

Abstract

Loneliness represents an important existential aspect of being, which forms a necessary element of the internal dynamic structure of a human being. In direct encounter with this foundation of life, we experience anxiety, to which our psyche reacts with various defense strategies. If our efforts fail, its clinical manifestations begin. However, loneliness in the context of Existential hagiotherapy has not yet been further developed or explored. The master's thesis therefore tries to contribute to the opening of the discussion, offers a certain summarization of the sources that are crucial for hagiotherapy, and dares to propose some alternative perspectives.

The theoretical part is devoted to the first aim of this thesis: *Description of loneliness in the context of Existential hagiotherapy*. Loneliness is discussed first from the point of view of I. D. Yalom's Existential psychotherapy, then from the point of view of M. Buber and E. Lévinas. Then the thesis focuses on the pair loneliness and relationship. The relationship appears in two forms – a way out of loneliness (M. Buber and E. Lévinas) and a defense against loneliness (I. D. Yalom). This is followed by the direct point of view of hagiotherapy, where loneliness is concretized as a violation of interpersonal relationships, alienation from the essential Self, which is based on dialogue. Loneliness can be broken out of and the way out is through a relationship – with other people and with God. Lévinas is proposed as another point of view alongside Buber's concept.

The empirical part is moving from „abstract concepts to the lived experience of hagiotherapy participants." The aim is to answer the basic research question: „*How do the participants of Existential hagiotherapy experience loneliness?*“ It was answered using Interpretive phenomenological analysis, which offers the researcher more freedom in understanding the participant's experience. The research was carried out with participants of hagiotherapy in the form of a semi-structured interview. The questions were based on the theoretical part of the thesis. The aim is not to confirm or refute it, but to turn it to the experiences of participants.

From the interpreted statements, it can be said that the respondents perceive loneliness as a negative phenomenon and associate it with other existentials (meaninglessness, freedom and death). They distinguish loneliness from solitude, which can also be positive. Managing loneliness, which is not irrevocable but could be broken through by relationship – to people, to God, to literary works, to self-relationship, can be learned by gaining experience. The theme of loneliness also appears during hagiotherapy groups and is reflected in the mirror of biblical stories.