

The Theme of the War of the “Lost Generation” in Western Literature

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Abstract

The article examines the theme of the war of the “lost generation” in Western literature and in particular Ernest Hemingway as his representative. Of course, the term “lost generation” itself is approximate, because the writers who are usually included in this group differ in their political, social, and aesthetic views, in the peculiarities of their artistic practice. Each of these writers is not like the other, and yet to some extent, the term “lost generation” can be applied to them all: the awareness of the tragedy of American life has had a particularly strong and painful effect on the work of these young people who have lost faith in the old bourgeois foundations

Keywords: cynicism, Lost Generation, fulcrum, local wars, chauvinistic propaganda.

INTRODUCTION

“Lost Generation” is a definition applied to a group of foreign writers who appeared in the 20s of the twentieth century with a series of books expressing disillusionment with capitalist civilization, exacerbated by the tragic experience of the First World War. The expression “lost generation” was first used by the American writer Gertrude Stein in a conversation with E. Hemingway. Then the “lost generation” began to be called people who went through the First World War, spiritually traumatized, disbelieved in the patriotic ideals that once fascinated them, sometimes internally devastated, acutely aware of their restlessness and alienation from society. The “lost generation” is therefore so named because, having passed through the circles of an unnecessary, senseless war, it lost faith in the natural necessity of continuing its kind, lost faith in its life and the future. [8]

The democratically minded intellectuals of America, France, England, Germany, Russia and other countries involved in the war were internally convinced that the war was wrong, unnecessary, not their own. It was felt by many, that's why this spiritual closeness between people who stood on different sides of the barricades during the war.

People who went through the meat grinder of the war, those who managed to survive it, returned home, leaving on the battlefields not only someone's arm, someone's leg - physical health, but also something more. Ideals, faith in life, in the future were lost. What seemed solid and unshakable - culture, humanism, reason, individual freedom of the individual - collapsed like a house of cards, turned into emptiness.

The chain of times was broken and one of the most significant and profound changes in the moral and psychological atmosphere was the appearance of the "lost generation" - a generation that lost faith in those lofty concepts and feelings in respect for which it was brought up, rejected devalued values. For this generation, "all the gods died, all the battles" were left behind, all "faith in man was undermined".[10]

Hemingway took the words "You are all a lost generation!" as an epigraph to his novel "Fiesta (The Sun Also Rises)", and the formula went for a walk around the world, gradually losing its real content and becoming a universal designation of the time and people of this time. But there was a sharp gap between people who had experienced the same life experience. Outwardly, everyone looked the same: demonstrative cynicism, faces twisted in an ironic smile, disappointed, tired intonations. But what for some was a true tragedy, for others became a mask, a game, a common style of behavior.

They were traumatized, really worried about the loss of ideals, which they believed in first of all, as a personal, relentless pain, experienced unsettled, discord of the modern world. But they were not going to cherish this state of mind carefully; they wanted to work, and not idly talk about losses and unrealized plans.

The general meaning of the creative efforts of the representatives of the "lost generation" - writers can be defined as the desire to bring a person out from under the power of ethical dogma, which requires total conformity and practically destroys the value of the human personality. To do this, it was necessary to find, develop, and create a new moral principle, a new ethical norm and even a new philosophy of being. They were united by a fierce aversion to the war itself and to those foundations and principles (social, economic, political, ideological, moral), which in their development inevitably led to a universal tragedy. They just hated them and swept them off the doorstep. In the minds of the writers of the "lost generation", the idea matured of the need to isolate oneself from these principles, to bring a person out of the herd state so that he could realize himself as a person and develop his own life principles that are not subordinate to the "established values" of an antagonistic society. The heroes of these writers never resemble puppets submissive to someone else's will - lively, independent characters, with their own characteristics, with their own intonations, most often seemingly indifferent and seemingly ironic. What are the traits of those who are called the "lost generation"? Representatives of the "lost generation" are, overwhelmingly, young people who have just graduated from school, and sometimes did not have time to finish it.

Honest and little naive young men, believing in the loud words of their teachers about progress and civilization, having read the corrupt press and listened to chauvinistic speeches, went to the front with the consciousness that they were fulfilling a high and noble mission. Many went to war voluntarily. The epiphany was terrible; faced with the naked reality, fragile youthful ideals shattered. The cruel

and senseless war immediately dispelled their illusions, showed the emptiness and falsity of high-sounding words about duty, justice, humanism. But refusing to believe the chauvinistic propaganda, yesterday's schoolchildren do not understand the meaning of what is happening. They don't understand why people of different nationalities should kill each other. They are beginning to gradually free themselves from nationalist hatred of soldiers of other armies, seeing in them the same unhappy ordinary people, workers, peasants, as they themselves were. The spirit of internationalism is awakening in the boys. Post-war meetings with former opponents further strengthen internationalism in the "lost generation". [3]

As a result of long discussions, soldiers begin to understand that war serves as a means of enriching some people; they understand its unfair nature and come to the denial of war. The experience of those who went through the meat grinder of the First World War determined for life their hatred of militarism, of cruel, senseless violence, contempt for the state system that generates and blesses murderous massacres. The writers of the "lost generation" created their anti-war works, believing this work to be their moral duty not only to the fallen and survivors, but also to future generations. [3]

The best representatives of the "lost generation" show firmness and courage in all life's trials, whether it is military everyday life with terrible shelling, mine explosions, cold and hunger, the death of comrades in trenches and infirmaries or the difficult post-war years when there is no work, no money, no life itself. The heroes meet all difficulties in silence, supporting each other, fighting with all their might for their lives. The combination of "loss" and personal courage in resisting hostile circumstances is the kernel of the attitude that underlies their character. The "fulcrum" of people crippled by war is front-line camaraderie, friendship. Camaraderie is the only value generated by the war. In the face of mortal danger and hardship, camaraderie remains a lasting force. Soldiers cling to this camaraderie as the only thread connecting them with the pre-war past, with peaceful life.

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (1896-1940) was an American writer known for his novels and short stories describing the so-called American "jazz era" of the 1920s. The work of F. S. Fitzgerald is one of the most remarkable pages of American literature of the 20th century during its heyday. His contemporaries were Dreiser and Faulkner, Forest and Hemingway, Sandberg and T. Wolf. In this brilliant galaxy, through whose efforts American literature in the 20s - 30s of the twentieth century turned into one of the largest literatures in the world, Fitzgerald has a bright role. A writer of an unusually subtle disposition, he chronologically opened a new era in the development of Russian literature, being the first to speak on behalf of the generation that entered life after the global catastrophe of the First World War, capturing in deeply poetic, at the same time full of great expressiveness images not only his dreams and disappointments, but also the inevitability of the collapse of ideals far from genuine humanistic values. [2]

Fitzgerald's literary success was indeed early and noisy. He wrote his first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920), immediately after completing his army service in Alabama. Roman expressed the sentiments of those who, having not managed to get to the front, nevertheless survived the war as a turning point in history, affecting everyone who had to live in those years when the usual order of things and the traditional system of values were undermined. The book told of a "lost generation" for whom "all the gods died, all the wars died out, all faith disappeared". Realizing that after the historical catastrophe, the former forms of human relations became impossible, the characters of Fitzgerald's first novels and short stories feel a spiritual vacuum around them and the thirst for intense emotional life, freedom from traditional moral restrictions and taboos, but also emotional vulnerability, uncertainty about the

future, the outlines of which are lost behind the rapid changes taking place in the world, characteristic of the “jazz age”, is transmitted to them. [2]

The best representatives of the “lost generation” have not lost their humanistic feelings: conscience, human dignity, a heightened sense of justice, compassion, loyalty to loved ones, self-sacrifice. These features of the “lost generation” were manifested in society at all critical moments of history: during World War II and after it, during “local wars”. The value of the works about the “lost generation” is enormous. The writers told the truth about this generation, showed their heroes as they really were with all their positive and negative traits. The writers influenced the readers' worldview; they condemned the foundations of an antagonistic society, strongly and unconditionally condemned militarism, called for internationalism. With their works, they wanted to prevent new wars, to warn people about their exceptional danger to humanity. At the same time, the work of the writers of the “lost generation” is full of humanistic aspirations, they urge a person to remain a person with high moral qualities in any conditions: faith in the power of courage, honesty, in the value of stoicism, in the nobility of the spirit, in virtue of a high idea, true friendship, immutable ethical norms. [10]

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