

## РОСІЙСЬКА МОВА ТА ЛІТЕРАТУРА

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### **LONELINESS AS A CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN «THE HERO OF OUR TIME» BY MICHAŁ LERMONTOW**

Despite great disagreements among critics as to the predominance of elements of romanticism or realism in Michail Lermontow's novel, the romanticism of the ideas and problems presented in the work cannot be denied. This romance manifests itself primarily in the figure of the main character, Pechorin. Wiktor Jakubowski emphasizes that Pechorin is almost the only Byronic hero worthy of special attention in Russian prose [5, p. 12]. The main character embodies all the features of Byronism, including: disappointment around the world, opposition to society, sadness, arrogance, skepticism and cynicism; Pechorin has an astonishing intellectual potential and emotional sensitivity, knows a lot about people, but despises them. As a byronic hero, Pechorin is mysterious and charismatic, he attracts the attention of women he does not share. Wiktor Jakubowski writes that Pechorin is characterized by virulent irony, boundless pessimism and a nihilistic worldview [5, p. 39]. However, the character's emotional estrangement from society in such a brazen way results in loneliness, which becomes one of the central problems of the novel «The Hero of Our Time».

One of the most important criteria of the romantic worldview is the concept of loneliness and its understanding. Juliusz Kleiner wrote about the romantic unit: «The individual is a force equivalent to the entire reality existing outside of it», «There is an extreme separation and exaltation of the individual, its overgrowth. The basic romantic attitude is solitude,

limiting oneself from what is beyond a given individual. The main conflict is the conflict of the individual with the world» [8, p. 186–187].

It is noteworthy that Michail Lermontov does not speak about loneliness directly: none of the characters complains of alienation, and the narrator also does not describe the characters as lonely. However, the feeling of loneliness is evident for the reader. Loneliness manifests itself in dialogues, results from the self-reflection of the main character and is reflected in the descriptions of nature.

It is worth considering the most important type of loneliness described in the work – romantic loneliness manifested in the main character. Pechorin says: «Perhaps tomorrow I will die!... and not a single being will remain on earth that will fully understand me» [1, p. 160]. With outstanding intellectual abilities and a tendency to insightful self-analysis, Pechorin notices his own individualism, which feels tragically. It could be described as passive loneliness explained by Maria Kalinkowska – an experience of strangeness, alienation [7, p. 27]. The character of Pechorin is so complicated that it is impossible to say immediately whether his loneliness is passive or even active (dictated by his own choice). Throughout the entire work, the reader has the impression that Pechorin is reluctant to establish closer relations with people, he says: «I mock everything in the world, especially feelings» [1, p. 123], «...I am incapable of friendship...» [1, p. 95], he seems to separate himself from others at his will.

Only in the moments of Pechorin's *quasi*-confession, the reader learns about the real reasons for the character's specific attitude towards society: «Yes, this was my fate from my childhood! Everyone read the signs of evil inclinations on my face that were not there, but they were supposed to be, and they were born in me. I was modest, I was accused of hypocrisy: I became secret....» [1, p. 128]. This society, due to his inability to understand, led the hero to alienation. These words are important as they allow us to see the true individuality of the romantic hero, which was noticed not only by himself, but also by his surroundings.

Unaccepted by people in his youth, Pechorin strengthens the opposition between himself and society. However, this is not the only factor that contributed to the protagonist's loneliness. Maria Kalinkowska compares Pechorin with René Chateaubriand because of the category of

boredom. Maria Janon and Maria Żmigrodzka write that the character of Chateaubriand symbolizes imprisonment in existence, which manifests itself in painful despair in the face of the past, which finds its fullest expression in the feeling of nothingness and boredom. Both protagonists get bored, and as a result they try to search for «their own self» [6, p. 16]. However, according to Maria Kalinkowska: «The attempt to reach out by a romantic person in solitude becomes an experience that intensifies loneliness, leading deeper towards alienation; the loneliness of the «I» deepening itself and «emptied of the world» becomes more and more marked by melancholy and boredom» [7, p. 30]. In being bored and looking for his own «self», the individual «turns to extreme experiences, to unpredictable passions, to risk, to dangers», hence Pechorin's games with the feelings of young Mary, checking fate by risk and cold blood in a plant with Wulicz, apparent no fear of death before a duel, interest in the secrets of the Taman family.

Its whole background serves to emphasize the importance of the category of boredom in the poem. The reader gets to know Pechorin during his travels, he learns almost no circumstances of his life before the Caucasus. The narrator informs the recipient that he has other parts of Pechorin's diary, but presents only those that were created during the journey. The journey to the Caucasus occurs not only as a characteristic of Pechorin, a Byronic hero, but also as one great attempt to reach out. It can therefore be emphasized that the whole life situation in which Pechorin found himself, his adventures, behavior and relations with other people are nothing more than a reaction to romantic loneliness, another confirmation of her presence in the form of the main character. The bold conclusion is that the protagonist is almost submissive to his loneliness, and it is she who determines the whole action.

Pechorin, at first glance, is a brave hero. He is not afraid of accusations from society, he condemns cowardice, he sees his own destiny for a higher goal – while the reader does not see this goal [3, p. 209]. You should look for it primarily in the name of the piece. Pechorin is the protagonist of «our times», ie the time when the work was published 15 years after the fall of the Decembrist uprising. Pechorin is a concentration of the moods of one's own time: the natural reaction of the intelligentsia to the collapse of the uprising under oppression by the authorities. That is why,

comparing Pechorin to Pushkin's Onegin, Bieliński writes that Onegin is bored and Pechorin suffers [2]. Pechorin's loneliness and boredom become not only the result of the fact that he was not accepted by society in his youth, but also of his inability to fulfill himself in the political situation of the time.

With the whole moral message of the work in the lonely opposition between the individual and society, the author takes up another almost imperceptible problem of ideological frustration. If Lermontov does not speak of loneliness as such directly, but it is immediately noticeable, the ideological problem becomes relevant only in a deeper analysis of the overall message of the work and Pechorin as the main character. Wiktor Jakubowski, expanding the thought of the Russian literary scholar Anatol Lunacharski, writes that Pechorin is the last, full, ideological and artistic reflection of the Decembrist moods in Russian belles-lettres [5, p. 21].

Therefore, it is difficult to relate Pechorin's loneliness to a specific type distinguished by Maria Kalinkowska, as the first type of loneliness is negative, and the second is almost a noble loneliness. This is Pechorin's paradox as a hero: he is not a positive hero, but nevertheless evokes empathy in the reader, and given the political interpretation, he can even be treated as a victim of his time. Grigorian writes that Lermontov introduced a new type of hero to the literary convention – this is a romantic dreamer with an active and analytical mind, whose dreams are not seductive, but sad [4, p. 245]. It can therefore be argued that Pechorin's complicated psychologism takes him beyond the accepted categories of the romantic hero and is characterized by a paradoxical romantic loneliness on the verge of passivity and boredom and the noble inability to act.

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