

THE MOTIVE OF SOLITUDE  
IN THE HERMANN HESSE'S NOVEL «JOURNEY TO THE EAST»

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*The artistic realization of the Eastern theme in Hermann Hesse's work «Journey to the East» («Die Morgenlandfahrt», 1931) is considered through the analysis of loneliness motive. It is shown that this motive is used by the author for the disclosure of the multifaceted soul of an individual's creative mindset. The sense of loneliness of the hero in the novel H. H. is caused by his inability to accept the world of the denial of moral values and art. H.H. aims to find the destiny of the artist-creator, to gain inner integrity and harmony, a state of true happiness. The influence of the philosophical processes of China (Taoism, the concepts of yin and yang) on the novel H. Hesse «Journey to the East » is revealed.*

The significant influence of Eastern philosophy is traced in the works by the German-speaking writer Hermann Hesse (Hermann Hesse, 1877–1962). Hesse grew up in the family of missionary pietists. He saw not only exotic wisdom in the eastern religions, but also a way of thinking that influenced his own worldview. The Hesse family's interest in the East, the acquaintance with the ancient Indian and Chinese texts, journeys to such Eastern countries as Malaysia, Sumatra and Sri Lanka, contributed to the writer's deep penetration into the Eastern world view. Hermann Hesse used the forms and principles of the eastern thinking in creating a mental-spiritual model of the world and the artistic reality of his works, which are filled with complex symbols [1].

Thus, Hesse considered at the beginning of the XXth century that philosophy as well as religion had no national and cultural boundaries. He embodied this awareness artistically. The German-Swiss writer saw a way to stop the moral degradation of the Western society with the help of learning Eastern religion and philosophy. Throughout his life and work Hesse showed an example of productive interaction of cultural and philosophical ideas of the West and the East. His works are characterized by strongly marked autobiographical features.

The forms of the artistic embodiment of the Eastern theme in the works of Hermann Hesse are very diverse. One of the significant forms is the motive of loneliness. The heroes, who have embarked on the path of spiritual development, experience incomprehension by society and spend most of their lives alone. Human civilization with its technocracy and culture, experiencing a decline in moral values, is a hindrance to the true self, drowns out the inner divine voice, so the heroes in Hesse's novels are compelled to separate themselves from the burgher environment. Hermann Hesse develops the problem of the loneliness of the personality with the spiritual mind, the artist-creator, in the novel «Journey to the East». The main character there is a writer. It is interesting that the name of the hero of the novel is almost unknown. Readers only know the initials H.H., which can be compared with the name of Herman Hesse. H.H. makes a journey to the Land of the East, which cannot be identified as a specific geographical object. It is not limited to any spatial and temporal limits. Travel, claimed in the title of the novel, is a peculiar journey of the main character in the depths of his inner self. H.H. is a member of the Brotherhood, which makes a pilgrimage. In this Brotherhood he acts as a violinist and storyteller.

Each member of this Brotherhood, besides a common goal (the narrator hides it), has their own. So, the main character wants to find the beautiful Princess Fatma and win her love, which he has dreamed about since his youth. And so, going on a journey as part of the Brotherhood, H.H. again surrenders to his youthful memories and dreams. Mentioned in the novel, a woman named Ninon is jealous of the protagonist of Fatma. The search for Fatma symbolizes for the main hero the search not only of his destiny as an artist-creator, but also his constant desire to search for truth, the divine trace, the meaning of life. From the biography of Hesse it is known that his wife was a woman Ninon, who did not understand him as a creative person, did not share her husband's aspirations for tales about constant wanderings.

The journey carried out by the protagonist and other members of the brotherhood does not pursue any political goals and is not regulated by the state legislation. Moreover, this procession rejects any modern technical means of transportation: «*Etappen unsrer Morgenlandfahrt, indem sie auf alle die banalen Hilfsmittel moderner Dutzendreisen, auf Eisenbahnen, Dampfschiffe, Telegraph, Auto, Flugzeug und so weiter verzichteten, wirklich ins Heroische und Magische durchgestoßen sind*» [2, S. 9] // «*The stages of our pilgrimage to the Land of the*

*East, coupled with the abandonment of the banal conveniences of co-temporary movement, such as railroads, steamships, cars, airplanes, telegraph, etc., really meant a way out into the epic and magic worlds»<sup>1</sup>. This indicates that true art is incompatible with technocracy. In addition, according to the principle of philosophical worldview of China – Taoism, everything artificial, created by man, is a hindrance on the way to the attainment of the divine state. Being a member of the Brotherhood, a participant in the campaign, the protagonist lives with the feeling of a certain unity, with a feeling of belonging to something great. The pilgrimage itself is seen in the novel as an aspiration, a way to some great truth, to eternity, to God: «es strömte dieser Zug der Gläubigen und sich Hingebenden nach dem Osten, nach der Heimat des Lichts, unaufhörlich und ewig, er war immer dardurch alle Jahrhunderte unterwegs, dem Licht und dem Wunder entgegen, und jeder von uns Brüdern, jede unsrer Gruppen, ja unser ganzes Heer und seine große Heerfahrt war nur eine Welle im ewigen Strom der Seelen, im ewigen Heimwärtsstreben der Geister nach Morgen, nach der Heimat» [2, S. 17] // «The procession of the faithful and devoted brothers to the East, to the source of light, flowed continuously and unceasingly, it flowed through all the centuries to meet the light, towards the miracle, and each of us, the participants, each of our groups, but our whole army as a whole and our great campaign was only a wave in the eternal stream of souls, in the eternal aspiration of the spirit to the fatherland, to the morning, to the beginning».*

There were apostates, deserters, those who left the world of poetry, magic, and went into the world of order, tranquility, tasteless life – into the world of suburbanity. Such people succumbed to the voice of the mind and followed it, losing faith in the existence of the Brotherhood. This is the destiny of many people: being young we believe in love, good, eternity, but over time our sense of beauty is ruined by reason and social norms. We say goodbye to our dreams and habit of mixing poetry with life and returning to the world of «tested railways» to «useful work», not fully realizing that it will be practically impossible to find a way back. Therefore, Taoism also encourages people to return to natural conditions, because only in the untouched virgin nature you can hear a pure divine voice. Entering the Brotherhood, each of its members become involved in the entire collection of great artists from all over the world. It includes both real historical figures and fictional ones: Lao Tzu, Novalis, Klingsor, Hugo Wolf, Brentano, Henry von Ofterdingen, Don Quixote, etc. The artist-creators, with the help of their talent and skill, create works of art that give people aesthetic pleasure, a sense of beauty, bring with them «a wave of magic that expanded and picked up everything».

Like many people the protagonist of the novel H.H. leaves the Brotherhood. After many years, he decides to tell about his pilgrimage to the Land of the East. However this venture fails. When the protagonist was a participant in the campaign, his bliss «bestand aus der Freiheit, alles irgend Erdenkliche gleichzeitig zu erleben, Außen und Innen spielend zu vertauschen, Zeit und Raum wie Kulissen zu verschieben» [2, S. 33] // «Consisted of the freedom to have all imaginable experiences simultaneously, playfully mix the external and internal, to control time and space behind the scenes». The hero enjoys art, studies it, creates his works, finds the purpose of his life in it, but then loses the meaning and value of his work: «es drohte alles seinen Wert, seinen Sinn zu verlieren: unser Kameradschaft, unser Glaube, unser Schwur, unsre Morgenlandfahrt, unser ganzes Leben» [2, S. 44] // «everything threatened to lose value, our meaning – our partnership, our faith, our oath, our patriarchy, our whole life». The protagonist loses faith in the revival of the genuine art. He does not feel able to create a meaningful literary work that could awaken morality, high spiritual values, the desire for self-development of people.

The key image in the novel is Leo, with the disappearance of which the Brotherhood disintegrates. Leo acts as a kind of symbol of the lost goal and hope of the protagonist, entangled in his claims to the writer's laurels and lost faith in the revival of the great art. Leo is cheerful, affable and extraordinarily modest: «wirkte dieser Diener Leo einfach und natürlich, so rotbäckig gesund und freundlich anspruchslos» [2, S. 30] // «Leo struck with incomparable simplicity and naturalness, red cheerful health and friendly unpretentiousness». The main character does not cease to take up the question of why the poet's fate is loneliness and the eternal search for his destiny and himself, while the characters created by the poet are full and vital. The answer to it is given to him by Leo, indicating to the young musician that this is the mission of the poet – to serve the people, to give his works the best thoughts, all himself. It is not surprising that the truth told by Leo remains for the main character incomprehensible. He cannot understand how to convey to people the most valuable and important: «eine strahlende Reihe von Taten und Wundern bewahrt, deren Bild und Andenken mit ihm dahinschwindet, wenn es ihm nicht gelingt, etwas davon durch Wort oder Bild, durch Bericht oder Lied an die Nachwelt weiterzuleiten. Aber wie nur, durch welchen Kunstgriff wäre es zu ermöglichen, wie wäre die Geschichte unsrer Morgenlandfahrt irgend erzählbar zu machen?» [2, S. 51] // «A brilliant series of feats and miracles, whose memory will disappear

<sup>1</sup>Hereinafter translation is mine – Vitalina Sapega's

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with him if it will not be possible to convey to the offspring something in a word or image, in a narrative or a song. But how, with what tricks of art can we find the way to this, how can we conceive the history of our pilgrimage to the country of the East, as reported to the reader?». We see that Hesse conveys the main character's concern with his mission to awaken in people the desire for self-improvement through a rhetorical question.

The author does not ignore modern social and political problems that have worried him, the degradation of the European people, the decline of European art: «*unsere Gemeinschaft, das Stärkste auf der Welt, sich hat auflösen können*» [2, S. 52] // «*Our fellowship has disintegrated, the strongest that was in the world*» – his heroes repeat again and again. Leo leaves and goes away with it, all European art is falling apart. H.H. tries to keep faith in the necessity of creating a work about the pilgrimage and ask a friend of youth, historian Lucas for advice. But Lucas, being a skeptic, a man of rational mindset, laughs at H.H., calling pilgrimage «the Crusade of the Children». In fact, his words are the reflection of the position of representatives of modern science, politics, the state as a whole in relation to artists. Art is perceived by them as a useless occupation, and its representatives, writers, artists, musicians, live, according to the majority, in a state of isolation from the real world. In this rebuke to the world of art, in the isolation from the world, the life position of the German Hermann Hesse, who criticized contemporary art, was emphasized, and focused on his main goal – educating people, and not in their entertainment and distraction from the real state of things, especially in the conditions of the approaching war. The historian wrote a book about the First World War, in which he took part. It was for him a way to get rid of emptiness and suicide, from the experiences caused by the horror of war.

After many years, the hero of the novel H.H. finds Leo. He lives among ordinary burghers and enjoys his life: «*das müsse ein sehr glücklicher und sehr liebenswerter Mensch sein, der auf diese Art zu pfeifen wise*» [2, S. 68] // «*he must be very happy and very likable man, if he can whistle like that*». H.H. is familiar with this whistling, this merry, light-hearted melody from the past hurts him and at the same time pleases him: «*Wie tief und wie schrecklich hatte sich alles für mich verändert, wenn mich der Ton eines Pfeifenden, der Takt eines bekannten Schrittes, nur durch Die Erinnerung an das verlorene Einstmals, so im Innerstentreffen, mir so wohl und so wehtun konnte!*» [2, S. 70] // «*How deep and how terrible everything has changed for me if the sound of a whistling melody, the rhythm is familiar steps one that reminded me of a lost past, could have wounded me so hard in the heart, could cause me such joy and such pain*». The motif of music symbolizes the return of the lost meaning of the life of the protagonist. The image of Leo is inextricably linked with the youth of H.H., sometimes of hope, ease and joy, sometimes of the pilgrimage to the Land of the East. Leo illustrates an example of the need to keep youth in his soul. In addition, Leo shows that even being a member of the Brotherhood, a man of art, you can happily live in a philistine world and be able to laugh: «*Gerade das ist es ja, das Leben, wenn es schön und glücklich ist: ein Spiel!*» [2, S. 76] // «*It is the game that is life, when it is so good!*». The motif of the game tells the hero that it is necessary to be able to play life. Here again comes the principle of the duality and unity of the world, the Chinese philosophical concept of yin and yang. We see that H. H. is not able to find harmony between the two worlds: the burgher environment and the spiritual life. He feels lonely and is not understood by other people. Meanwhile, Leo stands out in the novel as a symbol of a harmoniously developed, integral personality. His peaceful smile, easy humorous attitude to life, ability to exist in two worlds simultaneously indicate to the reader that Leo is a kind of the Enlightened One. Another confirmation of this idea we find in the episode with the Wolf-dog Necker. The wolf is a symbol of the dark side of man, his natural instincts (yin). Leo demonstrates friendship with the dog, which symbolizes the harmoniously developed personality of Leo. He is the Supreme Brotherhood; a true man, a genius, a man of art, and at the same time he lives in a philistine environment and enjoys life, knows how to treat it with humor. Meanwhile, the wolfhound Necker growls at H.H., indicating to the reader the disharmony of the personality of the protagonist, his inability to exist in two worlds at the same time.

With the loss of the Brotherhood, H.H.'s life turns into a painful loneliness, in unsuccessful attempts to realize his destiny, to find his place in the world. More than once he catches himself thinking of suicide, but came to the conclusion that this was not the way out: «*Es war mir der «Tod» kein Nichts mehr, keine Leere, keine Negation*» [2, S. 82] // «*Death "Ceased to mean nothing, emptiness, naked negation*». H.H. constantly feels pain, ceases to resist it, sees the destiny of the artist-creator in it.

Leo turns out to be the Supreme of the Brotherhood. The trial is executed in respect of the main character, he is justified, his betrayal is forgiven. H.H. was a deserter. The hero with surprise and admiration realizes that the Brotherhood exists forever and out of time. Here Herman Hesse resorted to the use of a rhetorical exclamation: «*Also es gab noch einen» Bund», von dem ich nichts mehr wußte, der ohne mich existierte und mich nicht mehr als zugehörig betrachtet hatte!*» [2, S. 86] // «*So, the Brotherhood, about which I did not know anything, continued to exist without me and treated me simply as an apostate!*». Thus, the hero realizes that he is

not alone in this world. There are many writers, artists, musicians and even philistines who, like H.H., endure a crisis of society, war, decline of culture and art. The true great art will live forever, will always instill in people a sense of beauty. The protagonist lived all alone, saw only the destroying world around him, brought himself to despair, trying to be guided in life only by justice and virtue. The court as a symbol of the dramatized form of introspection H.H. gives him another chance to overcome despair and pass the novitiate a second time, learning to humor and playing the game.

The final scene of the novel describes a strange figure found by the main character. It is unusual because it consisted of two faces, which again refers us to the principle of duality, to the philosophy of yin and yang. The image of H.H. depicted in the figure flowed into Leo's image: «*Mit der Zeit, so schien es, würde alle Substanz aus dem einen Bilde in das andre hinübereinigen und nur ein einziges übrigbleiben: Leo. Er mußte wachsen, ich mußte abnehmen*» [2, S. 122] // «*In time, one must think, the whole substance will pass from one image to another without a remnant, and only one image will remain: Leo. He must increase, I must be diminished*». The image of Leo's servant bears the idea of serving people. And since the image of H. H. in the figure goes into the image of Leo, it symbolizes the main character's awareness that the mission of the artist-creator is to serve people. The writer should awake a feeling of love, goodness, humanity, the best of their qualities, and also to encourage creation and spiritual quest, self-improvement in them. However, the artist-creator should not forget that life is a game in which the main thing is the ability to treat everything with humor and enjoy pleasant little things and every moment. The transition of the image of H.H. to the image of Leo also indicates the approach of the main character to the state of inner harmony and enlightenment, since Leo is an example of a harmonious personality.

We came to the conclusion that the motive of loneliness in the novel «Journey to the East» is connected with the problems of the creative personality. The protagonist, being an artist, writer, is in a constant search for his destiny and place in the world and all his life he is alone. He is trying to learn how to live with this disease.

In his youth, the hero felt a sense of belonging to the Brotherhood, which is interpreted in the novel as the eternal and timeless totality of the people of the art of the whole world. The members of the Brotherhood make a pilgrimage without technical means of transportation in the spirit of Taoism to the origins of their souls, in which God's light is enclosed. Moved by high spiritual goals to bring goodness and love into the world, they are looking for ways to fulfill their destiny as an artist-creator. Over time, the hero loses the divine trace in his soul and membership in the Brotherhood. H.H. considers his mastery as an artist-creator unproductive and useless, as he lives in times of decline in the culture and moral values of mankind. H.H. thinks himself to be lonely in his sufferings, but there are many creative people who are also experiencing the socio-political problems of the era. The hero goes through a stage of complete despair, thoughts of suicide come to his mind, but over time he sees in it the deliverance from loneliness. Thanks to Leo, the servant and the Supreme Brotherhood, H.H. realizes that true art lives forever, and in his hands to awake the highest spiritual values in people. This is the main life goal of the man of art. However, the artist-creator must be able to treat life with humor and enjoy it.

Leo in the novel acts as an image of a holistic, harmoniously developed personality that has reached enlightenment. The episode with a wolfhound Nekker snarling on the main character, where the image of the wolf serves as a symbol of the dark side (yin) of H. H., indicates the disharmony of the two principles of yin and yang of the protagonist, his inability to exist in two worlds (philistine and spiritual) at the same time.

The final scene of the novel «Journey to the East», where the figure of Leo is represented, gradually flowing into the silhouette of the protagonist, indicates the approach of H.H. to the achievement of harmony, inner freedom and true happiness.

#### REFERENCES

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