

Aesthetics and Mysticism Plotinus, Tarkovsky And the Question of 'Grace'

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Abstract

Plotinus confronts us with a "unification of rationalism and mysticism" (Bréhier). Also Tarkovsky's "spiritualist" penchant flows out of a religious, "non-modern" attitude. But Tarkovsky and Plotinus are also heirs of a rationalist tradition strongly marked by scientific formalism.

Tarkovsky was well aware of the philosophical problems linked to the subjectivism of perception. He intended to modify the final result obtained by the materialist deconstruction of subjectivist empathy carried out before by the Eisensteinian materialism-formalism.

Plotinus was confronted with problems of the same order. He aspires a "mystical union," Plotinus could be classified as a subjectivist. Still, the "mystical union" of Plotinus' design is not as simplistic as that which is usually advanced by subjectivism.

I detect the development of Russian formalism towards a Plotinian "formalism" realized by Tarkovsky. The conception of the image as "an organic link between idea and form" culminates in an aesthetics of non-symbolic images communicated without passing through the intermediary of the intellect, directly representing the Intelligible.

Introduction

Is there a reason to associate the Neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus (204-270 CE) to the Russian film director Andrei Tarkovsky? At first sight, these two people do not seem to have much in common except that one has produced, among other things, an

aesthetics of images approaching a kind of aesthetic mysticism, and that the other has practiced the art of cinema with a philosophical ambition that some would like to qualify as “mystical.”

Did I say “mystical?” Bergson has often insisted that Plotinus always maintained a clear distinction between “mysticism” and “dialectics,” saying that these two movements seem to overlap only when approached from afar (Bergson, 1962, p. 234). On the other hand, even without such a definite link between Plotinus and mysticism, the concession that mysticism would have “knocked several times at [Plotinus’] door” must be taken seriously with regard to any analysis of his philosophy. In reality, Plotinus is to be located in a field stretching between mystical temptations and a certain “Greek intellectualism” that remains well established throughout all of his philosophy. Only in this sense does Plotinus confronts us, as Emile Bréhier says, with a “unification of rationalism and mysticism.” Such unification might appear to us today as either unacceptable or interesting precisely because of its paradoxical aspect.

Also, for many people Tarkovsky’s “spiritualist” penchant flows out of a religious, “non-modern” attitude, and has given rise to mystical interpretations leading to mystifying stylizations of Tarkovsky especially during the post-soviet era. On the other hand, Tarkovsky is, like Plotinus, the heir of a rationalist tradition strongly marked by scientific formalism which was actively developed in Eisensteinian cinema.

For Tarkovsky as for Plotinus, there is thus a rupture and at the same time, a non-rupture with certain rationalist movements. Plotinus abandoned research into rational structures of the moral unity preached by Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, and attempted to approach his “mystical union” directly. However, the unified and integral character of the “mystical union” remained inspired – and

this is what constitutes the paradox – by the Platonic tradition. In a similar way, Tarkovsky advances a poetical way of reasoning whose structure, he proposes, is not removed from but is extremely close to intellectual reasoning. This reasoning attempts to overcome superficial models of contemplation in order to embrace all truth and all complexity of human life. If mysticism subsists here, it is not an end in itself, but functions in the service of a “higher rationality.”

For Plotinus, mystical knowledge is only, according to Bréhier, “the clear and living experience satisfying the aspiration to unity, i.e. the fundamental aspiration of reason” (Bréhier, 1968, p. 167). For Tarkovsky, reason, or even ethics, requires a transformation of formal logic into a “logic of dreams,” because the poetry of dreams represents for him “one way of being conscious of the world” and supports our efforts to “face reality” (*Sculpting in Time*, p. 21). This means that intellect, in Plotinus and in Tarkovsky, is not overcome in order to reach an intellectual level of mysticism, a mysticism creating blurred images and hazy ideas and asking intellect to settle definitely in a sphere of vagueness and exaltation. Rather intellect itself becomes the origin of wisdom.

The intention to simply overcome intelligence, on the other hand, would entail that everything floats away “into a dream” as says Plotinus: “Then the real man of dignity must ascend in due measure, with an absence of boorish arrogance, going only so far as our nature is able to go, and consider that there is room for the others at God’s side, and not set himself alone next after God. This is like flying in our dreams and will deprive him of becoming a God, even as far as the human soul can. It can as far as intellect leads it; but oneself above intellect is immediately to fall outside it” (II, 9, 9, 1. 49).¹

For Plotinus, Greek intellectualism subsists through a strategy that is never abandoned: keeping us from evil by keeping us first from ignorance, since ignorance is considered the primordial evil.² On the

other hand, Plotinus certainly *can* be considered as the parent of medieval mystics like Meister Eckhart and A. Silesius. Tarkovsky, since for some he evokes the mystical atmosphere linked to a non-modern or pre-modern age, comes perhaps close to just these mystics. However, what is fundamentally important is that, as mentioned above, Plotinus and Tarkovsky have merely touched upon mysticism without ever leaving the ground of rationality that their predecessors firmly established. Possibly, this makes their works intriguing for later generations overcome by crises of reason.

If there is mysticism in Tarkovsky and Plotinus, this mysticism remains always “disquieting” in that it never defines itself as a final position. In the end, neither mysticism nor rationalism are accepted as intellectual forms. For Plotinus, the only supreme force that remains is pure intellect representing a quantity “without form.” Brunschvicg, despite reservations about Plotinus’ philosophy, has highlighted this by writing: “How can we elude the question eternally asked by mysticism without ever obtaining the quietude of undivided evidence?” (Brunschvicg, 1947, p. 73) Today, when criticism of scientific rationality based on Galileo and Descartes occupies a more and more important place in philosophical activity, the refusal of such quietude can certainly appear even more attractive than in Brunschvicg’s day.

Tarkovsky’s and Plotinus’ situations are thus not, despite the temporal gap by which they are separated, incomparable. W. Theiler describes how Plotinus desired to “escape the cage constituted by his contemporary world in which all activity was predetermined, and where man’s interior progress was constantly limited (already by the fact that man had lost all faith in new discoveries). [Plotinus therefore wanted] to pursue the idea that the ‘highest’ is irrational, non-determined, and unlimited” (Theiler, 1970, p. 290). Plotinus’ supreme value became that of beauty superimposed with truth, spelled out as a “spiritual” quality.

Plotinus loathed the complex materialism of the Stoics and the less complex materialism of Democritus and Epicurus,³ while Tarkovsky confronted the duplicitous materialism – no less complex than that of the Stoics – that was rendered through simultaneous Marxist and Capitalist interpretations. His response was an art whose images “express themselves all alone” and which can, thanks to their inherent non-semiotic and non-scientific tendency, appear “mystical.”

1. The Simplicity of Images

Brunschvicg has described the function of images in Plotinus saying that these apparently “simple” images do nevertheless escape, through their very simplicity, any “quietude” offered by “official” philosophical strategies like idealism or materialism: “The historians of Plotinus, obeying their doubts or biases, forced themselves to introduce his thought into the divisional framework to which they were accustomed: immanence or transcendence, procession or emanation, pantheism or theism. But the causality of the One is established precisely in order to foil any attempt of classification by concepts: it can be grasped only with the help of images borrowed from the sight of organic or inorganic nature” (p. 84).

Both Plotinus and Tarkovsky share not only a “disquieting mysticism,” but also arguments concerning the “simplicity” of images. What is striking in Tarkovsky’s films is a certain aesthetic “necessity” present in the form of a profound and underlying language. Whether this language can be qualified as “rational” or as “artistic-mystical” is secondary. Important is that the root of Tarkovsky’s expressions cannot be localized in a pure *imaginatio*, that is in an imaginative act in the proper sense of the term, and this is amazing for an artist working first of all with images. For Tarkovsky artistic expressions have to “come from inner necessity, from an organic process going on in the material as a whole” (*Sculpting in Time*, 120). An organic whole is formed by an “inner necessity” (p.

121), which arises out of the “inner dynamic of the mood of the situation” (p. 74). The “image” is thus inscribed in a rhythm of necessity and not in the “imagination.” This might be surprising for us though in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance one would have affirmed that the image must always *be in* the mind of the artist. An image always pre-exists in a preliminary form, or else it comes out of the spirit, that is it is immediately produced by a spiritual-artistic act. Panofsky explains that during the Renaissance nobody would have accepted beauty as being “the daughter of imagination” (Panofsky, 1983, p. 77). This intimate appreciation of artistic values developed beyond the idea of pure appearance, also remains the exclusive attribute of Plotinus’ philosophy.

Marsilio Ficino was impressed, during the Renaissance, by the Plotinian experience through which “one grasps ‘beautiful images’ instead of propositions, just like the life of Gods within the intelligible” (Chastel, 1996, p. 82). Imagination, on the other hand, remained an “inferior function,” purely reproductive and so to speak “non-spiritual.” Consequently, it was seen as never being able to free itself from the “mud of matter.” (Krakovski)

2. The Problem of Materialism and Subjectivism

Tarkovsky was well aware of the philosophical problems linked to the subjectivity of perception. It could not be otherwise, since the preceding generation of Russian film directors had chosen as a preferred subject the destruction of all subjectivism in cinematographic art. The opposition of Tarkovsky and Eisenstein can be explained by the fact that, among other things, the younger intended to modify the final result obtained by the materialist deconstruction of subjectivist empathy, a deconstruction carried out before by the Eisensteinian materialism-formalism. This does not mean that Tarkovsky would have liked to re-establish, through a simple act of conservation, the idea of subjectivist empathy as it existed in pre-formalist aesthetics. On the contrary, he wanted to go

further and bestow a new, more philosophical, value to empathy as well as to any artistic “feeling.” Any idea of empathy remains inscribed in a *Platonic* philosophical project. To overcome this project was the aim of Tarkovsky as well as of Plotinus.

Alternatively, the “alienation effect” invented by the Russian formalists, presents itself as a rationalist strategy whose objective is to avoid the banality of any relationship between subject and object – a relationship that will inevitably become “banal” at the moment the subject “imposes” itself to the contemplated object. Subjectivism becomes “banal” because, just like hedonism, it sees only those things that it wants to see, without letting the subjectivist perspective undergo the slightest act of refraction. This refraction can be imposed upon the subjectivist way of seeing by the material itself. This was at least the approach applied by the formalists, and it is furthermore for this reason that Formalism must be seen as a form of materialism.

It has been recognized only much later that all materialism eventually becomes as banal as subjectivism. Materialism recognizes only those things as real – and there it also resembles hedonism – that are material, without ever asking, since it rejects the existence of things spiritual in the first place, what “spiritual” input could provide a thinking subject. Regrettably, this point was rarely taken into consideration by the formalists themselves since they might not even have seen it as a problem. Tarkovsky as an artist inclined towards “the spiritual” had to unravel a knot of ideas that had firmly established itself in formalist aesthetic theory.

Plotinus was confronted with problems on the same order. Plotinus remains an anti-materialist, but is he as much and for these reasons a subjectivist? Despite the objections of many specialists, Bréhier considers Plotinus as a subjective idealist. A priori, because he aspires to a “mystical union,” Plotinus should be classified as a subjectivist because the refusal of “materialism” can only lead to its

contrary – subjectivism. Still, the “mystical union” of Plotinus’ design is not as simplistic as the union which is usually advanced by subjectivism. If, according to Plotinus, the “mystical union” attains the highest degree of mysticism, it does so through highly complex philosophical reflections.

To know the world “in a simple manner” by avoiding, within the act of contemplation, all abstract deformations, rationalist or scientific, does not imply the assimilation of this world to one’s personal and subjective vision. Such simplification mirrors the kind of simplification typical of the scientific approach (of positivism which can be considered as the “first son” of subjectivism, for example).

Plotinus is certainly not looking for *such* a kind of simplicity. His aim is to see things and the entire world without adapting them to any definite perspective, neither to that of subjectivism nor to that of objectivism. This is what constitutes the “mystical” vision in Plotinus. Plotinus’ bodily attitude (practice of asceticism) as well as his spiritual attitude strives towards utmost simplicity. Constant exercise brings about a metamorphosis of the regard which attempts to see only the divine presence: “When it looks upon the authentic existences it is looking upon itself; its vision as its effective existence, and this efficacy is itself since the Intellectual-Principle and the Intellectual Act are one: This is an integral seeing itself by its entire being, not a part seeing by a part (V, 3, 6).”

By explaining that all things proceed from the ‘One,’ Plotinus hopes to avoid all mechanisms that would complicate our perception. To say that all things come from an absolute One means that things are just what they are, that they present themselves to our eyes in an absolutely simple manner, and that they need no auxiliary language, neither the language of objective science nor that of an “empathizing”

and subjective approach. In this way, they truly appear as what they are.

In Plotinus, the absolute immediacy through which things are communicated to the observer is also reminiscent of certain pre-formalist ideas that existed in Europe at the beginning of modernity, known under the name of philosophy of *Einfühlung* or of empathy.⁴ Paradoxically, Plotinus' immediacy is also reminiscent of formalism itself, which had decided, through the famous "alienation effect," to brutally extradite things to the sphere outside their subjective context in order to make things speak "directly." It is clear that Plotinus chooses neither the way of empathy nor that of alienation. As a matter of fact, not only empathy, but also the "alienation effect" remain profoundly Platonic since for Plato, *vision* always remains, as has said Pierre Hadot, a "presence at distance" (Introduction to VI 9, p. 43).

Plotinus is not a subjectivist but rather an intuitive metaphysician similar to Schelling, Ravaisson and Bergson for whom art "prints the things in us" ("imprime les choses en nous," Bergson) but who do not reduce art to a simple movement of expression retrievable by subjective empathy. In Plotinus' philosophy, the individual consciousness of the subject entirely negates itself within a mystical union. Certainly, Plotinus here can be no further removed from a philosophy of empathy. On the other hand, the "imprints" that our soul perceives are not "marks of a seal engraved in the soul" either (as for example, Epicurian sensualism would hold): "Memory is not to be explained as the retainer of information in virtue of the lingering of an impression which in fact was never made; either an impression is made upon the mind and lingers when there is remembrance, or, denying the impression, we cannot hold that memory is its lingering." (IV 6, 1) An impression is rather produced at the moment man makes an aesthetic experience in the form of an authentic and spiritual act, and the subject is not looking for an object but for a "presence."

3. Truth and Alienation

More precisely, Plotinus is looking for what he calls the “intelligible,” and this is grasped neither by brute sensation nor by abstraction or analysis. As mentioned above, it is something one finds without searching, through “simple” contemplation. “Simple contemplation” was certainly a project also pursued by the Russian formalists who, within a wave of generalized anti-idealism, turned against everything that resembled a philosophy of empathy. This is how they began, for example, to place their objects in particularly unusual contexts in order to confront the spectator in a shocking and provocative manner with the object itself. The “brutal” effect brought about by this experience was supposed to communicate things in a thoroughly immediate way. Of course, a stone placed grotesquely in an unusual environment (in a soup dish for example) will appear as even more “stony” than normal. The problem that was gradually discovered with regard to this theory of perception was, however, that it would develop into nothing other than pure materialism. This means that, through its very nature, formalism developed away from aesthetic contemplation. Tarkovsky’s task was to “reapply” the fundamental idea of the “alienation effect” to questions linked to truly aesthetic theory and practice.

Also in Plotinus we find the conviction that beauty is realized only through a “shock” experience: “So Intellect was raised to that height and stayed there, happy in being around that God; but the soul also which was able turned to it and, when it knew and saw, rejoiced in the vision and, in so far as it was able to see, was utterly amazed. It saw as if in utter amazement, and, since it held something of it in itself, it had an intimate awareness of it... (VI, 7, 31).”⁵ First, it must be understood that Plotinus is still speaking of “simple” contemplation here. Simple because carried out by a spectator “able to contemplate” that is whose soul has adopted a “certain attitude:” “Such vision is for those only who see with the soul’s sight – and at the vision, they will rejoice, and awe will fall upon them and a trouble

deeper than all the rest could ever stir, for now they are moving in the realm of Truth (I, 6, 4).” Here, it is not the materialist arrangement of things that brings about immediate aesthetic experience. On the contrary, it is through a certain spiritual attitude that we rediscover all those things that we already knew before (in the form of traces and shades), but which appear now, all of a sudden, as an “authentic” reality (cf. Gandillac, p. 102). In this way, one is bound to leave behind opinions and “dream images” in order to unite with the authentic “Good.” It is obvious that here “to contemplate” no longer signifies “to see an object,” but that it refers to the union of object and subject: “By principle they see principle and are linked with it, by like they have contact with the like... (VI 9.11).” The question of subjectivism does not even arise here since it is the subject itself that has modified its status and its being. This is a theory of perception founded on immediate experience excluding, by its very nature, any risk of falling back into the trap of a philosophy of empathy which is only possible because, as Bréhier says, “the intelligible world remains precisely that interior side of things whose knowledge seems to be a sort of deepening of sensation (*approfondissement de la sensation*) rather than an abstraction (p. xvi).” (This sensation should not be understood in the materialist sense of the term.)

The famous German aesthetician Oskar Walzel addressed the technical “devices” (*priëmy*) that were developed by the Russian formalists by investigating the devices by means of a special notion of *form* that he derived directly from Plotinus’ conception. Walzel’s opposition of Plotinus and the Russian formalists is supposed to indicate as clearly as possible the direction into which modern “formalist” humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) should develop: it should be a science that has overcome the *initial* stage of formalism and that has developed a new, more complex one. In *Vom Geistesleben alter und neuer Zeit* Walzel writes: “ This form – in Plotinus’ sense – is not based on technical devices but indicates rather

an interior relationship between exterior appearance and its spiritual presupposition (p. 57).”

The development of Russian formalism towards a Plotinian “formalism” has been realized by no one in a better than by Tarkovsky. The conception of the image that should, according to Tarkovsky, manifest “an organic link between idea and form” culminates in an aesthetics of non-symbolic images communicated without passing through the intermediary of the (interpreting) intellect. Tarkovsky’s images present the transcendent or the divine directly, without appeal to the intellect, perhaps in a way contrary to traditional Platonism.

Tarkovsky considered cinema and music as “immediate” art forms. He quoted Gogol’s conviction that the function of the image is not to express ideas about life but life itself. The pictorial “expression” is not symbolic or even “signifying.” Rather it requires a “spiritual” receiver able to unite himself with this expression by means of “simple” contemplation. The “expression” is not constructed here, but results from an observation that can be grasped perfectly through Plotinus’ philosophy: “If nature creates these organisms, this will be an immediate art. Nature is like a painter who contents himself with looking at his model, while the image draws itself on the canvas all alone (Hadot, 1997, p. 60).”

Plotinus’ main idea of art parallels Tarkovsky’s cinematographic conception, since Tarkovsky insisted that “the fundamental element of cinema comes from observation.” Life’s pure observation asks only for contemplation, and no intellectualism – be it materialist or subjective – has the right to interfere. Certainly, for this reason, Tarkovsky’s conception can still appear as “mystic.” Pètr Kral has written concerning “Tarkovsky’s philosophy” that “the All would be, altogether, the fact to accept the world’s strangeness without resigning oneself to it, and this as a final opening. If the

whole world seems to inhabit these images, men will reunite in its center (1986, p. 22).”⁶ The simplicity of the image is represented here by strangeness, perhaps that of a dream which – paradoxically – does not appear as strange but as authentic.

Finally, Plotinus’ ideas correspond not only to Tarkovsky’s aesthetics but also to that brand of cinema theory called “dreamlike realism” developed by André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer. Kracauer denied the possibility that cinema could be painting because painting would be unable to offer “raw material.” Instead, it would console us with extracts of material reality. Still, what Kracauer develops is not “materialism,” even if the same words written by a formalist theorist could or should have been interpreted as such.

What Kracauer produces is rather a “mysticism” holding that “reality” can immediately enter, in the form of “camera reality” (“Kamerarealität”), into cinema. The German term “Kamerarealität” well expresses the quasi Plotinian fusion aspired by Kracauer: eye and object of vision become one, and reality and camera fuse into a camera-reality (cf. Kracauer, p. 62). At the same time, the impact of the “shock theory” subsists here, since the raw material is still able to shock us – and this not only because of a certain intellectualist arrangement – but also due to the *presence* it retains. In the moment we are confronted with the camera-reality, the world appears as an absolute. In this state, even the distinction between dream and reality becomes relative. This does not mean that reality appears as “weakened as in a dream.” On the contrary, as a dream it can appear more real than reality. Kracauer claims that films will appear as dreams just because in films we are emotionally “moved by the raw and unpainted presence of the objects” (p. 224). Contact with reality is, in these images, still fresh and immediate, and it is this shocking authenticity that lets them appear as dreams.

4. Dream and Grace

At the center of this theory can be found an aesthetic concept that goes along well with what Plotinus called “grace.” Dreamlike realism searches for a quality of image graspable neither through empathy nor through abstract analysis. It is an image that must be “caught” through an act of dreaming. As a matter of fact, this dream is far removed from anything like “imagination,” because its aim is to overcome all categories of consciousness and unconsciousness. Kracauer uses the German expression “to dream after something” (*einer Sache nachträumen*, p. 256) in the sense that one joins a thing by imagining it as it would appear in a dream. This dream, which is simultaneously not a dream, catches reality not by representing it but by uniting itself with it.

Plotinus’ grace as a quality that deeply influenced Renaissance thinkers, and which Schiller still referred to as the “beauty of the soul,” is most radically opposed to materialism as well as to any theory of empathy. It is a non-present presence, a kind of suspended form not unrelated to the notion of “style” that we maintain today. It is the glow of the light of God (VI, 7, 22) and flows, as a “flash,” directly out of the One. Grace is an essence to be realized in form, it has no direct relationship with the “exterior” aesthetic form since the exterior exhibits only signs. It is that which *irradiates* symmetry rather than symmetry itself (VI, 7, 22). In this way, it is immediately linked to this concrete simplicity or simple presence that bestows beauty on all material things (I, 6, 2) and that is perceived at first sight by those “who see with the Soul’s sight” (I, 6, 4).⁷

Kracauer’s preference for a “truth without make-up” is echoed by Plotinus’ refusal of “made up dead bodies,” by which he means all matter “intellectually arranged” without being touched by the illuminated essence of the *Intelligible*. “Grace exists through the feeling it expresses,” said Ravaisson (*op. cit.*, p. 82), yet despite this it

is not a “sentimental” matter developed for the pleasure of “empathic people.” “To put one’s own feelings into one’s art is always vulgar,” says Tarkovsky⁸ (which likely explains his appreciation of Asian art). Grace, on the other hand, is not an object at all, and as a consequence, it does not require objective contemplation. All grace requires is a “simple” regard: looking at matter without searching for it because it is simply present.

In this way, matter can also appear as “spiritual,” which is particularly manifest in Tarkovsky. The most extreme example is perhaps that of the astronaut Henri Berton. At the beginning of the film *Solaris*, we see him talking in a video nervously before a commission revealing his experiences on the remote planet of Solaris. He describes a strange fog which revealed visions of a garden or of a giant child. Clearly for Berton, who perceived the ocean Solaris as comprised of a “thousand changing and moving colors reminiscent of torrents, seaweed, grasses, and the wind of the planet it comes from,” *matter* symbolizes nothing other than itself. Finally, only by making visible the substantial force that matter retains, “the ocean” has the chance to become “spiritual.”

This principle can easily lead to a dreamlike realism which also concerned Plotinus. Jean Brun has said (in the context of a discussion on Plotinus), that “for the magic idealism of Novalis, there is no difference between the human body, which is a reduction of the cosmos, and the cosmos, which is a gigantic projection of the human body. This is why, still according to Novalis, there is no reason to distinguish the world that one is dreaming and the world *in which* one is dreaming” (Brun, p. 112). The matter that must be “caught by the dreams” thus invites us to a dreamlike contemplation of the world.

The distinction between matter and form which, according to Heidegger, has served since Plato and Aristotle “as the conceptual schema par excellence for any theory of art and every aesthetics,”⁹

has, in Plotinus and Tarkovsky, been undermined by a mystical aesthetics. “Beauty,” traditionally understood as the aesthetics of an exterior form, becomes synonymous with splendor or grace.

Notes

1. Quotations from Plotinus are from *The Six Enneads* transl. by Stephen MacKenna and B.S. Page (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952).
2. Cf. Brun, 1988, p. 74ff: “Le mysticisme de Plotin est fortement teinté de l’intellectualisme grec puisque, pour lui, la connaissance suffit de nous détourner du mal qui est l’ignorance.”
3. Cf. IV, 7, 2-3: “Body—not merely because it is a composite, but even were it simple—could not exist unless there were soul in the universe, for body owes its being to the entrance of a Reason-Principle into Matter, and only from soul can a Reason-Principle come. Anyone who rejects this view, and holds that either atoms or some entities void of part coming together produce soul, is refuted by the very unity of soul and by the prevailing sympathy as much as by the very coherence of the constituents.” And about the Stoic *pneuma* he says: “Matter itself could not exist: the totality of things in this sphere is dissolved if it be made to depend upon the coherence of a body which, though elevated to the nominal rank of ‘soul,’ remains air, fleeting breath, whose very unity is not drawn from itself” (ibid.). Cf. also Ravaisson, p. 56: “L’une que Cicéron appelle plébéienne, que Berkeley appelle au XVIIe siècle petite philosophie et Leibniz *paupertina philosophia* c’est celle des Démocrite et des Epicure, don’t les principaux facteurs furent les sens et l’entendement, l’entendement étant l’auxiliaire naturel des mathématiques.”
4. In Germany alone, the problem of *Einfühlung* has a strange and tortuous history covering the entire 19th century. It appeared with Herder and Novalis, and developed through the psychologist Theodor Lipps into a process of “identification” objectifying the subject. Because of the directness and “avoidance” of rationality within the process of understanding, *Einfühlung* could, at some point, “turn abstract” and lay the foundation for positivism. The fight between anti-subjectivists on the one hand, and subjectivists believing in the importance of *Einfühlung* on the other, thus foreshadows the rise of “logical positivism” which was later going to dominate part of the German scene.
5. Jérôme Laurent defines this conviction as such: “There is no beauty without violence. The habitual order of the world is suddenly smashed, and new spatio-temporal references are created. The glitter of gold that delights us, does so only by overcoming the monotony of faded colors where our eye tends to loose interest” (Laurent, p. 41-42).
6. Kral has derived his observations from *The Sacrifice*.

7. Tarkovsky: "A propos du sacrifice" in *Positif* 303, mai 1986, p. 5.
8. Cf. Hadot, 1997, p. 76: "Le mot est prononcé: ce je ne sais quoi, ce mouvement, cette vie qui s'ajoutent à la beauté pour provoquer l'amour, c'est la grâce. L'expérience plotinienne avait éprouvé la Vie comme une contemplation, comme une simplicité concrète, comme une présence. Elle en saisit maintenant le fond. La vie est grâce."
9. *Holzwege*, GA Bd. 5, p. 12 Cf. Also Heidegger's *Nietzsche* I, p. 227.

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