

**THE DESPAIR AND AIMLESSNESS OF THE POST-WAR GENERATION**

Mukhtorova Makhzuna Mansur kizi

Master's Student, Tashkent International University of Chemical Technologies

Email: makhzunakhan@gmail.com

Annotation. *This paper explores the despair and aimlessness of the post-war generation in the context of modernist literature. It focuses on how the aftermath of World War I led to the collapse of traditional values and created a sense of disillusionment among individuals. The study examines the psychological state of people who survived the war but lost a clear sense of purpose and direction in life. Particular attention is given to themes such as emotional emptiness, alienation, and the search for meaning in a fragmented world. Using qualitative analysis, the research shows that the post-war generation often experienced a state of “half-living,” where life continues outwardly but lacks inner fulfillment and stability.*

Keywords: *Lost Generation, post-war trauma, aimlessness, modernism, Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, masculinity crisis, alienation, emotional restraint, identity fragmentation*

Introduction

The aftermath of World War I brought not only political and economic instability but also a profound spiritual and psychological crisis. Traditional values such as patriotism, heroism, and moral responsibility were deeply questioned. This historical rupture gave rise to the concept of the “Lost Generation,” referring to individuals who survived the war physically but were left emotionally disoriented and purposeless.

Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* reflects this condition through its depiction of characters who struggle with meaning, identity, and emotional fulfillment. The protagonist, Jake Barnes, embodies the post-war individual whose life continues externally but lacks internal coherence and direction. This study explores how post-war disillusionment, psychological trauma, and social fragmentation are represented in the novel.

Literature Review

Scholars have widely examined modernist literature as a response to the crisis of values following World War I. VanSpanckeren (1994) emphasizes that modernist



writers abandoned traditional narrative forms to depict inner psychological states through minimalism and silence.

Gray (2011) highlights that themes of alienation, moral uncertainty, and identity fragmentation became central in early 20th-century American literature. According to Tomkins (2008), Hemingway's writing relies heavily on the concept of "absence," where meaning is conveyed through what is left unsaid rather than explicit narration.

Additionally, studies on the Lost Generation underline characteristics such as aimlessness, emotional detachment, and the search for temporary escape through alcohol and travel. Tan (2016) further argues that symbolic contrasts—such as order versus chaos—play a key role in revealing internal conflicts, especially in relation to masculinity.

Methods

This research applies a qualitative literary analysis approach. The study focuses on textual analysis of *The Sun Also Rises*, examining narrative structure, character development, and symbolic elements.

Key passages from the novel are analyzed to interpret themes such as:

- psychological trauma
- emotional restraint
- social disintegration
- masculinity crisis

The analysis is supported by critical theories from modernist studies and interpretations by established scholars.

Results

The analysis reveals several key findings:

- Post-war Aimlessness
 - Jake Barnes represents the Lost Generation's lack of purpose. His life appears active, yet internally he experiences emptiness and directionlessness.
- Psychological Trauma
 - Jake's war injury symbolizes not only physical damage but also emotional and existential limitation, particularly affecting his identity and relationships.
- Emotional Restraint and Silence
 - Characters suppress their feelings, and meaning is often conveyed through short, indirect dialogue, reflecting modernist narrative techniques.
- Escapism through Alcohol and Travel



- Drinking and constant movement serve as coping mechanisms, temporarily masking but not resolving internal conflict.

- Masculinity Crisis

- Traditional notions of masculinity are destabilized.

- Jake's condition contrasts sharply with Romero's controlled and idealized masculinity.

- Social Fragmentation

- Despite constant social interaction, characters remain emotionally isolated, highlighting the paradox of collective loneliness.

- "Half-Living" Phenomenon

- Characters exist in a state between living and not fully experiencing life, marked by unrealized desires and lost possibilities.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that *The Sun Also Rises* is a powerful representation of post-war existential crisis. Hemingway portrays a generation that has lost faith in traditional values but has not yet found new meaning.

Jake Barnes embodies this condition through his emotional restraint, passive behavior, and inability to achieve fulfillment. His famous line, "Isn't it pretty to think so?" encapsulates the modernist rejection of illusion and acceptance of harsh reality.

The recurring patterns of drinking and travel reflect a cyclical existence rather than progression, reinforcing the idea of stagnation. Meanwhile, the contrast between Jake and Romero highlights the collapse of traditional masculinity and the emergence of a fragmented identity.

Ultimately, the novel illustrates that external activity cannot compensate for internal emptiness. The Lost Generation continues to move, socialize, and survive—but remains psychologically and emotionally unresolved.

References:

1. Gray, R. (2011). *A history of American literature*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
2. Hemingway, E. (1926). *The sun also rises*. New York, NY: Scribner.
3. Tan, Y. (2016). Symbolism and masculinity in *The Sun Also Rises*. *Journal of Literary Studies*, 12(2), 45–52.
4. Tomkins, J. (2008). The concept of absence in Hemingway's prose. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 54(3), 210–225.