

THE CONCEPT OF THE “LOST GENERATION” IN POST-WORLD WAR I AMERICAN CULTURE

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Abstract: *This article examines the concept of the “Lost Generation” in post-World War I American culture from historical, cultural, and literary perspectives. It explores the origins and semantic evolution of the term, as well as its reflection in the cultural consciousness of the postwar period. The study analyzes key aspects such as disillusionment, alienation, the crisis of values, and expatriate experience as fundamental components of the Lost Generation worldview. The paper argues that the concept evolved from a historically bound expression into a broader literary and philosophical category representing the fragmented identity and moral uncertainty of early twentieth-century individuals.*

Keywords: *Lost Generation, World War I, American literature, cultural consciousness, alienation, expatriatism, crisis of value.*

BIRINCHI JAHON URUSHIDAN KEYINGI AMERIKA MADANIYATIDA “YO‘QOLGAN AVLOD” TUSHUNCHASI

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Annotatsiya: *Mazkur maqolada Birinchi jahon urushidan keyingi Amerika madaniyatida shakllangan “yo‘qolgan avlod” tushunchasining tarixiy, madaniy va adabiy asoslari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda ushbu fenomenning kelib chiqishi, semantik rivoji hamda uning urushdan keyingi jamiyat ongidagi aks etishi ko‘rib chiqiladi. Shuningdek, umidsizlik, begonalashuv, qadriyatlar inqirozi va ekspatriantlik tajribasi kabi omillar “yo‘qolgan avlod” madaniy ongining asosiy komponentlari sifatida talqin qilinadi.*

Kalit so‘zlar: yo‘qolgan avlod, Birinchi jahon urushi, Amerika adabiyoti, madaniy ong, begonalashuv, ekspatriantlik, qadriyatlar inqirozi

Introduction

The aftermath of World War I marked a profound turning point in American cultural and literary consciousness. The war disrupted previously dominant beliefs in progress, stability, and moral clarity, leading to a deep crisis in both individual and collective identity. In this context, the concept of the “Lost Generation” emerged as a way to describe a generation disillusioned by war and unable to reconcile pre-war ideals with post-war realities.

The term is closely associated with Gertrude Stein, who first used it to characterize the moral and psychological condition of young people after the war. It was later popularized by Ernest Hemingway, particularly in his novel *The Sun Also Rises*, where the phrase gained broader literary and cultural significance.

This study aims to analyze the development of the “Lost Generation” as a cultural and literary concept and to examine its key features within post-war American literature.

Research methodology

The research is based on a qualitative and interpretative approach, combining historical-literary analysis with conceptual and comparative methods. Scholarly works on modernist literature, cultural studies, and post-war psychology were examined to trace the evolution of the “Lost Generation” concept.

The study employs textual analysis of literary works associated with the Lost Generation, particularly those of Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and John Dos Passos. Additionally, theoretical frameworks related to alienation, disillusionment, and moral relativism are used to interpret the phenomenon.

Analysis and results

The findings reveal that the “Lost Generation” initially emerged as a metaphor describing the psychological exhaustion and moral uncertainty of a post-war generation. Over time, it developed into a broader literary and cultural category.

One of the central characteristics of this generation is disillusionment, which reflects the collapse of belief in progress and stability. The war exposed the destructive potential of technological advancement, undermining earlier optimism about human development.



Another key feature is alienation, where individuals feel disconnected from society and traditional value systems. Literary characters often display emotional detachment, internal conflict, and a lack of clear purpose.

The study also highlights the crisis of values, where moral frameworks become relative rather than absolute. This shift leads to hesitation, ambiguity, and ethical uncertainty in both personal and social contexts.

Furthermore, expatriatism emerges as a defining experience of the Lost Generation. Many writers relocated to European cultural centers such as Paris, seeking freedom from American social constraints. However, this geographical movement often intensified their sense of identity fragmentation and cultural dislocation.

Discussion

The concept of the “Lost Generation” should not be understood as a literal disappearance but rather as a symbolic expression of moral and existential disorientation. The generation was “lost” in terms of stable values, clear identity, and coherent worldview.

The works of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald demonstrate how this condition is reflected through fragmented narratives, emotionally restrained characters, and ambiguous moral choices.

Moreover, the expansion of the term beyond American literature suggests its relevance as a global cultural phenomenon. It reflects broader transformations in twentieth-century thought, including skepticism toward progress and the rise of existential concerns.

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