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20TH CENTURY HISTORY OF LATVIA IN LITERARY NARRATIVES

Abstract:

The research focuses on contemporary Latvian fiction that reflects the history of the 20th century. Since 2015, the number of such works in Latvia has grown rapidly. To a great extent, it has been facilitated by the today's historical political situation, namely, the fact that the year 2018 is the centenary of the Republic of Latvia, which becomes an incentive to activate the attempts of restoration and understanding of the state's history. The analysis of fictional narratives is carried out by using the ideas of New Historicism and Literary anthropology, as well as the theories of collective memory.

Writing history in literary form not only constructs a shared space of memories, but also provides an opportunity to reflect, understand and create a national identity. By means of fictional narratives, the past becomes a factor in creating solidarity. Writers develop peculiar testimonies for a certain period of time – they focus on both the relatively recent past, which can be described by their own and their contemporaries' memories, as well as earlier events, which are described by using archival documents, oral testimonies, diaries and other materials. When representing the past, the narration strategies characteristic to fiction are combined with the reliance on historical documents, thus creating contemporary literary genres.

Keywords:

Latvian fiction, History, New Historicism, Literary anthropology, Collective memory, National identity