The Zone: James, Tarkovsky, and Understanding Reality

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Andrei Tarkovsky spends a section of his documentary *Voyage in Time* (Tarkovsky and Guerra, 1983) answering questions posed in fan letters. One such question asks, “Do you think science fiction should provide an escape?” Tarkovsky responds, “I don't like fiction, as I don't like to escape life.” This is a surprising response coming from someone whose work is nearly all fiction, and from someone who created *Stalker* (Tarkovsky, 1979), and *Solaris* (Tarkovsky, 1972), two of the most influential and well-regarded science fiction films of all time.

In another sense, the director's response should come as no surprise at all. While his films are fictitious in the most literal sense, they are certainly about reality. Indeed, Tarkovsky does not wish to escape reality, as the fan letter asks, but pierce through the clutter of our presuppositions and into reality as it truly is, before we arrive to categorize it. He explores this idea in his book *Sculpting in Time*, comparing the different processes by which science and art create knowledge:

In science, man's knowledge of the world makes its way up an endless staircase and is successively replaced by new knowledge, with one discovery often enough being disproved by the next for the sake of a particular objective truth. And artistic discovery...appears as a revelation, as a momentary, passionate wish to grasp intuitively and at a stroke all the laws of this world...Through the image is sustained an awareness of the infinite: the eternal within the finite. (37-38)

Tarkovsky's films not only attempt this sort of revelation, they are also about revelation. He is not satisfied simply to glimpse unadulterated reality; instead, his films, *Stalker* and *Solaris* specifically, can be read as discussions of that very process. Using the philosophy of William James as a comparison, we will explore how Tarkovsky articulates the problem of experiencing reality, what strategies each of his characters employ in order to solve the problem, and which strategy is most consistent with Tarkovsky's own beliefs.

While many thinkers have critiqued rationalism and the dominance of science, comparing James and Tarkovsky is particularly fruitful because both approach rationalism as a roadblock that prevents us from having meaningful encounters with the
world around us. Where Tarkovsky accuses scientific discovery as betraying reality so that it can remain “objective,” James worries that our obsession with logic, monism, and rationalism preclude us from apprehending all that our experiences can offer. While we pride ourselves on our scientific ability to present the facts “as they are,” James rejects the notion that facts can be constructed without accepting some assumptions as given with little to no justification. In describing this problem, he explains:

After all that reason can do has been done, there still remains the opacity of the finite facts as merely given, with most of their peculiarities mutually unmediated and unexplained. To the very last, there are the various ‘points of view’ which the philosopher must distinguish in discussing the world and what is inwardly clear from one point remains a bare externality and datum to the other. The negative, the alogical, is never wholly banished. Something - "call it fate, chance, freedom, spontaneity, the devil, what you will" - is still wrong and other and outside and unincluded, from your point of view, even though you be the greatest of philosophers. Something is always mere fact and givenness; and there may be in the whole universe no one point of view extant from which this would not be found to be the case. (James “Empiricism: 1897” 135)

Reason may be an effective way to make sense of our world and of our experiences, but James' issue is that it does just that; it makes sense. Reason relies on assumptions to create order where there might be none at all. Any assumptions that reason needs in order to operate go unnoticed, as we use reason itself to justify their lack of substantiation. In common with Tarkovsky, James contends that consistently using the same methodology to understand our experiences ignores the irreducible, perhaps chaotic “structure” that already exists in reality. In his words:

The generalized conclusion is that therefore the parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations that are themselves parts of experience. The directly apprehended universe needs, in short, no extraneous trans-empirical connective support, but possesses in its own
right a concatenated or continuous structure. (James “Empiricism 1906” 136)

The subtle yet important difference that separates James and Tarkovsky from dozens of other critiques of pure, universally applied reason is that for James we do not use rationality to fabricate our reality, but instead whittle it down to something we can comprehend. “Reality” already exists, if not in our absence then at least in our experience of it. The issue we face is that the amount of information any given experience presents to us is simply too overwhelming. James describes reality as “overflowing” logic (James “Compounding” 588). There is simply too much of it to contain within one interpretation.

James argues that the more appropriate approach is to embrace the “crudity” of our experience (James “Empiricism: 1897” 135). By crudity, James refers to the vast number of different truths that can be gleaned from the same experience when viewed from different perspectives. The important step is to understand that your perspective provides a crude, imperfect picture of experience. According to James, all methods of inquiry, whether by reason, emotion, intuition, or any other possibility, have flaws. Instead of ignoring the flaws in the system, James encourages us to always be conscious of how those flaws affect our interpretations. It may be uncomfortable or cognitively dissonant to always be aware of a method’s flaws and use it anyway, but it is a small price to pay for the ability to have a more fruitful interaction with reality and come to a greater understanding of how our own attitudes and presumptions affect the “facts” we observe.

James does not simply critique these methodologies and instead provides his own alternative, pragmatism, which is the last aspect of his philosophy we will need to understand before we can use it as a tool to understand Stalker and Solaris. James is perhaps best known for his method of pragmatism, which I see as the key detail that makes Tarkovsky's ideas different from James' philosophy. Because James views experience as overwhelmingly information-rich, and because he sees any one frame of reference as being unable to singlehandedly get the whole picture, James presents a guideline for understanding which frame of reference is appropriate for a given
experience or problem. James' alternative, pragmatism, shifts the focus away from trying to find the most accurate conclusion and instead concerns itself with whatever conclusion is the most valuable. In his essay “What Pragmatism Means,” he describes it in this way, The pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable...The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. Whenever a dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference that must follow from one side or the other's being right. (James “Pragmatism” 377)

When we escape from rationality's obsession with the objective and its refusal to engage in any self-awareness, we arrive at a place where we can ignore fruitless arguments about whether x or y is true, but instead choose to believe x or y based on what that belief accomplishes. When both truths are supported by differing perspectives, we are forced to simply pick the one that makes the world better. We are still falling short of seeing all the reality that exists within our experience, but our awareness of that fact allows us to make decisions to improve the situation of ourselves and of those around us.

A brief return to Tarkovsky's Sculpting in Time will underscore the difference between his and James' position. While both figures concur in their critiques of rationality, Tarkovsky is not willing to give up hope on the possibility that we might experience all of reality without reducing it. In other words, Tarkovsky sees pragmatism as an unnecessary compromise. For him, religious faith or spirituality allows us to do the impossible and experience all of infinity at once. He says,

There is a division in our world between good and evil, between spirituality and pragmatism. Our human world is constructed, modeled, according to material laws, for man has given his society the forms of dead matter and taken its laws upon himself. Therefore he does not believe in Spirit and
repudiates God. He feeds on bread alone. How can he see Spirit, Miracle, God, if from his standpoint they have no place in the structure, if they are redundant. (Tarkovsky Sculpting 228)

Though it is presented in a critical and perhaps even pessimistic tone, the heart of this message is positive. Tarkovsky claims that there is “Spirit, Miracle, and God.” He claims what has prevented us from understanding our experiences to their fullest is not, as James argues, that the endeavor is altogether impossible, but that our belief that both we and the world around us are simply material prevents us from transcending the problem. The limitation is self-imposed. We have chosen to describe all of our experiences in the same vocabulary with which we describe “dead matter,” but this is entirely avoidable, and Tarkovsky would consider James' pragmatic compromise unnecessary.

With these similarities and differences better established, we can now look at how Solaris and Stalker deal with the nuances and details of these foundational concepts, and evaluate the strategies the characters of each film employ in order to grasp truth. In Voyage in Time, Tarkovsky says that he considers Solaris a failure for its inability to transcend fiction and genre, and that Stalker was able to succeed where Solaris failed. In ascertaining why Tarkovsky views Stalker as the superior film, we will be able to better understand his view of reality. This will help us in our goal of understanding Tarkovsky's position on the matter, as the film he considers superior must also be the one that he believes best represents his ideas.

Early in Solaris, before Kris is sent off on his mission to the ocean planet Solaris, he is visited by a former astronaut, Burton, whose mission to the planet preceded Kris' own. Burton shows Kris a recording of an interview wherein a younger Burton tells his incredulous superiors about the fantastic and terrifying sights he saw on the planet. In the interview, he begins the description of his descent by detailing the fog that floated above the ocean. He reports that forms and shapes congealed out of the water, gaining detail until they combined to create a garden, with water from the ocean seeping through the cracks of the simulacrum. When his superiors do not believe him, Burton offers to show
footage from the ship's cameras that captured the events. However, the footage only shows the ocean and the clouds above it, no shapes, no garden.

This sequence acts as a metaphor for an idea we have already isolated in James. Burton's arrival on the planet represents the exact instant of an experience. Just as the ocean is homogeneous before Burton makes contact, we feel that our experiences are homogeneous and overwhelming before we apply a worldview to understand what we just saw. We protect ourselves from discomfort by interpreting what we see in a way that is consistent with our fears and desires, and justify our arbitrary interpretations with systems such as logic. In the same way that our presuppositions and perspectives allow us to make conclusions and find “facts” in our experience that might not actually reflect what is truly happening, the ocean congeals into something completely separate from what it really is and takes on the appearance of a garden. We often falter and make mistakes even when we have, logically or otherwise, proven our correctness. In the world of the story these errors are represented by the ocean flowing through the cracks. Although we may be able to convince ourselves to believe in our own self-deception, errors and anomalies still present themselves.

Once Kris reaches the planet, visions appear to him. Instead of Burton's garden, however, Kris faces an illusion that is much more personal. His wife Hari, who passed away before the events of the film, appears to Kris on the Solaris station. The planet of Solaris is described as being a conscious entity, so when Kris arrives it responds to his desires by projecting them back to him. Unsure if he wants to mourn Hari or to have her back, the planet simply presents Hari, as she is the only constant between these disparate desires. In Jamesian terms, this would be the mind’s attempt to shield Kris from the painful reality of Hari’s death by changing what we perceive to fit our - often contradictory - set of desires, worldviews, and expectations. All of Kris' observations
only strengthen the case for Hari being real, not an illusion or a dream. However, when he straps her into a rocket and shoots her into outer-space in a desperate attempt for closure, Hari appears back on the station soon after, as if nothing had even happened.

The important detail here is that even though Hari is certainly not real - as evidenced by her inexplicable appearance and her miraculous return to the station - she seems real. She affects physical things. She speaks with Kris' shipmates. He simultaneously knows that she is and is not real. When Kris first encounters Hari in his quarters, he is restless, pacing around the room to the point where it appears that he is trying to escape the frame that forces him into close proximity with an experience he would rather avoid. The combination of the impossibility and the irrefutable truth of her presence is such a taxing paradox that he sees no other option than to escape out of the frame and out of the situation altogether. More than once, Kris reaches for his gun when he is in Hari's presence. Kris' refusal to admit that he has not come to terms with her death is so strong that instead of acknowledging that she appears to him only because he wants her to be there, he considers a much more violent “solution.”

While Kris' reaction is certainly an exaggerated one, it is not so far removed from how we often react to such incongruity. Tarkovsky uses Kris' defense mechanisms as a way to point out our own. In line with James, Tarkovsky argues that our obsession with logic and reasoning is not due to its rate of accuracy but to its capacity to explain away many of the experiences that contradict our desires. When even logic fails to placate us, we often avoid information that contradicts our views altogether, just as Kris tries to escape the frame.
Kris' main struggle throughout the film, then, is to avoid being conscious of his own self-deception. Hari's presence is a constant reminder that the planet Solaris is showing him what he wants to see, and that his own desires are shaping how his experiences appear to him. While Kris attempts to understand what he sees, Tarkovsky shows us long, seemingly unrelated wide shots of the ocean. In each instance of shot, the water in the shot is more turbulent than in the preceding iteration, implying that Solaris is transforming from a homogeneous ocean to something more detailed, just as it did for Burton. A new world is forming.

Metaphorically, however, this transformation speaks of a worldview forming. Kris has done enough avoiding and rationalizing to create a worldview that explains away what his current perspective cannot, namely Hari's appearance on the ship. Delusions pile on top of delusions until Kris can make false-security out of uncertainty. Around the time when Hari realizes that she needs to get rid of herself in order to save Kris from this cycle, the members of the station speak of islands forming on the planet. Hari's instinct was correct, but too late. The land forming from water represents the solidification of Kris' perspective. The rationalizations for how Hari could be alive again and the purposeful ignorance of any contrary evidence have now become an integral part of how Kris sees the world now. He has let his self-deception become his reality.

This is why, in the final sequence of the film, it is revealed that when Kris presumably returns to his home, he has actually remained on an island on Solaris that is an exact replica of his home. Kris sees water flowing through the cracks just as Burton did before him. In other words, he is aware that everything he encounters is mediated through his stubborn worldview, but lacks the ability to deconstruct the prison he has built for himself.

Unpacking Kris' fate, Tarkovsky wants us to understand the consequences of letting our rational instincts go unchecked. We will, like Kris, often have desires so strong that they profoundly affect our interpretation of experience. When this biased interpretation inevitably creates friction with a subsequent event, we do all that we can to avoid the cognitive dissonance. We rationalize, we argue, or we run away. The problem
still remains, but we contain it. Time and time again we shun encounters with experiences that challenge us until there is no room to change. At that point, any attempt to be self-critical threatens the possibility that we have to deal with the anxiety of those experiences all over again. Kris cannot accept that his strong desire to have more time with Hari is what causes him to see her, because doing so would not only mean that he has to accept that he is at fault for his own suffering, but also that he is hurt. Accepting his fallibility means accepting his vulnerability.

From the selected James and Tarkovsky quotations, we know that their positions differ from each other slightly, and yet Solaris shows no sign of that difference. The lack of differenciation is because Solaris presents only the problem, namely the critique of reason to which both James and Tarkovsky agree, and not the solution, where their ideas begin to diverge. At the end of the film we are meant to see Kris' unfortunate end as a cautionary tale, but we are provided with little to no explanation as to how to avoid the same fate. Stalker, in contrast, forgoes much of the discussion of the problem and focuses on what Tarkovsky believes to be the solution.

Before we move to Stalker, however, it is important that we consider Tarkovsky's negative view of Solaris, as whatever Solaris lacks and Stalker contains must be of considerable importance to Tarkovsky's perspective. His own explanation in Voyage in Time comes directly after the discussion of science fiction and escapism discussed earlier. Tarkovsky says that Solaris does not transcend out of the science fiction genre, and therefore is far more escapist than he had intended it to be. I find this explanation to be lacking. Watching Solaris feels far too meditative to be cast aside as escapism. The question remains, then, if Solaris portrays the themes we have isolated, why would Tarkovsky consider it a failure?

Perhaps our understanding of what Tarkovsky means by the term “escapism” is inadequate. Returning again to Sculpting in Time, Tarkovsky argues that humanity
repeats the mistakes of history because civilization consistently “[aims for] something other than spiritual perfection” (248). It would follow that Tarkovsky’s understanding of “escapism” is not simply an escape from problems, but an escape from the solution, namely this “spiritual perfection.” Solaris is a success as far as identifying an issue is concerned, but it fails at what is most important to Tarkovsky: a step forward.

This is the key point of incongruity between James and Tarkovsky, and why the comparison between the two is so revealing. As we saw earlier, James’ solution is pragmatism. Because the full weight of experience is always too overwhelming for any one perspective to comprehend it fully, the solution is to simply pick the belief that leads to the best results. In a way, despite James’ romantic picture of an overflowing reality, he resorts to fatalism. We will never encounter the fullness of reality, so there is no point in pretending we can.

In Stalker we see that Tarkovsky is not willing to give up so easily. Certainly, in both Sculpting in Time and Solaris, materialism, logic, and self-deception will never provide the clear view of reality that we want, but an alternative does exist. This alternative is what Tarkovsky explores in Stalker.

In the world of the film, a mysterious event creates an area known as “The Zone” where the laws of physics warp and bend, and where a special room is said to grant entrants their deepest desires. Guides known as “stalkers” are hired to transport interested parties to The Room, so that their wishes would be realized. To avoid unnecessary attachments to each other in such a dangerous place, the main characters refer to each other simply by their professions: Stalker, Professor, and Writer.

The Stalker has spent so much time in The Zone that his life there and the lessons he learned from his former teacher, Porcupine, have caused him to view The Zone in a religious context. As he sees it, The Zone and all of its lapses in reality are escapes from the dull “real” world that has been scientifically categorized and studied to death. While being mostly in color, Stalker’s scenes outside of The Zone are black and white, echoing James’ idea that reality exceeds the limitations of our logic, making reason only grant part of the whole picture.
Early on, the Writer explains “The world is boring. There’s no telepathy, no ghosts, no flying saucers. They can’t exist.” More than the characters of Solaris, the Writer and the Stalker are already aware of the problems of our reliance on logic even before the events of the film. The obsessive rationalism that the Professor represents is the reason that everyday existence is so dull. Any variety or inexplicability is calculated out, until the world itself appears just as artificial as the systems we use to understand it.

Each character has a different approach to the issue. The Professor is quite similar to what we saw in Kris, in that both use logic as a defense mechanism. The Professor would not admit that his judgments, interpretations, and actions carry with them any semblance of subjectivity. He utilizes science and observation to justify the worldview he forms for himself, but all of his actions are motivated by petty jealousy of his former colleague who slept with his wife decades before the events of the film. The Professor’s strategy is to ignore the problem altogether. Certainly his blind adherence to the traditions of logic and science cause errors, but they also provide a framework wherein he can avoid self-criticism. Every action he takes is justified in his eyes, and his worldview is so reinforced that he never has any reason to think about the dispute with his colleague that fuels his perceptions.

When the Professor reaches The Room, it is revealed that he never intended to use The Room at all, but to destroy it with a bomb hidden in his knapsack. The Professor assumes that people will use The Room for dangerous, influential wishes. He decides not to activate the bomb when the Writer reminds him that people's deepest desires are often petty things of little to no real significance. In this interaction between the Writer and the Professor, we see exactly how the Professor operates. He shields himself from knowing that jealousy drives his interpretations so much that he cannot even imagine that someone
else might have an irrational decision. The only way for the Professor to hide his own irrational feelings is to ignore irrationality completely, even when it presents itself plainly to him.

In comparison, the Writer is much more aware of the problem at hand. In one sequence, he is mentally fatigued, having been tested by a portion of The Zone known as “the meat grinder.” This place - which to the audience appears as a simple tunnel - was so taxing on the Writer’s trust in the entire process that he ignores the Stalker’s warnings and rituals and advances on his own. At this point, the Writer places his hands at his temples as white light flashes across the screen. A falcon flies and lands in the room, but instantaneously jumps back in time to land in a different spot. To this point The Zone’s capacity to break the laws of physics have been merely a warning that the group has carefully avoided. Now, the Writer feels the full distortion of The Zone, or for our purposes, the incomprehensibility of reality.

The overwhelming nature of the event causes the Writer to collapse on the ground. When he is able to speak again, he notes “there’s no such thing as truth or facts, especially here.” He continues that everything is just a grand illusion, and there is no point in knowing the identity of the trickster. The camera pans from viewing him at an angle such that he speaks towards the edge of the frame to one where he speaks directly at the camera. The Writer says his occupation is pointless. All of the pressure from the meat grinder and the event that follows it cause him to see that he has become a puppet for his audience. His whole life is oriented towards pleasing them. He explains that he has been changed to “fit their image.”

This is the Writer’s secret, much like the Professor’s jealousy. The Writer fools himself into thinking that his insight on events and on his subject matter are a result of a
unique, artistic perspective on reality, but what he is afraid to admit until this point is that his interpretations are not driven by creativity but by a desire for acceptance. He has come to see things the way that his audience wants him to. Facing this fact directly, the Writer gives up. He has firsthand experience to tell him that reality itself is overwhelming - even to a physical degree, as evidenced by his collapse - but he also sees that his own interpretative habits are entirely arbitrary. The Writer arrives at nihilism. He concludes that if we can never know truth, there is no point to the search.

Lastly, The Stalker, as we learn from his prayer that the other two characters “be weak” and that “they would believe,” understands his world from a spiritual context where both flexibility and faith are required to endure contradiction and cognitive dissonance. In the same sequence, a long tracking shot follows the Stalker as he navigates invisible obstacles. Much of his dialog throughout the film, such as “straight paths are not the fastest here,” or “The Zone let you through,” corroborates the idea that the Stalker is able to tap into a second, spiritual level of existence. The “meat grinder” is a perfect example of this; to the audience, it is simply a tunnel, but it takes on an entirely different meaning to the Stalker. He speaks of The Zone as having agency and mystery beyond that of a purely material place.

The Stalker's belief in the mystical, combined with a second notion from his prayer where he equates weakness and flexibility to life and strength and rigidity to death, creates a clear picture of the Stalker’s approach to experiences. Each event is profoundly magical, demanding both reverence and respect. Instead of influencing his experiences with his own artificial perspective, he chooses to instead let reality freely influence him. We can see this in his reactions to other characters, the Writer in particular, when they fail to show their surroundings that same respect. For example, the Stalker scolds the Writer when he interferes with The Zone’s flora or ignores the path set by the Stalker’s nut and cloth ritual. In the Stalker’s eyes, the Writer has disrespected The Zone by deciding that he is not required to show reverence for either The Zone itself or its rites of passage.
The Stalker’s approach is Tarkovsky’s solution. The character’s way of life is the ultimate example of the aim toward “spiritual perfection” from Sculpting in Time. In the book’s conclusion, Tarkovsky expresses his respect for Eastern religious traditions wherein “The person is totally absorbed into God, Nature, Time; finding himself [sic] in everything; discovering everything in himself” (Tarkovsky, Sculpting 240). Being “absorbed” is precisely what the Stalker does. When we see the Stalker’s dreams, they are black and white, just as the images of the outside world, as in this state his consciousness is removed from his experiences and is unable to dissolve into them as he does when he communes with The Zone. However, when he is able to connect to The Zone and become a part of it, his world is filled with color. By minimizing his own self importance, embracing his weakness and flexibility, and believing in the mystical, he is able to experience the infinite from the inside.

Tarkovsky concurs with James no individual can ever observe all the reality one experience has to offer. However, Tarkovsky’s alternative is the possibility that the individual, by way of belief, can sacrifice its individuality and become part of the larger process of the universe observing its own boundlessness.

If the ending of Stalker is any indication, Tarkovsky has reservations about his own conclusion. At the end of the film, when the Writer accuses the Stalker of being a charlatan, the Stalker explains that when stripped of his zone, he has nothing. The camera looms over the Stalker, causing us to pity a character that we had previously been encouraged to respect as a guide. While the Stalker’s way of life grants him a more meaningful connection to his experiences, it leaves him without the ability to provide for his family. Achieving the oneness he has with The Zone requires a complete denial of himself and of those he cares for.
The Stalker leaves the other two characters with his beliefs challenged. He laments to his wife that while he once believed he would be able to share his style of life in The Zone with others, these last two men challenge the idea that there are any candidates capable of showing the same devotion and sacrifice as he does. In interviews, Tarkovsky described this conversation with his wife as a “loss of faith” for the Stalker (Guerra 160). Even after all he has seen, the Stalker questions if he will ever be able to share it.

After listening to his concerns, the Stalker’s wife explains that when she married him, she knew the risks. She sits with her eyes focused directly at the camera, so that when she explains that she made the decision to have a “bitter-sweet happiness” instead of a “gray, uneventful life,” we gather that this message is meant for us as well. Just as the Stalker's wife supports him in marriage, she also encourages him in his beliefs. She reminds the Stalker of why he persists in the first place, as they both make sacrifices in order to know and feel reality. The path of the Stalker might be bleak and more painful than one guided by Jamesian pragmatism, but the glimpses of wonder and happiness can outweigh the sorrow.

The perspective on sacrifice and reality that the Stalker and his wife share is the last of the strategies employed by Tarkovsky's characters. They and James give us four options to consider. First, we can opt to follow the lead of the Professor and Kris. Ignoring the problem causes pain and prevents any true interaction with reality, but at least we can deceive ourselves into a false happiness. Second, we can take the Writer’s approach. Having identified the impossibility of grasping the entirety of the truth, we give up. In this choice, we waste no effort on a task we believe to be impossible.

Neither of these approaches are particularly appealing, so that leaves us with the final two options, James’ and Tarkovsky’s respective alternatives. If we follow James, we come to terms with the fact that reality is out of our grasp, similar to the Writer, but remain optimistic that we can always see some version of the truth and choose beliefs based on what improves our lives and the lives of those around us. Lastly, we can follow the model of Tarkovsky and the Stalker, understanding the impenetrability of reality but
refusing to compromise. None of Tarkovsky's characters represent the compromise that James presents, suggesting that Tarkovsky does not even view it as an option worth considering. Tarkovsky values communing reality to such a degree that it must be pursued if possible. Sacrificing everything, including our own individuality, allows us to do the impossible, if only momentarily, and see the world as it sees itself. For better or for worse, if Tarkovsky is correct, seeing reality in its unadulterated form is possible, but only at the highest price.
Works Cited


