



Andrei Tarkovsky's the Stalker: Intellectualism as the anti-thesis of Hope and Belief

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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.

Keywords: Tarkovsky; Belief; Cynicism; Intellectualism; Doubt

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.

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.

Works cited:

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