

**CONTEMPORARY ART ABOUT THE TRAGIC FATE
OF MAN IN GLOBAL CIVILIZATION:
REFLECTIOS ON A.P. ZVYAGINTSEV'S FILM «LEVIATHAN»**

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This article analyses the philosophical content of A. Zvyagintsev's film «Leviathan» which can be understood only if we use a priori categories. Such a «category» is the image of the biblical Leviathan, allowing interpreting the film from a position of Bible. The misfortune of an ordinary man from Russia proved to go beyond everyday life and takes on common to all mankind sense. The tragedy of an individual becomes a tragedy of the modern global civilization when only God can save man.

Keywords: «God», «Leviathan», «Satan», «A priori categories», «Man», «Person», «Tragedy», «Art», «Pious», «Global civilization», «Church», «The Body of Jesus Christ», «The Body of Satan», «Subjectivism», «Objectivism», «Ordinary man»

A.P. Zvyagintsev's film «Leviathan» makes a deep positive impression in one aspect. One can argue about the artistic merits or demerits of this film, but it is clear that it fulfilled its main philosophical mission – showed people a sense of reality. However, this sense of reality can be discerned only if we use some intellectual «glasses» or, in the language of Kant, *a priori categories*, allowing to see the world from a certain viewpoint. In the endless stream of various empirical events that take place in the film (drunkenness, fornication, cursing, the tyranny of power, murder, dishonesty, etc.) they help us see a general picture, in a coordinate system where everyone can occupy their place in life, in other words, to solve the main philosophical question about the relations between man and the world.

In most cases, modern artists adhere to the position of subjectivism, that is, they are trying to give their own subjective vision of a problem, put their experiences, feelings and emotions on public display. Such protrusion of the «I», self-searching in the depths of their psyche is usually interesting only for a narrow circle of friends and aesthetes. Other artists adhering to the position of objectivism are trying to follow the path of the primitive realism allegedly allowing to reflect objectively the reality in the form in which it exists. But, as it is well known, facts as themselves do not exist. They are always interpreted, depend on the context, the theory, some of the common attitudes and perceptions. Therefore, both subjective and objective trends are of little use. They are unproductive. The task of the real art is that, firstly, the subjective and objective factors are to be given in dialectical unity, and, secondly, are to be examined in the light of the Absolute Truth, which will give a spiritual sense to the whole. A.P. Zvyagintsev quite succeeded in showing it. He sees modern life through the well-known image of the biblical Leviathan («twisted»),

which is the symbol of the enemy of God, or Satan (from the Hebrew. שָׂטָן, Satan – «enemy», «slanderer»).

The Image of the Leviathan

In the book of Job (Bible) there is the only description of Leviathan (Satan). We are presenting this description of Leviathan because of its great importance: «I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion. Who can discover the face of his garment? Or who can come to him with his double bridle? Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another; they stick together, that they cannot be sundered... The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved... The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee: sling stones are turned with him into stubble. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear... Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride» [7, Job 41: 12–34].

This Leviathan in the history of culture and philosophy, according to the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), is usually identified with the State or «mortal god» [8], who brings to man peace and security. But this interpretation is not correct. The true meaning of the Biblical image of Leviathan is that it gives the image of Satan, or rather, «the body of Satan» by analogy with «the body of Christ» [7, Eph. 4: 12] – the Orthodox Church. And as «the body of Christ» is not just a collection of people, but a living divine-human organism, consisting of Christ Himself, angels and

believers in Him, so «the body of Satan» is based on the unity of its members, interconnected with feelings, thoughts, actions and sinful way throughout life. This connection is so strong and thick that it is quite impermeable to external influence. It is the self-enclosed organism living by its own internal laws.

Leviathan is the symbol of our global civilization

The producers of the film through this image of Leviathan show the current global civilization that has formed before our very eyes in the last decade. This is the civilization of the Apocalypse, in which there are two main forces – on the one hand, the golden calf, fused with the State power and, on the other hand, disordered, often perverted sex and fornication. And both forces, each in its own way, turn the world into a single economic and sexual entity [7, 1 Cor. 6: 16–17], which is called the second Babylon (the Apocalypse of John the Theologian), or the mystical «body of Satan». We would remind you of it being the antithesis of the Orthodox Church, the mystical «body of Jesus Christ».

In this global world, everything from the life of the individual to the countries and peoples, is measured, weighed, bought and sold being on the balance of certain financial institutions [3]. A series of «orange revolutions», the war in the Ukraine, in the Middle East for the redivision of the world, the separation of civil society in many countries of the world between to «two Cities» [6] on the principle of «traditional» and «non-traditional» morality, and some other events demonstrate the final act of the world tragedy [3; 4].

Therefore A.P. Zvyagintsev could present the problem after the example of every country and every people, drawn into the maelstrom of today's events. By the way, the producer of the film used to say he made a start from a similar situation that happened with an American man in the United States. A.P. Zvyagintsev got the idea of the film in 2008 when he heard a story of an ordinary American who came into conflict with the state of Colorado authorities that denied his rights. Then it became clear that this story could happen anywhere. This film is about an ordinary man coming into collision with State system. That's why A.P. Zvyagintsev moved the plot into Russia. The producer is unlikely wanted to discredit Russia but he wanted to emphasize the fact that in Russia all these global events occur particularly bright and dramatic. This plot reminds us of the history of pious Job. His misadventures may be compared with those of the main hero of the film – car mechanic Nicolai Sergeev. Hence the name «Leviathan».

The pious Job and the tragedy of ordinary man

This theme was affectively tackled through the medium of A.P. Zvyagintsev's film, which moved the story into Russian reality. In the case of Russia such conflicts between people and authorities are particularly bright and dramatic for the simple reason that Russian Orthodox Church is the last bastion of Truth which the enemy could not overcome. Christ says: «I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it» [7, Mat. 16: 18]. But this does not mean that the enemy would not try to overpower the Church. In the film, the storyline is clearly displayed in the attempts of Leviathan to penetrate the Church gate under the guise of orthodox Bishop, having a pious sermon on every occasion, and the criminal mayor, «laundering» his pangs of conscience through stolen money which he occasionally donates to the improvement of the Temple.

But let's not forget that the first to enter the Paradise, as you know, was a repentant thief, hanging on the cross next to Christ. The Lord says: «I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance» [7, Luk. 5: 32]. The Mayor of the town Vadim Shelevyat, although with great difficulty, under the pressure of external circumstances, makes the first small steps for moral support in the direction of the Church. He is in his own way trying to stifle pangs of conscience to find peace of soul. Of course, these attempts are clumsy, wrong, distorting the essence of repentance, but historically tested – for centuries Catholics had bought indulgences. Moreover, they had bought them not only for sins committed, but also for the future ones.

Our protagonist, car mechanic Nikolai Sergeev, though not an angel, naively imagines himself a righteous man innocently offended, who is struggling against unjust corrupt town authorities. But, alas, he is not a righteous Job, and therefore a priori doomed to failure. The orthodox priest, Father Vasily, reminds him of this and cites as an example the relevant passage from the Book of Job, comparing the misadventures of the contemporary hero with the sufferings of the righteous man of the Old Testament. Answering the main question of Nicholas, «Where is your God the Merciful ...?» Father Vasily says to Nicholas, «Mine is with me. And where is yours I do not know. Who do you pray? I have not seen you in the Church. You do not keep the fast, do not take Holy Communion, do not go to Confession», hinting heavily drunken Nicholas, what god he serves. «Satan reigns there».

However, Nikolai, unbeliever in God, proudly challenges mayor, who represents the evil forces, not realizing that he himself, his wife and his friend are the cells of the mystical body of Leviathan. But a man must be perfect in such a struggle. Even if the biblical Job admitted to being in the wrong before God and lack of strength before Satan, our hero is not going to admit it. He does not realize his weaknesses and does not want to consider himself a sinner. At the end of the film Nikolai is sentenced to fifteen years of imprisonment, perhaps during which his moral renewal and spiritual revival through the pain and suffering would take place. But for that the second series of the film is required [5].

Conclusion

This tragic situation is hopeless as many people believe. And they are right. Neither the combined efforts of outstanding individuals nor the whole mankind could overcome the power of Leviathan, no one can «draw out Leviathan with a hook, or snare his tongue with a line which you lower... Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false» [7, Job. 41: 1–9]. And that is why «on earth there is nothing like him... He is king over all the children of pride» [6, Job. 41: 33–34]. But the fact that «what is impossible with man is possible with God» [7, Luk. 18: 20]. For only

God can hold Leviathan in obedience and He has been doing it for several millennia from time to time loosening the reins of the monster because of the sins of mankind. So thanks to A.P. Zvyagintsev for presenting the problem in its religious fullness, having exposed all the weak points of our common human life. Knowledge makes man strong and helps us endure tragic moments of life without losing faith in divine justice.

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