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A. Diadechko

THE REFLECTION OF THE EXISTENTIAL DOWNFALL OF “THE LOST GENERATION” IN THE NOVEL “THE SUN ALSO RISES” BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY

The article attempts to investigate the way in which one particular novel, namely “The Sun Also Rises” by E. Hemingway, portrays the life of the “lost generation”. The term labels a group of American expatriate writers who lived and established their literary reputation in Paris in the 1920s. Their lives and works were immensely affected by World War I. E. Hemingway is among the best-known representatives of the “lost generation”. The article focuses on E. Hemingway’s depiction of the life of the young American and British people, who being disillusioned with their society’s values lead a bohemian style of life, drowned in alcohol, endless parties, chats, rage, promiscuity, and trips. The psychological and philosophical discoveries of characters’ distresses are also revealed. Hemingway’s specific objective and honest prose, far from being emotional or sentimental, is also indicated.

Key words: *lost generation, existential downfall, disillusion, absurdity.*

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Problem statement. The term “lost generation” appeared in the aftermath of World War I and was broadly used with the reference to generation that reached adulthood during or shortly after World War I and was destructively affected by it. Having witnessed numerous deaths, they became unable to believe in abstract ideals and traditional values. Deeply disillusioned, they lost their faith in patriotism, courage, masculinity, became reckless and aimless. While their lives lacked purpose, preference was obviously given to material wealth. However, in the narrower context, the term is used with the reference to the group of G. Stein’s (1874–1946) contemporary American writers and poets who established their literary reputations in the 1920s after they had migrated to Europe, mostly to France. They made Paris the center of their literary activities. They felt spiritually alienated from the United States because they considered their native country hopelessly materialistic and provincial. These young expatriates willingly accepted the name “lost generation” which G. Stein awarded them. They became “lost” as they found moral and social values of their parents conservative and irrelevant in the post-war world. What they did seemed to be a rebellion against established social, aesthetic, and moral conventions while trying to foster new values. Thus, a new literature which resulted from the protest and rejection was built in the roaring 1920s. Extreme realism and complex symbolism came instead of romantic cliches. Language became so frank that it often caused problems for censorship. New boiling ideas and forms brought recognition to new writers. Typically, the list of the most famous names includes G. Stein, E. Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T. S. Eliot (The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 2012; Oxford Bibliographies, 2018).

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), one of the best known and widely read American writers, volunteered as an ambulance driver during World War I. While serving with the infantry on the Italian front, Hemingway was invalided home after being seriously wounded. But in 1921, he settled in postwar Paris where he happened to enter the expatriate circle of Gertrude Stein, a writer and an art collector. Paris was the place where Hemingway’s first book “Three Stories and Ten Poems” was published in 1921 (Hemingway, 1923). His American literary debut followed in 1925. In 1926, Hemingway’s first major novel “The Sun

Also Rises” (Hemingway, 1981) appeared and made him the voice of the “lost generation” and therefore cemented his reputation as a preeminent writer of his time. Moreover, later this Hemingway’s masterpiece established him as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century (Hemingway, 1926).

Thus, **the purpose of the study** is to investigate social, philosophical, and psychological portrait of the “lost generation” painted within a literary context. The novel “The Sun Also Rises” by Ernest Hemingway makes **the object of the study**. **The subject of the study** is to analyze literary and writing tools used by the author of the novel while picturing his characters, the ways they render his views and intentions. The descriptive, structural and contextual analysis **methods** are mostly applied in the study.

Discussion and results. Having been published, the novel was mostly positively reviewed. Some contemporary reviewers, though being rather critical about its content and characters, complimented Hemingway’s writing style. They were impressed by his prose as they found it strikingly direct, conveying both fine and sharp atmosphere of the time. In the U.S. the novel received a tremendous commercial success in its first printings and with many more to follow. In 1927, its British edition saw the light under the title “Fiesta”. The novel has been continuously in print, discussed and analysed since then. This study of the novel has been done with a direct reference to the views of such modern authors as H. Bracken (Bracken, 2019), M. Ciocoi-Pop, E. Tirban (Ciocoi-Pop, Tirban, 2019), R. Longley (Longley, 2020), C. Monk (Monk, 2018), K. O’Connor (O’Connor, 2021) and some others.

The two epigraphs Hemingway uses to foreword the text of the novel are immensely meaningful. The second epigraph quotes a passage from Ecclesiastes and in this way makes the readers understand where the title of the novel, its main idea, and its philosophical predetermination comes from: “*One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever... The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose...*” (Hemingway, 1981, p. 11) But it is the first epigraph that needs special mentioning as it made the novel commonly recognizable: “*You are all the lost generation*” (Hemingway, 1981, p. 11). Originally, the phrase was said by Gertrude Stein in her conversation with Hemingway, her fellow writer and a pupil. With this remark she meant to label the entire generation Hemingway belonged to. G. Stein, in her turn, is known to overhear this phrase from the talk of a garage owner and his young employee in France. Thus, Hemingway first credited Gertrude Stein with coining the term “lost generation” and later he made this bitter but fitting remark widely known through his novel. As for Hemingway’s personal vision, he associated the term with a group of writers and artists whom he met and worked with in Paris in the early 1920s.

Generally, “The Sun Also Rises” is known as the novel that captures and typifies existential characteristics of the Lost Generation presented by the young expatriates in postwar Paris. The absurdity of their life results from the psychological trauma inflicted upon the characters and their peers by the war. All main characters are lost morally, mentally, and emotionally. Cynical and disillusioned, they (especially war veterans) are involved in fast-living and hard-drinking life style in order to distract themselves from unpleasant memories and feelings the war had left in them. Although they regularly go out together, wander from bar to bar, take part in the endless parties, drowned themselves in alcohol, put up pointless fights over women and sex, their rivalries are often joyless. As their lives lack meaningful foundations and even their romantic attachments are fleeting, they never feel relieved, relaxed, and contented (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2019; Oxford Bibliographies, 2018).

The plot of the novel makes the readers to follow a group of American and British expatriates wandering through France and Spain in the mid-1920s. The novel centers around Jake Barnes, the protagonist of the story, and the adventure that follows his meeting up with

the former war veterans and friends, now expatriates, who intend to watch the Fiesta and the bullfights in Spain.

During the first part of the novel, the main characters' life in Paris is accompanied by non-stop drinking, wandering around, endless chatting, and arguing. Everything that the characters do during their journeys through Paris is a constant search for pleasure, pertaining to the idea of distancing themselves from the usual routine. This starting point of the novel, when the characters chat in cafes and restaurants, conceives a projection of their behavior on their personalities. The Fiesta is the main point of the entire novel as it can be compared to the War itself. It represents a 'battleground' of constant shouting and running and sometimes dying. The Fiesta and bull fights can be considered as a way of finding pleasure in dangerous activities, sometimes brutal, referring to the human's aggressive nature and destructive instincts which are inherent. Hemingway himself is believed to see the bullfights as a man's struggle against death. During this final and most intense part of the story most of the characters' inner selves are revealed, Robert Cohn's aggressive temper, Jake Barnes' alcohol addiction, work addiction, emasculation, and Brett Ashley's promiscuity. Thus, initially perceived as a trite description of a few drunk former war veterans in a search of relaxing pastime, the novel unveils the unconscious distresses of each character: their attitude towards each other becomes combative and the bonds of their companionship shatter (Ciocoi-Pop, 2019).

Hemingway turns to sparing prose to convey the disorientation and distraction of the Lost Generation. He deliberately avoids sentimentality and flowery language in his narration. He barely chronicles the lives of his main characters, describes their daily routines, talks, parties, trips. The fundamental emptiness of their lives is conveyed by withholding the key details about their mental and emotional condition (Ciocoi-Pop, 2019). But due to Hemingway's literary talent their inner selves are easily guessed and sensed between the lines. And this adds even more fatality to the story. By knowing the background of the characters one can truly observe their behavior in detail related to whatever trauma they suffered from.

Jake Barnes, the novel's narrator and protagonist, is a journalist and a World War I veteran. After the war Jake moves to Paris, where he lives near his friend, the Jewish author Robert Cohn. During the war Jake suffered an injury that turned him impotent. Throughout the story, Jake is in love with Brett, yet they cannot form a bond as this effect on Jake's masculinity hinders his ability to truly convey feelings and to act upon them: "*I had been having Brett for a friend. I had not been thinking about her side of it. I had been getting something for nothing. That only delayed the presentation of the bill. The bill always came*" (Hemingway, 1981, p. 139). Deeply hurt by the war, Jake is searching for a safe retreat that might soothe his thoughts. He is most in pain when left alone with his thoughts and impressions. But he never reveals or shares his anguish: "*I lay awake and my mind jumping around...I was thinking about Brett and my mind stopped jumping around and started to go in sort of smooth waves. Then all of a sudden I started to cry. Then after a while it was better and I lay in bed and listened to the heavy trams go by and way down the street, and then I went to sleep*" (Hemingway, 1981, p. 36). Undoubtedly, of all the characters he is the most stoical, but he seems to admit his defeat in front of his cold and dejected being. He is portrayed as a workaholic and a heavy drinker, both being the substitutes of his life meaning. Jake finds pleasure in a non-dramatic and smooth way of living, working, and going fishing. The fishing trip description proves that Jake Barnes' life is only powered by desires and pleasures. He also seems to find solace in his usual routine being captured by his life style. It is evident that Jake Barnes truly follows Hemingway's personal code of living. He is really a man of action and enjoys small things because life is inherently meaningless and ends in death (Longley, 2020). At the end of the book, Jake Barnes is seen next to Brett Ashley, in a moment when love can be achieved. Yet Jake denies it, probably because of his psychological inability to speak his mind effectively

and Brett's inability of committing to love: "*Oh, Jake, ..., we could have had such a damned good time together*", to which Jake responds knowing that his purposeless pursuit of love is over and he accepts a new fashion in which his life may go on: "*Yes, ' I said. 'Isn't it pretty to think so?*" (Hemingway, 1981, p. 231; Hemingway, 2015).

Lady Brett Ashley, a promiscuous divorcee, is Jake's former lover. They met and fell in love during the war. Being a volunteer nurse, Brett helped treat Jake's injuries at the hospital. They are not longer together because of Jake's impotence. When Brett comes to Paris, she is engaged to Mike Campbell, a Scottish war veteran. Having lost her true love in the war, Lady Brett Ashley is absurdly searching for a new meaning by means of liaisons. She is one of the most flamboyant characters of the novel: "*Brett was damned good-looking. She wore a slipover jersey sweater and a tweed skirt, and her hair was brushed back like a boy's... She was built with curves like a hull of a racing yacht...*" (Hemingway, 1981, pp. 27–28). She fuels herself with drinking, dancing, smoking, partying and being promiscuous, easily falling in love with the young toreador Romero. She admits her endless search for love to Jake. She is quite knowledgeable of it and thinks that her fighting for love holds the position of God in one's life: "*I do feel such a bitch*" ... "*You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch. ... It's sort of what we have instead of God*" (Hemingway, 1981, p. 230). This sudden revelation comes after her departure from Romero, her young Spanish lover. Finally, she puts an end to her amorous liaison, considering this triumphant victory against her promiscuity. Although at the end of the book Brett manages to escape the endless cycle, she does not acquire a new true love again, therefore, her war trauma is indeed endless (Bracken, 2019).

Although Jake is the narrator, the first paragraph of the novel is exclusively about Robert Cohn. This boxer is Jake's exact opposite. Throughout the novel he reveals strong passion for Brett and a restless pursuit of her love. Robert Cohn's desire of getting Lady Brett to love him results in aggressive behavior and resentment from his peers. Nevertheless, it is Robert Cohn who happens to initiate the great adventure that will follow. He openly admits: "*I can't stand to think my life is going so fast and I'm not really living it*" (Hemingway, 1981, p. 17). To find worth in his life Robert Cohn also tries his hand at writing. He is constantly mocked upon by his peers for being a weak-willed man constantly controlled by his mother, wife and lover. The psychological and behavioral changes seen in Robert Cohn are the results of this constant harassment from his group of expatriates, and the fact that he cannot fulfill any of his goals though he tries to follow his code of values. Evidently, he is unable to escape, being more of an adult child. He bursts into crying more than once and cannot control his aggressive urges. One more reason which makes Robert Cohn an alien and a symbolic stranger among his friends is that he is not a war veteran (Bracken, 2019).

The fishing trip is one of the most important part of the book, as it concerns the protagonist Jake Barnes accompanied on this safe retreat by his friend Bill Gorton, who is unscarred by the war, thus his lively and jokey mannerisms and view of life, and his being unburdened by neurosis, make him the best companion for this trip. He is the only character of the book not to feel subjected to Brett's beauty. He might provide an antidote for Jake Barnes' condition but he does not (Hemingway, 1926a). This is the most serene part of the book in which the characters truly get to feel the unity with nature: "*We walked on the road between the thick trunks of the old beeches and the sunlight came through the leaves in light patches on the grass... There was no undergrowth, only the smooth grass, very green and fresh, and the big grey trees well spaced as though it were a park. 'This is a country,' Bill said*" (Hemingway, 1981, pp.110–111). The mood of the scene is extremely optimistic and dismissive of any war wound left. The relationship between Jake and Bill remains unchanged following the events of the book. In this part, Bill also jokes around talking in a pastoral tone, revealing to the reader the fact that Jake does not cope with religion:

“Listen, Jake, ...are you really a Catholic?”

“Technically”.

“What does that matter?”

“I don’t know” (Hemingway, 1981, p. 117).

Conclusions. Even today, critics and scholars are not unanimous in their estimations of Hemingway’s novel. Some of them consider it to be a satire. Others see it as a literary portrait and condemnation for aimless lifestyle of the Lost Generation. In either case, the novel is continuously studied and discussed.

Hemingway characters embody his own values and views of life. He saw the war as a symbol of the world full of pain, hurt, and distraction. His characters are deeply scarred by their wartime experiences. “The Sun Also Rises” is a deeply philosophical work with its roots ebbed in the psychology of its characters and the way they react on a daily basis, struggling with unsolved trauma. In his novel E. Hemingway manages to reveal how the generation that managed to return to life out of its ashes because of the disastrous events of World War I, succumbed to a tragic way of existence. They suffered from a mental illness, which today is known as “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder”. E. Hemingway’s writing talent, his honest and penetrating view on their despair and loss of love is full of a tragic dignity and makes the novel truly notable.

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А. М. Дядечко

ВІДОБРАЖЕННЯ ЕКЗИСТЕНЦІЙНОГО ЗАНЕПАДУ «ВТРАЧЕНОГО ПОКОЛІННЯ» У РОМАНІ Е. ХЕМІНГУЕЯ «І СХОДИТЬ СОНЦЕ»

Дана стаття є спробою дослідити, наскільки конкретний літературний твір, а саме роман Е. Хемінгуея «І сходить сонце», відтворює соціальну і літературну епоху так званого «втраченого покоління».

Історично в широкому сенсі «втраченим поколінням» називали молодих людей, які після повернення з фронтів Першої світової війни відчували себе соціально дезорієнтованими, нездатними продовжувати існувати за традиційними стандартами, що повністю втратили первісну цінність внаслідок війни. В більш вузькому літературному контексті, який залучено у даному дослідженні, цей термін застосовується до кола молодих американських літераторів-експатріантів, які обрали Париж місцем свого проживання і творчості у 1920-х роках. Е. Хемінгуей, один з найбільш відомих представників цього кола, зробив його широко відомим, використавши у якості одного з епіграфів свого першого дійсно успішного роману «І сходить сонце» (у деяких виданнях «Фієста»). Після виходу роману у 1926 р. Е. Хемінгуея було визнано «голосом втраченого покоління».

Аналіз тексту роману та образи його головних героїв, особисто Джека Барнса, американського журналіста, який працює у Парижі, підтверджують вже відомі з біографічних і аналітичних джерел особисті філософські погляди автора на людське буття, подолання життєвих випробувань, особливо під час війни та у повоєнний час. Його роман є літературною хронікою безцільного божемного життя покоління молодих людей, до якого він сам належав і яке війна понівечила соціально, морально і психологічно. Своє життя Джек витрачає на відвідування ресторанів, алкоголь, безкінечні вечірки, балачки, суперечки, безцільне блукання Парижем у компанії своїх знайомих. Але читачам абсолютно зрозуміло, що насправді їх пошук постійного задоволення, розважальний спосіб життя не призводять до розради їх душі, а лише додають фатальності й драматизму. Їх подорож до Іспанії під час Фієсти, яка була запланована як розважальна, лише посилює їх внутрішні конфлікти, напружує, що виходять назовні та відбиваються на загостренні їх на перший погляд доволі дружніх стосунків.

Авторський талант Е. Хемінгуея, як і успіх самого роману, полягає у його унікальній стилістиці, яка є максимально стриманою і скованою. Письменник показує драму своїх ключових героїв через послідовну фіксацію їх дій, реплік, бесід, сперечань, уникаючи ретельного текстового дослідження і тлумачення їх внутрішніх особистих станів і переживань. Але глибина їх внутрішнього безладдя, безпорадності й навіть приреченості є очевидною для читача завдяки щирості та відвертості автора в зображенні своїх героїв, їх покоління в цілому.

Ключові слова: *втрачене покоління, екзистенціальний занепад, дезорієнтація, абсурдизм.*