fantasies are so obsessive and unendurable that suicide feels like the only recourse. Solaris amplifies the other's painful presence within the self and offers no escape from it. Chris considers suicide too: at some point, he reaches for a gun but Hari, sleeping next to it, suddenly pushes it away with her foot. Later, Chris comes to realise that these station apparitions represent rather a grace than a curse imposed on them by the unknown. They may equally be their personal hell or purgatory: The images of the ocean's reddish bubbling and boiling surface with some snapshots of a luscious garden beneath it are indeed evocative of the biblical symbols. Chris however chooses to believe in the benevolence of Solaris, in the fact that its energy will bring about positive changes in the psyche of those exposed to it. Chris thus proclaims with solemn sadness: 'Shame is the feeling that will save humanity'.

Unlike Gibarian, Chris comes to accept his shame and his guilt-produced fantasy. In fact, Chris begins to feel responsible for the fantasy of his dead wife Hari and wish to live with it on the station for the rest of his life. Chris's feelings resonate with Marcel's in *La Recherche* when a year after his grandmother's burial, the Proustian narrator finds himself overwhelmed with such pity and regret that, Marcel claims, if reunited with his beloved grandmother, he would live with her in happiness forever. Chris also learns to love his fantasy, although he never loved the earthly prototype. The lack of love, Chris believes, caused his wife's suicide: 'She must have felt that I did not truly love her'. Perhaps, Chris's infatuation with the fantasy Hari can be related to Derrida's idea that 'it is in the re-

presentation of the dead that the power of the image is exemplary'³⁰¹. No matter, Chris comes to realise that the fantasy Hari represents his chance to make amends for his past and appease his conscience. He therefore stops his attempts to shun Hari but engages more and more with the memories and fantasies that haunt him. Again, the Tarkovskian character's position echoes the Proustian narrator's: like Marcel, who wants to endure his suffering for as long as possible in order to maintain an authentic connection to his late grandmother, Chris also embraces his shame and appears determined to face his guilt and suffer for it to stay with Hari. In fact, Chris's relationship with the fantasy of his dead wife goes through stages according to the Derridean concept of hospitality: from being a violent *visitation* first, a welcome *guest* later and an integral *invitation* in the end.³⁰² For Tarkovsky, the interaction with the otherness of Hari might produce various consequences but they are entirely up to Chris's conscience. Maya Turovskaya suggests that Tarkovsky creates his character Chris in the tradition of Russian literature as *a martyr of conscience*:

In the art of our country and time there have been many heroes who have had the courage to overcome suffering, but fewer who have had the courage to suffer for their guilt and that of others.³⁰³

Solaris gives Chris a second chance through the fantasy Hari, and Chris takes it. The fantasy of Hari then functions as a mediator between Chris and his dead wife and sets up a situation of conditional forgiveness that, in Derrida's terms, demands an apology, repentance from the guilty and a pardon, reconciliation from the victim.³⁰⁴ Chris repents by undertaking to kill himself symbolically - in the act of self-sacrifice for the sake of the other - instead of committing suicide: He decides to stay with Hari on the station indefinitely and therefore gives up all he loves on Earth. In the end, the fantasy Hari, just like her earthly model, kills herself to free Chris, and in this sense Chris's history with his

³⁰¹ See Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 148.

³⁰² See Derrida, *De l'hospitalité*.

³⁰³ See Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, p. 58.

³⁰⁴ See Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 42, 51.

wife repeats itself in his relationship with Hari. However, Chris's failure to change his past matters very little as long as Chris behaves morally, or, as Hari puts it, 'behaves humanely in circumstances that are inhumane'. Hence, in Tarkovsky's moral drama that *Solaris* is, 'Kelvin tries to relive his past, but, alas, he fails to correct it. It is irreversible in the same way as are those emotional traumas that we sometimes cause, without intending them, in our loved ones'³⁰⁵. For Tarkovsky, forgiving is an ideal that can never be attained but that always remains a rupture, a wound that refuses to heal.

The Eternal Return of the Sacrificed Other

Mark Le Fanu finds the character of Hari in *Solaris* similar to the heroine Inger in Dreyer's masterpiece film *Ordet* (1955): They both refer to 'the topos of the woman rising from the dead'³⁰⁶. Peter Green in turn compares Hari to the mythical Undine 'who sacrifices her immortality to gain a soul through the love of a human being, taking on herself all the pain of mortal existence'³⁰⁷. Although Le Fanu rather sees the greatness of both films in showing that even though this resurrection is impossible, 'the desire for it is the sublimest, most noble human impulse'³⁰⁸, and Green's vision of the character also appears just, these interpretations of the character of Hari do not explain all its complexity. Skakov gives a psychoanalytic interpretation of the character of Hari: 'Following Freud's paradigm, Hari is an uncanny being: she is homely (*heimlich*) as an image of the beloved wife, and at the same time she is un-homely (*unheimlich*) as an embodied simulacrum of the dead

³⁰⁵ Tarkovsky quoted in: See Surkova, *With Tarkovsky*, p. 41.

³⁰⁶ See Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 64.

³⁰⁷ See Peter Green, *Andrei Tarkovsky. The Winding Quest* (The Macmillan Press LTD, 1993), p. 67.

³⁰⁸ See Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 65.

person'³⁰⁹, but he does not follow this reading through due to a generally different scope of his work.

At first glance, Chris's story with the fantasy of his dead wife lends itself easily to a psychoanalytic interpretation and could even be considered illustrative of Freud's famous passages on mourning and melancholia in his seminal *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917). Indeed, it seems that Chris is experiencing mourning, which is 'commonly the reaction to the loss of a beloved person or an abstraction taking the place of the person'³¹⁰, and, consequently, his mind recreates the ideal of his lost wife in the form of the fantasy Hari. Chris also appears to be a textbook case of obsessive neurosis since his mourning clearly bears pathological traits as it manifests itself in self-reproaches 'for having been oneself responsible for the loss of the love-object, of having wanted that loss'³¹¹. In addition, he seems to suffer from the disorder of self-esteem that Freud associates with melancholia, and which results in his shameful yet truthful self-knowledge. The bewildered psychologist even tries to send the first apparition of his dead wife off in a rocket - the act that could symbolise an attempt to expunge the otherness of the dead loved one as in the effective and 'normal' forgetting stage in mourning according to the psychoanalytic reading. Also, the fantasy Hari's self-erasure could be interpreted as Chris's renunciation of his love-object through the declaration of its death that would mark the end of the process of interiorisation.³¹²

Tarkovsky is quoted as maintaining that psychoanalysis is the key form of modern charlatanism and the enemy of the spirit,³¹³ which suggests that he did not intend his works for psychoanalytic interpretation. But this is not the reason why the psychoanalytic reading of the central narrative in *Solaris* appears insufficient. To begin with, there is not a trace of

³⁰⁹ See Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky*, p. 89.

³¹⁰ See Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 203.

³¹¹ See Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 210.

³¹² See Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 217.

³¹³ See Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 66.

what Freud calls 'the indubitably pleasurable self-torment of melancholia'³¹⁴ either in Gibarian's or Chris's response to their fantasies: both suffer tremendously as a result of these apparitions. Gibarian ends his suffering by taking his own life, while Chris welcomes his suffering but only to expiate his guilt. Second, there is no evidence of the deterministic nature in the characters' behaviour or acts. In fact, in spite of the potent influence that the Ocean has over the characters' minds, they are still sovereign and wilful in their response and the extent of their engagement with the circumstances that they encounter. Third, none of the psychoanalytic defence mechanisms seems to apply or work here. For Freud, Colin Davis notes, the fact that mourning can normally be brought to an end after a certain time is 'a readily comprehensible reaction to the loss of a loved one which gradually loses its traumatic force as the grieving subject learns to detach its affect from the deceased'³¹⁵. However, according to the direction that Tarkovsky gives to the actor playing the part of Chris, his character did not actually love his wife Hari, so there should be no affect attachment for the dead Hari or any problem with the detachment of his affect from her. Chris still feels responsible for the past and Hari's death.³¹⁶ Chris's position does not correspond to Freud's melancholia either. It appears that Solaris prevents the normal process of mourning from taking place, and Chris therefore cannot heal his wounds from the loss. But it is arguable that Chris was in mourning prior to the interference of Solaris, it rather looks like his mourning is suddenly initiated by the power of the Ocean. Regardless, Chris does not seek an end to his imposed experience of shame mixed with grief. Instead, Chris adopts an attitude towards melancholia that is rather Derridean in essence: He is unable to kill the fantasy Hari and to terminate the process of grieving, Chris experiences his melancholia as an ethical obligation to the dead other.

³¹⁴ See Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 211.

³¹⁵ See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, p. 132.

³¹⁶ See Surkova, *With Tarkovsky*, p. 53.

The fantasy Hari in fact resembles a Derridean spectre: it is neither alive nor dead, neither here nor there, neither then nor now. It is a figure of absolute alterity that is, according to Derrida, always already *part of, prior to, and in excess of* the self: it is in us before us and stronger than us.³¹⁷ Hari remarks to Sartorius: ‘You treat us, “guests” as you call us, like we are something external to you, something redundant, but we are you’. According to Freud, the death of the other means that the other can go on only within the world of those who mourn her through introjection, the internalisation of memory (*Erinnerung*), or idealisation. But the spectral Hari is present both inside and outside Chris, and Chris's relation to her becomes undistinguishable from his relation to himself, therefore while mourning for his dead wife through her, he also mourns for his own self. This is the reason why the psychoanalytic model of mourning, which ‘depends upon a spatial metaphor which separates inside from outside’³¹⁸ and the self from the other, does not work or hold true here.

According to what Abraham and Torok describe in *L'Ecorce et le noyau* (1978) as the theme of the *crypt*, Chris may be repeatedly haunted due to the recurrence of the unconscious symptoms of his repressed inherited trauma. Abraham and Torok suggest that dead loved ones may inhabit those who are left behind or unaware descendants and form crypts akin to internalised secrets. The crypts then exist within the inhabited without their conscious knowledge and thrive on their life experiences. Davis comments that Abraham and Torok's contribution to the psychoanalytic theory on haunting lies ‘in their conception of the phantom as the traumatic remnant of an ancestor about whom we may have known nothing, and who survives in us because of unatoned crimes which are not our own’, and therefore ‘[i]t is not the repressed which returns to wreck our lives, but the shame of others’.³¹⁹ As far as the narrative goes, the sudden death of Chris's wife can constitute an

³¹⁷ See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, p. 143.

³¹⁸ See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, p. 143.

³¹⁹ See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, p. 82.

intense trauma that gets repressed, as it is too violent and painful to be incorporated into his conscious experience. Such traumas, usually fragmented and incoherent, then keep on haunting their victims in a repetitive yet transient manner. The fantasy Hari can indeed be a representation of Chris's traumatic experience of his wife's suicide, except this experience is recent and personal and therefore not inherited, which excludes the possibility of trans-generational communication theorised by Abraham and Torok.

Derrida's *hauntology* proposed in *Spectres de Marx* (1993) provides a different reading of Chris's case with the fantasy Hari. According to the hauntological account, the dead Hari exists solely in Chris's memory and is recreated every time Chris recollects her. In his recollection, Chris gives the dead Hari some content and thus tries to represent the unrepresentable of death or, in Jankélévitch's terms, *l'indicible*. Every recollection is a new attempt at representation and interpretation, and, for Derrida, constitutes a decision that kills any other interpretations. To Chris, the dead Hari is a text that is open for innumerable different interpretations, which may or may not be true to the text or negate the original meaning of the text altogether. However, the possibility to create new representations and interpretations or revert to already attempted ones implies that all these alternative interpretations live on as spectres returning from the past, which refuses closure, and haunting the present, which cannot entirely embrace them. So, there are as many Haris as there are interpretations of her by Chris and, consequently, there are as many sacrifices of Hari by Chris and as many returns of her spectre. In this sense, Hari's death is never definitive. Gerald Moore suggests that the Derridean notion of repetition in the eternal return should be understood in terms of the philosopher's logic of *différance*: '[W]hatever is killed refuses death, returning to haunt the site of the decision that condemned it'³²⁰. Derrida's hauntology, Moore argues, thus links sacrifice to the eternal return: '[T]hat which

³²⁰ See Gerald Moore, *Politics of the Gift: Exchanges in Poststructuralism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 181.

is sacrificed cannot be put to death and accordingly lives on in the form of the spectre, a virtual trace of the *à venir*³²¹.

Indeed, the character of Hari represents the ultimate other that appears to fit Levinas's and Derrida's account of alterity: It could not be known, comprehended or engendered. Though Chris is exposed to it *malgré soi*, it is still a blank slate to him. The spectral Hari appears immortal, immutable and absolutely vacant. She has no memories, no conception of what she is, and no knowledge of herself or what is happening to her. At her first apparition to Chris, she is devoid of any meaning. Interestingly, when Solaris creates the spectral Hari, it replicates the physical appearance of Chris's dead wife: The copy is as exact as if the spectral Hari came off the photograph that Chris finds among his mementos. Even the pattern of her dress in that photo is diligently reproduced, except Chris is unable to undo it in any way but by cutting it with scissors: This godlike brain that the scientists suspect Solaris is can imitate the look of anything but does not fill it with meaning and purpose.

Chris receives Hari's *visitation* unwillingly at first but later he fully *invites* her into his life. The spectral Hari, simple and guileless, entirely dependent on Chris in the beginning of her existence on the station, eventually develops into a seemingly self-sufficient being. When Sartorius shouts at her that 'Hari is no more! She's dead! You are her mechanical reproduction, a matrix', she replies: 'Yes, perhaps. But I'm becoming human and feel no less than you do. I can already get by without him. I love him. I am human'. Chris opens up to the otherness of Hari, but his openness is mediated through his own experiences and thus remains hostage to them. In the light of Derridean hauntology, in spite of Chris's willingness to engage with alterity, the spectral Hari is shaped and therefore limited by Chris's experiences with his wife. Likewise, his dead wife is now, to paraphrase Sartre, a prey of the living Chris, and it is Chris who now decides how to recall or to forget her,

³²¹ See Moore, *Politics of the Gift*, p. 181.

what meaning to give to her words and to her acts. As a result, Chris's mind, consciously or unconsciously, creates the spectral Hari in the image of what he wishes her to be - loving, caring and, incidentally, sacrificial to the point of self-erasure for his sake. Hence, the spectral Hari's persistence in her claim to be and, later, in her need and desire to be real is no more than Chris's own will to have the spectre recur and haunt him.

Snaut remarks to Chris: 'The longer she is with you, the more human she is'. The process of the spectral Hari's transformation is referred to as her 'humanisation': Though she remains the materialisation of Chris's fantasy and is still composed of neutrinos, being with Chris 'humanises' her as she learns to love and suffer with him, acquires his ideas and ideals, inherits his notions of shame and guilt. Turovskaya comments on the spectral Hari's transformation in this way:

One cannot be a human being without knowing 'love for the graves of our ancestors'. [...] A short piece of film from Earth [that Chris shows to Hari] preserves something both intimate and unrepeatable, but which belongs to the whole of humanity. This is the poet's 'bonfire smoke', the 'bending image of the mother', and the 'sky - a book like any other' of which Aleksandr Blok wrote. But this, the 'saving bitterness of homesickness', is not enough. Hari also learns the difficult business of conscience.³²²

In the process of her transformation, the spectral Hari comes to realise that she is but a difference within Chris that is amplified by Solaris and that she does not belong in Chris's world. For one, she could never exist on Earth, and to live with her, Chris must never return home and therefore sacrifice for her sake all he holds dear. Therefore, the spectral Hari's suicide can be interpreted as the culmination of her humanisation: If to be truly human is to be able to sacrifice the self for the sake of the other, then 'by sacrificing herself, she has achieved human stature'³²³. However, if everything that happens to the spectral Hari takes place in Chris's mournful imagination, then her transformation is in actuality but Chris's: It is he who learns to love and to grieve, who now knows compassion and guilt, who becomes humane and thus humanises himself. So the outcome of Chris's

³²² See Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, pp. 56-7.

³²³ See Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, pp. 56-7.

openness to alterity is unexpected but positive and in line with Derrida's philosophy of responsibility to the other as opposed to the psychoanalytic theory of crypts. Davis claims that: 'For Abraham and Torok the phantom inevitably lies, because to hide the truth is the entire purpose motivating its return; for Derrida what is vital is to remain open to an encounter with the unstable, unassimilated spectre because it is through such an encounter that something previously unheard of might occur'³²⁴.

The question whether it is the spectral Hari who sacrificed herself for Chris's sake or Chris's mind that sacrificed Hari becomes rhetorical. Chris attempts to take responsibility for the spectral Hari and thus give priority to the otherness of the figure of the ghost. To paraphrase Derrida, Chris tries to learn to live differently but better and justly with the other who remains suspended between life and death. To learn to live with spectres is precisely what Derrida's hauntology appeals for:

Le temps de l' 'apprendre à vivre', un temps sans présent tuteur, reviendrait à ceci, l'exorde nous y entraîne : apprendre à vivre *avec* les fantômes, dans l'entretien, la compagnie ou le compagnonnage, dans le commerce sans commerce des fantômes. À vivre autrement, et mieux. Non pas mieux, plus justement. Mais *avec* eux. Pas d'*être-avec* l'autre, pas de *socius* sans cet *avec-la* qui nous rend l'*être-avec* en général plus énigmatique que jamais. Et cet être-avec les spectres serait aussi, non seulement mais aussi une *politique* de la mémoire, de l'héritage et des générations.³²⁵

No matter if Chris succeeds at the task of learning to live with the otherness of a spectre, Tarkovsky appears to be exclusively concerned with the humanistic project of reconciliation by means of acceptance and love. For Tarkovsky, because such reconciliation between the living and the dead in the world of men is unattainable, all we can do is mourn our loss: On the one hand, the relationship between the living and the dead seems impossible but, on the other hand, it refuses closure because of the unfulfilled responsibility that the living always have before the dead. Tarkovsky emphasises that there is no other way about it:

³²⁴ See Davis, *Haunted Subjects*, p. 84.

³²⁵ See Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, pp. 14-5.

When we mourn the loss of those we hold dear it's because we realise that we will never again have the possibility of asking their forgiveness for all of our sins against them. We cry at their gravesides, not because we feel bad for ourselves. Because we can no longer be forgiven.³²⁶

The Return to the Happy Space

The beginning of *Solaris* reproduces the ambience of 'metaphysical incommunicability' in one of Carpaccio's paintings (The Return of the Ambassadors) in which the characters seem completely self-absorbed and thus oblivious to their surroundings.³²⁷ In the film, Chris is at his childhood house sitting by the garden table in the pouring rain - the water is flowing on the table, drumming in the cups filled with tea and streaming down his face - but he does not notice or react to any of this. Chris is about to embark on the mission that will cost him all he loves. This farewell scene is that of Chris's alienation, the beginning of his venture into the unknown that will go hand in hand with his interminable, inconsolable and irreconcilable regret for the loss that could be only found in nostalgia and mourning.

It is widely known: a few significant alterations to the story and its exposition that were Tarkovsky's input to Stanislaw Lem's purely science-fictional novel led to a heated confrontation between the two artists which almost ended in Lem's disowning the film.³²⁸ In fact, Lem's main objective in his literary *Solaris* consists in depicting and discussing challenges and limitations that modern science faces in its exploratory assault on other forms of being that are, as in this specific case, alien to human existence. The novelist's priority is the apparent incompatibility of epistemology and ethics in science; his story in its entirety unfolds in space. While Tarkovsky does recognise Lem's conception, he feels that the discussion should be expanded to the realm of human relationships where the same

³²⁶ See *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, ed. Gianvito, p. 47.

³²⁷ See *About Tarkovsky*, ed. Tarkovskaya, p. 165.

³²⁸ See Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, pp. 53, 67-8.

struggle between what can be understood and what always remains out of reach (be it physical, cognitive or emotive), between the self and the other, takes precedence. The director decides to transfer the domain of the principal conflict in *Solaris* to the plane of interactions between the self and the other. As a result, his film is much less interested in impressing the viewer with futurism or exhibiting startling technological inventions but instead focuses on man and his morality.³²⁹ Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, unlike Stanislaw Lem's, begins and ends with the main hero Chris Kelvin in the birthplace of his childhood memories - his parental house in the countryside.

One of the essential scenes in the film shows Chris and Hari watching the video that he brought with him from Earth on his scientific mission to the station orbiting the mysterious planet Solaris. The footage gives an abstract of Chris's life before: There are images of his mother, father, dog, childhood home and his late wife, taken out of various contexts but woven together in a singular narrative by Chris's selective memory. The recollections of the main character create the imagery of his, in Bachelard's words³³⁰, *happy space* that consists of cherished spaces and spaces of protection for which Chris longs and which represents the very habitat for his selfhood. The recurrent image of a parental house that many of Tarkovsky's heroes see in their dreams, recollections and reveries (especially emphasised in *Mirror*) symbolises those sacred intimate spaces where their being originates, where it seeks shelter and where it goes to rest. This short video indeed becomes an allegory of what makes Chris's life meaningful and endearing. Tarkovsky makes the beginning and the ending in *Solaris* reproduce the scenes of the main character's return home - the repeated reminder that this is the source and the meaning but also the salvation of his life - and reiterates Dostoyevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*:

You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory, especially a memory of childhood,

³²⁹ Tarkovsky quoted in: See Surkova, *With Tarkovsky*, p. 45.

³³⁰ See Gaston Bachelard, *La Terre et les rêveries du repos* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1948).

of home. [...] If a man carries many such memories with him into life, he is safe to the end of his days, and if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us.³³¹

Importantly, Chris's video comprises images that are of purely subjective value and those that refer to the cultural heritage of humanity: for instance, there is a shot of Chris as a boy surrounded by his loved ones juxtaposed with the images of Bruegel's painting *The Hunters in the Snow* (1565) that linger before the viewer together with the solemn sounds of Bach's *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ* (1732). Tarkovsky finds Pieter Bruegel, a Flemish artist, very Russian in his manner of expression, and his art in Tarkovsky's works along with the images of a childhood house becomes the metonymy of Russia, a symbol of nostalgia³³². Bach's chorale prelude, often cited as a supplication in the times of spiritual weakness or despair, further underscores the feeling of longing for home. Some commentators on Tarkovsky's work suggest that the artist's insistence on references to art are reflective of his efforts to establish cinema as a serious and mature form of art that is fully independent from other genres³³³. However, it seems to serve another purpose as well: It embeds Chris's personal story within the history of humanity and relates his individual memory to the memory of humankind that spans across cultures and generations. For this reason, the images of his characters' nostalgia for Earth - from the station library thoroughly assembled and detailed by Tarkovsky himself with antique furniture and candelabra, folios of ancient manuscripts, a porcelain Chinese dragon statuette, and Pushkin's death mask to their various personal items such as a generic milk glass brought from home, a pot with a feeble plant in it or, Gibarian's invention, strips of paper attached to a ventilator to simulate the rustling of leaves in the wind - become the markers of what is familiar and dear to them as humans and separate their known world

³³¹ See Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (Penguin Classics, 2003), Epilogue, 3.

³³² See *Eduard Artemyev Interview*. Solaris. (1972) [DVD]. The Criterion Collection. Also, See *About Tarkovsky*, ed. Tarkovskaya, p. 165.

³³³ See *About Tarkovsky*, ed. Tarkovskaya, p. 165.

from the unknown and unwelcoming planet that they intend to explore. These meaningful images of nostalgia are in stark contrast with the sterile and cold images of the rest of the station fallen into decay and disintegration that betray its inhabitants' inability to make it their own and evidence the failure of their investigatory approach. It seems that Tarkovsky needs the unknown, other nature of Solaris to make his characters fully realise the tragedy of their entrapment in the midst of it and the viewer feel the irony and the sacrificial aspect of such scientific mission.

Also, by showing his short film to the spectral Hari, Chris invites her into his *home space*, offers his *hospitality* to her. Chris recreates the memory of his dead wife Hari so that once all past failures and damages are recognised and mended, he could live on in peace with his spectral Hari, with his shame and guilt or, in other words, with himself. But when the spectral Hari becomes the embodiment of this memory, she also self-destructs, unable to endure being the cause of Chris's suffering, after having learned the feeling of guilt herself, and hence renders Chris more vulnerable to sorrow and guilt than ever before. Both the spectral Hari, imagined by Chris, and Chris himself respond to the situation put forth by Solaris in the same manner - they prefer to benefit the other instead of the self, they seem to open up to the other in Levinasian terms. Indeed, 'there is in Tarkovsky's sacred cinema an emphasis on the denial of the self, ego, personal desire'³³⁴. However, Chris's openness to otherness inevitably creates the tension emphasised by Derrida in his discussion of hospitality: Both letting the other in and keeping the other at bay are in a way destructive of the self. Moreover, Chris brings another moral dilemma upon himself: while choosing to stay on the station, Chris accepts his responsibility to Hari and at the same time foregoes his indebtedness to his other loved ones that he left on Earth – in particular, his elderly father; but by abandoning his mission and thereby his spectral Hari, he ignores his responsibility to his dead wife. Either option is a sacrifice of one at the expense of the

³³⁴ See Jeremy Mark Robinson, *The Sacred Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky* (Crescent Moon Publishing, 2006), p. 269.

other and, according to Derrida, could not be justified.³³⁵ Chris's sacrifice can indeed be conceived in Derridean terms as the sacrifice of the virtual life of an *other* that is precluded from coming into existence. Gerald Moore comments on the distinction that Derrida gives to true sacrifice over the so-called biological sacrifice: 'What is sacrificed is not just the actual, but the virtuality that is foreclosed from actuality by the decision that names what we recognise as existing. Undecidability means that the act of making decisions is inherently sacrificial, necessarily entailing the loss of the singular and inexchangeable'³³⁶. In any case, Chris has no choice but to mourn - without consolation or conclusion - for both the other and the self since the self is always already inhabited by this other.

Andrei Tarkovsky writes in his diaries: '[*Solaris*] ends with what is the most precious for a person, and at the same time the simplest thing of all, and the most available to everybody: ordinary human relationships, which are the starting point of man's endless journey'³³⁷. After all, Chris decides to stay on the station and continue the studies of the unknown to further *Solaristics* (Tarkovsky's own interpretation of the ending).³³⁸ Then, the final sequence of *Solaris*, that of Chris's return home, be it another dream or delusion inspired by the Ocean and enacted by Chris's mind, captures the meaning of all our mourning experiences according to Tarkovsky - sorrow founded on loss - we indeed love what we can lose and lose only what we love. The ending of the film is a reconstruction of Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal Son* that tells the story of Chris's imaginary return home when wretched and desperate he kneels before his father in repentance, asking for forgiveness, meanwhile the father, his hands tenderly posed on his son's shoulders, looks absent and estranged - can the dead grant mercy and forgiveness to the living? Tarkovsky

³³⁵ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 98.

³³⁶ See Moore, *Politics of the Gift*, p. 181.

³³⁷ See Andrei Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time: Diaries, 1970-86*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (Faber & Faber, 2002), p. 364.

³³⁸ See Surkova, *With Tarkovsky*, p. 46.

does not believe so, but his *Solaris* testifies to the artist's passionate faith in the transformative power of mourning.

Tarkovsky in *Mirror*

When interviewed about his new project,³³⁹ Andrei Tarkovsky, in his early forties at the time, talks about his intention to make a film in which he would seek to take responsibility for his deeds in the past and thus confirms his undiminished interest in both how time affects one's morality and how morality can change one's relation to time. As we have seen, Tarkovsky explores the same subject in *Solaris*, but in *Mirror* he moves his exploration of the problematic from the science-fictional genre to the style of personal storytelling. Tarkovsky is unequivocal about the autobiographical sources of *Mirror*: The characters of the narrator, his mother Maria, his wife Natalia and his son Ignat are based on Tarkovsky himself and his family. The narrator's father is drawn on Arseny Tarkovsky, a renowned Russian poet, who also recites his poems over the key scenes in *Mirror*. Besides, in *Sculpting in Time*, Tarkovsky underlines that *Mirror* is the story of the old house in the Russian countryside where he was born, where he spent his childhood, where his father and mother lived when they were in love and to which his memories and dreams gravitate. The house featured in *Mirror* is rebuilt on the foundations that survived after Tarkovsky's childhood house had fallen into ruins. It is crucial for Tarkovsky that the house in the film looks exactly as it appears in Tarkovsky's old familial photographs and feels in every way as it resurges in his memory. In constant search for authenticity in his work, Tarkovsky brings his mother to the site where the reconstructed house stands as it did forty years

³³⁹ See Surkova, *With Tarkovsky*, p. 119.

earlier and observes her reaction: 'What she experienced was a return to her past [...] The house awoke in her the feelings which the film was intended to express'³⁴⁰.

However, the predominantly autobiographical content of the film alienates many of Tarkovsky's colleagues who, in Tarkovsky's words, launched 'a bitter attack' on him accusing him of immodesty and desire to make a film about himself.³⁴¹ Even Tarkovsky's cameraman and collaborator on all his films to date, Vadim Yusov, refuses to shoot *Mirror* after he reads the script. Tarkovsky recollects: 'He [Yusov] said he found the frankly autobiographical nature of the work distasteful from an ethical point of view; he was embarrassed and irritated by the unduly personal, lyrical tone of the whole narrative, and by the author's desire to talk exclusively about himself [...]'³⁴². Without denying the personal aspect of *Mirror*, Tarkovsky rejects the criticism of self-indulgence and ostentation:

Mirror was not an attempt to talk about myself, not at all. It was about my feelings towards people dear to me, about my relationship with them; my perpetual pity for them and my own inadequacy - my feeling of duty left unfulfilled. The episodes the narrator remembers at an extreme moment of crisis cause him pain up to the last minute, fill him with sorrow and anxiety.³⁴³

The criticism of the filmmaker and his work continues after the release of *Mirror*. Yet, Tarkovsky finds solace in positive responses to *Mirror* from his audience. In *Sculpting in Time*, he quotes letters addressed directly to him, in which his viewers tell him how the content of *Mirror* resonates with their own experiences and makes them relive their past. It seems that *Mirror*, one of the director's most intricate and finest films with regard to its exposition and most poetic and personal for its expression - a fusion of sensations, remembrances, reconstructions of the past and dream imagery that is put together through

³⁴⁰ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 132.

³⁴¹ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 133.

³⁴² See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 135.

³⁴³ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 134.

all kind of disjunctions, digressions, and ellipses of images - found its way to the hearts of those least professionally familiar with the language of cinema.

Tarkovsky talks extensively about the history of *Mirror* in *Sculpting in Time*. He uses the example of *Mirror* to point out that to him as an artist any film is a result of a long and comprehensive search for means to express the truth of life. Tarkovsky admits to rewriting the script for *Mirror* several times, adding scenes and characters in the process of shooting it and making numerous significant alterations in the actual structure of the film in order to make it come to life. His account of making *Mirror* shows that, to Tarkovsky, any scenario is 'a fragile, living, ever-changing structure, and that a film is only made at the moment when work on it is finally completed'³⁴⁴. Tarkovsky's filmmaking process invites a comparison with Proust's creating of *La Recherche* that involved much editing, compiling and shuffling of the written material. Proust keeps rewriting *La Recherche* even after the publication is agreed at Grasset: Such external circumstances as the war and the death of Alfred Agostinelli have a great effect on the novelist and therefore find their reflection in his oeuvre. Proust admits that by means of his multiple new insertions that he calls 'ajoutages' into the already written text he reinfuses the text with a 'surnourriture':

L'inflation des ajouts a conduit la jeune gouvernante de Proust, Céleste Albaret, à inventer l'ingénieux système des 'paperoles', bandelettes de papier qu'elle collait au bord des pages, repliées en accordéon et raboutées les unes aux autres - les plus longues atteignant deux mètres de long. *La Recherche* a ainsi été composée comme une marqueterie, l'écrivain juxtaposant des morceaux d'époques différentes.³⁴⁵

Tarkovsky's working on *Mirror* also suggests certain congruity with the Freudian notion of mourning as a process of *Trauerarbeit* or 'working through' a loss actively in addition to experiencing it emotionally. Indeed, both the act and the feeling of mourning can be found in the idea of *Mirror*, its structure and its narrative. Tarkovsky sheds light on how the film evolved.

³⁴⁴ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 131.

³⁴⁵ Jean Montenot, 'Un poète dans la pénombre', *Lire, Hors-Série* 8, p. 28.

A few years prior to making the film, Tarkovsky decides to put on paper the memories that plague him: ‘It was to be a novella about the war-time evacuation, and the plot was to be centred on the military instructor at my school. Then I found that the subject was too slight to develop into a novella, and I never wrote it. But the incident, which made a deep impression on me as a child, continued to torment me, and lived on in my memory until it had become a minor episode of the film’³⁴⁶. The first version of the script for the film, Tarkovsky explains, is ‘a simple piece of recollection, full of elegiac sadness and nostalgia for my childhood’, which needs a key idea ‘that would raise it above the level of lyrical memoir’³⁴⁷. Later, another version of the script is written, and Tarkovsky recalls: ‘I wanted to intersperse the childhood episodes of the novella with fragments of straight interview with my mother, thus juxtaposing two comparative perceptions of the past (mother's and narrator's)’³⁴⁸. In the end, having realised that such structure would still have been too direct and unsubtle, Tarkovsky replaces the planned interviews with his mother with acted scenes. In addition, in the attempt to better translate the past experiences of his loved ones to the screen, Tarkovsky looks for newsreels that can recreate the atmosphere of the time they lived in. He goes through thousands of metres of film before he discovers the documentary sequence of the Soviet Army crossing Lake Sivash during World War II: ‘When, on the screen before me, there appeared, as if coming out of nothing, these people shattered by the fearful, inhuman effort of that tragic moment of history, I knew that this episode had to become the centre, the very essence, heart, nerve of this picture that had started off merely as my intimate lyrical memories’³⁴⁹. Finally, when the film is almost entirely shot with only some thirteen minutes of screen time to go, Tarkovsky recounts, *Mirror* still has no unified structure, it does not exist as a film.³⁵⁰ Only with the

³⁴⁶ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 129.

³⁴⁷ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 129.

³⁴⁸ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 129.

³⁴⁹ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 130.

³⁵⁰ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 131.

introduction of the narrator's wife who did not figure either in the original plan or in the script into the narrative, does the film come into existence:

We [Tarkovsky and his co-author on *Mirror* Misharin] very much liked Margarita Terekhova as the mother, but felt all the time that the role allotted her in the original script was not sufficient to bring out, or make use of, her tremendous potential. Then we decided to write some additional episodes, and she was given the role of the wife. After that we had the idea of interspersing the episodes of the author's past and present in the editing.³⁵¹

Tarkovsky's account of making *Mirror* shows how the film grew conceptually. It begins as a story of nostalgia for the early years of the narrator's life, for the times that presently constitute his past and that he relives through his childhood memories and dreams. The introduction of the narrator's mother's perspective on the years of his childhood into the story explores how the narrator's and his mother's take on the same period in the past correlate. This now becomes a story of their shared past, of the past that belongs to the son and his mother. The idea to use newsreels that bear witness to that same period in the past creates the common historical background against which the narrator and his mother, as well as millions of other people, lived their personal experiences. In this way Tarkovsky brings another kind of past into the story. This is the past that we all inherit from the generations that were here before us and that we pass on to the generations that come after us. This past remains implicated in our past, present and future. Finally, the interspersing of the narrator's past and present examines what the past is in relation to the present and highlights Tarkovsky's interest in the interaction between them and, in particular, in the way the events that happen today mirror those of the past. Furthermore, all these remembrances occur to the narrator in very singular circumstances - when he is gravely ill, possibly on his deathbed. Thus, his awareness of his own death and awaiting it at that moment stimulate related memories and give them their morbid tone.

³⁵¹ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 131.

Strange Reflections: Mirroring the Fate

Le miroir constitue un cristal tournant, à deux faces si on le rapporte au personnage adulte invisible (sa mère, sa femme), à quatre faces si on le rapporte aux deux couples visibles (sa mère et l'enfant qu'il a été, sa femme et l'enfant qu'il a). Et le cristal tourne sur lui-même, comme une tête chercheuse qui interroge un milieu opaque: Qu'est-ce que la Russie, qu'est-ce que la Russie...?³⁵²

In his work *Cinéma 2: L'image-temps* (1985), Gilles Deleuze discusses the aesthetics of Andrei Tarkovsky and defines them in relation to what he terms the *time-image* because they show temporal links that, though invisible in the *here* and *now*, refuse to be reduced to the present moment and allude to something beyond the represented. Deleuze argues that what is in the present of the cinematographic image is what this image 'represents', but not the image itself, while the image itself is the system of the relationships between its elements or, in other words, a set of relationships of time from which the present, that is variable in nature, flows. And this is how Deleuze understands the distinction that Tarkovsky makes between montage and shot when the filmmaker defines cinema by the 'pressure of time' in the shot: According to Deleuze, Tarkovsky believes that the cinematographic image should render relationships of time which cannot be seen in the represented object perceptible and visible.

Indeed, together with his aesthetic of *mirroring*, Tarkovsky's inventive use of images gives his films their rich texture that allows for the director's trademark multiplicity and diversity of perspectives and yet secures the implosion of meaning. This is especially true for *Mirror* that can be metaphorically likened, as it is by Deleuze, to a crystal, for the film indeed has many sides with respect to both the structure of its narrative and the themes that it explores. And while the film's overtly intimate content can be responsible for the rejection of *Mirror* by some, the complexity of the film's form can be blamed for *Mirror's* inaccessibility to others. However, it is the combination of these two factors - *Mirror's*

³⁵² See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 101.

autobiographical nature and its complex expression where diverse parts interrelate - that accounts for the film's appeal and relatability.

Tarkovsky's aesthetic of *mirroring* that becomes a vehicle for his philosophy in *Mirror* is based on the idea of the eternal return of the same. Introduced to modern philosophy by Nietzsche, the concept of the eternal return implies that the same life has been lived in the exactly identical manner for an infinite number of times. Then, what helps us go through this life again and again is our ability to forget it. Nietzsche asks, 'What if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you have to live once more and innumerable times more" [...]'³⁵³. According to Nietzsche, finding an answer to this *what if* would be the heaviest weight imaginable, *das schwerste Gewicht*, on man's conscience because the uninterrupted recurrence of the same that can never be exhausted in the course of successive generations suggests the futility of existence. In Russian literature, the idea of the eternal return appears in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) a few years prior to the publication of Nietzsche's works that discuss the same concept *The Gay Science* (1882) and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883). Although in *The Brothers Karamazov* the idea is formulated only in passing by Devil who visits Ivan in his delirium, it pinpoints the theory's major theses: 'Why, you keep thinking of our present earth! But our present earth may have been repeated a billion times. Why, it's become extinct, been frozen; cracked, broken to bits, disintegrated into its elements, again "the water above the firmament"', then again a comet, again a sun, again from the sun it becomes earth - and the same sequence may have been repeated endlessly and exactly the same to every detail, most unseemly and insufferably tedious'³⁵⁴.

³⁵³ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (Random House, 1974), s. 341.

³⁵⁴ See Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Karamazov Brothers* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2007), p. 724.

What Heidegger refers to as *the hypothetical question* of the eternal return of the same in order to emphasise Nietzsche's mere theorisations on the subject³⁵⁵ becomes a theme in Tarkovsky's films. The most direct reference to the question in his work is made over a decade after *Mirror* in *The Sacrifice* (1986) during the conversation between two main characters. Otto hypothesises about the course of life to Alexander: 'We hope, we wait for something, we hope and then lose hope, we near death and finally die, and - get reborn again but do not remember anything from before. And everything begins anew'. However, *Mirror* with its allusions to non-chronological time and recurrence through its discontinuous narrative and doubling of characters that belong to different generations is a definite forebear of this thought. In fact, in one of his interviews about *Mirror*, Tarkovsky states that the title was thoughtfully chosen to convey the idea of continuation and repetition in life according to which wives remind us of mothers, the same mistakes are made from generation to generation, and only experience is always singular so it cannot be inherited or transmitted but has to be lived.³⁵⁶ This idea is consistent with the Nietzschean doctrine of the eternal return of the same but even more so with Deleuze's ontological principles of repetition and difference. In his works, like Deleuze, Tarkovsky poses the same question of the unrepeatability and non-exchangeability of experience that, though caught in the cycle of never-ending repetition, has the potential to become a selective and liberating process of affirmation. There are constant allusions to it in *Solaris*, *Stalker* and *The Sacrifice*. In *Mirror*, Tarkovsky uses the aesthetic of mirroring to convey the same philosophy.

Indeed, Tarkovsky's use of the same actress (Margarita Terekhova) to play the narrator's mother Maria when she was young and his ex-wife Natalia reveals the director's concept behind *Mirror*. In one of the scenes, the narrator tells Natalia that she looks like

³⁵⁵ See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Vol. 2: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. David Farrell Krell (Harper, 1991).

³⁵⁶ See *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, ed. Gianvito, p. 44.

Maria and that in his childhood recollections his mother always has Natalia's face, to which Natalia replies that this is probably the reason why they got divorced. This alludes to the idea that the physical resemblance between Maria and Natalia is reflective of their psychological similarities, which are the cause of the correspondences in their destinies as women, mothers and wives. In another scene, when the two women look at each other through a Renaissance landscape, they *seem* to see one another in the mirror. Natalia sees herself reflected as Maria, and Maria in turn sees her image in Natalia. In addition to the allusion that Natalia's fate mirrors the fate of Maria, this scene suggests that there are two parallel conflicts in Alexei's life - with his mother and with his wife - and that, in his mind, there is a trauma which underlies both conflicts and allows for the same problems to transfer from one relationship to the other and vice versa. Alexei realises it and says that he feels pity for both Maria and Natalia.

Alexei's childhood recollections have essential features of Deleuze's notion of *reminiscence*. According to Deleuze, a reminiscence does not simply refer an actual present to a present that happened before it or a current love to an infantile love, as our lover to our mother, but it also suggests the existence of some elemental representation of all of these at once. In this representation, we can concurrently observe how the actual present fades away and how various moments of the present telescope one another.³⁵⁷ Indeed, it appears that Tarkovsky's narrator, like Proust's, follows the same repetitive pattern in his love relationships which originates in his attachment to his mother and then keeps recurring during his adult life, except Alexei does not disclose his entire amorous history in his narrative as Marcel does. Also, in Bergson's terms of the proliferation of virtual images, Maria and Natalia, Alexei's mother and wife respectively, become a virtuality of one another which underscores the resemblance between the two and yet highlights the singularity of each of them. In fact, in his work on the notion of time and

³⁵⁷ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 115.

space in Tarkovsky's films, Skakov discusses the peculiarity of the mirror to simultaneously represent and distort an object placed before it: 'It [mirror] is a natural means of displacing spatial categories. Even a straightforward reflection reverses, at the very least, the right-left axis - a mirror always reflects distortion back to the subject. In addition, the point of view in relation to the mirror (for instance, that of a camera or of an eye) inevitably tilts the reflected object; the resulting image is bound to misrepresent its physical source'³⁵⁸. Hence, even the most exact resemblance connotes difference.

The Deleuzian philosophy of repetition in love is more clearly pronounced in *Mirror*, but *Solaris* gives it a strong footing. In *Solaris*, the main character Chris repeats the love story with his dead wife in his relationship with the spectral Hari but his experience is different in quality and results in her and his 'humanisation'. The eternal return of the innumerable Hari, with the same physical appearance but with a different meaning, can be also used as a trope for Deleuze's theory: The spectral Hari is a replica of Chris's dead wife while every spectral apparition is another repetition of Hari, however Chris's love for these multiple Haris like Marcel's for his women remains the same. The theme of the elemental representation that points to Deleuze's idea that in love 'il n'y a pas de premier terme qui soit répété'³⁵⁹ is reflected in the significant physical resemblance among various Haris and Chris's mother. In addition, *Solaris* demonstrates how Deleuze's *difference* in repetition can be revealed in the works of conscience: The difference between Chris's experience with the spectral Hari and his relationship with his wife on Earth, for Tarkovsky, is determined by Chris's conscience. Thus, though the set of circumstances ultimately remains the same and keeps on recurring, Tarkovsky's position towards the eternal return is optimistic because his philosophy of time allows for moral and spiritual improvement and therefore progress as long as the repeated event is experienced differently. In this sense, Deleuze's theory of

³⁵⁸ See Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky*, p. 103.

³⁵⁹ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 28.

repetition and difference does not contradict but rather aids Tarkovsky's idea of the reversibility of time through conscience. This is how Tarkovsky comments on his idea:

Time is said to be irreversible. And this is true enough in the sense that 'you can't bring back the past', as they say. But what exactly is this 'past'? Is it what has passed? And what does 'passed' mean for a person when for each of us the past is the bearer of all that is constant in the reality of the present, of each current moment? In a certain sense the past is far more real, or at any rate more stable, more resilient than the present. The present slips and vanishes like sand between the fingers, acquiring material weight only in its recollection. King Solomon's ring bore the inscription, 'All will pass'; by contrast, I want to draw attention to how time in its moral implication is in fact turned back. Time can vanish without trace in our material world for it is a subjective, spiritual category. The time we have lived settles in our soul as an experience placed within time.³⁶⁰

This further supports the argument that Tarkovsky's philosophy in *Mirror* with the filmmaker's particular interest in non-chronological time is very close to Deleuze's theory of repetition and difference.

The idea of mirroring in the film is reinforced through the character of the narrator's son Ignat who looks identical to his father at the age of twelve years (both parts are played by the same actor Ignat Daniltsev). Several scenes show how much Alexei fears that his son's future will be nothing else but the repetition of his own life. For instance, there is an episode of Ignat's déjà-vu in his father's flat: While helping his mother Natalia to collect the change she accidentally dropped, the boy has an impression that something of the sort has happened before. Later in the film, there is a scene with Alexei, twelve years old at the time, helping his mother Maria to pick up the earrings she dropped on the floor a moment earlier. Ignat's childhood appears to mirror the childhood of Alexei and thus enables us to foretell Ignat's future. Deleuze associates the phenomenon of déjà-vu with our intuitive grasp of non-chronological time and such concepts of time as contemporaneity and coexistence. Similarly, in *Mirror*, Tarkovsky's narrator appears to experience the layered structure of time that Deleuze and Guattari (1994) call *stratigraphic* and define as the superimposition of various 'before' and 'after' moments instead of their linear succession.

³⁶⁰ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 58.

Such stratigraphic conceptualisation of time explains why in Tarkovsky's film the present does not fail to repeat the past while the past tends to truthfully intimate what is soon to become the present. Therefore, the mirroring in the stories of Alexei and Ignat, the father and his son, can be read in light of Saint Augustine's formula cited by Deleuze in *Cinéma 2*: '[I]l y a un présent du futur, un présent du présent, un présent du passé, tous impliqués dans l'événement, enroulés dans l'événement, donc simultanés, inexplicables'³⁶¹.

Thus, it can be suggested that the mirroring in the characters' lives occurs because time is layered and the distance between *then* and *now* is so minimal as to be nonexistent. Moreover, the stratigraphic nature of time makes self-narration so painful and effortful that it is almost impossible: The narrator seems to experience any significant event in the present too soon and too unexpectedly for it to be recognised and understood, and so it gets to recur and strike Alexei again and again. This elucidates the repetitiveness of the narrator's conflicts with his loved ones: The traumatic experience that underlies Alexei's relationships with his mother and his wife or, to the same extent, his relation to his son and himself, is not locatable, to paraphrase Caruth³⁶², 'in the simple violent and original event' in his past but rather consists in his constitutive inability to grasp the meaning of it, 'in the way it was precisely not known in the first instance'. In this sense, his present is more distant and incomprehensible to him than his past. Then, the exploration of the past becomes the only way to grasp and understand the fleeting and alienating present.

Hence, Tarkovsky's particular use of reflections, doubles, and echoes with the philosophical subtext of the recurrence of the same and layered time in his aesthetic expression is indeed in line with Deleuze's philosophy of repetition and difference. The Deleuzian framework for time that follows Bergson and encompasses such notions as pre-existence, coexistence and contemporaneity is also largely similar to what Tarkovsky

³⁶¹ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 132.

³⁶² See Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative and History* (John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 4.

appears to envision and communicate through the doubling of the main characters and his discontinuous non-chronological narrative style. In addition, as we will explore in more detail below, the three Bergsonian paradoxes of time that Deleuze espouses are manifest in Tarkovsky's treatment of death and especially in his attitude towards the death of the other.

Death in *Mirror*

In one of his interviews about *Mirror*, Tarkovsky explains that the film tells the story of a man who wakes up, sees his image in the mirror and gets overwhelmed with dread.³⁶³ In *Mirror*, the narrator Alexei appears on the screen only once. Bedridden, motionless, feebly muttering words to his visitors, the narrator appears near death. According to Tarkovsky, this is at this extreme point of life that Alexei finds himself at a loss. He feels that his life is almost over but nothing is done and the eternity he used to have before him is no longer. He then begins to ponder over the meaning of life. In *Mirror*, the atmosphere is thus imbued with death and its anticipation. In addition to the narrator's attempts to come to terms with his own finitude, he becomes acutely aware of the mortality of his loved ones and, furthermore, reflects on the purpose of man's existence generally as his memory brings forth the visualisations of various dramatic events from our collective past. However, death as an event is neither depicted nor represented in the film. Similarly to the hidden multivalence in relationships of time that Deleuze uncovers in Tarkovsky's time-image, death is not exhibited but is consistently implied in the narrative. In fact, when Alexei peruses his memory to explore the collective past or the past that is a part of his lived experience, and the past that he shared with his mother, the narrative can be read as his meditation on death that encompasses his discourse on death in general, the expression of his fears about his own death, and his anticipatory dread of the death of those he loves,

³⁶³ See Surkova, *With Tarkovsky*, p. 133.

respectively. In *Mirror*, death is expressed through sorrow and mourning that the narrator experiences as a result of loss, be it an actual loss or an anticipated one.

Tarkovsky's oeuvre is rich in references to literary and visual works of art or citations of music. *Mirror* is no exception. The citations of Dostoyevsky, Bruegel, Leonardo da Vinci, Vermeer and Bach are the most evident and put the narrator's recollections and story in the context of collective memory and history. However, the collective past in the narrator's remembrances is mainly represented by newsreels from the period in history that coincides with Alexei's childhood. There is a documentary footage of the civil war in Spain (the scenes of a corrida, the evacuation of children), newsreels of the ascent of a Soviet manned balloon in 1934, those that show the return of Chkalov, a cult Soviet aviator, from his glorious expedition to the North Pole in 1937, and the rare footage of Soviet soldiers crossing Lake Sivash in 1943. These documentary insertions in the narrator's recollections have a striking common feature - they bring to life events of the past that are followed by death and sorrow. Indeed, these scenes prefigure the arduous orphan life of children separated from their parents, the deaths during the ascent of the balloon, Chkalov's eventual fatal plane crash, and millions of people killed in the war. The people who perished in these events are strangers to Alexei, and their deaths, no matter how tragic, are simply instances of what Jankélévitch describes as 'death of whomever' ('la mort de n'importe qui')³⁶⁴. Their deaths should be abstract and anonymous to the narrator because they happen to people whom he does not know personally and with whom he does not have any emotional ties. According to Jankélévitch's theory, the impact of these deaths on the narrator should be that of death in the third person: Death in the third person is similar to a medical or demographic phenomenon which, essentially impersonal, should be perceived as natural, familiar and universal. Jankélévitch points out that the ordinariness of this death gets best represented in statistics that transforms human deaths into masses of

³⁶⁴ See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 16.

numerical data. This death is 'la mort sans mystère'³⁶⁵: Jankélévitch calls this kind of conceptualisation of death 'death-in-general'³⁶⁶. *Mirror* however refuses to show the impersonal aspect of death and grief that transpire in the newsreels: To the narrator, the people who lived these tragic events and died because of them are not disposable or replaceable, and their lives are not worthless. The documentary scenes seem to flash in the narrator's mourning memory, but it is implied that their ominous aura has dwelled in his consciousness since the day he was born. Tarkovsky claims that suffering and sorrow can never be meaningless and those who endure them become immortalised:

The scene [the Soviet Army crossing Lake Sivash] was about that suffering which is the price of what is known as historical progress, and of the innumerable victims whom, from time immemorial, it has claimed. It was impossible to believe for a moment that such suffering was senseless.³⁶⁷

Death in the third person is not of no consequence for Tarkovsky. In *Mirror*, Tarkovsky tends to associate this kind of death with suffering and sacrifice. In fact, suffering as a result of individual sacrifice and acts of heroism, which are especially manifest in war times, can be seen as a response to the claim of the futility of life brought about by the hypothetical recurrence of the same. The theme of sacrifice indeed dominates Tarkovsky's films. In *Ivan's Childhood*, for instance, a twelve-year old risks his life to get intelligence about Nazi manoeuvres during the war until he gets caught and killed. In *Solaris*, there is a recurring theme of sacrifice for the sake of a loved one. In *Stalker*, Tarkovsky's philosophical parable, one of the main characters, the Scientist, plans to bomb the Room (and himself together with his companions in it), which allegedly makes one's most genuine wishes come true, so that it does not fall into the hands of an ill-intending person. Finally, sacrifice is also a leitmotif in *the Sacrifice* (otherwise known as *Offret*), in which the main hero is prepared to offer everything he cherishes in hopes of saving the

³⁶⁵ See Jankélévitch, *Penser la mort?*, p. 16.

³⁶⁶ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 25.

³⁶⁷ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 130.

world. Furthermore, Tarkovsky believes that sacrifices made in everyday life are as important. For one, the mother figure in his works is usually endowed with the natural significant capacity for sacrifice. In fact, the character of the narrator's mother in *Mirror* epitomises this idea. And this is the reason why the narrator feels indebted before his mother and tormented by the thought that he will never be able to repay his mother's sacrifices for his sake. So, no matter how repetitive the course of life is, the continuity of this course can only be ensured, Tarkovsky suggests, through giving it all you can without ever looking back. In this way, death in the third person comes to represent life, the history of the humankind, and the immortality of thereof. Then, sacrifice can here stand for the Deleuzian difference that affirms the progressive power of life in the process of the recurrence of the same. Again, Tarkovsky comments on the newsreels of the Lake Sivash crossing:

People dragging themselves, knee deep in wet mud, through an endless swamp that stretched out beyond the horizon, beneath a whitish, flat sky. Hardly anyone survived. The boundless perspective of these recorded moments created an effect close to catharsis. Later I learned that the army cameraman, who had made the film, with such extraordinary penetration into the events taking place around him, had been killed on that same day.³⁶⁸

To Tarkovsky, the Lake Sivash images 'spoke of immortality, and Arseny Tarkovsky's poems were the consummation of this episode because they gave voice to its ultimate meaning'³⁶⁹:

I don't believe forebodings, nor omens
Frighten me. I do not run from slander
Nor from poison. On earth there is no death.
All are immortal. All is immortal. No need
To be afraid of death at seventeen
Nor yet at seventy. Reality and *light*
Exist, but neither death nor darkness.
All of us are on the sea-shore now,
And I am one of those who haul the nets
When a shoal of immortality comes in.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 131.

³⁶⁹ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 130.

³⁷⁰ Trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair in: See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 142.

As we have seen in the section of this chapter on *Solaris*, Tarkovsky's treatment of sacrifice or attempts for sacrifice on the part of both Chris and Hari can be logically linked to the Derridean notion of true sacrifice that goes beyond the so-called 'natural' sacrifice with putting to death of something material, tangible, or living but rather implies the sacrifice of a virtual life or the yet embodied, existent possibilities it represents. Here in *Mirror*, with its pronounced themes of the collective past and death-in-general, Tarkovsky appears to conceive sacrifice in Heideggerian³⁷¹ terms as willingness to die for the sake of an event and therefore take part in the making of history. This kind of sacrifice then can be claimed to carry positive potential within itself because such sacrifice thus offers a possibility to have an authentic relationship with being and counters the argument of the futility of life by the belief in special meaning and the fulfilment of historical destiny. Therefore, the sentiment of heroism and immortality that Tarkovsky gives to the scenes which portray sacrifice in the film is brought to the fore. It seems that Tarkovsky still preserves his faith in what Moore refers to as 'the binary sacred-profane it [sacrifice] was once charged with safeguarding'³⁷².

Thus, in *Mirror*, the narrator's personal story, which is filled with the awareness of his own finitude and that of his loved ones, is integrated within the collective past and history that are also replete with suffering, death and sorrow. The association of individual pain and collective pain in the narrative here gets marked by the melancholy of memory in never-ending grief. And even though the narrator did not personally live these experiences that resurge in his memory and the past from which these experiences are derived did not really exist for him, he finds himself in mourning for them. Here Derrida's words resound with their meaning: 'Si un passé n'existe littéralement pas, la mort non plus, seulement le

³⁷¹ See Moore, *Politics of the Gift*, p. 173.

³⁷² See Moore, *Politics of the Gift*, p. 153.

deuil'³⁷³. In this sense, *Mirror* expresses the idea that is opposite to Proust's in *La Recherche* where the narrator in mourning, be it for his grandmother or for his lover, is a man who gets entirely consumed by his own personal tragedy and believes in utterly private experiences provided by involuntary memory as the most genuine revelation of it. Ricciardi comments on this phenomenon of exclusively personal character of the Proustian narrator's experience of grief: 'Involuntary memory in Proust's masterpiece, *In Search of Lost Time*, represents the decisive metamorphosis of historical time into a structure of feeling, thus perhaps suggesting the obsolescence of a public, political discourse of memory and tradition'³⁷⁴. While Tarkovsky's use of newsreels enables him to turn the public discourse on mortality and grief into his narrator's private experience. It is reflective of Tarkovsky's belief that a person cannot live isolated, withdrawn and unaffected, from the rest of humankind and history because of the inherent moral characteristics of time which place demands of ethics and responsibility on everyone.

The Antemortem State of Mind

Last night I dreamt that I had died. But I could see, or rather feel, what was going on around me. I could feel that Lara was beside me, and one of my friends. I felt I had no strength or will, I was only capable of witnessing my own death, my own corpse. Above all, I could feel in my dream something long forgotten, something that had not happened to me for a long time - the feeling that it was not a dream but real. It is such a powerful sensation that a wave of sadness fills your soul, of pity for yourself, and a strange, as it were aesthetic way of seeing your own life. When you feel compassion for yourself in that way, it is as if your pain were someone else's, and you are looking at it from outside, weighing it up, and you are beyond the bounds of what used to be your life. It was as if my past life was a child's life, without experience, unprotected. Time ceases to exist, and fear. An awareness of immortality. I could see everyone very busy because I had died. And then I came back to life, and no one was surprised.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ See Derrida, *Mémoires pour Paul de Man*, p. 71.

³⁷⁴ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 7.

³⁷⁵ See Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time*, p. 11.

In Tarkovsky's dream, the feeling that his death is real overwhelms him and yet he contemplates his death and life before death as if they were someone else's. The oneiric experience of his death accomplishes what is impossible in the actual experience of his death: It enables him to experience his death as both the person *who* is dead and as the person who is aware that he is dead. He is the corpse that he observes. In this case, the subject of death and the object of consciousness coincide in the same person - Tarkovsky. This is, however, an impossible situation in reality. Jacques Derrida, for instance, argues in *Apories* that death can only be imagined or represented but cannot be experienced and is therefore only of the other, never *mine*. For Derrida, 'my death' is as unliveable as it is for Jankélévitch and as secondary and meaningless as it is for Levinas. Since Derrida believes that there is no spatial separation between the self and the other and that the other always inhabits the self without giving in its otherness, the meaning of the syntagma *my death* can only be understood in terms of the death of the other *in me* as it does not make sense otherwise: 'La mort de l'autre, cette mort de l'autre en "moi" est au fond la seule mort nommée dans le syntagme "ma mort", avec toutes les conséquences qu'on peut en tirer'³⁷⁶. Consequently, according to Jankélévitch, the instant of 'my death' remains forever in the unknown future, and we always are before our death no matter how near it: 'L'extrême future de la mort est un après-demain qui ne sera jamais Aujourd'hui, un avenir qui ne sera jamais présent, mais toujours à venir, et ne cessera jamais d'advenir et de s'approcher'³⁷⁷.

A Bright, Bright Day is the initial title of the first script of the film that we know as *Mirror*. It is a line taken by Andrei Tarkovsky from a poem by his father. In this version, the film opens with a bright winter day at a cemetery where a funeral is underway. The narrator walks past the ceremony and recites Alexander Pushkin's poem *The Prophet*. The funeral makes him think of his own death, and he begins to review his life. *Confession* becomes the title that replaces *A Bright, Bright Day*. Maya Turovskaya comments on this

³⁷⁶ See Derrida, *Apories*, p. 133.

³⁷⁷ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 18.

idea by referencing Pier Paolo Pasolini's words: Death completes the final montage of our lives, and when the stream of our life is finished, the meaning of that stream emerges.³⁷⁸ This metaphor would fit, however Tarkovsky did not pursue the strategy of a post-mortem perspective. Neither the cemetery nor the funeral is present in the final version of the film. Instead, the story in *Mirror* is told by the narrator who still lives but who anxiously anticipates his end. His mind is occupied with the kind of certainty and anxiety with regard to the imminence of death that is very Heideggerian in nature. Heidegger does not view death as any sort of ending to life - it does not mean the fulfilling of oneself, it does not refer to getting finished or disappearing - death is a way of being that grips one's life as soon as one is born.³⁷⁹ Therefore, for Heidegger, death masked as anxiety is man's lifelong companion, the basic state of mind of any mortal. In *Mirror*, Tarkovsky conceives his narrator with a kind of Heideggerian morbid and anxious self-reflection that does not necessarily occur at death's door but appears to be spurred by a looming shadow of death or some premonition.

Similarly to what Tarkovsky experiences in the immediate aftermath of his death in his dream, the narrator in *Mirror* sympathises with himself as if his failures and sorrows were someone else's; he reminisces about his life, analyses and evaluates it as if his past was 'a child's life, without experience, unprotected'. In fact, the key scenes that convey the main idea of the film refer to one of the narrator's dreams. In this dream, he sees himself as

³⁷⁸ See Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, pp. 62-3.

³⁷⁹ See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie, Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 289.

In *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger insists that the living can experience their death solely as anxiety in the anticipation of death. The actual moment of man's death then remains a possibility that gets concealed and inhibited in a fugitive, everyday manner of our reference to it, in our *idle talk*. Heidegger claims that such publicly accepted avoidance of any genuine and meaningful discourse on death mislabels thinking about death or being anxious before it as a cowardly fear or a sign of insecurity and thereby precludes one's authentic engagement with death as one's own imminent possibility. Instead, Heidegger prescribes, man should live in 'an impassioned freedom towards death', in the constant anticipation of it, free of illusions, certain and anxious of his finitude at the same time. (p. 311)

a little boy standing before his grandfather's house where he grew up and which he tries to enter in vain - he fails every time because something holds him back. In the narrator's words, this dream is recurrent, but when it does not come back for a long time, he misses it and gets very anxious. The narrator longs to re-experience the feeling of 'everything is still possible, everything is still ahead' that fills him in the dream. For Alexei, childhood represents what Bachelard calls the archetype of simple happiness, elusive and naïve³⁸⁰, yet unburdened by his past or present, and he attempts to recapture it through his dream. While the rest of Alexei's life, his post-childhood, is likened to Orpheus's descent into Hades in search of Eurydice - it is but a constant spiritual journey to find the forever-lost happiness and joy. Arseny Tarkovsky's poem *Eurydice* recited in the background underlines this metaphor. Also, the poem that is quoted in the first title of the film, *A Bright, Bright Day*, describes exactly the feeling of nostalgia which borders on mourning for the blissful childhood years that the narrative seeks to communicate.

This dream that is seen by the narrator in sepia first and then progressively in colour all of a sudden turns black and white. Alexei then contemplates a vase filled with water and a watch mechanism inside it. This is the image of immutable time that reiterates the idea from Tarkovsky's death dream: 'Time ceases to exist, and fear. An awareness of immortality'. In his works such as *Ivan's Childhood*, *Solaris*, *Nostalghia* and, certainly, *Mirror*, Tarkovsky insists on the theme of the return to the happy space that he strongly associates with one's unawareness of time, the state that exclusively graces childhood years, when one is unmindful of time's implacably fast-paced course towards death. Childhood is the most essential part of life, says Tarkovsky, whatever happens after is of little importance.³⁸¹ When the boy then walks up to a garden table covered with a pristine cloth, looks back at the house and hears its door crack and open, a rooster flies in slow

³⁸⁰ See Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de la rêverie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), p. 101.

³⁸¹ See Surkova, *With Tarkovsky*, p. 132.

motion through the window and shatters the glass. Meanwhile, the violent wind overturns a petrol lamp on the table and distorts the still life composition of apples, bread and a spoon. These images speak of the fragility and transience of this state of innocence and peace. Tarkovsky's dream sequences thus cater to the idea of time as both an ideality that rules the mind and something all-encompassing that, according to Deleuze who finds this idea characteristic of both Proust and Tarkovsky, holds a person within it.

Yet, in another black and white dream, the same aggressive wind rackets through the dacha. The narrator sees himself as a little boy again, but he now gets inside the house of his childhood: Alexei looks in the mirror that shows his reflection as the same little boy holding a jar of milk. It is as if he was able to recapture the simple bliss of childhood and end his mourning for his hopeful and promising past. *Mirror* is ambiguous about the fate of the narrator: We do not know for certain if Alexei recovers from his mysterious illness or succumbs to it. Tarkovsky is never explicit about it because it is irrelevant to the story he wants to tell:

Il me semble que les gens se posent des questions sérieuses à des moments différents et surtout en face de la mort. La logique des souvenirs de notre héros dépend du moment où tout se déclenche. S'il avait été joyeux et en bonne santé, alors il aurait eu d'autres souvenirs et qui auraient surgi différemment. Il souffre d'une maladie dont on ne sait s'il se remettra, quoique cette éventuelle survie n'ait en définitive aucune importance dans la signification du film. Qu'il meure ou qu'il survive, l'idée qui sous-tend le film reste la même.³⁸²

The narrator's confession is now finished. Alexei succeeds at telling his story in the way that helps alleviate his painful recollections and appease his conscience. Tarkovsky sums up the atonement effect that his narrator achieves in the citation from Proust's *La Recherche* in which Marcel talks about his haunting impressions of the steeples of Martinville and describes how he gets rid of them through writing down his memories:

I never thought about the page subsequently, but at the moment when I finished writing it, there in the corner of the box where the doctor's coachman usually put the chickens he had bought in Martinville market, I felt so happy, so freed by it from those

³⁸² Tarkovsky quoted in: See Le Fanu, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 55.

steeple and from what was hidden behind them, that, as if I myself were a hen who had just laid an egg, I started to sing at the top of my voice.³⁸³

Andrei Tarkovsky confesses that he achieved the same state of expiation when he completed *Mirror*: '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'³⁸⁴. It appears that Freud's terminable mourning is successful in relation to working through the loss of an ideal or a feeling that is certainly the case for Proust's Marcel and Tarkovsky's Alexei in these specific instances.

Mourning Does not Wait

Et elle [l'appréhension angoissée du deuil] pleure avant la déploration, elle pleure la mort avant la mort.³⁸⁵

In the film, the narrator appears in the flesh once. Bedridden, he is surrounded by a doctor and two women. The doctor explains the aetiology of the narrator's illness. 'This is an ordinary case', he says, 'a man gets ill when someone in his family dies very suddenly'. One of the women then objects that none of his loved ones is dead, but the other suggests that the narrator is ill because of his memories and remorse. Alexei protests and demands that they leave him alone: 'I simply wanted to be happy'. 'All will be fine', he mutters to himself.

Alexei's confession, provoked by a possibility of his death, tends to revolve around his relationships, damaged or irreparable, with his loved ones. It transpires from his dreams, memories and sensations that Alexei wishes to take on all the blame regardless of the fact that the nature of his conflicts with others remains ambiguous. According to Tarkovsky,

³⁸³ Proust quoted in: See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 128.

³⁸⁴ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 129.

³⁸⁵ See Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié*, p. 31.

the narrator 'lives with the hope that he will be able to pay his love debt back, but that debt is one which nobody can get rid of'³⁸⁶. Tarkovsky emphasises that Alexei is in search for 'his moral equilibrium' that could be regained only through mending his relationships with his loved ones.³⁸⁷ The narrator's sense of indebtedness and guilt before his family echo Derrida's concept of *originary guilt*. Derrida argues that such guilt is *originnaire* in the same way as original sin is: It is an inherent human condition that stems from our irredeemable inferiority to the infinite and immense goodness.³⁸⁸ This guilt can be latent until activated by the proximity of death through the realisation of our singularity and irreplaceability in the face of it. Derrida therefore develops the Heideggerian idea of death as our *ownmost*, non-relational and inevitable possibility.³⁸⁹ For Derrida, the realisation that no one else can take our death in our stead leaves us no choice but to accept responsibility and assume guilt:

En tant que responsable, je suis coupable. Ce qui me donne la singularité, à savoir la mort et la finitude, c'est cela même qui me rend inégal à la bonté infinie du don qui est aussi le premier appel à la responsabilité. La culpabilité est inhérente à la responsabilité parce que la responsabilité est toujours inégale à elle-même: on n'est jamais assez responsable.³⁹⁰

It appears that to both Tarkovsky and Derrida guilt is a state of mind that is already and always included in the conception of responsibility. However, in the film, it is suggested that the narrator gets ill because of his guilt and remorse, which would then reverse the cause-and-effect relationship between his deathbed state of mind and guilt. Alexei does not experience guilt before his family because he is ill and near death; instead, he finds himself near death as a result of the guilt that he feels. In fact, his guilt and illness are difficult to unravel, but it is clear that although the narrator in *Mirror* has not had any

³⁸⁶ See *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, ed. Gianvito p. 44.

³⁸⁷ See *Andrei Tarkovsky: Interviews*, ed. Gianvito p. 44.

³⁸⁸ See Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 51.

³⁸⁹ See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 294.

³⁹⁰ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 77.

deaths in his family, the fear of the death of a loved one, in this case his mother, aggravates Alexei's presentiment of his own death. Moreover, the content of his memories suggests that the narrator already experiences mourning for his mother, before her death, and her actual death is not a precondition to make him grieve for her. The explanation of the narrator's state of mind comes from Tarkovsky:

I cannot reconcile myself to the thought that my mother will ever die. I will protest and shout that she is immortal. I want to convince others of her individuality and uniqueness. The internal premise from which I started was my desire to analyse her character in such a way as to prove her immortality.³⁹¹

Tarkovsky once again demonstrates his leaning to associate suffering, sorrow and sacrifice with the ultimate meaning that validates and immortalises life as suffering and sacrifice ensure the moral progress of the humankind. Tarkovsky does not differentiate between the heroism and self-sacrifice of soldiers during the World War II and the self-sacrifice of ordinary people in their everyday life. Such position echoes the Levinasian dismissal of death as a cornerstone of human preoccupations and his philosophy of the primacy of the other and the death of the other that must be the focal point in life:

‘L'épreuve suprême de la volonté n'est pas la mort, mais la souffrance’³⁹². In the case of his mother, Tarkovsky refuses to render her character and life banal and inconsequential. Instead, the filmmaker seeks an affirmation of their singularity and meaningfulness and therefore pursues the Derridean link between the singularity conferred on us by death and responsibility and, further, the responsibility and guilt before the other that stands as infinitely other in ‘sa singularité absolue, inaccessible, solitaire, transcendante, non manifeste, non présente originellement à mon ego’³⁹³. According to Derrida, ‘le devoir ou la responsabilité me lient à l'autre, à l'autre en tant qu'autre, et me lient dans ma singularité

³⁹¹ See Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, p. 61.

³⁹² See Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, p. 216.

³⁹³ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 110.

absolue à l'autre en tant qu'autre'³⁹⁴ which resonates with Tarkovsky's stance on alterity, death, mourning and anticipatory mourning, in particular, as a meditation on one's ability to respond to the call of the other.

Tarkovsky wants *Mirror* to be almost entirely devoted to his mother. This idea is reflected in the first version of the script: Tarkovsky sets out to film a series of covert one-on-one interviews with his mother, Maria Vishnyakova, who would talk about her life experiences. Tarkovsky does not realise this idea for various production-related and personal reasons, the film however enacts several episodes from his mother's life.³⁹⁵ The narrator's mother works at the printing press where Tarkovsky's mother worked in the Stalin era, and, just like her prototype, spends summers with her little children in the Russian countryside, fights starvation during the war years, waits for her husband's return and grieves when he leaves her for another. Also, Tarkovsky's mother gets to play the part of the narrator's mother Maria in the narrator's present. Tarkovsky does not simply recreate his mother's experiences on the screen but also makes them an integral part of the narrator's childhood recollections. This achieves an important conceptual effect: Although the narrator's mother acts as the main agent, the narrator is implied as a silent witness in these recollections without his being personally involved in them. For instance, these are the scenes with his mother sitting on the fence waiting for her husband's return from the war and rejecting the advances of another man who happens to pass by their dacha; or the incident at the printing press when his mother is terrified by the thought that she made a grave proofreading mistake; and, finally, the scene from the early days of his parents' relationship, in which his father asks his mother if she wants a boy or a girl. These scenes show that Alexei's remembrances are in fact his reconstructions of the past based on his childhood impressions rather than his actual recollections. These impressions are of his and

³⁹⁴ See Derrida, *Donner la mort*, p. 97.

³⁹⁵ See Vida T. Johnson, Graham Petrie, *Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue* (Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 111-2.

his mother's shared past that solely the narrator's mother lived in reality but that nonetheless had an impact on the narrator.

For the narrator in *Mirror*, the impact of his childhood impressions is significant. His imagination reconstructs his mother's past as if his mother lives in him, in his thought and his sensibility, in his voice and his look, in his body and his soul. The narrator's reconstructions are wholly concerned with his mother's life as if the narrator watches the images from the past, to paraphrase Derrida³⁹⁶, *en mémoire de* [of] his mother and then imparts them *à la mémoire de* [of] his mother. Perhaps, it is in this sense of a more interested and sympathetic involvement with another that a childhood impression is more meaningful to Tarkovsky. The tone of the narrator's childhood impressions is indeed committed and compassionate while their matter is exploratory: Alexei seems to consider how his lived experiences are tied up with the traumatic events in his mother's life. In fact, Cathy Caruth's interpretation of Tasso's story of the Wound and the Voice³⁹⁷ that Freud discusses in relation to his study of recurrent traumatic experiences is applicable to the narrator's situation in *Mirror*: Alexei listens to his mother's 'wound' speak to him in his grieving memory through his childhood impressions, and then his 'voice' tells the story of his own 'wound' in the hope of understanding his present.

Yet, the discourse *in memory of* and the *wounded* recollections of someone imply the death of that someone as they reflect on a loss or separation by death. In *Mirror*, the narrator's recollections of his mother are marked by memory in grief while she still lives. Alexei's remembrances seem to be initiated by memory in anticipatory grief that, according to Derrida's theory of mourning, begins to haunt us long before we get to experience the factual and final loss of someone we cherish. This anticipatory grief finds its early expression even in a simple heartfelt goodbye before a brief separation:

³⁹⁶ See Derrida, *Mémoires pour Paul de Man*.

³⁹⁷ See Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*.

La certitude mélancolique dont je parle commence donc, comme toujours, du vivant même des amis. Non seulement par une interruption mais par une parole d'interruption. Un *cogito* de l'adieu, ce salut sans retour, signe la respiration même du dialogue, du dialogue dans le monde ou du dialogue le plus intérieur. Le deuil alors n'attend plus.³⁹⁸

The narrator's reconstructions of his mother's past can be read in light of Derrida's concept of *le deuil originaire* or, in other words, a state of mind that makes us dread someone's death so much that 'tout ce que nous inscrivons dans le présent vivant de notre rapport aux autres porte déjà, toujours, une signature de mémoires d'outre-tombe'³⁹⁹. Alexei appears to experience this kind of mourning that though similar to the Freudian concept of *interiorisation* and self-torment with guilt and pity, puts the narrator in melancholy, which does not seek closure, for his mother who still lives. These recollections of the past are therefore caused by what Derrida describes as the melancholic certainty of separation by death that lasts a lifetime and survives the death of our loved ones to go on in our mourning memory:

Alors le survivant reste seul. Au-delà du monde de l'autre, il est aussi de quelque façon au-delà ou en deçà du monde même. Dans le monde hors du monde et privé du monde. Il se sent du moins seul responsable, assigné à porter et l'autre et son monde, l'autre et le monde disparus, responsable sans monde (*Weltlos*), sans le sol d'aucun monde, désormais, dans un monde sans monde, comme sans terre par-delà la fin du monde.⁴⁰⁰

In fact, Freud also justifies the possibility of a melancholic state that endures. Freud's letter to Ludwig Binswanger following the death of his friend's son expresses the feelings that go contrary to the psychoanalyst's famous theory on the terminable nature of mourning:

Although we know that after such a loss the acute state of mourning will subside, we also know we shall remain inconsolable and will never find a substitute. No matter what may fill the gap, even if it be filled completely, it nevertheless remains

³⁹⁸ See Jacques Derrida, *Béliers. Le dialogue ininterrompu entre deux infinis, le poème* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), p. 22.

³⁹⁹ See Derrida, *Mémoires pour Paul de Man*, p. 50.

⁴⁰⁰ See Derrida, *Béliers*, p. 23.

something else. And actually this is how it should be. It is the only way of perpetuating that love which we do not want to relinquish.⁴⁰¹

Tarkovsky foregrounds the narrator's anticipatory mourning for his mother: Alexei's grief for Maria overshadows his anxiety in the face of death together with his regret for unrealised possibilities and dreams, as well as his melancholy for the collective past. The narrator imagines and connects with his mother's past through *l'appréhension angoissée du deuil* in the attempt to immortalise her in his narrative. Thus, *Mirror* reflects Tarkovsky's personal philosophy on our moral obligations to those we love - we are eternally and irredeemably indebted to them for their presence in our lives.

In *Mirror*, Alexei's return to the past is similar to Chris's imaginary return home in *Solaris*: they both get there in the end of a long difficult journey in hopes of kneeling before their loved ones with humility and repentance and seeking their forgiveness. However, they both learn that the forgiveness of our loved ones can never be deserved, just as their love for us can never be requited. Yet, this journey must be made, Tarkovsky believes, and mourning is the transfiguring power that enables us to embark on it.

⁴⁰¹ See *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Ernest L. Freud, trans. Tanya and James Stern (New York: Basic Books, 1960), p. 386.

IV

**THE NARRATIVE STRATEGIES OF MOURNING IN THE WORKS OF
MARCEL PROUST AND ANDREI TARKOVSKY**

As Jankélévitch, Levinas and Derrida show in their philosophical works, one's own death, or in Jankélévitch's terminology death in the first person, cannot be experienced in reality and can therefore be narrated only as imagined. The death of the loved other, or death in the second person, is the nearest that the living can come to experiencing death in actuality, and mourning is the only experience that allows for a close relationship with it. Death as a biological event does not find a direct representation in Proust's *La Recherche* or in Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and *Mirror*; however, mourning, mostly as a meditation on the mortality of the loved other, is given plenty of consideration in the oeuvre of both artists. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the narrative methods used to depict mourning in the works of Marcel Proust and Andrei Tarkovsky are similar in nature as they privilege such phenomenal experiences as sensations, memories and dreams in the construction of images and organise the narration according to a particular understanding of space and time that is characteristic of Deleuze's philosophy of repetition and difference.

In this chapter, we will follow the narrative strategies in the creation of images that concern the exploration of the self as well as the opening of the self as a result of the interaction with the other in Proust's novel and Tarkovsky's films. We will analyse sensorial and poetic images that allow fixating and reliving subjective experiences of the Proustian narrator and Tarkovsky's characters by transcending temporal and spatial constraints. Gaston Bachelard claims that 'le temps est ce qu'on sait sur lui'⁴⁰², and so we will observe how Proust and Tarkovsky get to know time with help of images: how they sense the present, how they recollect the past and especially childhood that is always latent

⁴⁰² See Gaston Bachelard, *La Dialectique de la durée* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), p. 32.

in us, and how they anticipate the future - all in light of the awareness of mortality of the self and, most importantly, of the other. In general, what Bowie notes about Proust's literary oeuvre can be applied to Tarkovsky's cinematic work: as both artists reconstruct 'the temporality of daily living', their syntax plays a key role in doing it 'with a sense of phenomenological fulness'⁴⁰³. Therefore, we apply our phenomenological approach, however in a broad sense of the notion, to the analysis of the narrative strategies of mourning that we undertake in this chapter.

The Sensorial World of Proust and Tarkovsky

In his *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense* (1873), Friedrich Nietzsche claims that we should not be awed by human intellect: '[O]ne would still not have sufficiently illustrated how pathetic, how shadowy and volatile, how useless and arbitrary the human intellect seems within nature. There were eternities in which it did not exist; and when it is gone nothing will have happened. For this intellect has no further mission leading beyond human life'⁴⁰⁴. The philosopher emphasises the primacy of sensation that precedes language and conceptualisation and gives us a much richer and fuller representation of the world than any product of our intellectual or scientific activity could ever do. Nietzsche insists that the intelligence of sensation must be preferred to the intelligence of reason because the former is associated with a natural sensibility that precedes logic and is prevalently manifest in subcutaneous, or subconscious, experiences whereas the latter is entirely dependent on consciousness, and, for Nietzsche, it is rather a flaw than an advantage: 'Consciousness is the last and latest development of the organic and hence also

⁴⁰³ See Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 40.

⁴⁰⁴ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, ed. Raymond Geuss, Alexander Nehamas, trans. Ladislaus Löb (Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 253.

what is most unfinished and unstrong'⁴⁰⁵. Nietzsche therefore seeks the aesthetics that rely on somatic sensibility and conceive 'un retour de la vérité au vrai - perçu, d'une médiation renouvelée et approfondie de la connaissance et de la sensibilité'⁴⁰⁶.

According to Deleuze in *Francis Bacon - Logique de la sensation* (1981), sensation is non-rational and primary while perception is rational and secondary. For Deleuze, sensation is akin to naive sensibility that coexists temporally and spatially with conscious perception and conscious representation but, unlike perception or representation, is in contact with the presence of the world that is intuitive and still dissociated from the image and the word. He writes:

Il y a deux manières de dépasser la figuration (c'est-à-dire à la fois l'illustratif et le narratif): ou bien vers la forme abstraite, ou bien vers la Figure. Cette voie de la Figure, Cézanne lui donne un nom simple: la sensation. La Figure, c'est la forme sensible rapportée à la sensation; elle agit immédiatement sur le système nerveux, qui est de la chair. Tandis que la Forme abstraite s'adresse au cerveau, agit par l'intermédiaire du cerveau, plus proche de l'os. [...] La sensation, c'est le contraire du facile et du tout fait, du cliché, mais aussi du 'sensationnel', du spontané, etc.⁴⁰⁷

Sensation thus resembles a chaos of forms, colours, sounds and light: it is such a sensorially intense confusion that it is impossible to distinguish the self from the world. Deleuze is interested in the process of turning what is insensible into sensible, as every contact with the world produces a new primary sensation that is entirely different from any sensation before.

The main issue here, Deleuze suggests, is how we sense and then think: we give in to intersubjective notions, which he defines as psychic clichés, that freely and anonymously float in the external world and prevent the generation of new sensations, images, and thoughts. Deleuze proposes the destruction of clichés as a solution: while sensation

⁴⁰⁵ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans., with Commentary, Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), Book 1, Aphorism 11, p. 84.

⁴⁰⁶ See Peter Sloterdijk, *Le Penseur sur scène: Le Matérialisme de Nietzsche* (Paris: Christian Bourgeois Editeur, 2000), p. 137.

⁴⁰⁷ See Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon - Logique de la sensation* (Éditions du Seuil, 2002), p. 39.

circulates at various spatial and affective levels and enables the coexistence of different degrees of intensity, it is sufficiently rich and unaltered to allow for an unmediated access to the world and the production of new knowledge about it. Though sensation remains on the surface of things - in their contours, movements, colours and densities - it represents the only opportunity of our naive presence in the world together with the world:

[E]lle est être-au-monde, comme disent les phénoménologues: à la fois je *deviens* dans la sensation et quelque chose *arrive* par la sensation, l'un par l'autre, l'un dans l'autre. Et à la limite, c'est le même corps qui la donne et qui la reçoit, qui est à la fois objet et sujet.⁴⁰⁸

Paul Ricœur explains that to know a material object is to know from experience how 'elle [une chose] se conduit quand on la presse, la heurte, la courbe, la brise, la chauffe, la refroidit, bref comment elle se comporte dans l'enchaînement des circonstances causales, par quels états elle passe, comment elle demeure la même à travers ces états'⁴⁰⁹. Therefore, the same object may appear different to us in various contexts at various points in time, and our every encounter with the object will therefore yield a singular manifestation of the object's reality which underlies the existent rupture between our subjective sensation of the world and its objective materiality. However, once we appropriate objects that come into our perceptive field with our senses, we also obliterate any divide between the world and ourselves.

According to Proust, in order to possess something, it is necessary to make it ours in a physical manner: this explains why the narrator in *La Recherche* privileges such senses as taste, smell or touch. In contrast to sight, these senses can make objects reverberate in our bodies and thus incorporate them. The majority of Marcel's comparisons and metaphors are therefore based on sensations other than visual. For instance, Marcel compares the bell tower of the church in Combray to a sweet bun, 'doré et cuit lui-même comme une plus grande brioche bénie, avec des écailles et des égouttements gommeux de soleil' (I, DCS, I,

⁴⁰⁸ See Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, p. 39.

⁴⁰⁹ See Paul Ricœur, *À l'école de la phénoménologie* (Vrin, 2004), p. 32.

II: 64): although there is a visual resemblance between the two objects, the flavour rather than the sight will form a recollection and evoke it later. The Proustian narrator claims that ‘après la mort des êtres, après la destruction des choses, seules plus frêles mais plus vivaces, plus immatérielles, plus persistantes, plus fidèles, l’odeur et la saveur restent encore longtemps, comme des âmes’ (I, DCS, I, II: 46). Indeed, the famous scene when Marcel tastes a bit of a madeleine dipped in some linden infusion describes exactly the sensorial metamorphosis in his body produced by the smell and the flavour that transcend the materiality of objects and therefore time. The narrator provides us with a pure description of his experience: he does not attempt to explain it as if a vague, approximately plausible cause of the sensation is sufficient. In his narrative, Marcel seems to look for a sensation that would reflect the experience of the self in the world before the self detaches itself from the experience to form an idea of it. It is an experience without presuppositions or reconstructions that is lived in the naïveté of the continuous present. A similar sensorial change that Marcel describes as ‘bouleversement de toute ma personne’ occurs to him during the experience of the involuntary memory of his late grandmother. There is no agency and no discernible cause of the event, and no attempt at an explanation of it by the narrator either. Marcel simply describes the physically violent sensation that overwhelms him in the moment.

Furthermore, for Proust, the rediscovery of the past selves in the present selves is dependent on and can be successful only due to the rediscovery of the same significations through sensation. Merleau-Ponty illustrates this idea with an example:

Cette table porte des traces de ma vie passée, j’y ai inscrit mes initiales, j’y ai fait des taches d’encre. Mais ces traces par elles-mêmes ne renvoient pas au passé: elles sont présentes; et, si j’y trouve des signes de quelque événement antérieur, c’est parce que je porte en moi cette signification.⁴¹⁰

⁴¹⁰ See Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 475.

This phenomenon is present in Tarkovsky's work too: the elements of decor on the station in *Solaris* or various household items that spring in the narrator's memory in *Mirror* carry the same philosophical idea. In Tarkovsky's films, many material objects appear on the screen solely to form still life compositions: they no longer exhibit their mere utility but rather become meaningful images that stimulate memories and nostalgia in the characters. So, any item – ranging from those with some cultural or aesthetic significance such as an ancient manuscript, a porcelain statuette, or a beautiful candelabra to an ordinary milk jar and commonplace curtains that cannot be described other than as everyday and prosaic – arrests the gaze of a viewer to emphasise its special signification. The poster for *Andrei Rublev*, an earlier film by Tarkovsky, hung on the narrator's wall in *Mirror* turns the author/director into a character overcome with nostalgia too. In other words, the past selves and the present selves are connected by various significations so that when the self senses the world, it thus gathers knowledge about itself. Moreover, as Erwin Straus justly remarks, ‘En sentant nous nous éprouvons nous-mêmes dans le monde et avec le monde [...] Nous devons rejeter la conception qui fait du sujet-sentant une conscience qui contient les sensations disséminées et qui les réunit par un processus de pensée’⁴¹¹.

In the works of Proust and Tarkovsky, sensations and body also play a crucial part in the production of memories. Merleau-Ponty ascribes the function of projection to the body:

Le rôle du corps dans la mémoire ne se comprend que si la mémoire est, non pas la conscience constituante du passé, mais un effort pour rouvrir le temps à partir des implications du présent, et si le corps, étant notre moyen permanent de ‘prendre des attitudes’ et de nous fabriquer ainsi de pseudo-présents, est le moyen de notre communication avec le temps comme avec l’espace. La fonction du corps dans la mémoire est cette même fonction de projection.⁴¹²

The same function of projection can be found in the representation of the body in the Proustian novel. In the sentence ‘j’appuyais tendrement mes joues contre les belles joues de l’oreiller qui, pleines et fraîches, sont comme les joues de notre enfance’ (I, DCS, I, I:

⁴¹¹ See Erwin Straus, *Du Sens des sens* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1989), p. 333.

⁴¹² See Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 221.

4), the narrator describes his tactile sensation that has an affective dimension to it and engages his memory. The same sensation represents the object that is being touched and reveals the body touching this object and thus creates a superimposition, which then helps to trace the role of the *touchant-touché*⁴¹³ in the constitution of the self as well as in the recollection of the self. For Marcel, the smell can also create links between the past and the present: thus, the scent of iris and wild blackcurrant reminds him of the little room where as a child he used to seek shelter in times of solitude while the staircase with the strong odour of varnish provokes the recollection of his everyday anxiety associated with the bedtime drama. In fact, Marcel assigns a certain cruelty to this staircase which shows one of the ways of the self to, in Ricœur's words, 'se comporter en se rapportant'⁴¹⁴. According to Ricœur, to say that I desire an object is to say that the object attracts me, or to say that I suffer because of something is to say that this something is cruel towards me. Or, as Merleau-Ponty notes, 'des objets [...] n'existent pour moi qu'en tant qu'ils suscitent en moi des pensées ou des volontés'⁴¹⁵. So, it is because the narrator had to walk up the staircase *à contrecœur* multiple times that the staircase got imprinted on his memory.

Merleau-Ponty adds:

S'il est vrai que j'ai conscience de mon corps à travers le monde, qu'il est, au centre du monde, le terme inaperçu vers lequel tous les objets tournent leur face, il est vrai pour la même raison que mon corps est le pivot du monde: je sais que les objets ont plusieurs faces parce que je pourrais en faire le tour, et en ce sens j'ai conscience du monde par le moyen de mon corps.⁴¹⁶

Sensations are also heavily implicated in Marcel's remembrances when he is mourning for his grandmother and later for Albertine. The waves, the piano, the partition evoke in Marcel's grieving memory the sounds that are associated with the lost grandmother while the humid touch of leaves or the cheerful chirping of birds torment him during his

⁴¹³ See Ricœur, *À l'école de la phénoménologie*, p. 53.

⁴¹⁴ See Ricœur, *À l'école de la phénoménologie*, p. 44.

⁴¹⁵ See Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 111.

⁴¹⁶ See Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 111.

mourning for Albertine. Marcel's mother also appears to be under the spell of the sensations that connect her to his dead grandmother: from wearing the grandmother's clothes and her 'en-tout-cas' and treading on the same sand on the beach in Balbec to adopting her mother's bodily postures - these are examples of tactile sensations that remind the living of their dead and therefore still bring them together. In general, the frequent almost unconscious fusion of the narrator's mother and grandmother into one person in his narrative also points at the same sensations produced by the two different women in Marcel that he then associates in his mind with tenderness, relief from anxiety or salvation from solitude. It seems that, for Marcel, the same processes underlie mourning and involuntary memory: they both take place due to the recurrence of intermittent sensations that his body receives and enacts first, before his mind begins to engage with them too.

When mourning for his lover Albertine, Marcel describes the following experience:

'Instinctivement je passai ma main sur mon cou, sur mes lèvres qui se voyaient embrassés par elle depuis qu'elle était partie, et qui ne le seraient jamais plus' (IV, AD I: 59). The connection with the dead loved one through sensation is so overpowering that Marcel feels that to forget Albertine will mean renouncing the whole sensorial world. However, Marcel does fall victim to the general law of oblivion as, he explains, we tend to forget everyone and everything, even the dearest ones, not because our love for them fades away but 'c'est parce que nous mourons nous-mêmes' (IV, AD II: 175): perhaps, his forgetting is due to the death of those intuitive, involuntary memory selves that are as raw and elusive as the sensations that evoke them.

The significance that Tarkovsky attaches to sensation is clearly manifest in the fact that he rebuilds his grandparents' house in the countryside where his mother grew up and then brings his mother there to make sure that she re-experiences the same sensations that she had back in the days. Tarkovsky looks first and foremost for the right sensation that will later become the right image. When he sees his mother standing overwhelmed with

emotion before the reconstructed house, he knows that the past has returned for her.

Tarkovsky does not stop at the rediscovering of the material traces of the world lost to the passing of time in inanimate objects, an endeavour that can be compared to Proust's search for the incorporated time; the director asks his mother (who has never had any experience in acting) to play herself in *Mirror* precisely in order to evoke the right sensations in his highly autobiographical work. Not only does Tarkovsky not view the dissolution of boundaries between fiction and autobiography as a problem or obfuscation in the production of meaning in his narrative, he also exploits it to find the feeling of authenticity in his work. It appears that what matters most to Tarkovsky is to construct images in such a way that the sensations that reality evokes in his characters, and subsequently in the viewer, feel like simple observations. Therefore, Tarkovsky's images that result from such approach are not exact photographic copies of reality but rather psychic and sensorial revelations of the immediate contact with reality related in a poetic form.

In *Mirror*, Alexei's reconstructions of his mother's past are all very sensorial in essence as if his own body goes through his mother's experiences, as if he and his mother are united in the same sensation, as if she lives within him in his anticipatory mourning for her. Here, we could suggest that the very Proustian intermittence of sensations takes place in the lives of Tarkovsky's characters too, even though it occurs across different persons and moreover across generations. The most evident examples of this phenomenon come from *Mirror*: Ignat's déjà-vu scene where his sensations of dropping something and picking it up from the floor repeat the sensations from Alexei's childhood experience, or Maria's sensations that recur in Natalia's life are in fact beautiful illustrations of Proust's involuntary memory in action but the involuntary memory that transcends persons and generations in addition to transcending time and space. These examples also give a resounding support to the narrator's idea in *La Recherche* about the ever-present continuity between the living and the dead on which Marcel comments in relation to his mother's total

identification with his dead grandmother. Thus, the trans-generational recurrence of sensations is yet another example of the collapse of conventional spatiotemporal constraints in Tarkovsky's works and the revelation of the alliance between Tarkovsky's notion of time and the Bergsonian paradoxical nature of time that accounts for pre-existence, coexistence, and contemporaneity.

Like Proust, Tarkovsky privileges such subjective phenomena as memories and dreams in the narration of the self, and these are replete with sensorial metaphors that are mostly based on tactile, olfactory and auditory associations rather than on visual ones. Many metaphors in Tarkovsky's works evoke concomitant sensations and thus produce *synesthesia* or the subjective perception of one sense when another is being stimulated, the phenomenon for which Baudelaire introduces the term *correspondances* in his eponymous poem from *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857). In synesthesia, a colour can be tasted, a scent can be seen, and a sound can be touched and so on. According to Kovács and Szilágyi, Tarkovsky's images represent reality through sensation.⁴¹⁷ But because reality is complex, an image of it can never be translated by a single sensation, it rather reflects a bundle of various sensations produced as responses to stimuli from the outside world. Consequently, for Tarkovsky, the images of water, be it pouring rain, lakes and rivers or some water in a basin for washing, relate at the same time the sensations of humidity, coldness and noise that can express a wide range of unpleasant and unsettling feelings from discomfort and loneliness to despair and alienation. However, these images often precede an important shift in characters' psyche as a result of the process of symbolic purification by water and therefore usually have positive undertones. Such are the image of the rain in *Solaris* before Chris's departure on his exploratory mission and the rain in *Mirror* that drenches the narrator's mother on her way to the printing press. Other major sensorial images in

⁴¹⁷ See Bálint András Kovács, Akos Szilágyi, *Les mondes d'Andrei Tarkovski* (Lausanne: Éditions l'Age de l'Homme, 1987), p. 29.

Tarkovsky's films can be analysed in a similar vein: for instance, his images of fire are ambivalent as fire is either harmful and destructive or gentle and life-affirming; or the image of wind - the other favourite in Tarkovsky's aesthetic - can either violently shake or quietly caress and therefore becomes a symbol for both drastic change and peaceful eternity. Tarkovsky's preference for sensorial metaphors other than visual can be explained by the belief that he shares with Proust that the sensations of touch, smell and hearing outlive those of sight to resurface in memories and give the sense of veracity and reality to impressions and recollections. In addition, Tarkovsky believes that colours are usually emotionally charged and often need to be neutralised in order to erase the impression that they leave on the viewer.⁴¹⁸ This is why Tarkovsky's images in *Mirror* are either polychrome or monochrome, and the change of scenes is often accompanied by the change of colour that fills the screen. Yet, the Tarkovskian variation of colour does not express his characters' psychological state or refer to a particular subjective phenomenon: for instance, a black and white scene does not necessarily suggest a reminiscence but can sometimes indicate a dream sequence.

The body in a state of sleep or between sleep and waking right before the sleeper regains conscience of himself is another instance of the close relationship between body and memory. For Proust, our body is the guardian of the past because it can recollect, 'avant même que la pensée, qui hésitait au seuil des temps et des formes' (I, DCS I, I: 6), the configuration of furniture in each room that he ever lived in and find out which one he is in at the moment of unawareness. The body of the suddenly awakened Marcel intuitively knows how to position itself in relation to the objects that surround him while his mind still struggles to determine where he is. Besides, the Proustian sleep proposes a relation to the body where imagination and matter are conjoined: the body is linked to signification, and signification is attached to matter. An awkward positioning of his thigh during sleep

⁴¹⁸ See Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 138.

induces a reverie of an unknown woman and an erotic desire in his body: Marcel feels the heat of a kiss on his cheek and his body still sore from her weight even after he wakes (I, DCS I, I: 5). In the same way that the body imposes its rules on imagination and dreams, imagination affects the body as well. Thus, when one of the infantile horrors in which Marcel's grand-uncle pulls his hair pursues him in his dream and wakes him, Marcel grabs a pillow to cover his head with it as a precaution before going back to sleep (I, DCS I, I: 4). In this sense, imagination and sensation are interdependent and inherent in one another.

In addition, dreams in *La Recherche* reveal a potential for doubling and reincarnation. For instance, Marcel's imagination gives birth to multiple and diverse hypostases of his self: a cathedral, a quartet, the rivalry of François I and Charles V to name a few. In his dreams, there is a possibility not only to embody someone else but also to become an inanimate object and thus join a previous or parallel existence. The place where he happens to fall asleep as well as his own bed become the sensual extensions of his body and can transform into a *fauteuil magique* that then turns every waking into a mysterious resurrection of the self and the rebirth of the world at once. In this way, sleep and reverie bypass the contingency of the present, the necessity of the past and the virtuality of the future, therefore the narrator of *La Recherche* claims that 'un homme qui dort tient en cercle autour de lui le fil des heures, l'ordre des années et des mondes' and that 'leurs rangs [of time and space] peuvent se mêler, se rompre' (I, DCS I, I: 5). The possibility of metempsychosis, though it is only an imaginary reincarnation, shows that the present, the past, and the future can coexist in the Deleuzean stratified fashion that also reflects the Bergsonian paradoxes of time.

With regard to Marcel's dreams about his dead loved ones, it is certain that the common thread here is Marcel's insatiable desire to re-establish the lost sensorial contact through the physical closeness to them or simple presence in the same place where they are. Marcel claims that the world of sleep and dreams make people and things return from

our internal oblivion, intensify our sensations and then leave us in tears, i.e. sensorially and emotionally disturbed. When in mourning for his grandmother, Marcel sees her in a dream and longs for a contact - a kiss - but finds no love or affection in her eyes or expression. Similar to the bedtime scene, the mood of this dream is full of fears of abandonment and estrangement, but it cannot be remedied here, as the kiss cannot be granted by the dead grandmother. In another related dream, Marcel wants to visit his grandmother and thus hopes for physical contact with her, but his father recounts numerous reasons to him why Marcel's visit is impossible. Marcel suffers in the dreams and when wakes up, he continues to feel pain as a result of the inability to find the localisation for his sensation in the external world, his grandmother in this case, because this world no longer exists.

Another manifestation of Proust's preference for sensation in his narration is Marcel's fascination with chance and surprise as opposed to habit and routine as the latter bring about the false sense of certainty and mental immobility. The 'bon ange de la certitude' (I, DCS I, I: 8) relieves anxiety: Marcel associates the rooms that are familiar to him with a nest, an alcove, and a warm cavern. In *La Terre et les rêveries du repos* (1948), Bachelard suggests that, in spite of the multitude and variety of images that represent habitation, they all are archetypal of the maternal womb and spaces of protection. But the slightest modification in their appearance provokes disquiet and suffering. Similarly, the magic lantern changes the lighting of Marcel's room and thus takes away his calm. So anything that goes contrary to what is usual and routine not only evokes a sort of corporeal intuition but also emphasises the suffering of the body because sorrow and pain cleave habitual sensations and surprise the body with new impressions and sensations. Marcel has the same attitude towards travel, and his themes of a voyage or traveller intended to disrupt the order and destabilise his self are frequently associated with malaise or illness. However, illness can be beneficial as it reroutes attention to the self and sharpens the sensations of the moment. Anne Simon comments that 'la maladie fait ainsi prendre conscience de notre

enchaînement paradoxal au corps'⁴¹⁹ and then 'la suppression de l'habitude dans le voyage permet la découverte d'aspects inconnus de nous-mêmes, et plus précisément de cette partie constamment cachée aux regards qu'est l'intérieur de notre chair'⁴²⁰.

The involuntary memory of his grandmother that brings Marcel out of his state of insouciance and carefree existence to face the reality of the death of the loved other is accompanied by intense physical symptoms. Marcel takes the pain that he feels in the moment of the involuntary evocation for a proof of the 'reality'/ 'authenticity' of his experience. He says: 'Je sentais que je ne me la rappelais *vraiment* que *par la douleur* [...]' (III, SG II, I: 156). In addition, Marcel realises that the same pain he caused to his grandmother when she was alive now hurts him from within. He assumes that they are united in suffering from the same sensation, and therefore his dead grandmother lives on inside him. The conjunction of his current experience with his grandmother's past experience, in his mind, now produces a more genuine experience that brings them two closer together. This idea resonates with Merleau-Ponty's claim about the meaning that transpires at the intersection of various experiences of the self with those of the other:

[L]e sens qui transparaît à l'intersection de mes expériences et à l'intersection de mes expériences et de celles d'autrui, par l'engrenage des unes sur les autres, il est donc inséparable de la subjectivité et de l'intersubjectivité qui font leur unité par la reprise de mes expériences passées dans mes expériences présentes, de l'expérience d'autrui dans la mienne.⁴²¹

It is not surprising then that Marcel wants the sensation that revives his closeness to his grandmother, even though this sensation is but pain and suffering, to last and strengthen: '[J]'aurais voulu que s'enfonçassent plus solidement encore en moi ces clous qui y rivaient sa mémoire' (III, SG II, I: 156). Moreover, Marcel firmly believes in the singularity of his sensation and therefore succumbs to it as he knows that he cannot repeat it at his will: '[...]

⁴¹⁹ See Anne Simon, *Proust ou le réel retrouvé* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000), p. 152.

⁴²⁰ See Simon, *Proust ou le réel retrouvé*, p. 151.

⁴²¹ See Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie*, p. 20.

je ne tenais pas seulement à souffrir, mais à respecter *l'originalité de ma souffrance* telle que je l'avais subie tout d'un coup *sans le vouloir*, et je voulais continuer à subir, *suivant ses lois à elle [...]*' (ibid). Later in his narrative, Marcel makes a similar observation of how unprecedented and unique our sensations are and how impossible it is for us to imagine them and prepare ourselves for the experience:

Mais la sensibilité, même la plus physique, reçoit comme le sillon de la foudre, la signature originale et longtemps indélébile de l'événement nouveau. (IV, AD I: 8)

The role of body is as significant in Tarkovsky's films as in Proust's novel: the body, as opposed to the mind, is the privileged route for generating and amassing experiences of the self and the self in relation to the world, be it through illness or a sensorial interaction with the other. Tarkovsky's narrator in *Mirror* temporarily loses his voice due to laryngitis and tells his mother on the telephone after he recovers that it was actually good not to talk for a while because words cannot fully express what one experiences anyway. Alexei suggests that our sensorial capacity is much more advanced than our linguistic skills and should therefore be more relied on when establishing and developing relationships with the self and the other.

The idea of the superiority of sensation and the emphasis on somatic wisdom set against reason and verbal ability which reiterate and illustrate Nietzsche's theory are best underlined in the prologue to *Mirror*. The scene, in which a hypnotist is treating an adolescent who suffers badly from a stutter, becomes a literal, in addition to poetic, figure of speech that demonstrates the priority of sensation over reason. On the black and white screen, we watch the boy physically struggling to answer the most ordinary biographical questions about his name and his surname, his home address and his place of study: he articulates and pronounces poorly while his speech lacks fluency and assurance. The hypnosis specialist then creates a sensation of immobility in the boy's arms and hands, a sort of temporary localised paralysis that holds him fixated and constrained in his

movements for a brief period of time. When the hypnotist releases the boy, she urges him to start speaking highly and clearly, in a manner that is free of fear and hesitation, because if he succeeds at this task right now, he will speak intelligibly and confidently for the rest of his life. It is suggested that the boy's speech deficiency is caused by a problem which is psychophysical in nature: here, a psychological trauma is manifested in bodily symptoms that backfire to produce further psychological issues thus perpetuating the vicious circle of the pathology.

Alexei, the narrator in *Mirror*, finds himself in a similar situation: he is bedridden due to an illness that, his doctor claims, is brought about by Alexei's guilt towards his loved ones. However, it soon becomes clear that the illness then provokes more guilt and self-blame, and the narrator struggles to break the circle. Alexei's illness fills him with sensations, recollections and dreams that he would not have experienced otherwise and brings some calm to his restless state. In the case of the stutterer's miraculous recovery, the hypnotist's hand pulls the boy back to free him of his problem. Similarly, the mother 'pulls' the narrator Alexei back into the past to face his troubles. In *Solaris*, for instance, Chris's illness leaves him in delirium which ends in a new state of mind that seemingly frees Chris of his late wife's visitations and thus gives a resolution to his relationship with the dead Hari, however it becomes evident in the final scenes that Chris's illness and recovery do not terminate his involvement with the spectre but rather transfer it to a different plane.

Finally, in addition to the image of illness or malaise that usually mark the onset of sudden and drastic changes in characters' psychology and general attitude towards reality through physical perturbations in the body, Tarkovsky like Proust uses the image of a voyage. For Tarkovsky's characters, as for Proust's narrator, a voyage does not merely consist in physical displacement but is also accompanied by a mental or emotional transformation. The voyage in *Solaris* or *Mirror* represents a disturbance that leads to new

sensations and novel revelations of the self where the return home at the end of the journey is essential. The parable of the Prodigal Son is an emblematic image of this idea in Tarkovsky's works.

The Sensation of Time in the Works of Proust and Tarkovsky

Il y a bien en effet deux séries: le temps objectif qui chemine régulièrement vers la mort, d'un pas égal et par une avance quotidienne; le présent éternel qui se trouve un beau matin et brusquement nez à nez avec la mort sans s'être à proprement parler rapproché d'elle jour après jour et d'heure en heure. Ces deux séries sont bien, si l'on veut, coextensives l'une à l'autre.⁴²²

According to Vladimir Jankélévitch, a person has three kinds of consciousness. He defines them as *la surconscience* that oversees the entire history of a person's life, *la conscience retardataire du devenir déjà devenu* that registers already happened events, and *la conscience de soi* that contemplates the self as an object.⁴²³ Jankélévitch claims that all three contribute to anxiety that a person, 'affolé par le gaspillage des minutes dénombrables', inevitably feels, and that makes a person want to 'faire revenir le devenir' and suspend the flight of time.⁴²⁴ Then, each of the three can supposedly tell a different story of the self and justifiably claim its story to be true. It however appears that the former two kinds of consciousness can produce a narrative that will be biographical in nature whereas the latter, *la conscience de soi*, is capable of giving an account of the self that is independent of chronology but based on sensations, involuntary memory or reminiscences that are associated with non-chronological time instead.

In *Du texte à l'action* (1986), Paul Ricœur suggests that texts mediate between *le vécu temporel* and *l'acte narratif* and, similarly to any other art form, *dé-range* and *ré-arrange* our relation to reality. In the process, Ricœur says, narration usually goes through three

⁴²² See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 212.

⁴²³ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 204.

⁴²⁴ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 204.

distinct developmental stages such as prefiguration, configuration and transfiguration prior to becoming a story and producing a new self. For Ricœur, '[tout] ce qui se déroule dans le temps peut être raconté'⁴²⁵, but to tell the story of the self within time, one must interpret signs, symbols and texts that mediate it in search of an absolute transparency or a perfect coincidence of the self with itself.⁴²⁶ Then perfect self-coincidence yields such consciousness and knowledge of the self that cannot be contested. It appears that, in *La Recherche*, the occurrence of self-coincidence is possible thanks to the involuntary memory of the narrator: Marcel's involuntary experiences resurge from the past to communicate by means of sensations the theme of the self that is pre-conscious and pre-logical. In Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, the narrator seems to be in search of Ricœur's absolute transparency when he peruses his recollections, impressions and dreams.

The self that appears as a result of self-coincidence is neither an act nor an object but is revealed at a certain moment, be the self passive, inattentive, or obliterated. To paraphrase Ricœur, the self wants to identify with time that is immanent and constitutes itself within this time.⁴²⁷ According to Ricœur, the structure of immanent time is necessary so that every act - opinion, affect, or volition - has a permanent 'theme' that makes the self appear immutable and consistent. The coherence of the self is thus ensured not through its content but through its acts and manner. So, similarly to Deleuze's repetition and difference, the pattern in which the self behaves returns while the content of its behaviour changes. Marcel's example of behavioural self-plagiarism springs to mind to illustrate this idea. It can be suggested that Ricœur's notion of the narrated self is close to Deleuze's image or a virtuality of the self that is linked to the past-in-general inasmuch as it does not represent a psychological state or a consciousness but exists outside consciousness in time. Deleuze therefore defines the virtual image in the pure state in this way:

⁴²⁵ See Paul Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1986), p. 14.

⁴²⁶ See Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action*, p. 29.

⁴²⁷ See Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action*, p. 44.

[L]'image virtuelle à l'état pur se définit, non pas en fonction d'un nouveau présent par rapport auquel elle serait (relativement) passée, mais en fonction de l'actuel présent dont elle est le passé, absolument et simultanément: particulière, elle est pourtant du 'passé en général', en ce sens qu'elle n'a pas encore reçu de date.⁴²⁸

In film, the creation of cinematic time is an important aspect of the figurative transposition of reality. For instance, *Mirror* is known for a particular sensation of time that flows within the film and in each of its components. There are two factors that are believed to contribute to it. First, as Tarkovsky himself claims, the temporal totality in a film can be achieved solely through its internal rhythm created by time pressure. The uniform 'tension' of time, Tarkovsky explains, determines the rhythm and produces the totality of the sensation of time.⁴²⁹ Second, the sensation of time is not simply expressed on the screen with help of visual images but is also revealed in the allusion to what happens outside the frame in real life⁴³⁰ and, Deleuze suggests, in the relationship between different frames too. In his works on film theory, *Cinéma 1* and *Cinéma 2*, Deleuze claims that the mutability of time can be represented in cinema in two distinct narrative styles: one of them relies on images of movement that convey action chronologically, and the other works with time-images that break the sensory-motor connections and make action irrelevant. The time-images construct the visible by means of the invisible and thus create a non-chronological temporality in which the real and the imaginary, perception and recollection, the past, the present and the future are not separated or opposed to one another but remain coexistent and complementary. The time-image concept of representation is therefore not dependent on the sequences in meaning but is founded in the ruptures between images instead thus allowing for an exploration of meaning in the very relationship between various images as well. Deleuze discusses Tarkovsky's work precisely in terms of time-images and what he calls crystal-images because they enable

⁴²⁸ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, pp. 106-7.

⁴²⁹ Tarkovsky, 'De la figure cinématographique', p. 60.

⁴³⁰ See Surkova, *With Tarkovsky*, p. 89.

Tarkovsky to create the sensation of stratified time and time as a state of mind in contrast to time as History or evolution. Skakov gives a more accessible explanation of Tarkovsky's treatment of time: 'Every point in space "remembers" events at different dates, while every instant of time is "filled" with events at different places. Both space and time always already contain spatio-temporal multiplicity, and the director simply amplifies this quality'⁴³¹.

Deleuze claims that Proust's oeuvre is also cinematic in exposition, as the novelist tends to make different 'shots' in his narrative coexist in depth instead of laying them out on a plane.⁴³² For the narrator of *La Recherche*, the self of today can find again the self of the past thanks to the superimposition of intermittent sensations or involuntary memory. Every time this happens, Marcel produces an arresting in-focus image that appears to restate Bergson's postulate that 'chaque actuel présent n'est que le passé tout entier dans son état le plus contracté'⁴³³. When Marcel talks about 'cents masques qu'il convient d'attacher à un même visage', he makes us guess the invisible relationships among his multiple selves and venture different possible meanings that might be associated with them. This is why Kristeva concludes that the Proustian selves constitute a 'polytope' - 'une place au contraire prolongée sans mesure puisqu'ils touchent simultanément, comme des géants plongés dans les années à des époques, vécues par eux si distantes, entre lesquelles tant de jours sont venus se placer – dans le Temps'⁴³⁴. Besides, when the self is attributed multiple hypostases, it is inadvertently divided into the selves that can be spoken about and the selves that resist any discourse on them. The self thus always includes the unspoken that brings about a rupture in meaning.

In cinema, the eye of a camera becomes the virtual body of the viewer or his embodiment at least for the duration of the film. For example, in *Mirror*, the narrator is the

⁴³¹ See Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky*, p. 13.

⁴³² See Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p. 37.

⁴³³ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 111.

⁴³⁴ See Kristeva, *Le temps sensible*, pp. 335-7.

subject that senses, remembers, and imagines, and though his presence in the frame is limited to his voice, the narrator's perspective becomes the lens of the camera and the temporary body of the viewer. In fact, the narrator appears on screen only once, his face still hidden from the viewer, at the moment of some mysterious grave illness possibly just before his death, and the perspective of the camera is therefore contemplative as if the narrator has suddenly gained a look over his entire life, the materiality of the world and his body included. In *Mirror*, Tarkovsky uses the technique of prolongation to create a particular 'divine' sensation of time in the frame: the viewer gets exposed to an image for such an extended period of time that his experience resembles the ceremonial contemplation in an orthodox liturgy.⁴³⁵ This is also an example of time-image. Such images are not dramatically poignant or plot-line shifting but represent simple observations that allude to what is behind the visible, hint at a future event or start a series of recurrent themes. Tarkovsky's themes and recurrent images are not unlike Proust's intermittent sensations since they can also trigger involuntary evocations. When repeated in different contexts, these images reiterate sensations and either separate various scenes or connect them through a common thread or harmony. For instance, the recurrence of a visual image or a sound, such as fire, water, hand, bird, wind, cries of an owl or heartbeat to name a few, makes the image itself more concrete and stable through the sensation that it evokes and also becomes a sign that can produce the same sensation in the future. The consistent reuse of a series of themes in Tarkovsky's aesthetic is another evidence in favour of the philosophy of repetition in his work.

In general, Proust and Tarkovsky both understand and treat the notion of time as non-chronological and show the characters in their works re-experiencing some events in their lives in order to allude to the non-linear repetitive pattern inherent in the sensation of time. Indeed, Proust's intermittent sensations, selves and involuntary memory, Tarkovsky's

⁴³⁵ See Kovács, Szilágyi, *Les Mondes d'Andrei Tarkovski*, p. 35.

doubling of characters, mirroring and impressions imply discontinuity, fragmentation, and yet the consistently recurrent character of time. Tarkovsky's narrator in *Mirror* finds himself as entangled in the web of time as Proust's Marcel. Angela Moorjani accurately describes Marcel's fluid subjectivity in relation to time:

This discontinuous continuity of the subject is stretched out in time/space, neither linearly nor on a finite surface, but rather through time's incessant motion, from endless beginnings, transversal turnings, spanning at once upward and downward into the depths.⁴³⁶

Structurally, Proust's novel and Tarkovsky's films appear cyclical, with a built-in constant return to the same scenes and themes within them. Furthermore, Deleuze notices that *La Recherche* is composed of self-sufficient parts that do not pretend or seek to create any kind of totality but hint at the ever-unfinished state of the novel⁴³⁷:

L'essentiel est que les parties de la Recherche restent morcelées, fragmentées, sans que rien leur manque: parties éternellement partielles entraînées par le temps, boîtes entrouvertes et vases clos, sans former un tout ni en supposer un, sans manquer de rien dans cet écartèlement, et dénonçant d'avance toute unité organique qu'on voudrait y introduire. Lorsque Proust compare son oeuvre à une cathédrale, ou à une robe, ce n'est pas pour se réclamer d'un Logos comme belle totalité, mais au contraire pour faire valoir un droit à l'inachèvement, aux coutures et aux rapiécages.⁴³⁸

Similarly, Tarkovsky's films seem to imitate the structure of the parable of the Prodigal Son - the return to the same but *differently* - in the way their story lines begin, develop and then end by reversing to the beginning again. In *Solaris*, the main protagonist starts and ends his journey, no matter physically or mentally, at his parental house; in *Mirror*, the narrator can't escape the return to his childhood impressions. In both films, such structure seems closed and open-ended at the same time: so that we know the finale but still imagine what else could have happened or how differently the journey could have been made.

⁴³⁶ Moorjani, 'A Cryptanalysis', p. 888.

⁴³⁷ Benjamin describes the impression that the structure of Proust's novel gives him in these words: 'And thus the basic feature of this work, too, which Proust kept proclaiming as being planned, is anything but the result of construction. But it is as planned as the lines on the palm of our hand or the arrangement of the stamen in a calyx'. See Benjamin, *Illuminations. The Image of Proust*, p. 208.

⁴³⁸ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 193.

According to Deleuze, the narratives in Proust's *La Recherche* and Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and *Mirror* are reflective of Bergson's paradoxical conception of time and Péguy's theory of *l'internel*. In *La Recherche*, Marcel's multiple selves - some living and some dead - show that, in his mind, he has difficulty connecting them all under the umbrella of one totalising self. Likewise, time that his multiple selves have lived also remains fragmented and cannot be totalised either⁴³⁹. And even if the disconnected pieces of time could be reassembled into a coherent timeline, Marcel's mistrust of voluntary memory and intellect proves that he is not interested in this enterprise. As Deleuze suggests, the Proustian narrator rather wants to know what connects his selves to Memory and Time as the expressions of non-chronological time, and this transpires in his disagreement with 'le grand philosophe norvégien', one of Bergson's followers, in the novel. Importantly, when Deleuze talks about a resemblance between Bergson's and Proust's conceptions of time, he emphasises that the similarity lies in the way the two thinkers conceive the resurgence of the past in recollections. Deleuze therefore draws parallels between how Bergson and Proust construe memory as opposed to how they understand the duration of time:

Qu'on ne remonte pas d'un actuel présent au passé, qu'on ne recompose pas le passé avec des présents, mais qu'on se place d'emblée dans le passé lui-même. Que ce passé ne représente pas quelque chose qui a été, mais simplement quelque chose qui est, et qui coexiste avec soi comme présent [...]. De même Proust, quand il parle des états induits par les signes de la mémoire: 'Réels sans être actuels, idéaux sans être abstraits'.⁴⁴⁰

Deleuze notes that Proust, contrary to Bergson, wants to know how the past in itself can be preserved. In *La Recherche*, the narrator proposes a counter-argument to Bergson's philosophy that he then relates in the form of an anecdote about the Norwegian philosopher (Henri Bergson was in fact a French philosopher): according to Deleuze, Marcel voices

⁴³⁹ Benjamin cites Fernandez in his take on this: 'Fernandez rightly distinguished between a *thème de l'éternité* and a *thème du temps* in Proust. But his eternity is by no means a platonic or a utopian one; it is rapturous'. See Benjamin, *Illuminations. The Image of Proust*, p. 206.

⁴⁴⁰ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, pp. 73-4.

Proust's interest in what 'un souvenir qu'on ne se rappelle pas'⁴⁴¹ is and whether it can be found by means of involuntary memory:

Nous possédons tous nos souvenirs, sinon la faculté de nous les rappeler, dit d'après M. Bergson, le grand philosophe norvégien dont je n'ai pas essayé, pour ne pas ralentir encore, d'imiter le langage. Sinon la faculté de se les rappeler. Mais qu'est-ce qu'un souvenir qu'on ne se rappelle pas? Ou bien allons plus loin. Nous ne nous rappelons pas nos souvenirs de trente dernières années; mais ils nous baignent tout entiers; pourquoi alors s'arrêter à trente années, pourquoi ne pas prolonger jusqu'au delà de la naissance cette vie antérieure? Du moment que je ne connais pas toute une partie des souvenirs qui sont derrière moi, du moment qu'ils me sont invisibles, que je n'ai pas la faculté de les rappeler à moi, qui me dit que dans cette masse inconnue de moi, il n'y en a pas qui remontent à bien au-delà de ma vie humaine? Si je puis avoir en moi et autour de moi tant de souvenirs dont je ne me souviens pas, cet oubli (du moins oubli de fait puisque je n'ai pas la faculté de rien voir) peut porter sur une vie que j'ai vécue dans le corps d'un autre homme, même sur une autre planète. Un même oubli efface tout. Mais alors que signifie cette immortalité de l'âme dont le philosophe norvégien affirmait la réalité? L'être que je serai après la mort n'a pas plus de raisons de se souvenir de l'homme que je suis depuis ma naissance que ce dernier ne se souvient de ce que j'ai été avant elle. (III SG II, III: 374)

This long citation is necessary to fully appreciate Marcel's thought and make accurate inferences. In his argument, Marcel places a remembrance that does not occur, the life that precedes his birth, a life in somebody else's body or a life outside his human life, and a possibility of his existence on another planet in the same category of phenomena that can be real but are beyond his control and outside his reach. They all can belong to the realm of the past-in-general and non-chronological time that is not accessible by means of intellect and effortful recollection and yet represents a plausible way to conceive immortality in the sense of the eternal return and uninterrupted continuity. Proust's article for *Figaro* exposes the novelist's personal hesitancy to accept the notion of human mortality as definitive:

Mais si je crois sans difficulté à la mort d'une méduse, je ne puis croire facilement à la mort d'une personne, même à la simple éclipse, à la simple déchéance de sa raison. Notre sentiment de la continuité de l'âme est plus fort.⁴⁴²

Martin Hägglund also suggests that Proust's preoccupation with the lost time is reflective of his profound desire for survival that is 'a desire to live on as mortal, since the death that

⁴⁴¹ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 74.

⁴⁴² Proust, 'Sentiments filiaux d'un parricide'.

one defends against in the movement of survival is internal to the life that is defended'⁴⁴³.

Hägglund contrasts the notion of survival with that of immortality: whereas survival means holding on to one's mortal being and thus everything that is temporal and subject to change, immortality implies eternal life without alteration or disruption. Hägglund's point is that the Proustian narrator does not want to die and yet does not want eternal life either: 'Marcel explicitly wants to hold onto his mortal being ("my memories, my defects, my very character"), which makes him fear death and reject the idea of immortality'⁴⁴⁴.

However, immortality in the sense of the eternal return of the same can reconcile the ideas of survival and eternal life as it presupposes a potential for the recurrence of all things that Marcel is afraid to lose and never regain. Here involuntary memory can serve as both a glimpse into immortality, i.e. non-chronological time, and a proof that such phenomenon exists. In fact, Hägglund conjectures the same: 'If there is a resurrection in the experience of involuntary memory, it is the resurrection of a mortal life that lives on'⁴⁴⁵.

Tarkovsky in turn distinguishes between recollections and impressions: the former have all the disadvantages of Proustian voluntary memory while the latter have the edge of involuntary memory. As both *Solaris* and *Mirror* show, Tarkovsky's impressions cannot be willingly called upon but are more likely to be evoked by a guilty conscience. Moreover, they do not reproduce the past exactly but rather rediscover or recreate it with help of the mood, sensations and feelings from back then. The scenes from the narrator's childhood in *Mirror* and especially those that solely concern his mother are the examples of what Tarkovsky means by *impressions*. Tarkovsky's impressions are like Deleuze's *souvenir pur*: '[...] c'est dans le souvenir pur que nous restons contemporains de l'enfant que nous avons été, comme le croyant se sent contemporain du Christ'⁴⁴⁶. Similarly to dreams and involuntary evocations, impressions preserve what Deleuze calls *l'état pur du temps* and

⁴⁴³ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 25.

⁴⁴⁴ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 29.

⁴⁴⁵ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 33.

⁴⁴⁶ See Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p. 121.

thus give access to non-chronological time. Deleuze cites one of the most famous episodes from *La Recherche* to emphasise the phenomenon of the pure state of time:

Reste à expliquer pourquoi, par la sollicitation de la madeleine, Combray ne se contente pas de resurgir tel qu'il a été présent (simple association d'idées), mais surgit absolument sous une forme qui ne fut jamais vécue, dans son 'essence' ou son 'éternité'.⁴⁴⁷

In fact, it appears that the eternal return of the same and non-chronological time are Tarkovsky's idea of immortality too. At least this idea is prominent in *Mirror*: Tarkovsky insists that not eternal life but the recurrence of such human dispositions as heroism and individual sacrifice for the sake of the other ultimately ensures the progress of humankind. This is also why, for Tarkovsky, the acts of heroism and sacrifice are not specific to significant historical events but are common features of everyday situations as well. Tarkovsky like Proust does not believe that anyone can be immune to the general law of oblivion, but he sees the remedy to it in the consciousness of moral importance that impels to live every singular life for the benefit of the whole of humanity. This is what in Tarkovsky's interpretation of survival, defined by Hägglund as holding on to the temporal and mortal, relates the past to the future and moves the humankind forward within the recurrence of the same. Hägglund makes a similar claim about the Proustian narrator's personal motivation behind his search for the lost time: 'Without extinction, nothing would pass away, and without survival, nothing would relate the past to the future. In writing his book, Marcel neither can nor aspires to transcend this painful synthesis of survival and extinction'.⁴⁴⁸

Proust's intermittence of sensations and involuntary memory, like Tarkovsky's mirroring and childhood impressions, afford their characters an unmediated access to non-chronological time and the kind of immortality that both artists envision in their aesthetic

⁴⁴⁷ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 19.

⁴⁴⁸ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 50.

philosophies because all of them represent those rare and raw encounters with mortality that Jankélévitch defines as random occasions when people are taking time seriously:

Dans l'intervalle de la naissance et de la mort, la rencontre des deux chronologies est elle-même intermittente... Le devenir, disions-nous, est une continuité infinie en profondeur et en intensité, mais sa carrière est finie en extension; la vie est une éternité temporaire, un inépuisable qui en fait s'épuisera un jour! Immérgé dans le présent sans fin, l'homme ne survole cette provisoire éternité qu'au hasard des occasions. La prise-au-sérieux, rappelons-le, consiste en cela même: on ne prend conscience du temps que de temps en temps; car la conscience du temps continu est une conscience discontinue [...].⁴⁴⁹

Immortalising Love in the Signs of Art

Deleuze refers to the Proustian narrator's recurrence of sensations to illustrate his theory of repetition and difference in love: for Marcel, who compares falling in love to catching a cold, every new experience of love repeats the one before, and the object of his love seems to remain the same in spite of being represented by different women. Moreover, for Marcel, love is like illness because of the distress, pain or extreme suffering that it can bring about. In Marcel's mind, love and suffering are interlocked to perpetuate one another. Indeed, while as a little boy Marcel longed for the closeness to his beloved mother to end his anxiety and suffering, as a grown man he finds himself seeking pain and suffering to regain the closeness to his dear late grandmother. Suffering also gets repeated in the next love relationship, it is however a new and different kind of suffering every time. Deleuze notes that the idea of love, regardless of suffering, still remains joyous and makes one, Marcel included, seek love throughout life:

Ce que nous répétons, c'est chaque fois une souffrance particulière; mais la répétition même est toujours joyeuse, le fait de la répétition forme une joie générale. Ou plutôt, les faits sont toujours tristes, et particuliers; mais l'idée qu'on en extrait est générale et gaie.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 213.

⁴⁵⁰ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 91.

Commenting on Marcel's claims of self-plagiarism in the matters of the heart, Deleuze writes about a recurrent theme in love that is beyond anyone's control or experience and that is much more than any individual love or all loves ever known to people taken together. Deleuze thus hints at the existence of an archetype of love that reveals itself a little less here and a little more there but never fully so that we can only get a glimpse of it every time we fall in love but cannot live it in its entirety:

Plus profondément, c'est une image lointaine au-delà de notre expérience, un Thème qui nous dépasse, une sorte d'archétype. Image, idée ou essence assez riche pour se diversifier dans les êtres que nous aimons, et même dans un seul être aimé; mais telle aussi qu'elle se répète dans nos amours successives, et dans chacun de nos amours pris isolément.⁴⁵¹

The archetype of love also manifests itself in experiential differences that tell one love story apart from another and get never exhausted because they refer back to some sort of all-encompassing primordial love:

[C]haque amour apporte sa différence, mais cette différence était déjà comprise dans le précédent, et toutes les différences sont contenues dans une image primordiale, que nous ne cessons pas de reproduire à des niveaux divers, et de répéter comme la loi intelligible de toutes nos amours.⁴⁵²

It appears that, in principle, Deleuze's theory of primordial love is akin to Bergson's idea of totalising Memory that contains within itself all the multiplicity of diverse singular memories and, furthermore, creates them infinitely. Both ideas are also predicated on the philosophy of non-chronological time and in this way negate the psychoanalytic premise of the love for the mother at the origin of any erotic experience:

[L]'image de mère n'est peut-être pas le thème le plus profond, ni la raison de la série amoureuse: il est vrai que nos amours répètent déjà d'autres amours, que nous n'avons pas nous-mêmes vécues. La mère apparaît plutôt comme la transition d'une expérience à une autre, la manière dont notre expérience commence, mais déjà s'enchaîne avec

⁴⁵¹ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 84.

⁴⁵² See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 84.

d'autres expériences qui furent faites par autrui. À la limite, l'expérience amoureuse est celle de l'humanité tout entière, que traverse le courant d'une hérédité transcendante.⁴⁵³

According to Deleuze's theory, every temporal love refers to the same archetype of perfect infinite love, and then this prototype of love gets repeated, yet in a different manner, in another finite love experience. In his desire to hold onto his temporal feelings, Marcel wants his love to last forever, but it is as mortal as both himself and the one he loves. Although the death of his beloved Albertine did not put an end to his jealousy of her and his suffering from their tormenting relationship, so his love for Albertine outlives her; however, Marcel's feelings towards Albertine change after her death and therefore do not survive as the same feelings that he experienced when she was alive. Hägglund believes that the Proustian narrator is motivated by the threat of the possibility of losing his love as he realises that loss is inherent in love and thus imminent:

The sense of temporal finitude - the sense of the possibility of loss - is part of the desire to save anything in the first place. The threat of loss is thus not merely an eternal threat but is internal to whatever one wants to save.⁴⁵⁴

Sceptical of the power of intellect as a reliable way to defeat the flight of time in order to preserve his love, the Proustian narrator does not believe voluntary memory or consciously lived experiences can be of any help in this task. Deleuze comments on the Proustian position here: 'Proust adresse les mêmes reproches à la mémoire volontaire et à la perception consciente: celle-ci croit trouver le secret de l'impression dans l'objet, celle-là croit trouver le secret du souvenir dans la succession des présents'⁴⁵⁵. In contrast, involuntary memory offers a solution by means of access to the kind of immortality that is revealed in the consistent recurrence of experiences within non-chronological time. However, involuntary evocations are uncontrollable and transient and therefore can only give a casual glimpse of immortality. As Marcel learns from the evocation of his late

⁴⁵³ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 89.

⁴⁵⁴ See Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 55.

⁴⁵⁵ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 72.

grandmother, involuntary memory is not sufficient to make the pain last and thus prolong the affection: his mourning memory fades away only to recur in a different form and intensity when he grieves for someone else.

Deleuze suggests that involuntary memory, impressions, and dreams seem to function in the same manner in order to access non-chronological time: they achieve it through tapping into essences of things because ‘le sens matériel n'est rien sans une essence idéale qu'il incarne’⁴⁵⁶. Unfortunately, Deleuze notes, these essences are fragile and elusive and therefore difficult to capture and preserve: ‘Ce sont nos “otages” [les essences]: elles meurent si nous mourons, mais si elles sont éternelles, nous sommes immortels en quelque manière’⁴⁵⁷. Then, the question is whether it is feasible to create or locate essences that will deem us immortal in the world that surrounds us. As an answer, Deleuze puts forth his theory that aesthetics and art, rather than memory of any kind, are the only domain of human activity capable of discovering essences, preserving and communicating them across time and space thus regaining time again and again and keeping the eternal process of repetition and difference going:

Mais, comme le sommeil, l'art est au-delà de la mémoire: il fait appel à la pensée pure, comme faculté des essences. Ce que l'art nous fait retrouver, c'est le temps tel qu'il est enroulé dans l'essence, tel qu'il naît dans le monde enveloppé de l'essence, identique à l'éternité. L'extra-temporel de Proust, c'est ce temps à l'état de naissance, et le sujet-artiste qui le retrouve.⁴⁵⁸

For Deleuze then, essences hold the key to the extra-temporal in Proust's oeuvre and can render anything immortal through artistic expression: ‘Elles [essences] rendent donc la mort moins probable; la seule preuve, la seule chance, est esthétique’⁴⁵⁹. So, according to Deleuze, the world of art is the ultimate world of dematerialised signs (above the world of signs of love) that find their meaning in ideal essences and, vice versa, ideal essences

⁴⁵⁶ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 21.

⁴⁵⁷ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 57.

⁴⁵⁸ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 59.

⁴⁵⁹ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 57.

reveal themselves as absolute *differences* in works of art.⁴⁶⁰ Deleuze does not discard involuntary memory and reminiscences in favour of art and metaphors; in fact, he likens the processes that underlie all these phenomena and the effects that they produce on our sensation of time:

L'essentiel dans la mémoire involontaire n'est pas la ressemblance, ni même l'identité, qui ne sont que des conditions. *L'essentiel, c'est la différence intériorisée, devenue immanente.* C'est en ce sens que la réminiscence est l'analogue de l'art, et la mémoire involontaire, l'analogue d'une métaphore: elle prend 'deux objets différents', la madeleine avec sa saveur, Combray avec ses qualités de couleur et de température; elle enveloppe l'un dans l'autre, elle fait de leur rapport quelque chose d'intérieur.⁴⁶¹

So, every artist sees and expresses the world from a certain point of view while every point of view represents difference itself, *la différence interne absolue*⁴⁶². Furthermore, Deleuze claims that repetition and difference are interdependent and difficult to unravel: 'En vérité, différence et répétition sont les deux puissances de l'essence, inséparables et corrélatives'⁴⁶³. And, Deleuze continues, 'la différence et la répétition ne s'opposent qu'en apparence. Il n'y a pas de grand artiste dont l'oeuvre ne nous fasse dire: "La même et pourtant autre"'⁴⁶⁴. Certainly, this outlook on art can be extended to the patterns of repetition and difference in works of different artists thus proposing a sort of trans-artist and trans-genre recurrence of ideal essences that enable us to participate in cross-temporal, cross-spatial and cross-cultural communication. The comment made by the Proustian narrator that works of art allow us to see the same world through a different set of eyes capitalises on the idea of art as a vessel of shared signs and recurrent meanings:

The common denominator - the central value that is promoted in the sections on aesthetics - is the capacity of art to disclose 'another universe' or 'another world' that otherwise would be inaccessible. 'The only real journey', Marcel emphasises in a famous passage, 'would be to travel not towards new landscapes, but with new eyes, to see the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to see the hundred universes that each of them can see, or can be; and we can do that with the help of

⁴⁶⁰ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, pp. 21, 53.

⁴⁶¹ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 75.

⁴⁶² See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 55.

⁴⁶³ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 63.

⁴⁶⁴ See Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 63.

Elstir, a Vinteuil; with them and their like we can truly fly from star to star'.⁴⁶⁵

Perhaps, Tarkovsky's Russian winter landscapes in *Mirror* that imitate, or repeat, the composition of the famous Bruegel painting are carriers of the same idea: to paraphrase Deleuze, it is in the work of art that they find lost time in its pure state. Similarly, Tarkovsky's allusions to Da Vinci or direct citations of the works of Rembrandt and Carpaccio do not only show the eternal beauty and genius of their creations but also inadvertently comment on the immortal and recurrent character of the themes and subjects that they depict. When Tarkovsky says that the initial idea behind *Mirror* is to immortalise his mother Maria and let the entire world know of her charismatic personality and unique human qualities and then places her individual story in the context of collective history and art, he insists that she is an integral part of the continuous process of recurrence or the Deleuzian *difference* that keeps on coming back in perpetuity. Tarkovsky thus makes references to visual and literary arts and music in order to create the cinematic image of his mother: he compares her to Leonardo's Ginevra de Benci, Dostoyevsky's character Lebiadkina, embeds her story in the poetry of his father and music by Purcell, Bach and Pergolesi.

In *La Recherche*, Swann likens his beloved Odette to Jethro's daughter Zipporah in Botticelli's fresco for the Sistine Chapel: Swann has a picture of the painting on his table and imagines that he owns his living Botticelli when he holds the picture against his heart or when he justifies his wasting time with Odette. The musical phrase by Vinteuil that becomes the theme of Swann's love for Odette, their *hymne national*, is inspired by multiple sources such as Saint-Saëns, Fauré and Franck.⁴⁶⁶ In fact, all art genres are represented by a character in *La Recherche*. In addition, the characters of Marcel's mother and grandmother are inspired by Proust's mother Jeanne Proust and his grandmother Adèle

⁴⁶⁵ See Häggglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 150.

⁴⁶⁶ See Jean-Yves Tadié, *Marcel Proust. La Cathédrale du temps* (Gallimard, 1999), p. 26.

Weil. Jean-Yves Tadié notes that these two characters are the only female characters in *La Recherche* that are shown to have some actual internal life, feelings and thoughts.⁴⁶⁷ It is also thanks to these two women that the Proustian narrator, like the novelist in his life, is exposed to and taught to appreciate art.

It seems that, for both Proust and Tarkovsky, immortalising their love means the same - reconnecting with the Deleuzian archetype of love by means of art and its essential signs. Then, the ones that they love will join the ranks of those sung and glorified by other great artists through hundreds of years before and will continue the eternally recurrent theme of love while preserving their uniqueness and irreplaceability. Perhaps, this is why neither Proust nor Tarkovsky represent an event of actual death, rituals or traditional observances for the dead in their works: these do not serve their purpose of making love last and survive after death. In fact, as Jankélévitch justly notes, the event of death is too brief and incomprehensible, so the living end up with funereal ceremonies for the dead that in reality do very little to preserve the memory of the dead but mostly make the instant of death come back ad infinitum and remain a part of their lives:

Le mystère du pianissimo léthal disparaît dans les cantiques grandioses. Et comme si cela ne suffisait pas encore, les survivants célèbrent avec une pieuse régularité la date anniversaire de cet instant: grâce à la fidélité du souvenir, ce qui est arrivé une seule fois deviendra périodique; le calendrier fait du mystère 'semelfactif' un événement itératif et presque familier; les cérémonies miment la répétition du trop bref instant. C'est ainsi que les fidèles commémorent inlassablement, chaque Vendredi saint, l'éternel dernier soupir du Christ; et comme le surlendemain ils célèbrent non moins fidèlement sa résurrection, l'instant qui devrait être tragique achève de se mêler intimement à l'existence dans la familiarité du culte. Le périodisme remédie sans doute à la frivolité des hommes incapables de continuer perpétuellement l'instant, incapables de soutenir bien longtemps la sublimité de leur deuil. Fête périodique ou fête prolongée, la fête permet à l'instant mortel, dans les deux cas, de cohabiter familièrement avec la vie journalière. Le mourant n'en finit plus de mourir!⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁷ See Tadié, *La Cathédrale du temps*, p. 29.

⁴⁶⁸ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 225.

Jankélévitch suspects that the living simply lack the knowledge of death as a phenomenon and thus act intuitively or prefer to trust custom and tradition with regard to the kind of behaviour they are expected to exhibit in such circumstances:

Les survivants ne savent que faire ni à quoi s'occuper; non, il ne sera pas dit qu'on en reste là, qu'à la dernière expiration de la dernière respiration succède décidément le néant éternel, que la mort ait dit Non une fois pour toutes!⁴⁶⁹

In the case of Proust and Tarkovsky, they refuse to banalise the death of their loved ones in mourning, whether anticipatory or in the aftermath of death, that looks like a staged performance instead of being a genuine expression of loss and love. Jankélévitch believes that such performance-like sorrow is simply 'une affaire' among the living that entirely excludes the dead:

Les vivants vont s'employer du moins à étirer la fraction de seconde: les vêtements noirs survivent longtemps à la disparition tragique. Ou bien au contraire, comme on ne sait jamais que faire devant une tombe, on arrangera des fleurs: ce qui est du moins une occupation pour les survivants étrangement inoccupés en face de leur défunt; le parterre parfumé, image de l'épanouissement vital, recouvrira le vide sinistre du néant. Nous nous recueillons longuement devant ce point d'orgue en marbre qu'on appelle un mausolée. Le deuil est donc une affaire entre vivants: ce sont les vivants qui s'affairent, et transforment l'instant en pièce montée; quant au mort, il est, comme on sait, retire de toutes les affaires.⁴⁷⁰

The concept of mourning that represents Proust's and Tarkovsky's philosophies is rather Derridean: it is intermittent yet continuous, it can affect one prior to or after the actual loss of the loved one, it recognises and prophesies the singularity of the loss. Proust and Tarkovsky appear to believe that we all contribute to non-chronological time and leave our trace in it. Derrida refers to this kind of past as the absolute past. For Derrida, the absolute past is akin to an immense collection of information, or such a vast archive that no one and nothing can encompass. Art, Derrida argues, is connected to this archive and can therefore communicate bits of information that it holds within through signs:

⁴⁶⁹ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, p. 225.

⁴⁷⁰ See Jankélévitch, *La Mort*, pp. 225-6.

L'art est comme la pensée ou la mémoire pensante, lié au signe et non au symbole, il n'a donc affaire qu'à du passé absolu, c'est-à-dire de l'immémorial ou de l'immémorable, à une archive qu'aucune mémoire intériorisante ne pourra prendre en elle.⁴⁷¹

So when Deleuze's past-in-general, or Derrida's absolute past, comes back to us in the process of the eternal recurrence of the same, we can recognise ourselves and our experiences in it thanks to involuntary memory and art. Hence, all mortals, even the most ordinary people with their most ordinary lives, have a chance to gain the kind of immortality that is at the same time concealed and revealed through the signs of art. The oeuvre of Marcel Proust and Andrei Tarkovsky show that the narration of the love for the other inspired by mourning remains one of the most honest strategies of immortalising the other in art.

⁴⁷¹ See Derrida, *Mémoires pour Paul de Man*, p. 78.

CONCLUSION

Affects related to culpable conscience such as regret, remorse or sorrow are commonly thought to be produced by the excess of memories about a negative or traumatic experience. On the contrary, Deleuze claims, these affects are triggered by the lack of memories or the impotence to elaborate them: as a result, the traumatic experience keeps on recurring and thus hindering recuperation and renewal. Deleuze relies on Freud's analysis in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* to develop his idea:

[O]n répète d'autant plus son passé qu'on s'en ressouvient moins, qu'on a moins conscience de s'en souvenir - souvenez-vous, élaborez le souvenir, pour ne pas répéter. La conscience de soi dans la recognition apparaît comme la faculté de l'avenir ou la fonction du futur, la fonction du nouveau. N'est-il pas vrai que les seuls morts qui reviennent sont ceux qu'on a trop vite et trop profondément enfouis, sans leur rendre les devoirs nécessaires, et que le remords témoigne moins d'un excès de mémoire que d'une impuissance ou d'un raté dans l'élaboration d'un souvenir?⁴⁷²

Therefore, the dead that come back are those who are swiftly pushed away from consciousness and fast forgotten. Marcel's dead grandmother and Chris's late wife Hari come to mind as illustrations of this idea. Indeed, they reappear as distressing haunting memories because they did not receive a proper farewell from their loved ones. The necessary duties, which are mentioned in Deleuze's argument as a prerequisite for avoiding the recurrence of a trauma, have very little to do with traditional observances for the dead that conceptualise death or give rise to abstract recollections rather than truly honour the lost. The Proustian narrator and Tarkovsky's character from *Solaris* shy away from such mourning practices and succeed at parting with their traumatic experiences caused by the death of their loved ones solely thanks to the intensive and genuine perusal of their grieving memory. Deleuze refers to Freud once again:

Freud marquait dès le début que, pour cesser de répéter, il ne suffisait pas de se souvenir abstraitement (sans affect), ni de former un concept en général, ni même de se représenter dans toute sa particularité l'événement refoulé: il fallait aller chercher le

⁴⁷² See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 25.

souvenir là où il était, s'installer d'emblée dans le passé pour opérer la jonction vivante entre le savoir et la résistance, la représentation et le blocage.⁴⁷³

For Deleuze, who proposes his notion of pure reminiscence and Proustian involuntary memory as a means for atonement, the ability to remember the past on these terms is linked to the ability to promote the new and generate the future. Arguably, the latter constitutes the most essential and effective principle of Deleuze's philosophy of repetition and difference.

In Proust's *Recherche*, as in Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and *Mirror*, the narration of mourning is precisely the elaboration of memories that Deleuze prescribes for breaking the circle of repetition. In fact, for Marcel, Chris or Alexei, recollecting their past when in mourning becomes a process that allows them to undergo a series of psychological changes. Indeed, though Marcel's mourning for his grandmother, and later for Albertine, subsides with the passage of time and turns into Derridean *demi-deuil*, Marcel's other self emerges from it ready to move on to new and different experiences. Similarly, as a result of their mourning experiences, Tarkovsky's Chris in *Solaris* and Alexei in *Mirror* appear if not recovered from their grief-related illnesses then at least freed from their anxiety and guilt.

Ricciardi suggests that Proust's appreciation of loss remains at the level of superficial stylistics when she questions the moral validity of the Proustian understanding of mourning: 'Is an aesthetic connoisseurship of style of lost time an ethically appropriate answer to the enigma of mourning? This is the problem Proust ultimately leaves us to ponder'⁴⁷⁴. However, in *Allegories of Reading* (1979), Paul de Man does not doubt the sentiment of guilt and responsibility before the other in the Proustian work as he finds it clearly reflected in the novelist's rhetorical strategies. Moreover, de Man argues it to be impossible (and perhaps nonessential) to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between Proust's ethics and aesthetics:

⁴⁷³ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 29.

⁴⁷⁴ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p.8.

One should not conclude that the subjective feelings of guilt motivate the rhetorical strategies as causes determine effects. It is not more legitimate to say that the ethical interests of the subject determine the invention of figures than to say that the rhetorical potential of language engenders the choice of guilt as theme; no one can decide whether Proust invented metaphors because he felt guilty or whether he had to declare himself guilty in order to find a use for his metaphors.⁴⁷⁵

Besides, Ricciardi's reservations about the moral grounds for the Proustian aestheticising of loss become irrelevant if mourning is given the Derridean interpretation of an imperative for any ethical relationship. For Derrida, we are always in mourning as long as we are in relationships with others: in *Politiques de l'amitié* (1994), Derrida uses his own term *aimance*, a compound of *amour* and *amitié*, to erase 'the ever unstable historical and conceptual limit that distinguishes friendship from love'⁴⁷⁶. So, according to Derrida, in both love and friendship, the mortality of the other is the precondition for a relationship.

Furthermore, when putting their traumatic experiences on paper (whether in the form of a novel or a film script), verbalising and arranging them in some meaningful order of a story, the artists themselves go on a transforming and transfiguring journey. Thus, the narration of mourning for the loved other, in addition to the task of immortalising the other in art, also represents an attempt at a kind of self-therapy that heals and therefore changes the mourner/ narrator/ artist. In their work, both Proust and Tarkovsky meditate on their private losses and contemplate their personal mortality. Proust ruminates on the reality of his mother's death while Tarkovsky forebodes the possibility of such loss in his life. Tarkovsky's oneiric experience of his death that he describes in his diaries attests to his heightened sense of his own finitude. Suffering from a long-term serious illness, Proust actually lives and creates under the palpable threat of death. According to Walter Benjamin, this is the primary stimulus to Proust's creativity: 'On a larger scale, however, the threatening, suffocating crisis was death, which he [Proust] was constantly aware of,

⁴⁷⁵ See Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading. Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 64.

⁴⁷⁶ See Critchley, *Ethics-Politics-Subjectivity*, p. 264.

most of all while he was writing⁴⁷⁷. It appears that the narration of the self in *La Recherche* and *Solaris* or *Mirror* represents the work of mourning that the artists do, perhaps unawares, in order to reconcile with their losses, quell their sorrows and carry on.

For Freud, mourning is working through a specific experience of loss or an activity in the process of which one performs *Trauerarbeit*, 'sorrow work'. According to the great psychoanalyst, mourning is in fact a riddle because the pain of the libido's detachment, as well as the ego's resistance to re-absorption, is difficult to explain.⁴⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Freud believes that the termination of mourning is not only possible but in a way certain. For Derrida, however, mourning is interminable: Though it does not go on with the same intensity, it oscillates between forgetting and remembering and preserves the sentiment of the inconsolable loss of a unique world of the other. Derrida sees mourning as a necessary activity, a kind of homage to the dead other. Like Freud and Derrida, Proust and Tarkovsky also think that mourning is not simply an emotion but a purposeful activity; however, their notion of mourning assumes some characteristics of both Freudian mourning as a post-traumatic psychological phenomenon and Derridean mourning as an ethical responsibility before the other.

For both Levinas and Derrida, the self and the other are constituted by one another in a perpetual interchange. Levinas, however, puts the other on a pedestal for the self to admire: a 'relation without relation', for Levinas, entails the impossibility of equality or understanding between the two as the Other always remains absolutely other and represents only the promise of an encounter that enables any future experience rather than an actual event in time and space. According to Levinas, the relation between self and other is fundamentally ethical because there is nothing that precedes it or takes priority over it; moreover, it takes the self out of its solitary existence by declaring the world to be a shared experience and demanding a response to it – either responsibility and care for the

⁴⁷⁷ See Benjamin, *Illuminations. The Image of Proust*, p. 214.

⁴⁷⁸ See Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning*, p. 31.

other or violence and annihilation. Yet, Colin Davis emphasises, Levinas is descriptive rather than prescriptive in his philosophical texts (which is in keeping with his phenomenological background) and thus does not denounce violence as wrong but attempts to demonstrate how violence inadvertently fails: ‘I may succeed in killing the other, or even innumerable others, but the Other survives. Violence, then, always ends or continues in failure’⁴⁷⁹. The works of Proust and Tarkovsky also show how the encounter of the self with the other is structural for the self and that the other’s presence within the self is inevitable and can therefore be haunting if denied. Edith Wyschogrod, for instance, observes that Proust’s fiction is ‘a kind of protoethics, a revelation within language of the persecution of self by another’, and this is what draws Levinas to *La Recherche* in his discussion of alterity in *Noms Propres*: ‘To be sure, in Proust’s writing the persecution of alterity is bound up with actual persecution: Albertine as absence and mystery shades off into the Albertine who actually tortures Marcel. The point, however, is that Albertine as other eludes plenary presence, cannot become a datum of consciousness. Proust is the “phenomenologist” of what cannot be recovered [...] because to be other is to remain hidden *en principe*’⁴⁸⁰. What unites Tarkovsky and Levinas, Dominic Rainsford claims, is their shared distrust of seeing one thing in terms of another as there is always the danger of reduction of difference to the same: ‘Both [Tarkovsky and Levinas] problematise questions of translation, identification and staging, to create tensions and traumas that reveal a kind of impossibility inherent to engagement in the world, but thereby creating space for concepts of responsibility and ethics’⁴⁸¹. Rainsford notices that, in Tarkovsky’s works, there is the desire ‘to find a prototype, or to suggest that everything and everyone is

⁴⁷⁹ See Colin Davis, *Levinas* (Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 1996), p. 51.

⁴⁸⁰ See Wyschogrod, ‘The Art in Ethics’, p. 393.

⁴⁸¹ See Dominic Michael, Rainsford, ‘Tarkovsky and Levinas: Cuts, Mirrors, Triangulations’, *Film-Philosophy*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (August, 2007), 122-143, p. 129.

repeated, as though they are just shadows of a transcendental Platonic original'⁴⁸² while Levinas appears to be suspicious of the expression of the other in art because art offers only a promise of transcendence that cannot be realised.

Though the response to alterity in the works of Proust and Tarkovsky does not correspond to the Levinasian ideal of the unconditional moral obligation before the other, the characters' response to the loved other following the other's death does involve their search for moral improvement. Furthermore, the Derridean problem of the assimilation of alterity in mourning also applies to the process of immortalising the other in art which remains as insoluble from the perspective of Levinasian ethics: when the other becomes the object of *my* experience, *my* mourning, or *my* expression in art, its otherness risks to get reduced to the same. So Davis notes: 'The problem of the Other has been misposed: rather than seeking knowledge of it (thus reducing its otherness), we should accept that we do not, cannot and should not know the Other. The rest of Levinas's philosophical career will, then, be dominated by one question: what does it mean to think of the Other as Other?'⁴⁸³. Perhaps, Levinas's difficulty can be helped by approaching the description of the object, be it the representation of the other in art or the narration of the self, *phenomenologically*, i.e. by relying on the idea of the infinite that exceeds description and thus trusting sensation as a noncognitive link between the subject and the object. It appears that this is precisely what Proust and Tarkovsky, intuitively, attempt to do in their works. And this quality of their aesthetics unites them with Levinas, for whom, as Wyschogrod justly observes, ethics is an unmediated relation to the other that transcends any conceptual structure and therefore chooses nonlinguistic access routes to alterity.⁴⁸⁴

Finally, intentionally or not, Proust and Tarkovsky narrate their traumas to reconcile with them, make amends for their mistakes and thus alleviate their anxiety and pain. The

⁴⁸² See Rainsford, 'Tarkovsky and Levinas', p. 137.

⁴⁸³ See Davis, *Levinas*, p. 33.

⁴⁸⁴ See Wyschogrod, 'The Art in Ethics', p. 388.

stories of Marcel, Chris and Alexei prove their strategy of self-treatment through narration to be therapeutically effective. In fact, a vast number of recent psychological studies have experimentally confirmed a decrease in anxiety and depression-related intrusive ideas among positive health changes brought about by trauma narration.⁴⁸⁵ It might be that Proust and Tarkovsky with their distinct ethics, aesthetic philosophies and narrative strategies, unbeknownst to themselves, introduced or, at the very least, contributed to the development of a successful therapeutic technique of self-narration.

⁴⁸⁵ For instance, J. W. Pennebaker, S. K. Beall, 'Confronting a traumatic event: Toward an understanding of inhibition and disease', *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Vol. 95 (3) (1986), pp. 274-81. Also, J. W. Pennebaker, 'Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process', *Psychological Science*, 8 (1997), pp. 162-6.

Trauma narration, often referred to as *self-authoring* in the field of psychological science, is a type of cognitive therapy that was pioneered by James W. Pennebaker in 1986. In self-authoring, one is asked to give a thorough written account of a traumatic or stressful personal event. The idea behind the method is that narration helps us derive information from our past experiences and then guides our perceptions, emotions, thoughts and actions. Arguably, narrating as a formalised way of reflecting on life's important events reduces uncertainty, regret and anxiety that are associated with a traumatic event and may be experienced as hopelessness, lack of meaning and sorrow.

Bibliography

N.B. The bibliography is arranged according to the following divisions (and alphabetically within each section):

- Works by Proust;
- Works by Tarkovsky;
- Works by Deleuze;
- Works by Jankélévitch;
- Works by Levinas;
- Works by Derrida;
- Works by Freud;
- Critical Works on Proust;
- Critical Works on Tarkovsky;
- Other Works.

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