

# Faith In The Films Of Andrei Tarkovsky

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## Abstract

The men who make themselves Gods like the writer and the scientist thus flounder in an eternal perspective because all their writing and scientific discoveries are dust when put in God's eternal perspective, it is the religious faith of a man and his contributions to God's kingdom that will eventually make a difference when Christ returns and judges man, as the allusion to Revelations in the film's middle comments. We will be subject to the Lamb's wrath if we do not believe and contribute to God's kingdom when he returns. The stalker by Tarkovsky is thus a profound indictment of unbelief and cynicism by intellectuals and the hubris of men who make themselves gods in place of worshipping the true God who promises to bring them redemption and blessing if they would only believe. Clearly an allegory for man's fallen condition, *The Sacrifice* is about the innate barrenness of a life lived without spirituality and blind to metaphysical truths in the universe such as God's existence and the spiritual forces at work behind everyday phenomena. Hence Alexander is seen leading a mundane and unspectacular life till he is jolted to awareness of the need for redemption on his birthday as a nuclear apocalypse confronts his family and he finally makes contact with God to save his family from impending extinction by promising a sacrifice, much like Christ promises to sacrifice his life by taking on the sin of the world and dying for all of mankind.

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**Keywords:** Tarkovsky, Belief, Cynicism, Intellectualism, Doubt

## Introduction:

In Andrei Tarskovsky's *The stalker*, the stalker is a man who brings people to the Zone, a place cordoned off from the public because a meteorite had hit the place a few years before, and in the Zone there exists a room which is widely believed to grant all your wishes. What comes to pass however is that the intellectuals that he leads to the room, a scientist and a writer, are cynicals who after being brought to the threshold of the room, refuse to believe in it and indeed the scientist wishes to destroy it and annihilate all hope for the rest of mankind because he believes it this wish

giving room will come into the wrong hands of conquerors and malicious people who wish to bring harm on mankind. Clearly an allegory for man's fallen condition, *The Sacrifice* is about the innate barrenness of a life lived without spirituality and blind to metaphysical truths in the universe such as God's existence and the spiritual forces at work behind everyday phenomena. Hence Alexander is seen leading a mundane and unspectacular life till he is jolted to awareness of the need for redemption on his birthday as a nuclear apocalypse confronts his family and he finally makes contact with God to save his family from impending extinction by promising a sacrifice, much like Christ promises to sacrifice his life by taking on the sin of the world and dying for all of mankind.

#### **NOTE:**

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- In an author-date style, in-text citations usually require the name of the author(s) and the year of publication.
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#### **I.:**

In Andrei Tarkovsky's *The stalker*, the stalker is a man who brings people to the Zone, a place cordoned off from the public because a meteorite had hit the place a few years before, and in the Zone there exists a room which is widely believed to grant all your wishes. What comes to pass however is that the intellectuals that he leads to the room, a scientist and a writer, are cynicals who after being brought to the threshold of the room, refuse to believe in it and indeed the scientist wishes to destroy it and annihilate all hope for the rest of mankind because he believes it this wish giving room will come into the wrong hands of conquerors and malicious people who wish to bring harm on mankind.

Read allegorically, the stalker, who is described as not being of this world, is a metaphor for Christ who leads us, as the stalker leads the two in the Zone through various trials and temptations to bring us to an ideal state that will lead to blessings from God, much like the stalker leads the two to the wish giving room. As an affirmation that the stalker's role is a Christ like one, in the middle of the film the stalker recites from a passage from the Gospels about the journey from Emmaus in which Christ lead the disappointed disciples after his crucifixion and explained to them all the

scriptures and how it was necessary for the crucifixion to bring God's will for him and mankind as a mediator between man and God to pass.

The Zone is then a metaphor for the religious journey we have to undertake with Christ or in the film the stalker, going through various trial and temptations before we finally come to the place where we encounter God and receive his blessings. To affirm that this a religious allegory, the stalker says that the two must recount their lives and adopt an attitude of penitence and prayer in the room before they receive their wishes or blessings.

However that the Writer and the Scientist refuse to enter the room when they are brought to its threshold is an indication of the cynicism that intellectualism brings- they are unable to hope or believe in the room because they are jaded and refuse to believe in miracles and the supernatural and in fact the scientist wishes to destroy the room because he fears the room will bring doom on mankind, only choosing to see the evil and not the good in the human race. It is thus seen that intellectualism is the anti-thesis of belief and it is the empirical obsession by the scientist and the writer who believe firmly in the empirical and the evil of mankind in place of goodness, faith and mercy who are antagonistic to belief and miracles happening. It is thus seen that it is the hubris of the scientist and Writer who refuse to believe in miracles that lead them to reject the stalker who is a Christ figure, much like many scientists and intellectuals and writers who deem themselves Gods in their own right, like many atheistic intellectuals who reject Christ and the miracles and deliverances that Christ promises them.

The film thus essentially comments that belief and hope which is what will deliver mankind from their fallen state into a state of blessings and well being in which their wishes come true no longer exists as all the people whom the stalker brings to the room refuse to believe when they are brought to the room. This is a commentary on how we reject Christ as the miracles he promises in our lives if we only put our faith in him and trust in him as our risen Saviour. The film thus comments it is the intellectual arrogance of mankind who doubt rather than believe in Christ as Savior who bring on their own limits to the blessings and well being in life they could potentially receive by simply calling upon Christ and believing and trusting in Christ to deliver them from any bad situations they are in and bring them fulfillment and happiness. Hence it is the cynicism, intellectualism, hubris and arrogance of the unbelievers that distances them from God's blessings and potential redemption for their life.

The stalker is described as one who is not of this world and has given up his worldly possessions and family life to bring others to a place of hope and miracles, much like Christ gave up worldly possessions and a family and endured persecution like the stalker is jailed for bringing people to the Zone. Hence the film is definitely a strong analogy for the religious journey that

one must go through and choose belief rather than unbelief and intellectualism and cynicism in order to bring about all the promises that God promises those who pursue the life of faith as Jesus calls upon people to rest in him for his yoke is easy and burden is light.

The meat mincer is a place in which one confronts the stark truth about oneself, and in the meat mincer the Writer confesses the truth that no one cares about his writing and his writing is just a diarrhea or hemorrhage of words to convince himself of his own significance when he is easily replaced by the next fashionable writer that comes along. This is an Ecclesiastical conviction when man is brought to see the futility of his pursuits and ambition when all is grass and kings and queens are brought to the same end as beggars because we are all dust in God's creation and all achievements come to naught at the end of death. It is thus faith that distinguishes a man's life, without faith indeed ambition and worldly pursuits are futility but it is the belief in Christ and the adherence to God's commands that distinguishes a life and brings him to a place of recognition and blessing within God's plans and providence.

The men who make themselves Gods like the writer and the scientist thus flounder in an eternal perspective because all their writing and scientific discoveries are dust when put in God's eternal perspective, it is the religious faith of a man and his contributions to God's kingdom that will eventually make a difference when Christ returns and judges man, as the allusion to Revelations in the film's middle comments. We will be subject to the Lamb's wrath if we do not believe and contribute to God's kingdom when he returns. The stalker by Tarkovsky is thus a profound indictment of unbelief and cynicism by intellectuals and the hubris of men who make themselves gods in place of worshipping the true God who promises to bring them redemption and blessing if they would only believe.

The film makes use of long takes to capture the spiritual ennui of mankind who refuses to believe in Christ and God's promises to redeem them and makes use of colour to distinguish life before and after the Zone. Outside the Zone or outside the life of knowing Christ life is monochrome and colourless but within the Zone and within the life of knowing Christ the world explodes into colour and becomes a place of miracles. Other points of religious allegory include the Writer's attempt to take a shortcut by a straight and wide path to the room and fails because he is stopped alluding to the way the easy and wide path is the path to destruction but the narrow and difficult path is the way to salvation. Other indications of the Zone being a place of Christ is the way it responds to actions of the sojourners and will punish and destroy if they do the wrong things such as desecrating the Zone such as picking wild flowers from the Zone, much like if we do not respect holy

property such as the Church within God's kingdom and desecrate holy premises and will be subject to holy wrath if we disobey God.

Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Stalker* is thus a compelling commentary on the necessity of belief and hope to enter the kingdom of God's promises and an obedience to Christ who's metaphor is the stalker in the film who promises to lead us through trials and temptations into a life of redemption and blessing if we would only believe, obey, trust, hope and conform to God's Word.

The film *Solaris* reads like the perfect precursor to Baudrillard's theories on simulation in which the copy or image of the original has effaced the original and there is no longer any possibility of distinguishing between the copy and the original. In the case of *Solaris*, Kevin is visited by his beautiful ex-wife Rheya only it is an alien reproduction of her from the cosmic ocean *Solaris* sent as an instrument of interrogation to probe Kevin's conscience. Kevin though fearing this alien simulacra of Rheya initially begins to fall for the copy Rheya and there is no longer any ability on his part to distinguish between the original Rheya and the copies that the ocean *Solaris* sends him in order to probe his conscience and consciousness. What begins as a feared encounter between Kevin and an alien Other becomes a means of revisiting an old love whose suicide he had caused through neglect and whom he eventually falls more for. It could be said that the copies of Rheya that the ocean *Solaris* sends him hold more power over him than the original Rheya whom he had neglected and caused to take her life in his younger days.

"We take off into the cosmos, ready for anything, for solitude, for hardship, for exhaustion, death. Modesty forbids us to say so, but there are times when we think pretty well of ourselves. And yet, if we examine it more closely, our enthusiasm turns out to be all sham. We don't want to conquer the cosmos, we simply want to extend the boundaries of Earth to the frontier of the cosmos. For us, such and such a planet is as arid as the Sahara, another as frozen as the North Pole, yet another as lush as the Amazon basin. We are humanitarian and chivalrous: we don't want to enslave other races, we simply want to bequeath them our values and take over their heritage in exchange. We think of ourselves as the Knights of the Holy contact. This is another lie. We are only seeking Man. We have no need of other worlds. A single world, our own, suffices us, but we can't accept it for what it is. We are searching for an ideal image of our own world: we go in quest of a planet, of a civilization superior to our own but developed on the basis of a prototype of our primeval past. At the same time, there is something inside us which we don't like to face up to, which we try to protect ourselves, but which nevertheless remains, since we don't leave Earth in a state of primal innocence. We arrive here as we are in reality, and when the page is turned

and that what is revealed to us- that part of reality which we would rather pass into silence- then we don't like it anymore. (Lem, 1961: 72)

In seeking out alien Others thus, what we wish to see is a reflection of Man which we can appropriate for ourselves, anthropomorphizing other galaxies in terms relative to Earth, but what we are sometimes confronted with is something that not merely mirrors but disturbs us about ourselves in revealing the ugly areas of our own nature, as Solaris projects Rheya as a memory from his past that he would rather conceal, a wife whose suicide he caused through neglect. Yet while confronted with the darkness of his past Kevin also manages to overcome this darkness and transcend it into love for this alien Other that is a projection from his memory, indeed he eventually loves the alien Rheya more than the original Rheya and is forced by his conscience to deal with the ugliness within himself that had driven the original Rheya to suicide. Baudrillard's thesis that the image or the copy has effaced the real applies here, indeed the copy comes across as more real and intoxicating than the original In the *Ecstasy of Communication*, Baudrillard once again reminds us that with the advent of television, as in hyperreality, the subject-object distinction collapses and we are immersed in its reality – “television becomes a control screen” (13). He uses the metaphor of driving to relate our relation to television- no longer controllers of a device, we are now subjected to its control, we become a “computer at the wheel”, not a “drunken demiurge of power” (13). He argues that television creates a space of hyperreality that overtakes reality and hence displaces metaphysics. Our subjectivities are dissolved- we are no longer ‘subjects of interiority’” (13) in control of television but subjected to the controls of multiple network satellites. Television becomes an intrusive actor in our domestic space- that overtakes our lives from work, consumption, play, social relations and leisure. Baudrillard further explains that the hyperreal displaces the real and renders it useless. Social relationships within the home are destroyed. Reality is ‘minituarized’- television replaces our desire for human relationships or ideals and renders organic and real bodies and events superfluous (*Ecstasy* 14). The obscene fascinates us, and replaces the organic with the machinic. In this regard, advertising also becomes an omnipresent reality – materializes its ‘obscenity’- monopolizes public life with its exhibition. This is also precisely what television shows are: Simulations and the triumph of the hyperreal and mediated reality. Reality television demonstrates Baudrillard's thesis that the obscene lies in the fact that there is ‘nothing to see’ and that the spectator, rather than desiring difference from others, desires sameness with the subjects that we witness on television. As Baudrillard notes in *Ecstasy of Communication*, all that matters now is to resemble oneself, to find oneself everywhere, multiplied but loyal to one's formula. It is the universe of the fractal subject, dreaming of a formula to reproduce himself to

infinity (Ecstasy of Communication 41). Consequently, television incarnates our desire for sameness and our fascination with the obscenity or pornography of objective reality. It is the obscenity of the hidden that is suddenly overexposed and visible. In this dissolution of the exterior and the interior, Baudrillard likens the contemporary subject to the schizophrenic – who cannot distinguish between inner and outer and is subject to all the vagaries of the external world (Ecstasy of Communication 14). The subject's sense of individuality and distinction from external objects is dissolved. He/she becomes obscene, as is the world. The subject is total prey of hyperreality, a pure screen, a switching center for all networks of influence. For Baudrillard, both the body and the 'self' (both conform to images) can be divided and commodified, as governed by the capitalist/advertising code (Ecstasy 42). To see the 'self' as a technology possessed by the mediascape, as Baudrillard does, is to become schizophrenic. Baudrillard's subject is therefore, completely de-centred and dominated by the image. Kevin is dominated by the image of Rheya so in Tarkovsky's film version of Lem's novel Kevin loses sleep and weight and becomes obsessed by Rheya to the point of deteriorating physical and mental health. It no longer matters to him that she is not the original Rheya because he craves the immortal and replaceable simulacra and copies of Rheya that Solaris sends him because they cannot die as a consequence of his actions like the original Rheya did.

Hence the hyperreal Rheya is what television is to Baudrillard- an image which has replaced and monopolized the real. The copy or hyperreal Rheya as an image has displaced the original Rheya and dominated Kevin's consciousness so he can no longer distinguish between the original and the copy and indeed Kevin falls more deeply for the copy than the original. This also reflects the earlier thesis that we conquer civilisations to find mirrors of ourselves only to become more obsessed with the simulations of ourselves than original man. Hence the image or copy is more compelling and grips and exercises more control over us than the original and we are in the realm of Baudrillard's hyperreal where we can no longer distinguish between image and object or original and simulation. Hence this is what happens when youth are addicted to the internet and videogames- the simulation has replaced reality and we are firmly in the grip of the hyperreal.

Lem's novel while being a speculative love story thus functions as a foreboding of Baudrillard's theories of hyperreality and simulation in which the copy or image becomes more compelling and real than the original. In today's virtual society where facebook and twitter are rapidly replacing solid and tangible relationships, this has become very much a reality of modern society- the hyperreal has replaced the real. Kevin's romance with Rheya is thus not merely a speculative romance with an alien Other but a precursor of

the current immersion in the world of the hyperreal which has replaced and indeed effaced objective reality.

Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice* is about Alexander, a man indifferent to spirituality and God until on his birthday, his family is plunged while celebrating his birthday into the midst of a nuclear apocalypse. Alexander then strikes up a bargain with God to save his family and promising to make a sacrifice for it – his voice and speech for example. When he goes to sleep, he awakes to find that things have been restored but is told by his friend to save the world by sleeping with his maid who is intimated to be a witch. Alexander does as told and consummates the relationship to find everything to be restored back to normal and that the bargain he has struck with God has indeed been answered but with him making the sacrifice of sleeping with his maid. Yet, when he returns to the family he saved- all is far from normal. His son wishes to migrate to Australia to escape them which leaves his wife desperate and angry. Maria the maid turns up as Alexander is driven mad by the remaining scene of the family in shambles and he sets fire to his house destroying everything he had sought to save by making the promise. He seeks to return to Maria but is dragged off by his family from her.

Clearly an allegory for man's fallen condition, *The Sacrifice* is about the innate barrenness of a life lived without spirituality and blind to metaphysical truths in the universe such as God's existence and the spiritual forces at work behind everyday phenomena. Hence Alexander is seen leading a mundane and unspectacular life till he is jolted to awareness of the need for redemption on his birthday as a nuclear apocalypse confronts his family and he finally makes contact with God to save his family from impending extinction by promising a sacrifice, much like Christ promises to sacrifice his life by taking on the sin of the world and dying for all of mankind. Alexander's sacrifice however does not involve death but the consummation of a sexual relationship with his maid who is intimated to be a witch who is treated lowly by household members. It is inferred that it is her poor treatment by members of the household that has led her to conjure a spell on the family and bring them to doom with the threat of nuclear extinction and it is her spell on Alexander which she must sexually possess in order to bring the spell to an end. But the curse is not entirely undone as Alexander returns to the family members bickering bitterly over his son's decision to migrate to Australia to escape them. It would then seem the ruin the maid has brought on the family through her witchcraft refuses to go away- the family remains in shambles though Alexander has saved the world from nuclear apocalypse by sleeping with her. It is thus seen that the world that Alexander has sought to save through his sacrifice of sleeping with the maid is not worth saving as they are ugly and fallen- just as the mankind that



Christ sought to save is not appreciative of Christ's atoning sacrifice and often return to their sinful brutish violent and destructive ways that Christ had sought to save them from. Alexander then goes mad and sets fire to all he had sought to save- his house which he sets on fire and his family whom he abandons as he makes his way to a mental hospital at the end of the film.

Thus inferring that the mankind he has made a sacrifice for is not worth saving in the end, the film works as a profound statement on the lack of spirituality in modern life. While Alexander and Christ make atoning sacrifices on behalf of mankind for their indifference to God, it is implied that these sacrifices are made in vain as man remains indifferent to God after his sacrifice, Hence aptly mentioned at the beginning of the film is Nietzsche's theme of eternal recurrence- man is doomed to repeat his fate without any divine redemption even after the price has been made. Thus implied is the fallen, ugly and brutal nature of man who remains unworthy of redemption even after the price has been paid.

The film is shot in grainy hues of black and white and greyish colours to intimate the spiritual destitution in mankind. Indeed with faith losing its ground in Europe and man growing increasingly indifferent to God it is little wonder Tarkovsky sees a need to make a film about humanity's fallen nature and violence and its dire need of redemption- with the implicit implication that man remains so fallen humanity may not be worth saving in any case. The materialized existence trapped in the mundane and unconcerned with deeper spiritual truths haunts the film which is a profound indictment about the spiritual destitution of modern existence. The film remains an allegory of Christ's return to save the world from its self destruction but what is implied by the film is that mankind remains so fallen and indifferent to God that the sacrifice of Christ's atoning death is made in vain and man may not be worth saving after all. This is inferred from Alexander's family, as a metaphor for mankind, returning to strife and violent and cruel ways even as Alexander has made the atoning sacrifice of sleeping with his maid to save the world. The inherent brutality of mankind indifferent to redemption and spirituality and caught up with the material world and the mundane, unaware of deeper spiritual forces at work and profoundly Nietzschean sceptical and materialist and unworthy of redemption remains at play.

The cinematography is done by Ingmar Bergman's cinematographer Sven Nykist who makes use of long shots to capture the ennui and barrenness of modern existence and grainy black white and grey colours to intimate the lack of vitality and colour in the spiritual landscape. Altogether the film is a bleak commentary on the fallen nature of mankind who remains unworthy of redemption and whose ugly ways, indifferent to spirituality remain unworthy of Christ sacrifice. Tarkovsky's film is thus a deep

indictment of the spiritual crises that has beset Europe with its decline in faith and indifference to its creator, God.

Indeed the film remains a profound indictment of the Nietzschean philosophy which as beset Europe with its declaration that God is dead when the film reveals that God remains very much alive and very much at work in the world, it is humanity who is indifferent to God and unworthy of his redemption and atoning sacrifice in the person of Christ. The reality of God is shown in the fact that God intervenes and allows Alexander to save mankind by allowing Alexander to make a sacrifice to save the world by sleeping with his maid- a metaphor for the fallen nature Christ had to take on in the fallen form of man and the crudeness of the crucifixion which demanded the sacrifice of his flesh and mortal life to save mankind. Yet the sacrifice is made in vain as Alexander returns to a household bickering over his son's selfish decision to migrate to Australia to escape them all- leading Alexander to go mad and set the house which he had tried to save on fire. This is a metaphor for the destruction and hellfire and damnation which we all stand to face if we do not awake from our spiritual malaise and death and turn back to God. The implication from the film is that mankind remains spiritually dead even after Christ's atonement and has returned to their sinful and fallen ways which makes humanity unworthy and undeserving of Christ's sacrifice. Alexander as a metaphor for Christ goes mad because the world he has come to save remains indifferent to his gift of salvation and redemption through the sacrifice of his flesh to save the world.

Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice* is thus a profound statement on spiritual loss and the fallen ungrateful nature of mankind who have turned their back on God and Christ's atoning sacrifice. This is captured in the Nietzschean philosophy and profoundly mundane and materialistic ways the Swedish family is caught up with in the film – lost and in need of redemption, yet ungrateful and unworthy of redemption when the sacrifice is made. Tarkovsky's sacrifice is thus an indictment of the profound spiritual destitution of modern urban ways of living and the decline of faith in Europe.

In another Christian allegory, Coetzee's *the Childhood of Jesus*, Christ's atoning sacrifice is also noted. Indeed, Christianity is described as a religion which exceeds the sensible world of phenomena and a transcendental and otherworldly religion because David defies the world of the sensible and empirical laws, always challenging the authority of material authorities and seeking his authority in a transcendental realm that exceeds the sensible. That David is denounced and exiled to a school for intellectually challenged children reveals that Christianity is a religion that is primarily spiritual and otherworldly rather than rational, David is not bound by the laws of reason because his authority derives from the supersensible of the transcendental rather than the empirical. Indeed Ines recognizes this as

did Mary and seeks to protect David because she recognizes that worldly authorities do not recognize his intellect and revolutionary ethics for what it is – a preaching of the kingdom that is to come rather than the empirical world of the here and now.

The Christian experience is one of repeatedly being born again and starting over and renouncing old flesh ties and sinful desires, so it is little wonder Simon has to renounce his flesh tie to Elena who is described as being jealous of Ines when she fails to comprehend Simon's mission for making Ines David's mother and his fixation on Ines. It turns out to be a relationship which far transcends the carnal relationship she and Simon had shared because Simon and Ines turn out to be David's spiritual parents, who are bonded together by their common mission to protect David, or read allegorically, to protect their bonds in the Holy Spirit and advance the mission of safeguarding Jesus and delivering him from persecution by worldly authorities, which in the case of the book, is the Spanish authorities of Novilla who seek to put David in a special school and rehabilitate him to become more normal or worldly when it is clear David is not one of them in the sense that David, as a metaphor for Christ, is one who is not of the world but one of the kingdom of heaven which he sees as his mission to lead others to and save people on earth from by leading them to a new destiny as his followers and members of his kingdom which will eventually succeed Satan's current reign on earth. The detachment of worldly ties, the mission to liberate people from worldly ties and entrapments, and the deity of Jesus, or in this case David, all lend support to Coetzee's *Childhood of Jesus* as an allegory for the Christian experience of renouncing old blood ties and the past and being born into a new spiritual family.

Indeed Ines later sees it as her mission to rescue David from the Spanish authorities of Novilla as they decide to send David to a special school for delinquents and orphans because she knows David is not mentally handicapped and indeed extraordinarily intelligent and spiritually wise as he sees beyond the law, such as the need to use money and to work, and challenges the authority of the law just as Jesus challenges the authority of the lawmakers and Pharisees in his day. This challenge to the law and authority lands David getting persecuted in a manner similar to the way Jesus was persecuted, and it is this condemnation by worldly authorities who have no insight into David's spiritual status as a prophet and visionary in the way Jesus was that Ines wants to save David from as, like Mary who was Jesus' mother, Ines manages to see that David is a special child and spiritually as well as intellectually gifted in a way that makes him too precocious for an ordinary school. It is shown that David has no patience with manmade rules, which in Christ's context is the rule of the law. David rejects his teacher's authority because they are so concerned with science, empiricism, natural

laws and mathematics, which dictate the way the phenomenal functions, but indeed David rejects them because his mind exists beyond the realm of the empirical in the realm of the transcendental, where he sees beyond natural laws of this world to a world of spiritual needs in which people need to be saved from their worldly desires and self-seeking interests by being ushered by him into the kingdom of God where worldly interests are replaced by spiritual interests in which one seeks to follow Christ, serve God and others, love one's neighbour as oneself, and love God and Christ as their new mission as they enter the spiritual, transcendental kingdom of God which transcends or lies beyond the worldly empire of Novilla and the Spanish authorities in Coetzee's context.

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Coetzee has thus rewritten the nativity story of Jesus in a highly plausible modern retelling of it that brings out the more metaphorical aspects of it to the foreground. The idea of spiritual kinships in place of flesh ties and the idea of Jesus being a person who was essentially a radical who challenged pharasaical authority and laws of common sense are brought out by Coetzee's retelling of David's story as a child who is ahead and advanced for his time, to the extent that he is misunderstood and persecuted by those around him because his thinking was too radical and advanced for his time.

## Conclusion

Hence running through two Christian allegories, Coetzee's the childhood of Jesus and Tarkovsky's the sacrifice, we see that salvation is offered to an ungrateful mankind who remain spiritually lost and indeed persecute Christ and also go on in their wicked ways in The sacrifice. Both Christian allegories, The Childhood of Jesus and the Sacrifice remain profound indictment of the spiritual destitution at the heart of modern existence and its profound and dire need of redemption and salvation. Thus inferring that the mankind he has made a sacrifice for is not worth saving in the end, the film works as a profound statement on the lack of spirituality in modern life. While Alexander and Christ make atoning sacrifices on behalf of mankind for their indifference to God, it is implied that these sacrifices are made in vain as man remains indifferent to God after his sacrifice, Hence aptly mentioned at the beginning of the film is Nietzsche's theme of eternal recurrence- man is doomed to repeat his fate without any divine redemption even after the price has been made. Thus implied is the fallen, ugly and brutal nature of man who remains unworthy of redemption even after the price has been paid. Andrei Tarkovsky's The Stalker is thus a compelling commentary on the necessity of belief and hope to enter the kingdom of God's promises and an obedience to Christ who's metaphor is the stalker in the film who promises to lead us through trials and temptations into a life of redemption and blessing if we would only believe, obey, trust, hope and conform to God's Word.

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