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## THE LOST GENERATION AND THE LIVES OF EXPATRIATES IN ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S NOVEL *THE SUN ALSO RISES*

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### Abstract

In this study, Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* is dealt in terms of Lost Generation and the lives of expatriates who escape form their native land in search of starting new lives away from their troubles caused by the World War I. In this novel the writer who is also a member of the expatriate writes, portrays the thoughts and lives of the lost people by the help of the characters whom he created. Therefore, the reality on the lives of expatriates is reflected vividly in Hemingway's novel. The present study is composed through method of literature review and the main aim of it is to show how the expatriates continue their lives after the war. To reveal the hidden meanings in the novel, the characters' dialogues, thoughts and behaviors are analyzed. As a result, it can be stated that one can see how the situation of the people who actually live like exiles is in a different country and how they struggle for surviving in life even if they are corrupted physically or psychologically due to the war.

**Keywords:** Lost Generation, Expatriates, American Literature.

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## Introduction

Being a prominent writer of 20<sup>th</sup> century American Literature, Ernest Hemingway has influenced the fictional works by using simple style of writing including short sentences, omitting some parts for creating a work that is appropriate for his iceberg theory. To him, in fiction there should be some hidden things and meanings that can be found by the readers in process of understanding the story of the work. His popular literary works that covers novels, short stories and non-fiction works admired later writers. Therefore, his works are regarded as classics of American Literature. Hemingway witnesses the Great War and his experiences of this period and the years after this war are reflected and portrayed in his works obviously.

After having some health problems when he is an ambulance driver in Italian front during the war, he is wounded seriously and returned his country and some years later goes to Paris as a foreign correspondent. The experiences during his stay in this city also affect his literary works. Considered as one of the members of the Lost Generation, Hemingway is an expatriate, too. This expatriate group including modernist writers and artists of 1920s are influenced by the experiences of war years and the years after it. In fact, these people want to get rid of the bad effects of the war. Thus, they search for new way of life and they need to recover their psychology damaged so seriously due to the war. Being one of these expatriates, Hemingway also tries to start new life by escaping his past and he shows this reality in most of his works, especially in his novel *The Sun Also Rises*.

Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* actually portrays the American expatriates' lives. Written based on this reality, the novel includes the characters who escape from their home country in search of being safe in a city where traditions, culture and values are so steady. However, to these characters, everything on earth is so futile and they do not expect goodness from their future. In fact, they are victims of their past and this truth is demonstrated by Hemingway so successfully. The main of the present study is to show the reality about the expatriates reflected by writer who is also an expatriate. In order to achieve this goal, the characters' thoughts, acts and speeches are analyzed and through literature review, method the information on Lost Generation and the lives of expatriates is stated in this study.

### 1. Ernest Hemingway's Life and Literary Works

Hemingway born in Oak Park in 1899 was a significant American writer, poet, dramatist and journalist who influenced especially fiction of 20<sup>th</sup> century. His parents were Clarence Edmonds Hemingway and Grace Hall Hemingway. His father was a physician and his mother was a so religious woman. She a member of Protestant Community of their hometown. Hemingway had name of his grandfather who was a veteran in Civil War. Although Hemingway's mother wanted him to spend time with music, he actually loved outdoor activities. He liked living in remote places when he grew up. Moreover, he liked being isolated from people around him. Therefore, "Nature would be the touchstone of Hemingway's life and work" (Mammadov, 2009, 81).

After he graduated from high school, he became a reporter of Kansas City Star and started his career in writing. He did not attend college. When World War I broke out, he wished to take part in the US Army; however, his eyesight problem prevented him from being a soldier during that war. Therefore, instead of attending the army he took part as an ambulance driver of America. Then he was sent to the Italian front where he faced the reality of the war when he was injured. Thus, his career as a driver ended and he had treatment at a hospital because of a shrapnel wounded him seriously. Returning his home in Chicago in 1918, Hemingway continued his writing career for the Toronto Star Weekly. In 1921, he married Hadley Richardson who was the first of his four wives. They had a son whose name was Jack. Then he became a correspondent for the Toronto Daily Star. Afterward he and his wife moved to Paris.

In Paris, Ernest Hemingway met Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce and other modernist people who were members of a group of expatriate writers and artists living in Paris after World War I. There he became famous both as a fiction writer and as journalist. He also became a member of community of expatriates and one of the Great War veteran. Therefore, he was a member of a literary group that was called the Lost Generation. His family survived on income gained from writing short stories and working as a correspondent. They were quite poor during these years.

Hemingway wrote a book on his experiences of being an ambulance driver during the war. The book was *A Farewell to Arms* published in 1929. In 1932, he published *Death in the Afternoon*. In 1937, he went to Spain during the Spanish Civil War. He supported international cover by fighting the fascists. Then in 1940, he wrote another book *For Whom the Bell Tolls* that is about Spanish Civil War and its inhumanity. By



the way, in Spain “Ernest discovered bullfighting and the running of the bulls in Pamplona” (Mammadov, 2009, 82). When the World War II broke out, he was working as a foreign correspondent. During his later life, he spent most of the time in Florida, Spain and Africa that influenced his writing issues. Moreover, Hemingway experienced two plane crashes in 1950s and these events caused him to be injured seriously. In 1952, he published *The Old Man and the Sea* that was a novel about a fisherman. Later, he was awarded both the Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Prize in Literature. In 1959, he moved to Ketchum Idaho. Then as he had pain due to the plane crashes, he committed suicide in 1961.

To Hemingway, prime masculinity was so crucial in his life. This idea included power, courage and honor that were the most significant issues of life “by implying capability of acting with ‘grace under pressure’, meaning to be able to act as a man even in the most brutal situation” (Ismail & Musa, 2012, 115). His other works were *Hills like White Elephants*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Across the River and Into the Trees*. Ernest Hemingway was a significant author to write on years between two world wars. “He wrote about two types of people. One type, disillusioned by war, lived for their own interests and needs. The other type consisted of men of simple character, such as prizefighters and bullfighters” (“Ernest Hemingway”, *Famous Floridians*). He was the pioneer of writing style of modernism. His focus was on reality that influenced other authors afterwards. Long descriptions were not seen in his writings since he did not place direct statements on psychology and emotion. Most of his works created by the help of his own experiences of life. There were many hidden meanings in stories of his works. This demonstrates the effect of his iceberg theory of writing. He used short expressions and omitted some parts of the stories that he composed for adapting his iceberg principle. “Many of Hemingway’s novels and shorter pieces deal with war explicitly and directly. Others are concerned with the aftermath of wars” (Velea, 2012, 314). Since witnessing many wars in his life, Hemingway undeniably affected by them and wanted to display its effects in his literary works.

## 2. The Lost Generation

Lost Generation is a group of literary people including American writers “who came of age during World War I and established their literary reputations in the 1920s” (“Lost Generation”, *Britannica*). Members of this group were the prominent figures of modernist period who were known for their works and their rejection of American culture, traditions and values. This group consisting of expatriates aimed at being distant from American society. Its members chose to move other countries in Europe, especially, France where they thought that they would be free for pursuing their creative and social sides and live for a long time. To these expatriate writers, living in America was unavailing and they were desperate.

One of the important writers of this literary group was Ernest Hemingway. He was a member of a circle of expatriates and he demonstrated the revolutionary thoughts of this circle. The circle included some artists and writers. These significant people tried to define new, modernist techniques in both literature and art. Not only did they want to escape from the environment of America, but also they wanted to enjoy the romance in Paris. Because of the war, they felt alienated and isolated. They began to demonstrate their frustrations on their works. During this period after the war, Paris was full of an artistic community that was united with a rich history of the city. Therefore, it was considered as the cultural capital of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The rich atmosphere of Paris influenced the expatriates so they decided to settle in there. In other words, the expatriate writers and artists who escaped from America wished adventure, enjoyment and excitement lost after the war because of the feeling of being close to death. Thus, they desired to seek new experiences of life in Paris. Actually, this generation of writers and artists decided to protest the values of their earlier country.

The Lost Generation period refers to the time that starts at the end of the First World War and ends at the beginning of the Great Depression. Therefore, this group was often called as the World War I Generation and the expatriates’ group settled in Paris was sometimes known as the Generation of Fire. In fact, the individuals of this group searched for meaning of their lives. They became disjointed and isolated from both the world destroyed and the new world emerging afterwards (Rafi, 2012, 3). They cannot identify themselves with the values of their own community. Actually, they were the social exiles. In Paris, they hoped to redefine and find themselves in a new environment. The exiles began to criticize “American culture in creative fictional stories, which had the themes of self-exile, indulgence (care-free living) and spiritual alienation” (“The Lost Generation”, 37).

In addition, the group of expatriates described the moral loss and aimlessness of the young adults after the World War I. Since lots of the men died during that war and other returned their homes in a damaged position not only physically but also mentally, in fact their faith in moral values was not valid, they were totally lost. They were alienated, frustrated, hopeless and left out. They felt estrangement after the war.



“Their independent attitude caused that they got a label of bad children. The peak of their career was influenced by the Great Depression and their old-age by the high tax rates” (Palcikova, 2010, 10).

As Agarwal states (2017, 33), during the period of lost generation “The old values were in a state of disintegration and new values were taking their place.” This issue can be seen in one of the prominent writers of this time, Ernest Hemingway. Especially in his first novel *The Sun Also Rises* that is considered as “Hemingway’s best war book in a very real sense all of Hemingway’s fiction is war fiction” (Sharma, 2014, 124). In this literary work, the post-war men long for a world coming to its end or they displayed the violence affected their lives after the war. Being the representative of lost generation the characters of this novel questions the notions such as love, romance, religion, moral subjects. All the characters, like the real lost expatriates “underwent an overwhelming loss of innocence, making it impossible for them to continue living as they had before the war” (Sharma, 2014, 126).

### 3. The Lives of Expatriates in *The Sun Also Rises*

Ernest Hemingway’s significant novel *The Sun Also Rises* was published in 1926. It is about expatriates who left their native country deliberately. Since the writer is also an expatriate, to him creating the characters being exiles was easy. Like the characters in modern fiction the characters of the novel “expect to repair the damage they have suffered, they are anxious to live as much as they can, to experience and make sense of their lives and the chaotic world they live in” (Gallardo, 2009, 15). The novel focuses on a real trip that was done to Spain by Hemingway and his expatriate friends. He began writing the book after this trip. Actually, *The Sun Also Rises* is viewed as an important work of art because it was composed through the writer’s own life experiences. Being so successful in displaying these experiences, the novel deals with the members of Lost Generation, American expatriates who consist of men and women who suffered from World War I or the Greta War during their adulthood years. Like any people of this time, the war affects the expatriates’ beliefs, values on love, manhood and faith. They are so badly affected by the war that there exists nothing in the world for them to trust in. As most of them fight in battlefield, not only do they suffer morally and physically but they also suffer psychologically. In fact, they become aimless after facing the reality of the war. Aiming to show this reality actually in his novel Hemingway “wants to focus on the aspect of morality of life and the essence of human existence” (Robinson, Osben & Sujithra, 2019, 501) since these issues become the significant after the war.

Hemingway’s novel is actually the expression of the time when it was written. In novel, the characters being expatriates think that they can find excitement in Paris. Nevertheless, they see that this city is empty, as well. To get rid of the corruption and artificiality of this city, they decide to go to Spain where the traditions are going on. The prominent characters of the novel are Jake, Brett, Robert Cohn, Mike and Bill who are representatives of Lost Generation. They do not depend on any values in any place and just want to go from one place to another all the time. On the contrary, the native people of Paris and Pamplona, city of Spain are living steady lives including traditional values. In the novel, the main characters mentioned, move from one setting to another and they act like the tourists whose exact land does not exist in the world. In other words, they consider that they do not belong to any place. To fill the void in their lives, they go to Paris in search of adventure. In addition, *The Sun Also Rises* shows searching for meaning in life and in the world. In other words, the lost characters whose lives and believes on life are completely transformed and they desire to find what they lost because of the war. The behaviors of these characters are totally reflections of their past. Thus, Hemingway’s novel can be dealt with as the representation of the post-war disillusionment. “*The Sun Also Rises* itself occupies a unique social and cultural position with regard to money, exchange and especially values” (Cates, 2016, 116).

After the war, even masculinity takes another shape. Jake Barnes, the protagonist of novel, represents this reality. Since he is wounded in the war, he becomes impotent. He is the representative of the male psyche damaged by the war and makes him unman. The protagonist and his friends who are expatriates like him are so aimless and they just want to forget their disappointments by drinking and partying all the time. They are irresponsible people. As Jake is emasculated, he is emotionally suffering from the effects of the war. He is so frustrated; therefore, he does not care about the notions on friendship, family and religion. These empty attitudes of the expatriates are demonstrations of both Hemingway’s and other members of Lost Generation vividly. Jake resembles the writer of the novel in being a post-war man who is wounded during his duty as a veteran soldier. In the novel, only the character, Pedro Romero who is a bullfighter is not an expatriate who escapes from America or Great Britain.



“Listen Robert, going to another country does not make any difference. I’ve tried all that. You can’t get away from yourself by moving from one place to another. There’s nothing to that” (Hemingway, 1994, 11). In this quotation, Jake talks to Robert Cohn who is a Jewish writer. Cohn wants Jake to go with him to South America. Cohn does not love his life in Paris and thinks that if he goes another place he will fill the void in his life. As Jake states, this thought does not help him. To Jake, his life will not be different even if he goes another country. As seen, Jake demonstrates the problems and activities of the postwar generation. In novel, like Cohn, some of the characters even Jake tries to recover their unhappiness by the way of traveling from country to country. Here Jake knows that such travel is futile and purposeless. Actually, the dissatisfaction of the Lost Generation is not geographic, but psychological.

“Simple Exchange of values. You give them Money. They give you a stuffed dog” (72) Here Jake’s writer friend, Bill Gorton speaks to Jake. He indicates that after the First World War, the values has change. Even the nature and animals has changed. Being a war veteran, Bill knows that nothing is the same. Bill likes stuffed animals. The stuffed dog represents not only the living creatures, but also the people of that time and their new values. In other words, the members of the Lost Generation do not have any belief, value, especially emotion and passion. They live as if they are not living beings, but stuffed animals. In another chapter of the novel, Bill advises Jake to send Brett and Mike’s marriage a couple of stuffed race- horses. This advice shows the changing value of those people.

Good. Coffee is good for you. It’s the caffeine in it. Caffeine we are here. Caffeine puts a man on her horse and a woman in his grave. You know what’s the trouble with you? You’re an expatriate. One of the worst type. Haven’t you heard that? Nobody that ever left their own country ever wrote anything worth printing. Not even in the newspapers (115).

As seen Bill’s words demonstrates that the expatriates drinks especially to forget the bad days of the war and their wounds. He says that the caffeine does not make any good for anybody and it is the cause of dying day by day. He clearly tells that Jake is an expatriate even if Jake does not mention about being an exile. To Bill an expatriate writer cannot write any worthy work. As he knows, Jake is a newspaper writer, he implies the fact that Jake’s writing is not valuable, since he is also an expatriate. Bill Gorton is the only character who is declaring the reality of the time. He obviously says everything that is made by the expatriates. He wants Jake to see the facts that he is in fact an exile. If we read this quotation carefully, we will see that Bill uses the words “her” for a man, and “his” for a woman. These words manifest the variation of sexes after the war. There are lesbians and gays during those times.

You’re an expatriate. You’ve lost touch with the soil. You get precious. 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 cafes (115).

Likewise, in the quotation above, Bill continues showing the realities of Jake’ life. As he emphasizes, an expatriate lost the relation with his own country. The new life in a new country spoils and destroys previous values. Being an expatriate, Jake only drinks and wants to vanish in the world. Bill implies that Jake is also an impotent because of the war and this situation influenced him psychologically. He lives fast and speaks so much to pass time. As Bill says, the members of the lost generation only goes to cafes, speaks and drinks.

“But I could not sleep. There is no reason why because it is dark you should look at things differently from when it is light” (148). Here Jake states that he cannot sleep when the electric light off. He only can sleep in light. To him when it is dark one should think different things and especially the past events. In order not to remember the bad times, he does not turn off the light. Maybe, if he tries to sleep in dark, he will only see the scene of the Great War in his dreams. The bad effects of the war are seen in these words, again. The characters are ruined psychologically.

“Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about” (148). In this quotation Jake is thinking. To him, maybe people learn some good things by way of surviving. He does not care for the reason of the events that occur around him. His only concern is to know how to live after the war with his wounds. If he can learn how to act and live, maybe he can understand what the reason of the events occurring around him is. As seen, the Lost Generation does not know how to spend their time and how to survive. Whatever they do, they cannot adapt themselves to postwar life. They act aimlessly, not knowing what to do.



"I've never gotten anything I prayed for" (Hemingway, 1994, 209). Here Brett Ashley, an expatriate talks to Jake. As seen, the expatriate begins not to believe in religion. When Jake wants her to pray in the church, she becomes nervous and rejects praying. To her, it does not help her and does not make any good. Because of the fact that she sees the wartime, she loses her faith in religion. Her life is also aimless and futile. She lives independently and her haircut resembles hair of men. She has affairs with a number of men and drinks heavily. Nevertheless, she is not happy, like other expatriate women.

"He wanted me to grow my hair out. Me, with long hair. I'd look so like hell" (242). Brett mentions about his last darling. Her dear loves long hair, but she says that it is impossible for her. Maybe, she feels more independent and strong having a short hair, like a man. She is a liberated woman but her life has corrupted. To her, she cannot conform to traditional feminine behavior and cannot be more womanly. She searches for the real life. She has lost the prewar values of love.

Jake and Brett are very old hands: they not only know all the rules, they invent them as they go along. As veterans who have proved their superiority by surviving, they realize the absolute necessity of the cold head, the clenched will, the machined coordination of mind and body. As lovers, they know the possibilities and remain carefully within them. They have managed to get this far because they respect the simple values--simple drinking, simple thinking, simple fornication--and because they are smart enough to keep themselves thoroughly insulated (Jake with alcohol, Brett with sex) so they will be unable to register pain or boredom or worry over their predicament. If they falter occasionally, as does Jake, it is only in the privacy of their rooms at night, and then a good cry settles everything (Aldridge, 1954, 31).

In the quotation above, it is emphasized that the major characters Jake and Brett realize what is to be a veteran and how to act after bad days. They behave like machines and do not have any purpose in life. Actually, they love each other but do not demonstrate this to their friends. Though Brett loves Jake, she does not want to begin a relationship with him because of the fact that he is impotent. They are together most of the times even if they do not become real lovers. Like other expatriates, they engage in drinking and respecting simple values. They want to get rid of their troubles. Jake only remembers his troubles when he is in his room at night.

The weary and aimless expatriates in *The Sun Also Rises* demonstrates the lost optimism and innocence after the war. The effects of war are seen through the behaviors of the characters in this novel. Some of the characters are victims of the war. The war destroys the characters belief in justice, morality and love. Without these values to rely on, the Lost Generation lives aimless and devoid of true emotion. Jake and Bill are aware of the uselessness of the Lost Generation's way of life. Although they perceive the problems in their lives, they cannot cure them. They lose the values giving life the meaning. They are lost both psychologically and morally. They do not believe in anything and their lives are empty. They fill their time with traveling and drinking. Their drinking provides a way of escaping reality. It allows the characters to endure their lives. As Bill states, drunkenness only worsens them emotionally and mentally.

### Conclusion

After the World War I, Europe become filled with lots of American aimless group of expatriate writers, called Lost Generation. Ernest Hemingway who is a dominant figure of Lost Generation is wounded several times in the war and comes to brink of death. So he is deeply affected by war. Hemingway, in *The Sun Also Rises* which is about the Lost Generation and expatriates in Paris, expresses the reality of human situation in his time by means of the characters' speech and their way of living, especially by Jake Barnes who is the narrator as well as the hero. Jake wounded in the war and his wound leaves him physically and spiritually unmanned, because he has to live without any sexual experiment. Jake and the other characters as Robert Cohn, Mike Cambell, Brett Ashley, try to learn to live in a world where love and religion is dead. These characters try to cauterize their wound through friendship with people they meet but these are false friendships. In addition, the characters always drink alcohol, dance and moves from one country to another to forget their problems, but they cannot find true freedom in anywhere else.

In fact, both Hemingway and his characters cannot free themselves from thinking about the scene of full of horror of war, violence and death. Therefore, in *The Sun Also Rises* Hemingway expresses his own feelings in the actions and words of his characters. Moreover, in *The Sun Also Rises* the female characters have lost their femininity by replacing their natural warmth with masculine freedom. There is not an actual conversation among characters. All these events reflect the real life of Ernest Hemingway, because after the war, like fictional Jake Barnes, he is never the same again. Especially in the last days of his life, he feels no



love for God or man and he feels completely isolated like his characters in *The Sun Also Rises*. In this novel, Hemingway developed a new style of writing which is simple and included clear sentences. It is one of the best novels describing the effects of war on human psychology.

To conclude, the war influences all things in lives of the expatriates whose members are called the Lost Generation. To them, life is pointless and unavailing. They lose their faith in religion since they cannot get anything that they pray for. Travelling from one country to another does not make difference in their lives and thoughts that is why they cannot escape themselves by doing so. In addition, to them, the people resemble stuffed animals that are empty. They do not have the prewar belief on love, emotions, passion, justice, morality and traditions. The expatriates always drink and come together in cafes for talking all the time in order not to remember the old days. Actually, they feel that they have lost touch with soil that is their country and the values of their country. Moreover, these people cannot sleep at night as they remember the years of war in darkness. In fact, they try to find a way for learning how to live in life. However, this effort is useless. In other words, attempt to cure themselves is in vain because of the fact that they are the victims of the war. Additionally, they also lost their optimistic views on future and the innocent side of their hearts after the war. In order to get rid of their troubles caused by the war years, they engage in both drinking and travelling but not working. Therefore, not only men's but also women's lives were corrupted due to their past. All of the bad effects of the war are portrayed and demonstrated in Hemingway's novel vividly.

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