

Theme of Love and Pain in Ernest Hemingway the Sun also Rises

P.Arulmozhi, * and Dr.R.Visalakshi, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.,**

*Research Scholar, Department of English, PRIST University, Thanjavur,

**Assistant Professor, Department of English, PRIST University, Thanjavur,

Abstract:- The story centers on the narrator, Jake Barnes and his love interest, Lady Brett Ashley, with whom he is unable to sustain a romantic relationship due to a war injury that has rendered him impotent. In this article love is shown in a very superficial manner. It is so because most of the characters are self-seeking in love. Love fails to offer it's natural and becomes a dehumanizing force. The love between Jake and Brett does not rise to desirable proportions because Jake is physically disabled and Brett is spiritually incapacitated. Had Brett not been so, the union with Romero should have proved to be a perfect one. The failure of their love was not the failure of Romero who is both bodily and spiritually sound; it is owing to the inadequacy of Brett as a beloved her in ability of total absorption in love and surrender to her lover. Jake is the suitable partner in love who can act for the happiness of another and can rising above all self-seeking, but he fails to give physical satisfaction. Romero's love possesses Brett fully for a time and brings some change which has a moral significance in her character and sheds light on what love can really do if it is perfect. This novel provides a clue about Hemingway's negative attitude to love.

Keywords: Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, Social instability, Moral decay, disillusionment, loss

I. INTRODUCTION

The novel *The Sun Also Rises* is just as well known for its epigraph as for the story itself. One of Ernest Hemingway's friends, Gertrude Stein, coined the expression—the Lost Generation when she said —You are all a lost generation, which serves as an epigraph to the novel. It is a fitting epithet for the characters in *The Sun Also Rises*, who are all affected by World War I, and the experiences take their toll on their lives. This essay will show that the novel centers on different strategies to learn to live with disillusionment and loss of values in postwar Europe. The essay focuses on three of the characters – Jake Barnes, Lady Brett Ashley and Robert Cohn – and describes their different survival strategies, and the way these strategies affect their personalities. Even though they share some ways of dealing with their traumas, they also have different ways of coping with their experiences. Still, they are all part of the Lost Generation. Jake is lost because of his wound, which has left him not only physically emasculated, but also mentally. Brett has lost hope in the future due to her personal losses, and cannot commit to anybody – or anything at all. Cohn has not participated in the war like the others, but is confused by being caught between old and new values.

The Lost Generation is veterans of the First World War who had to endure years of brutal trench warfare – where it was just as much luck as skill to survive; the whole generation lost faith in the foundations of a normal life. The code of values, such as family, friends, religion and work lost its meaning leaving them with no motivation to plan and think about the future. The moral values built on love, optimism and hope seemed no longer valid and left the generation —lost. Bill describes Jake and everybody else in

the crowd as well as himself: —Fake European standards have ruined you. You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed by sex. You spend all your time talking, not working. You are an expatriate, see. You hang around cafés. The temporary solutions developed by the members of the Lost Generation - drugs, sex and a trivial existence - are shared by all of them, and they constantly move, from café to café and country to country, avoiding confrontation with their own lack of values. The emotional dysfunctions of the Lost Generation are severe and manifest themselves in more ways than one. Aimlessness leads to hopelessness, and lack of values leads to lack of belief in the future - not once is the future mentioned in the novel. No one in the story has any goals, except instant sensual gratification. Also because the rules that are supported by the values are gone, there is no way of knowing how to behave. The searching, the hope of the grass being greener on the other side, is apparent in the constant moving from one place to another. No longer believing in the good in people, Jake Barnes defines himself by stating: —I mistrust all frank and simple people.

Hemingway's first novel *The Sun Also Rises* exposes powerfully the theme of alienation in a very faithful manner. It is an authentic account of the sense of aimlessness; nihilism, despair and, above all, the sense of alienation. *The Sun Also Rises* presents the story of young people of what Gertrude Stein has aptly called 'Lost Generation'. It is a group of wounded people, wounded either physically or psychologically as a result of war. They are American expatriates who are leading a depraved life in Paris after the World War I. The expatriates' group takes its stand squarely on the principle of an alienation from the society that had been forced upon it by the circumstances of the times. The war injury results in impotency of Jake

Barnes, the central protagonist of the novel. Others in the story are less obviously cut off from normal experiences and distracted by violent substitutes. Lady Brett Ashley's final cry, "We could have had such a damned good time together", reflects her utter sense of alienation. It was intensity alone that they were seeking and that they found fleetingly in frantic lovemaking, in death in the bull-ring. Nihilism was complete. So, a total denial of values could seem to have only one outcome-alienation.

In this way, after making a close scrutiny of the novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, we can safely and rightly conclude that not that the heroes of Hemingway's novels are basically unsocial or anti-society, rather they have seen through the realities of social life around them. It is their discovery of their hollowness and vicariousness that has made them disengage their fidelity from the group. The reality of this world is that faith in religion and God is usually disappointing; the prevailing ethics and social conventions are a sham and virtue and morality are mere cloaks for unashamed defiance of all basic principles of honesty, loyalty and righteousness. Hemingway knew that the entire might of the social machinery comes into action against the innocent joys and aspiration of an individual's sentiments, which taken singly, every individual member of the social mass, holds dear to his heart. The most heinous crimes are committed in the name of religion and God and justice and pateridism. Countries with 'Thou shalt not kill' as their basic religious commandments gave the desolation and man-slaughter of the First World War.

Hemingway for instance is one of the prominent writers of the lost generation, and an American expatriate. Thanks to his experience in his life as an ambulance driver, his witnessing of the horrors of war during his work as a reporter, and even his own personal life contributed to great extent to his proficiency in writing. His works are the reflection of the lost generation, their aimlessness, and the effects of war upon them.

Hemingway suffered from a severe depression and insomnia, and attempted twice to commit suicide but he was stopped by Mary, his fourth wife. But in 1961, Ernest Hemingway made an end for his life in Ketchum.

Hemingway's sickness and depression is a culmination of so many years of repression, starting from his young age in Oak Park, to his war wounds, and his failed love stories with different women...etc. All this contributed to the creation of a severe depression that led at last to suicide.

Hemingway's writing reveal much of his inner struggles, he speaks about the death of love, depression, and the real death in almost all his works of fiction. He created a style which unique and attributed only to him. We see that he does not express his ideas explicitly, but he covers them so as to have a double meaning.

Among the most important novels through which Hemingway succeeded to reflect the lost generation is, *The Sun Also Rises*. In this novel he approached different issues that are in common with his own life such as, the war, love, divorce, disillusionment...etc.

The Theme of Love in "The Sun Also Rises"

Love is a universal language; it is something that everyone understands. It does not necessarily have to be spoken of; instead it can be shown through people's action. In most novels love is an unseen character yet it plays this strong force that moves the story along. Ernest Hemingway writes about a group of people who are trapped in a wearisome game of love. In *The Sun Also Rises* Jake Barnes, the protagonist, is a journalist whose war injury causes him to be handicapped. He is madly in love with Lady Brett who loves him in return. However, they cannot complete their relationship because of Jake's injury.

The Lost Generation

The Sun Also Rises is an impressive document of the people who came to be known, in Gertrude Stein's words (which form half the novel's epigraph), as the "Lost Generation." The young generation she speaks of had their dreams and innocence smashed by World War I, emerged from the war bitter and aimless, and spent much of the prosperous 1920s drinking and partying away their frustrations. Jake epitomizes the Lost Generation; physically and emotionally wounded from the war, he is disillusioned, cares little about conventional sources of hope -- family, friends, religion, work -- and apathetically drinks his way through his expatriate life. Even travel, a rich source of potential experience, mostly becomes an excuse to drink in exotic locales. Irresponsibility also marks the Lost Generation; Jake rarely intervenes in other's affairs, even when he could help (as with Cohn), and Brett carelessly hurts men and considers herself powerless to stop doing so. While Hemingway critiques the superficial, empty attitudes of the Lost Generation, the other quote in the epigraph from Ecclesiastes expresses the hope that future generations may rediscover themselves.

Emasculation and impotence

One of the key changes Hemingway observes in the Lost Generation is that of the new male psyche, battered by the war and newly domesticated. Jake embodies this new

emasculatation; most likely physically impotent, he cannot have sex and, therefore, can never have the insatiable Brett. Instead, he is dominated by her (see "Sexuality and bull-fighting," below), as is Cohn, who is also abused by the other women in his life. Jake is even threatened by the homosexual men who dance with Brett in Paris; while not sexually interested in her, they have more "manhood" than Jake, physically speaking. Though a veteran, Jake now works in an office and fritters away his time with superficial socializing; he admires bull-fighters so much, and Romero in particular, because they are far more heroic than he is or ever was. Though Romero's appearance is more feminine than Jake's, he fulfills the code of the Hemingway hero, commandingly confronting death as a man of action with what Hemingway has called "grace under pressure." Jake, on the other hand, has returned from his confrontation with death feeling like less of a man, physically and emotionally.

Sexuality and bull-fighting

Hemingway draws numerous parallels between bull-fighting and Brett's sexuality. Early in the novel, Brett tells Jake she cannot commit to him, as she will "trometer" him; while this means "to be unfaithful to," it also means "to elude," and it makes sense why she is attracted to Romero: as a great bull-fighter, he is the consummate eluder, deceiving the bulls into thinking they are close to him, then pulling away, much as Brett does with men. Romero also penetrates with his phallic sword both the bull and, as Jake metaphorically describes it, the audience; he begins as the coy, elusive female, then metamorphoses into the violent, dominant male. In one episode, Jake and Cohn also resemble steers (Mike even calls Cohn a steer), young oxen castrated before sexual maturity. Jake resembles the steer that joins the herd of bulls (much as he, as a castrated male, manages to belong to his group of virile friends), while Cohn is like the steer excluded from the group, the pariah who follows around Brett.

Depicting the Aspects of Social Instability in the Sun Also Rise

The Sun Also Rises is Hemingway's first novel, and is the first work that made him gain a prestigious fame among writers worldwide, not only because it is a reflection of the roaring twenties and a vision of an era given by an eye witness, but also a prototype of the modernist novel, full of new techniques and a new style of writing.

The amount of carelessness and loss that is found in every detail in the novel drew my attention, a disillusionment within the characters; their speech, their different and changing states of being, their behaviours, in the themes offered by the writer, and in the language of the

writer himself. All these elements can be covered under the term "Social Instability".

So as to better explain the theme of this research, I divide this chapter into three elements, first: the analysis of the characters, second: some of the themes offered by the author, and third: the analysis of the author's language, style and techniques. By this, I intend to bring forward the social instability that lay within the novel.

By combining the two terms it forms the following meaning: the lack of stability in the way society is organized, or in other words it is the disequilibrium in the social state of individuals or the whole society. By looking back at the different events that occurred during the roaring twenties, we have more understanding of the ways that led to this instability such as, the trauma of the First World War, the disillusionment, and the sudden shift in all aspects of life, either in the USA or Europe, this caused an imbalance which affected all the aspects of life of the individuals of the era. These elements are well explained in Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*.

II. Conclusion

The decade of the Roaring Twenties brought with it much change that affected mostly the young generation. Ernest Hemingway is for instance one of these youngsters that the period influenced so much, and being a writer helped him to reflect his feelings and the situation of his generation through his works. In *The Sun Also Rises* is a novel which pictures the loss and the disillusionment of the lost generation, Hemingway show as one of the many characteristics of the 1920s which is social instability.

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