

Document Citation

Title	[The sacrifice]
Author(s)	Pat Graham
Source	<i>Reader (Chicago, Ill.)</i>
Date	1986 Dec 12
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Offret (The sacrifice), Tarkovsky, Andrei, 1986

Reader's Guide to the

Selected first run, neighborhood,

THE SACRIFICE Andrei Tarkovsky's spiritual misadventure (at least he calls it spiritual, though it's more the familiar counterfeit of Cassandra wailing and refined agony) signifies ferociously its emotional and cultural intentions (the sacred litany—Nietzsche, Dostoyevski, Leonardo, etc—is talismanically invoked, like ghosts in a mausoleum), though the gap between sign and substance seems almost abysmally wide. Tarkovsky's *deja-vu* dancing around themes of suffering and redemption is as exhausted as the Manichaean polarities that inspire it: materiality versus the spirit, the old metaphysical antagonists whose terms set a reductionist trap into which the director all too obligingly falls. The sacrifice of the central character—an exquisitely learned professor/critic (Erland Josephson) who lives with his family in Chekhovian bourgeois comfort (though, alas, without Chekhovian lightness or irony)—seems suspiciously like the classical neurotic bargain: an exchange of the responding, interacting self for a world without terror, change, or death (in the beginning was the com-

municating Word, but even this the critic gives up to his savage god). Tarkovsky has a handful of remarkable films to his credit (*Andrej Rublev*, *Nostalgia*), but this one's in the great pumpkin tradition of the unendurable *Stalker*. With Susan Fleetwood, Allan Edwall, and Valerie Mairesse; the cinematography is by Ingmar Bergman favorite Sven Nykvist. (PG) (Fine Arts)