

Title: The End of Nostalgia: Andrei Tarkovsky's Emigration
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Andrei Tarkovsky died on 29 December 1986, after four years of enforced exile from the Soviet Union. Tarkovsky's exile had begun with his project about the phenomenon of exile, the joint Soviet-Italian production *Nostalghia* (1983), after which Tarkovsky staged Musorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov* at the Royal Opera House in London and completed his final film, *Sacrifice*, under the auspices of the Swedish Film Institute. After years of battling within the Soviet system to preserve creative control over his films, Tarkovsky's exile was a fruitful if frustrating confrontation with a wholly new set of constraints: the market, the culture industry, and the festival circuit.

Though he was buried in Paris, in many respects his premature death (at the age of just fifty-four) sealed his return to Soviet culture. Not only did it curtail his fledgling career in the West, as an event it reverberated most in the USSR. A major factor in the resonance of Tarkovsky's death was that it coincided with the first faint glimmers of Perestroika. His films were read as prophetic commentary on late-Soviet culture; most famously, *Stalker* and *Sacrifice* became seen as premonitions of the Chernobyl disaster. Within a couple of years, Tarkovsky became seen as a veritable martyr of late-Soviet culture, posthumously festooned with all number of accolades. In this light, his death became seen as an especially poignant, unnecessary cultural loss.

It is, perhaps, unsurprising that Tarkovsky's death has become seen as a major cultural event. The funeral itself was attended by émigré luminaries such as Mstislav Rostropovich, who famously played Bach on the parapet of the Russian church in Paris. Tarkovsky's death was imprinted in the memory of his contemporaries, such as Arkadii Strugatsky, Aleksandr Sokurov and Chris Marker, as an event of universal desolation. It must be that Tarkovsky somehow represented to his contemporaries a possibility in Soviet society apart from its mere demise. It was a lost possibility, and apart from oblivion the only possible attitude towards Soviet society is now nostalgia. Sokurov has become the principal bearer of this nostalgia. In this paper I will argue that Tarkovsky, the creator of the film *Nostalghia*, is an antidote to this nostalgia for a lost future. I will illustrate this thought primarily by re-considering the finale of *Nostalghia*, which argues forcefully for an acceptance of the here and now, rejecting a false identification with the there and then. I will develop this thesis into a re-interpretation of Tarkovsky's work in emigration.