

ROMANTIC IDEA AND ITS POETIC REALIZATION IN AMERICAN LITERATURE (IN THE CASE OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD)

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Abstract: The article explores the concept of the romantic idea and its poetic realization in American literature, focusing on the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Romanticism, as a literary and philosophical movement, emphasizes emotion, individualism, imagination, and the pursuit of ideal beauty. Fitzgerald, writing during the Jazz Age, transforms these romantic ideals into a modern context marked by materialism and disillusionment. Through symbolic imagery, lyrical prose, and complex characters, especially in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald creates a poetic representation of unattainable dreams and the fragility of human aspirations. The study reveals how romantic thought persists in American literature, evolving into a nuanced critique of the American Dream.

Keywords: Romanticism, American literature, Fitzgerald, poetic imagery, American Dream, symbolism, Jazz Age

Introduction: Romanticism, originating in the late 18th century, profoundly influenced world literature by emphasizing emotion, imagination, and the individual's inner world. In American literature, romantic ideas evolved uniquely, blending idealism with national identity and the concept of the American Dream. Among 20th-century writers, F. Scott Fitzgerald stands out for his poetic reinterpretation of romantic ideals in a modern, often disillusioned society.

Romantic Idea in American Literature: the romantic idea in American literature is grounded in several key philosophical and aesthetic principles:

- Individualism - a strong emphasis on personal identity, self-expression, and moral independence
- Idealism - belief in perfection, beauty, and the possibility of higher truth
- Emotion over reason - privileging feelings, intuition, and subjective experience
- Nature and imagination - seen as authentic sources of truth and creativity

In the American context, these principles are closely connected with the concept of the American Dream, which symbolizes hope, freedom, upward mobility, and self-realization. Early American writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau promoted transcendental ideals, encouraging individuals to trust their inner

voice and seek spiritual truth beyond material existence. However, by the early 20th century-especially during the Jazz Age-these ideals began to weaken. Industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of consumer culture led to contradictions between spiritual aspirations and material success. As a result, the romantic idea evolved into a more complex and often critical form.

Fitzgerald and the Transformation of Romanticism: F. Scott Fitzgerald reinterprets romantic ideals through the lens of modernity and disillusionment. His works represent a transition from classical romantic optimism to modern skepticism. Fitzgerald's literary vision combines:

- Romantic longing for beauty and perfection - seen in his characters' pursuit of love and success
- Critical perspective on wealth and class - exposing the emptiness behind luxury and social status
- Nostalgia and loss - a recurring sense of yearning for the past

Unlike earlier romantics, Fitzgerald demonstrates that dreams are often constructed illusions, shaped by desire rather than reality. His characters are driven by ideals, yet trapped in a society dominated by materialism. Moreover, Fitzgerald's work reflects the broader crisis of values in post-World War I America, where traditional beliefs were replaced by uncertainty and moral ambiguity.

Poetic Realization in The Great Gatsby: The Great Gatsby serves as the most vivid example of Fitzgerald's poetic realization of romantic ideas, combining narrative technique with symbolic depth.

- Symbolism: the novel is structured around a rich symbolic system:
 - The green light - represents hope, desire, and the unattainable dream
 - The valley of ashes - symbolizes moral decay and the consequences of industrialization
 - Dr. T. J. Eckleburg's eyes - suggest the absence of spiritual authority and the decline of moral values

These symbols elevate the novel beyond realism, creating a poetic and philosophical dimension that reflects inner psychological states.

- Lyrical Prose: Fitzgerald's prose style is one of his most distinctive features. It is highly poetic and musical, characterized by:
 - Rich metaphors and similes
 - Flowing, rhythmic sentence structures
 - Strong emotional resonance

His language transforms ordinary scenes into vivid emotional experiences. For example, descriptions of Gatsby's parties are not merely realistic but almost dreamlike, blending beauty with underlying emptiness. Additionally, Fitzgerald often uses

contrast and imagery (light vs. darkness, illusion vs. reality) to reinforce the tension between romantic ideals and modern disillusionment.

- The Romantic Hero: Jay Gatsby: Jay Gatsby represents a modern version of the romantic hero:

- He is driven by love and idealism, particularly his devotion to Daisy
- He is obsessed with an impossible dream, attempting to recreate the past
- His story is tragic, ending in failure and isolation

Gatsby's belief in the possibility of perfect love and success reflects the core of romantic ideology. However, his downfall reveals the fragility of such ideals in a materialistic society. Importantly, Gatsby's tragedy lies not only in external circumstances but also in his inability to distinguish between illusion and reality.

The American Dream as a Romantic Illusion: In Fitzgerald's interpretation, the American Dream becomes a form of romantic illusion:

- It promises success, happiness, and fulfillment
- Yet often leads to moral emptiness and disappointment

Through characters like Gatsby, Daisy, and Tom, Fitzgerald critiques the transformation of the American Dream into a pursuit of wealth rather than meaning. This reinterpretation reflects a broader cultural shift: romantic ideals no longer guarantee fulfillment but instead highlight the gap between aspiration and reality.

Thus, romanticism in Fitzgerald's work becomes dual in nature:

- Beautiful in its aspiration
- Tragic in its outcome

Conclusion: The romantic idea in American literature undergoes a profound transformation in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald. While rooted in traditional values such as idealism, imagination, and emotional depth, Fitzgerald redefines these concepts within the context of modern society. Through poetic language, symbolic structures, and psychologically complex characters, he reveals the tension between dream and reality, illusion and truth, and hope and disillusionment. Ultimately, Fitzgerald demonstrates that romantic ideals remain powerful but are deeply challenged by materialism and social change. This duality makes his work both aesthetically poetic and intellectually critical, securing his place as a central figure in American literary modernism.

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