Abstract

This thesis explores the themes of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) in comparison with Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* (1996) through the views of the intradiegetic unnamed first-person narrators of both novels. Although they are of a different race, socio-economical standing, and era, they have a similar mindset which, on the one hand, criticizes the US capitalism and the work-oriented, materialistic American Dream, and on the other one, reflects Emersonian combination of nihilism and anarchy. *Fight Club* follows the ideas voiced in *Invisible Man* and adjusts them to the contemporary globalized society. The thesis is divided into three main chapters, each focusing on one major topic pursued by the narrators. The first chapter deals with the idea of dispossession, both as a material and spiritual separation from the world, which is the core of the narrators' process of self-liberation from the norms of society. Only when they lose all possessions, social bonds, and almost erase their identities, they can find their true (Emersonian) selves and freedom. The self is more analysed in the following chapter focused on the theme of social invisibility. The narrators are taken at face value by society, i.e. people concentrate only on their outward social markers and disregard their individual selves. Thus, they lack their own identity and feel like no ones—they are invisible in the hive of identical individuals. This is strengthened by their everyman features, omission of their real names, and loss of their original identities, which are overshadowed by those they assume (or receive). The final chapter analyses the manipulation of the organizations which the narrators join. The narrators have no actual power over the organizations—they become mere symbols of their ideologies. When the narrators realize the manipulation, they try to stop them but are considered as traitors and figuratively castrated, which leads to their final dispossession in their quest of finding their true Emersonian self and freedom.