

DYNAMICS OF BALTIC GERMAN CULTURAL HEGEMONY IN AUGUSTS DEGLAVS' NOVEL "RIGA"

Inta Genese-Plaude

Daugavpils University, Vienības iela 13, Daugavpils LV-5401, Latvia

Liepāja University, Liela iela 13, Liepāja LV-3401, Latvia

Abstract

*In the history of Latvia, alongside with other nations, Baltic German people also left their imprints. Over the centuries, Baltic Germans influenced local socio-economic life and cultural processes, cultural practices and values until the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Baltic Germans are an ethnic group of people that was formed from peoples who immigrated to Livonia and Latvians who became Germans, thus creating a peculiar phenomenon of local history with its own mentality and culture. The imprints they left are reflected in Latvian literature, which is an essential resource to find out more about the social and national history. One of such texts is the novel *Rīga* ('Riga') by the novelist Augusts Deglavs (1862–1922). It depicts the events of the second half of the 19th century, when Latvians, forced by economic needs, began to flow from the countryside to Riga, hoping for a better life. The overall picture of the novel is made up of Riga's multicultural society, general socio-economic and urban processes, Latvians' struggle for the Latvian language, equal to the German language, practice and strengthening the Latvian culture, therefore the novel can be called a chronicle of cultural history and cultural confrontation of the second half of the 19th century. One of the central lines in the novel is the development and formation of the Latvian nation in the conditions of double colonialism (Baltic German and Russian Imperial Rule). In the article the manifestations of the Baltic German hegemony and the relations related to Latvians, depicted in the novel, have been analysed. The research uses a context-oriented approach, applying interdisciplinary findings from sciences related to the humanities. The theoretical findings of New Historicism support the connection of literary work with the correlations of history and cultural social life.*

Keywords: *Baltic German, Latvians, cultural hegemony, language, economics, novel*

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of Latvia and Latvians has not been made only by Latvians. Representatives of lots of nations have come and lived here, and the Baltic Germans and their culture are an integral part of our history. Its origins in the territory of Latvia can be dated back to the end of the 12th century, when German merchants, crusaders and together with them also pastors entered the territories inhabited by the Balts with the slogan of Christianizing the local peoples.

The immigration of Germans to the Baltics from Germany continued until the second half of the 19th century, but the majority of Baltic German families settled in the Baltics in the 17th -19th centuries (Cerūzis 2002, 55). On the one hand, Baltic Germans (especially Lutheran pastors – literates) have the greatest merit in initiation and implementation of various projects promoting the development of Latvians. For instance, the organization of societies that were engaged in the formation of the very essential cultural foundation – book publishing, modern Latvian fiction, professional technical literature, education of Latvians, and 'with the principle of voluntariness an alternative to social reforms 'from above' was created, at the same time laying the foundations for strengthening the principles of a democratic society, for the development of the values of the modern civil society' (Daija 2021/2022). However, one has to admit that these initiatives have certain connections with the other side of the face of the era – the hegemony of German culture. The presence of this ethnos (also for Latvia being part of the Russian Empire since the 18th century) significantly influenced all important local processes up to the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century – a period in which Latvians

became a cultural nation, but then political nationalism was born and an independent state of Latvia was established.

In historical and cultural research, the word 'Baltic Germans' refers to an ethnic population group that was formed from the Germans, French, Swedes, Austrians, English and other peoples who immigrated to Livonia, and Latvians who became Germans (Fēgezaks 2011, 8, 393). Jānis Stradiņš (1933–2019), a representative of today's Latvian intellectual elite, historian of science, academician (Vilks 2022), also emphasizes that Baltic Germans should be viewed 'not so much as a branch torn off from the German people, but as a peculiar phenomenon of local history with its own psychic structure and culture that was formed on local soil and has absorbed in itself the elements of Swedish, Russian, Polish culture, has assimilated a large number of native inhabitants – Latvians, Livonians, Estonians' (Stradiņš 1990). This specific ethnic portrait is complemented by the aspect of social stratification – they were representatives of various occupations and professions – nobles, merchants, pastors, teachers, doctors, pharmacists, civil servants, craftsmen, etc., who formed a certain cultural environment in the Baltics that Latvians observed and in which lots of them tried to integrate. The proportion of Baltic Germans was small, around 5 – 10% of the total population of the Baltic provinces. Nevertheless, they were able to preserve the administrative peculiarities of the region, a peculiar autonomy and a leading position in it, and until the 30s of the 20th century they formed the political, economic and intellectual elite (Stradiņš 1990). Thanks to this community, the Baltic Germans has served as a bridge between the West and East of Europe, and German and Russian cultures, and has influenced the development of the administration, culture, science, and technology of the Russian Empire (Topij 2011). Researchers of history acknowledge that the Baltic German factor, as part of the historical phenomenon of the German factor, continues to influence the Latvia's development process even today, both in the form of historical memories and cultural historical heritage, and in modern economic and political relations with Germany (Cerūzis 2002, 1-3).

Over the ages, the pages written by the Baltic Germans in the story of history of Latvia have also flowed into literature, creating an important resource for our social and national history acquisition. One of such cultural-historical messages is the unfinished novel *Rīga (Riga)* written with an epic calibre (Part 1 1912, Part 2 1921) by the author of novels and short stories, journalist, and public worker Augusts Deglavs (1862–1922). It reflects the multicultural society of Riga in the second half of the 19th century, as well as general social economic and urban processes, and cultural events and practices, therefore the novel can also be called a chronicle of the interaction, confrontation, and emancipation of cultures of the second half of the 19th century. This novel is sometimes referred to in historical research as an example in which a confirmation of a phenomenon of 19th century Latvian history to be studied can be found.

One of the central lines in Augusts Deglavs' work is the emancipation of the Latvian nation in the conditions of double colonialism (Russian Imperial and Baltic German Rule). The objective of the article is to analyse the manifestations of Baltic German hegemony depicted in the novel in the context of this line.

2. SOURCE AND THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Augusts Deglavs' novel *Rīga (Riga)* has been included on the list of the so-called main texts in Latvian literary culture, thereby emphasizing the national importance of this text next to the epic *Lāčplēsis (Bearslayer)*, 1888) by Andrejs Pumpurs (1841–1902), the novel *Mērnīeku laiki (The Times of the Land Surveyors)*, 1879) by the Kaudzītes brothers (Reinis Kaudzīte 1839–1920, Matīss Kaudzīte 1848–1926). (Cimdiņa, 2013, 9) The work depicts the time period from the 60s to the 90s of the 19th century, when Latvians from the countryside went to Riga in search of a better life. The novel includes a rich layer of cultural and historical facts and reflections, and various illuminated individual and social contradictions. According to historical data, by the end of the century, there were more than 40% of Latvians in Riga, and the modern Latvian urbanism was formed from them. As a result of industrial and economic development, Riga turned into a multicultural 'meeting place of peoples', where a 'fascinating national, cultural and religious diversity' was created (Volfarte 2004, 28). The need to depict the multi-layered and dynamic scene of the era forced the author to create a peculiar, unique form of message in the

context of the history of Latvian literature, saturating the text with cultural and historical information materials in the form of data and descriptions – historical facts and people, language characteristic of social groups, descriptions of events, journalism, contemporary media and cultural news, sociological facts that appear in the portrayal of the cultural environment, events and situations, dialogues, retardations and other elements of the text poetics.

The Baltic German society was the dominant culture in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire, so also in Riga, when the arrival of Latvians increased more and more there. In the novel, the author introduces representatives of the German community from various fields, among whom historical figures are also portrayed and revealed in episodes representing significant socio-political and ideological trends of the era - they are manufacturers, representatives of the city authorities, trade masters, small businessmen, as well as Latvians who had become Germans. In several episodes of the novel, culturally and historically colourful scenes have been depicted in an aesthetic characteristic of realism, which allows us to judge the era of the Baltic German hegemony in Latvian history.

The concept of hegemony defined in Marxist philosophy is used in social sciences to mark the dominant or ruling role of the state and the people, and the social layer. It was developed by the Italian Marxist theoretician, philosopher and social worker Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). In modern Cultural Studies, the concept of hegemony is also under the attention of researchers, it has been reviewed by, for example, Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Roger Simon, etc. The essence of the concept lies in the thesis that one culture, thanks to its status, ensures dominance by ideological or cultural means, most often applying institutional support and creating an impression of the correctness of the ruling culture's activities and formed attitudes. Thus, consensual relations with the subordinated social groups are ensured, but at the same time the cultural practices and segments of these groups are influenced - values, norms, worldview, ideas, behaviour. Cultural theorist and literary critic Raymond Williams argues that 'hegemony is the relations of domination and subordination, in their forms, as practical consciousness, as in effect a saturation of the whole process of living – not only of political and economic activity, nor only of manifest social activity, but of the whole substance of lived identities and relationships, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense. Hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology', nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as 'manipulation' or 'indoctrination'. It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living; our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values – constitutive and constituting – which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming' (Williams 1977, 110).

The research has been conducted applying the context – oriented approach, which enables interdisciplinary work, applying findings from sciences related to the humanities. The theoretical basis has been found in the theoretical findings of the new historicism, which helps to connect the literary work to the correlations of history and social life and to reveal, in the words of the New Historicism theoretician Stephen Greenblatt, the resonance created by it – 'social energy' through the ages (Greenblatt, 1988, 6). 'An important realization of the New Historicism is that literature and history are inseparable. History is not a coherent body of objective knowledge simply be applied to a literary text in order to discover what the text does or does not reflect. Literature is a vehicle for the representation of history, and it does contain insights into the formation of historical moments. It reveals the processes and tensions by which historical change comes about. But it does not behave passively towards history; it does not, in other words, reflect history as a mirror. Literature shapes and constitutes historical change. Literary texts can have effects on the course of history, on the social and political ideas and beliefs of their time. For new historicism the object of study is not the text and its context, not literature and its history, but rather literature in history. This is to see literature as a constitutive and inseparable part of history in the making, and therefore rife with the creative forces, disruptions and contradictions, of history' (Brannigan, 2001, 169).

3. CONTEXT OF THE NOVEL

Looking from the time of the novel was written, readers are offered a panoramic representation of the events of a relatively recent history – the 60s – 90s of the 19th century. How important were the representations of depicted events for a Latvian? What waves of social and ideological “energy” did it bring to the Latvian society and what factors of the time of writing influenced the creation of this text? The answers to these questions form the surroundings of the text and help us understand its meaning in the discourse of national culture and ideology.

The end of the 19th century, the beginning of the 20th century is the time of the formation of new social, cultural and aesthetic models. In literature, there is a rapid convergence with the trends of European literature, interweaving both local and acquainted foreign literary traditions. At the beginning of the 20th century, Augusts Deglavs translates several European authors’ work, such as novels by Alexandre Dumas, Walter Scott, Henryk Sienkiewicz and other authors, which matures his aesthetic experience in writing novels (3 novels were already published in the 1890s), understanding that novels can create social history. At the beginning of the 20th century, in a colonial situation, the Latvians had already become a nation with all the segments necessary for its existence in a historically short but intense revival (the characteristics of the nation have been described by the modern researcher of nationalism Anthony D. Smith in the work *National Identity* (Smith, 1991, 14)). The rapid economic and cultural emancipation of Latvians is proved by an article *Vāciešiem (For the Germans)* published in 1907 in the Riga German newspaper *Rigasche Rundschau*. In it, the well-known Baltic German politician and editor of this newspaper, Paul Schiemann, discusses the new situation after the events of the 1905 Revolution and points out that in the future the position of each national group in society will depend only on its achievements and encourages strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit among German youth. And then follows the almost unbelievable – the politician encourages the Germans to learn from the Latvians of Riga, because when they establish small companies, ‘which have the future to a certain extent, they become the owners of restaurants, hotels, saunas, and trucking companies, they own small shops, they build houses on the cheap plots of land in the suburbs’. It is not forgotten to point out that everything started with a small capital. However, the illusory spirit of self-sufficiency prevails in the German society of Riga: ‘But what we lack is the spirit of entrepreneurship...’ (Volfarte, 2004, 31). Latvian historian Raimonds Cerūzis points out: ‘The long-term status of the privileged class of the Germans had created special conceptions of moral and ethical nature in the society, which continued to exist even in the 20th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, these views did not cease to manifest themselves both in the Latvians’ attitude towards Germans and in the Germans’ attitude towards Latvians. Generally speaking, these views were not always friendly, often permeated either with hidden hatred and contempt, or with misunderstanding, anxious suspicion and fear. Stereotypes rooted in the society were very much alive. Even though as the centuries passed and the powers in the Baltics changed, changes also occurred in German rights and the scope of privileges, the concept of Germans as a traditional and legitimate privileged class in the Baltic German society did not change until 1918’ (Cerūzis, 2002, 46). Based on the conclusion of the exiled Latvian historian Andrejs Plakans (1940) that ‘characteristics of Baltic intellectual life, once established in the 1850s, continued to be a part of nationality relationships during the next four decades’ (Plakans, 1981), it can be said that the novel *Rīga* (‘*Riga*’) at the beginning of the 20th century, continuing the line of ideas of national literature born in the middle of the 19th century, is part of national relations. It fits into the anti-colonial discourse, recalling and recording in the register of Latvian history the narrative of the recent past, when the Latvians, under the influence of the colonial power (which still existed at the beginning of the 20th century) and the Baltic German hegemony, were in a marginal zone that was difficult to cross.

4. MANIFESTATIONS OF HEGEMONY IN THE NOVEL

In the depiction of the cultural confrontation between Germans and Latvians the supporting foundation of the Germany hegemony has been illuminated – it is the self-reference of the colonizers cultivated over the centuries, the efforts to keep themselves aloof from the different and foreign. Among Germans, there is a perception of the created ‘Baltic special identity and cultural-historical heritage’ (Cerūzis, 2022). German self-identification intersects with local patriotism. The generations born here consider

themselves to be 'real Baltic men and Baltic women' and the territory they live in is 'our Baltic', 'German Baltic' (Deglavs 1983, 604). In the novel, the author has described German efforts to implement the project of Baltic autonomy, which would provide opportunities to put into practice control and ruling cultural rights.

The presence of the long-lasting colonial hegemony comes into sight already in the opening pages of the novel with the confrontation of the two cultures and the representations of German administrative and linguistic power. The protagonist of the novel, teenager Pēteris Krauklītis, upon entering the city, hears a Latvian say: 'Great men must arise from our midst who can defend us, the poor people, against those cursed lords and Germans', only then, when we, the Latvian people, defend ourselves, we will get to justice' (Deglavs, 1983, 55). The Latvian does not go further than the suburbs for a long time in the direct sense – the outskirts is their place of abode, and in the indirect sense - the dominant language and culture is German. The Germans' attitude towards Latvian speakers is indifferent, contemptuous and suspicious. Latvians had inherited from generation to generation the belief that Germanism is irresistibly present in all cultural structures and therefore the knowledge of the German language and acquisition of German cultural norms is self-evident. The protagonist Pēteris Krauklītis is determined to realize his goals, because 'the one who knows how to write and calculate and speaks a little German, is able to get ahead for sure' (Deglavs, 1983, 11). Respect for the power of the German language, knowledge and practice of the public cultural norms and etiquette was the way to the affiliation to the privileged class, education and cultural level. The Latvian who became German Georgs Rabemanis, Krauklītis' godfather, gives the first piece of advice: 'You should learn in German, so that no one can say that you are an uneducated and ill-mannered man and, moreover, a Latvian' (Deglavs, 1983, 80). Several details portrayed by Deglavs reveal the penetration of hegemonic relations into Latvians' private lives and kinship ties. Rabemanis has become a German, so he has changed his identity, he publicly avoids recognising and communicating with a relative who has come from the countryside, but looks for secluded places to meet and urges him not to approach his son until the 'German school' has been acquired, but anyway 'once you will be his brother' (Deglavs, 1983, 79) and 'don't even dare let others know who you are to me!' (Deglavs, 1983, 120) The hegemony of the language is evidenced by the detail included in the dialogue, in which Ivans Himillers, secretary of the Baltic Regulatory Commission, looking for Latvians to help establish an aid society for Estonians, realizes that no one in his circle knows where to find Latvians, and is surprised: 'We live in one and the same city and don't know each other... These are the circumstances!' The explanation of the circumstances said by the German colleague is clear: 'They hardly ever use their language, those Latvians... They speak German just like us' (Deglavs, 1983, 292). (However, it also shows the mobility of Latvians and their ability to adapt, acquiring the skills necessary for the urban life.) Latvians themselves are also aware of the marginal situation – 'where else can Latvians be found as on the outskirts of the city (...)they are no longer there in the centre' (Deglavs, 1982, 284), and that 'they are still far behind the mountains, but they didn't want to stay there behind the mountains' (Deglavs, 1983, 325). This circumstance becomes the main driving force that accumulates both the socialization of Latvians and the promotion of national self-awareness, which already appears in the broader collective thought in the foundation motives of the Latvian society¹. The 'German Riga' is a representative of the power of German cultural hegemony in the novel, which manifests itself in the centuries strengthened, other nationalities discriminating urban administration, socio-economic and cultural power implementing mechanisms, beliefs and attitudes. The formation of the "Latvian Riga" causes tension, exposes contradictions, splits a gap in the body of hegemony. The solution to the events of Augusts Deglavs' novel demonstrates that as the Latvian national awakening movement becomes stronger, the Latvian language becomes the basis on which the dispute between colonists and colonizers is developed and the emphases and dynamics of the hegemonic attitude change.

The hermeticism of German citizenship, the power rooted in centuries, the hegemony-supporting conservatism of a feudal nature and the efforts to preserve the purity of their society are revealed in the communication of the Riga administration with the citizens. The author depicts the situation in the city centre, on Sunday, when lots of people go to churches, 'but even more to Town Hall Square. Today,

¹ Riga Latvian Society was founded in 1869. <https://www.rlb.lv/rlb-vesture>

from the balcony of the town hall, the Riga rights and laws, are read, and it is also announced what new members the high town council has re-elected” (Deglavs 1983, 154). In the form of retardation, several pages list the rules of the city order, the task of which was to regulate and control the citizens at the domestic and private level, socially and ethnically, so that the borders of ethnic groups are not violated. The task of the episode is to expand the global boundaries of the novel and to mark broader interconnections, that is why it is separated from the text of the novel with highlighted titles – ‘Arbitrary laws and rights of the city’, ‘On safety on the streets’, ‘On cleanliness on the streets’, ‘On buying and selling’, and also ‘On un-Germans, those house servants and maids’ (Deglavs 1983, 158). In the clauses of these last regulations, prohibitions are formulated in a medieval spirit for ‘un-Germans’² – to trade, brew and sell beer, while Germans are forbidden to ‘associate with an un-German. Nor hold any gatherings or meetings with them’ (Deglavs, 1983, 166).

The concerns and suspicions expressed by the Lutheran Pastor Pelhauss about the activities of the Young Latvians movement are characteristic of the conservative, closed Baltic German society. He gives a speech filled with despair and anger to the power elite of Riga at the ball of the city power elite organized by the Latvian Rabemanis, who has just become a German; what is said shows the depressive inability of Germans to come to terms with the expansion of peasant rights and cultural activities caused by the abolition of serfdom in the Baltics. The danger of hegemonic instincts makes it regrettable that the tactic applied by the Germans to discourage the natives from being German due to the ethnic purity of their ranks has suffered a fiasco, the spiritual and secular literature created by the Germans, the published media have lost their influence, but they ‘instilled in the people modesty, obedience to their masters and great love for the motherland. Until now, this nation of ploughmen and servants has completely trusted us, relied on our leadership...’ (Deglavs, 1983, 133). A catastrophic scene is outlined, in which ‘new agitators are revolting against us, who want to deprive us of the public trust, to lead it along other, but little tested, even harmful paths. In Riga, for instance, the newspaper *Mājas Viesis* (*Home Guest*) is published, which even provided its readers with a translated German poem ‘Die Lorelei’ in such a foreign, unusual language, discarding the completely old construction and orthography... This is how we got the ‘New Latvians’ (Deglavs, 1983, 133).

In the modern era of socio-economic conditions and ideas, the manipulative nature of hegemony and the moral attitude towards the subordinates do not change, but tend to acquire seemingly more open and liberal features. In the second half of the 19th century, the modern, industrial environment and society with new structures took shape in the Baltics, the type of product production and technologies changed, and capitalism strengthened its position. Augusts Deglavs in the episode of the Rabemanis’ ball asks a historical character - the owner of the manufactory Ādolfs Tilo to demonstrate a turning point in economic thinking, in which the ideas of the 19th century Young Latvian economic authorities, the 18th century English economist Adam Smith (1723–1790) can be recognized. Tilo presents a whole complex of techniques that ensure the interests of capital increase, the factory workers’ loyalty, which in his view is the guarantee of stability and capital increase. What Tilo said is consistent with Smith’s idea of capital accumulation, which allows you to become more efficient and innovative, because ‘if you put something in one place, you will also take something from it... I have the cow enclosure.... Those “most beautiful cows” are not German cows, but well-fed cows. [...] We, the educated and well-off ones, are not like that because we are German, but because we have capital’ (Deglavs 1983, 131). The ethnic emphasis of hegemony moves to the emphasis of the general power of capital but leaving the consciousness ‘we – the educated and well-off ones’ and that it is German capital (Deglavs, 1983, 131). In the further development of the speech, Tilo comes to the realization that it is worth investing in the workforce, the workers should work with the belief that the good working conditions are introduced because of human love, because it pays off, the interest on capital increases and both parties benefit. Adam Smith was familiar with the idea of compassion and emotional support, he was occupied not only with the market, but also with moral issues. According to Smith’s opinion, social sympathy is based on the persuasion principle which is so dominant in human nature. ‘Wealth is what you create, not what you own; create what others need, and you will be able to buy all the gold and silver you want’ (Gopniks 2022). However, the hegemonists’ morals and attitudes remain unchanged: ‘We must welcome the

² Latvians and Estonians were denoted with the term “un-German”. (Daija, 2013, 27)

educated and wealthy un-Germans as equal Germans, because they strengthen our ranks. But we have to help the big crowd to develop their own national culture. What is the loss for us through this, if they have their own societies, they read their books and sing their songs? Long live the economic development of our city!' (Deglavs 1983, 132) Novel demonstrates that, in the formation socio-economic relations of capitalism, hegemonic power chooses a new hybrid tactic in the name of its dominance maintenance and wealth increase, projecting and developing the needs of capital provision within it. However, the enthusiasm and patriotism of the Baltic Germans is focused on securing economic interests and historical privileges, not on the disruption of the hermetic circle of power. The main emphases of the struggle are summarized in the Baltic German representative Otto Bimmelstein's rhetoric: 'We will never support a Latvian, we will not allow them to gain any economic strength, we will outlive every Latvian who appears. Then we will also exploit them in the future, we will use them as a means for a higher idea of civilization' (Deglavs 1983, 605).

As the use of the Latvian language and revival activities gain a wider scope, tension arises in the Baltic-German elite, because they cannot tolerate that 'foreigners' are creating trouble, undermining the usual order, 'our old traditions, the system of our land, our peculiarities and our established advantages. All this has fallen victim to that plebeian movement that levels everything, makes one similar to another, pulls down the highest and the most respectable' (Deglavs 1983, 605).

The deterioration of the external manifestations of hegemony and the rapprochement with the Latvians came into sight along with the policy of Russification. The German government advised Russia to disregard German interests in the Baltics, and in 1879 the Russian ambassador was even advised not to use the term 'Baltic German provinces' anymore, but to call these lands 'Latvian provinces' or differently if you do not want to assign the character of Russian provinces (Dribins 2000, 49). In the novel, it is revealed that the pastors reluctantly begin to call Latvians a nation, and newspapers occasionally remind in appropriate articles that a Latvian is the same person as a German.

Latvians are an important factor in the 'crumbling' of the German hegemony. Latvians fill the historically established 'empty space' between the two cultures themselves. They appreciate the German cultural codes and traditions as beneficial to themselves, by re-creating they create new products of their own culture and thus change the cultural hierarchy. Latvians learn the German language to perfection, but remain Latvians, adopt everyday lifestyle and behavioural manners, apply forms and models of social organization (establishing associations, organizing Song Festival). The established boundaries of hegemonic power are being rearranged and overcome, and its normative views on development and progress are being challenged.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Representatives of many nations have entered and lived in the cultural space of Latvia, but the culture of the Baltic Germans has left the deepest traces. The pages written by them in the history of Latvia have flowed into the literature, creating an important resource for our social and national history acquisition. One of such cultural and historical messages is the novel *Rīga* ('*Riga*') by the author of novels and short stories, journalist and public worker Augusts Deglavs. It reflects the multicultural society of Riga in the second half of the 19th century, economic and urban processes, cultural events and historical personalities, which is why the novel is also called a cultural-historical chronicle. The novel has a unique form of message, the text is saturated with materials of the era in the form of data and descriptions - historical facts and people, languages characteristic of social groups, descriptions of events, journalism, contemporary media and cultural news, sociological facts.

In several episodes, the author reveals culturally and historically colourful scenes in an aesthetic characteristic of realism, which allows us to judge the era of the Baltic German hegemony in Latvian history. In the depiction of the cultural confrontation between Germans and Latvians the supporting foundation of the German hegemony has been illuminated – the German self-reference, the identity created in the ideology of the colonizers over the centuries, the efforts to keep themselves aloof from the different and foreign with institutional rules, mistrust and hatred towards Latvian national cultural

activities. Over the centuries, the German community has constructed for itself a concept of the Baltic's special identity and contribution to the cultural and historical heritage.

The concept of hegemony means that one culture, thanks to its status, ensures dominance by ideological or cultural means, most often applying the institutional support and creating an impression of the correctness of the actions and attitudes of the ruling culture. Thus, consensual relations with the subordinated social groups are ensured, but at the same time the cultural practices and segments of these groups – values, ideas, behavioural models – are affected.

Under the conditions of the formation of capitalism, the manipulative nature of the German hegemony and the moral attitude towards the Latvians do not change but tend to acquire seemingly more open and liberal features. Augusts Deglavs' novel, incorporating the ideas of the British economist Adam Smith, demonstrates that during the formation of the socio-economic relations of capitalism, hegemonic circles choose a new hybrid tactic in the name of its dominance maintenance and wealth increase, projecting and developing the needs of capital provision within it. However, the enthusiasm and patriotism of the Baltic Germans is focused on securing economic interests and historical privileges, not on the disruption of the hermetic circle of power.

The deterioration of the external manifestations of hegemony and the rapprochement came into sight along with the policy of Russification. Representatives of German community reluctantly begin to call Latvians a nation, and newspapers occasionally remind in appropriate articles that a Latvian is the same person as a German.

The weakening of hegemony was also facilitated by the fact that Latvians create and develop their cultural products and models following the example of German culture, and thus change the hierarchy of cultures and rearrange the existing borders.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Research paper supported by the ESF Project No. 8.2.2.0/20/I/003 'Strengthening of Professional Competence of Daugavpils University Academic Personnel of Strategic Specialization Branches 3rd Call'.

REFERENCES

1. Brannigan, J 2001, History, power and politics in the literary artifact: new historicism, in J. Wollfreys (ed.), *Introducing Literary Theories. A Guide and Glossary*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 169-184.
2. Buks, A 2019, *Vācbaltiešu gredzens*, viewed 18 April, 2022, www.satori.lv
3. Cerūzis, R 2002, *Vācu faktors Latvijā (1918.- 1939.): politiskie un starpnacionālie aspekti*. Promocijas darbs. Rīga, Latvijas Universitātes Vēstures un filozofijas fakultāte, viewed 26 March 2022, [https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/V%C4%81cu-faktors-Latvij%C4%81-\(1918.-1939.\)%3A-politiskie-un-Cer%C5%ABzis-fakult%C4%81te/e3cc56d56065a3c690aa0fee94d189cd0f324e71](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/V%C4%81cu-faktors-Latvij%C4%81-(1918.-1939.)%3A-politiskie-un-Cer%C5%ABzis-fakult%C4%81te/e3cc56d56065a3c690aa0fee94d189cd0f324e71)
4. Cerūzis, R 2022, Karls Širrens, viewed 30 March 2022, <https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/131234>
5. Cimdiņa, A 2013, *Rīgas teksts. Augusta Deglava romānam "Rīga" 100*, Rīga, Zinātne.
6. Čakare, V 1999, Multikulturālisms romānā "Rīga", I.Kalniņa (sast.) *Rīgas kultūrvidē 19.gadsimtā. Augusta Deglava romāns "Rīga"*, Rīga, Pētergailis.
7. Daija, P 2013, *Tautas apgaismības idejas latviešu laicīgajā literatūrā 18.gadsimta otrajā pusē un 19.gadsimta sākumā*, Promocijas darbs, Rīga, Latvijas Universitātes humanitāro zinātņu fakultāte, viewed 30 March 2022, <https://luis.lu.lv/pls/pub/luj.fprnt?l=1&fn=F1091197835/Pauls%20Daija%202013.pdf>

8. Daija, P 2021/2022, Biedrību kultūra un latviešu grāmatniecība Kurzemē un Vidzemē 19.gadsimta sākumā, *Akadēmiskā dzīve. Academic Life*. 57.rakstu krājums 2021/2022, p.118-127, viewed https://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/www.lu.lv/Zurnali/Akademiska_Dzive/Akademiska_dzive_2021_gala.pdf
9. Deglavs, A 1983, *Rīga, Rīga, Zvaigzne*.
10. Dribins, L 2000, 19.gadsimta pārmaiņu laiks. Cīņa pret rusifikāciju. L.Dribins, O.Spārītis (sast.) *Vācieši Latvijā*, Rīga, Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un Socioloģijas institūts, Etnisko pētījumu centrs.
11. Fēgezaks, Z fon 2011, *Senči un pēcteči*, Rīga, Vesta-LK.
12. Gopniks, Ā 2013, Tirgus vīrs, *Rīgas Laiks*, 7, viewed 15 April 2022, <https://www.rigaslaiks.lv/zurnals/tirgus-virs-361>
13. Greenblatt, S 1988, *Shakespearean Negotiations. The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*, Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press.
14. Plakans, A 1981, 'Latvian belletristic writing as a source for social history, 1850–1900', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol.12, pp.109-119, viewed 30 January 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778100000111>
15. Smith, A 1991, *National identity*, London, Penguin Books.
16. Stradiņš, J 1990, 'Vācbaltieši Latvijas kultūras kopībā', *Literatūra un Māksla*, 13 January, p.1.
17. Topij, A 2011, The role of the Deutschbalten in the cultural and economic development of Russia's Baltic provinces in the 19th century, in *Zapiski historyczne*, tom LXXVI, zeszyt 4, pp.63-94, viewed 15 January 2022, <https://zapiskihistoryczne.pl/pl/zeszyty/8>
18. Vilks, A 2022, *Jānis Stradiņš*, viewed 12 January 2022, <https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/24953>
19. Volfarte, K 2004, Latviešu Rīga, K.Volfarte, E. Oberlenders (sast.), *Katram bija sava Rīga*, Rīga, AGB.
20. Williams, R 1977, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.