

Abstract:

The thesis deals with the image of Donbas as a unique topos in selected works of contemporary East Ukrainian writers. Throughout the last century, the symbolic value of the region, determined primarily by the peripheral character of the area and the dominant industrial nature of the landscape, has been shaped in Ukrainian culture. Nowadays, as a result of the social developments of the last decades, and especially due to the ongoing war, the forms of the symbolic geography of the region are substantially re-evaluated and updated.

The first part of the thesis outlines the historical development of the region and the dominant myths and metaphors of the Donbas associated with it – these function as a backdrop for the examination of the current literature. The core of the thesis is the analysis of selected literary works of authors coming from this region; these are mainly the works of writers Vladimir Rafeyenko, Serhiy Zhadan and poet Lyuba Yakymchuk. The specific nature of the literature of the borderlands and the representation of collective memory serve as the interpretive frameworks. Against their background, the thesis examines the depicted forms of otherness, the relationship between the periphery and the centre, the symbolic construction of space and sites of memory, and the staging of memory and forgetting. The interpretation then aims to analyse the ways in which the Donbas identity is constructed and what foundations of the forms of regional identity the literary works offer.

Key words:

Donbas, Ukrainian literature, borderlands, periphery, identity, collective memory