

## Abstract

The doctoral thesis entitled *Die Figur des Kranken in ausgewählten Prosatexten des Expressionismus* (*The figure of a sick person in selected short forms of expressionist prose*) is an analysis of a depiction of sick person in selected German short forms of expressionist period. The aim of the thesis is an attempt to answer the question what types of the ill are represented by the literary protagonists of expressionism. A background to it are medical sciences, psychoanalysis and the philosophy of the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which makes it easier to understand the behaviour of a sick person and psychological symptoms of diseases. The thesis also focuses on the research to what extent the analyzed prose texts have characteristics of the expressionistic means of expression and whether they harmonize with literary programmes of Carl Einstein, Alfred Döblin and Kasimir Edschmid. Referring to literature is of a huge importance as, on the one hand, the depictions of the sick document the phenomenon of mental diseases developing at the turn of the twentieth century. On the other hand, they document the phenomenon of disablement and physical suffering from war wounds and injuries. What is more, the texts reflect society's reaction to the excluded.

The thesis consists of an introduction, theoretical, medical and analytical parts, a summary, the literature on the subject as well as illustrations attached to each subchapter and being a comment on the contents of the analyzed expressionist novellas and stories. The illustrations depict on the one hand, war stories and, on the other, the artists' idea of the characters of the sick - their artistic expression makes reflection possible and complements text analyses.

The theoretical part presents historical and theoretical considerations in order to provide with the political, cultural and social aspects of expressionist period and genre characteristics of expressionist prose. This part also characterizes the generation of expressionist authors, emphasizing their background, education, belonging to literary circles and war experience.

The second part contains opinions of physicians: neurologists (Jean Martin Charcot, Paul Julius Möbius, Franz Tuzcek, George Miller Beard, Hermann Oppenheim) and psychiatrists (Emil Kraepelin, Otto Binswanger, Sigmund Freud), as well as sociologists (Emile Durkheim) and philosophers (Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault) from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries relating to mental diseases.

In the research part eleven German works of expressionist prose were analysed – including six novellas (*Kriegskrüppel* by Leonhard Frank, *Die Ermordung einer Butterblume* by Alfred Döblin, *Der Irre* and *Jonathan* by Georg Heym, *Der Selbstmord des Zöglings Müller* by Alfred Lichtenstein, *Die Schestern Stork* by Carl Sternheim), four short stories (*Der Arzt* by Ernst Weiß, *Zimbehl in den Wolken* by Oskar Loerke, *Der Neurastheniker* by Martin Beradt, *Yvette* by Carl Sternheim) and one fragment (*Stücke* by Fritz von Unruh).

The selection of the works was made on the basis of the following criteria: medical education, private experience of the WWI front, mental breakdowns and psychological crises, as well as the practice of disease treatment.

The thesis conclusion presents the results of the analysis of eleven texts and finds out that the figures of the sick can be divided into two groups. The first one includes the sick suffering from physical pain, the second - insane people: madmen, suicides, hysterical men and women. The analyses make it possible to characterize a sick person as an individual whose suffering and pain are a result of traumatic experience such as war, family and social relationships, solitude or social exclusion. The majority of them die, others fall ill completely and being not accepted by society create a group of the excluded and stigmatised. The analyses also prove that the authors used expressionistic means to describe a sick person.