Abstract

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to conduct a comparative analysis of two novels representing transgressive fiction and literature of addiction. These two novels, *Junky* (1977) (first published as *Junkie* in 1953) by William Burroughs and *Trainspotting* (1993) by Irvine Welsh, deal with drug addicts and their transgressive behaviour. They describe the choices the main characters make when they try to break free from the confines of society and their search for identity. The protagonists of both texts try to escape from the rules and expectations society imposes on them, they cross the boundaries of law, morals, and ethics; they transgress.

The origins of the term "transgressive fiction" are explained and transgressive techniques and transgressive features in both texts are analysed. The transgressive potential of the subtitle of the first edition of *Junkie* is explained and moments of undermining middle-class identity and mocking American lifestyle are discussed. In *Trainspotting*, the transgressive elements involve, among others, the psychological effect of humour in grave and/or graphic transgressive situations and the manipulation of others using intellectual superiority. In both texts, channelling of transgression through violence plays an important part. Violence is seen as the only avenue for emotional response.

The different narrative styles of the texts are compared - Burroughs' flat and emotionless narration is in contrast with Welsh's multiple narrators who deliver a fuller picture of society and offer a wider range to play with different narrative tones and styles. The use of sensual descriptions is debated. The main sensual organ in *Junky* is eyes, Burroughs' descriptions follow the trajectory of eyes as if it were a camera lens. Welsh's descriptions are not only visual, but also tangible, aural as well as olfactory.

One chapter is dedicated to the search for identity. The historical background of the attitude of The United States towards homosexuality and the implications of McCarthyism,
particularly the so-called Lavender Scare, are explained as they play an important part in Lee's search for identity. In *Trainspotting*, the search for identity of the protagonists is influenced by consumer capitalism and competitive individualism brought about by Margaret Thatcher. Welsh connects these political measures with transgressive elements in the text.

A crucial transgressive feature is the use of language. Both texts use drug jargon which serves as a means of identification with a certain social group. *Trainspotting* is written mostly in Scots dialect. Language in *Trainspotting* serves as a means of shifting power and as a means of distinguishing various narrators. Welsh's gift for voices and dialogue makes the text very readable and authentic.

The last part of the thesis deals with the role of women in the texts. It elaborates on the fact that female figures are almost absent in *Junky*. Burroughs' deliberate exclusion of his marital life in *Junky* is discussed. Welsh's *Trainspotting* is also focused mainly on men and their damaged masculinity but women are present, too. In general, women in *Trainspotting* are stronger than men, they are liberated and confident, which is perhaps surprising in the traditionally male-dominated world of the working class.

The transgressive elements pervade the texts on all levels. The narrative techniques of the texts reflect the transgressive acts, the main protagonists are trying to escape and break free from the limitations imposed on them by society. The authors open taboo topics and portray uncomfortable situations. By creating an acute sense of discomfort for the readers they make them ask questions and raise awareness about unpopular or openly vilified topics.