Abstract

The main goal of this thesis is to analyse the way in which British authors describe the First World War. The primary aim is to define how its description has changed in more than ninety years since it ended. For this purpose, the thesis will analyse two novels written by direct participants who took part in the trench fighting on the Western Front in the ranks of the British Army, and two novels by the authors writing on the brink of the twentieth and the twenty first centuries. Using secondary sources from the fields of literary criticism, historical and cultural studies, along with the analysis of the primary texts, this work reveals how and why the manner of depiction and perception of the first global conflict has changed. The main focus lies on the differences between the treatment of the traditional war-literature motives; heroism, sacrifice and the meaning of the war. This interdisciplinary analysis forms chapters two and three. The topic of the fourth chapter is partly the motivation of the authors to write about the conflict and, with relation to that, the way in which the war functions in them as in works of literature. The conclusion then assesses all the above mentioned differences not only between the two periods but also between the respective authors. The thesis proves that, apart from the differences caused by certain myths and preconceptions about the First World Wars becoming stronger in the last fifty years and the post-modern discourse, there are also differences between the novels from the same period. It is therefore obvious that the space which the authors used to express particular ideology is not determined by the period in which they wrote. The period influences not to what extent the ideology is present in the novels, but what ideology it actually is.