



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 3. Issue.3.,2016 (July-Sept. )

ISSN INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA  
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

TWO EPIGRAPHS WITHIN THE HISTORICAL CONTENT OF HEMINGWAY'S  
"THE SUN ALSO RISES"

Wael Fadhil Hasobi

PhD Scholar, Department English  
Acharya Nagarjuna University



ABSTRACT

The paper points out to the historical content of Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rise* and the impact of two epigraphs one borrowed from Gertrude Stein and the other from The Holy Bible in shaping the major themes of the novel. The First epigraph by Stein refers to the loss and the destruction of the generation after World War 1 while the other epigraph from the Holy Bible points to the eternal life of existence which abides through the perpetual destruction of appearances.

Key words: Disillusionment and the loss of traditional beliefs, the Lost Generation ,the meaning of life ,the physical and emotional wound , the bullfight, the upheavals and disasters of the individuals.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

*The sun Also Rises* was Hemingway's first novel and its first suggested titles were *Fiesta* and *Lost Generation* .It had been published in October 22 ,1926 by the publishing house Scribner's in the United State consisting 5090 copies and to be sold for two dollars a copy since its initial appearance. The novel got its second publication after one year in the London publication house by Jonathan Cape with the title *Fiesta*. Hemingway started to write the novel on his birthday 21 July ,1925 and it took eight and half weeks.

Hemingway began to construct the idea for his novel after his third visit to the *Fiesta* of San Fermin in Pamplona accompanied by his wife Hadley and his friends Bill Smith ,Don Stewart ,Pat Guthie,and Duff Twysden. Duff was the woman who attracted Harold Loeb and he could persuade her to spend a week of romance with fears from Ernest to be his rival in this relation. Ernest could not hide his resentment about this week of romance and at the same time he realized that he couldn't and wouldn't have Duff.

All enjoyed the bullfight there and the attention was on the great new matador named Cayetano Ordonez with an appearance and behaviour looked like the eighteenth –century matadors .At first Hemingway shaped the histories of his characters Brett Ashley ,Mike Campbell ,and Robert Cohn depending on the histories of Duff Twysden, Pat Guthrie, and Harold Loeb with an intention to make the novel about a lady named lady Ashley and Carlos Baker observes that "His new opening said that this was going to be a novel about a lady.

Her name was lady Ashley and she was living in Paris. Her story was both romantic and highly moral" (Baker,1969,P 153) .The story in his mind was to make this woman living in Paris with her second drunken husband and to run away then with the former soldier Mike Campbell and those couple would meet an American newspaper named Jake Barnes.

Then the sight of the Pamplona Fiesta filled Hemingway's mind and the matador Ordonez began to dominate his novel with an intention to make all the action in Spain. Carlos Baker noted that "He [Hemingway] was deep in his account of the Pamplona Fiesta .Ordonez, thinly disguised as Pedro Romero ,was beginning to dominate the book" (Baker,1969,p158)

But Hemingway went deeper in his thoughts to find enough material for his novel and to make Jake Barnes the hero and to begin the novel in Paris. He based the tone and the theme of the novel on two epigraphs. The first epigraph was directed to Hemingway from Gertrude Stain in a conversation by telling him "you are all a lost generation " and in her conversation with him ,she meant the Americans who had fought in the war and were suffering from spiritual alienation. The second epigraph was a quotation from Ecclesiastes which are poetic and mysterious books with a pessimistic life "one generation passed away ,and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever ...The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down ,and hasleth to the place where he arose ....the wind goeth toward the south ,and turneth about unto the north ; it whirlleth about continually ,and the wind returned again according to his circuits ....All rivers run into the sea ;yet the sea is not full, unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither the return again"(Holy Bible, Ecclesiastes 1:4)

Hemingway didn't begin his novel with primary characters like Jake Barnes, or Brett Ashley, or with the matador Romero but he instead started it with Robert Cohn ,Jake's friend ,referring to his boxing history and his social manners. The beginning of the novel came to be like this when Hemingway put in his consideration the advice of his friend F.Scott Fitzgerald about the first 30 pages to be inferior .Fitzgerald was an established author and who got great critical success for his novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and he showed his admiration of the novel from page 30 and above saying "From P.30 I began to like the novel but Ernest I can't tell you the sense of disappointment that beginning with its elephantine facetiousness gave me. Please do what you can about it in proof. It's 7500 words -you could reduce it to 5000." (Svoboda ,1983,p,133)

There was a demand for Hemingway's first novel from many publishers but Hemingway kept his word with the publisher Max Perkins at Scribner's and he informed him that he made a complete change to the autobiography of the narrator Jake Barnes and the biography of Brett and Mike which governed the first fifteen typed pages of the manuscript. Hemingway got Max's agreement for the change accompanied by great praise to the performance of the whole novel.

Although *the Sun Also Rises* was Hemingway's first novel but it granted him much of his reputation and considered to be best-known .The novel examined the way of life in Paris during the 1920s for Americans who left home to Europe after the World War I seeking for greater freedom whom they were defined as expatriates. James T.Farrell asserts that "the novel struck deeper chords in the youth of twenties ,which Gertrude Stein called lost generation." (Farrell,1945,P.29) Hemingway was able to reflect the chaotic post war and was able to create characters ,situation, happenings and mood that were as real as life and concerning this Farrell comments "The mood and attitude of the main characters is that of people on vacation .They set out to do what people want to do on a vacation. They have love-affairs ,they drink ,go fishing and see new spectacles" (Farrell,1945,P.5)

Jake Barnes was impotent as a result of a wound he got during the World War I .During his stay in a hospital he fell in love with a British woman named Brett Ashley. Jake lived his own grief watching Brett in several love affairs with two marriages .Critic Michael S. Reynolds comments "Hospitalized in England, Jake falls in love with his nurse, Brett Ashley: the sexually incapable man and the sexually active woman-a punishment that might have come from Dante's *Inferno*." (Reynolds, 1989, P.25) With a hope to get any sort of normal life, Jake struggled to find a meaning of his life through his work as an American journalist and through his friendships and his sports especially bullfighting.

By opening the novel with epigraphs carry two different perspectives , Hemingway presents the major themes that dominate the novel and creates a microcosmic tragedy .The first epigraph ,in Gertrude Stain's words, points out to the theme of dissatisfaction and aimlessness as the World War 1 has smashed the dreams and hopes of all the characters who experienced this war and who were also traumatized by the post war attitudes. In their expatriate lives, the characters fill their time with activities such as dancing or drinking to escape from disillusionment and the loss of traditional beliefs. Jake, Brett and their acquaintances seem to be wounded physically and emotionally but Jake who is the most wounded character leads to a prevalent theme drawn from the second epigraph of Ecclesiastes which is the meaning of life.

Stein's claim of destruction and loss to those young men who fought in the World War<sup>1</sup> and her claim that this war had thrown those men aimlessly has been balanced with the second epigraph from Ecclesiastes in the king James version of Holy Bible that compares the passing of generations with the sun in its rising and setting and with the shifting of the wind emphasizing that these continuous changes happen upon the earth but the earth abides. Thus the biblical quote aims to the eternal life of existence which also asserted in an essay appeared before half century from releasing *The Sun Also Rises* by Nietzsche in defining the nature of tragedy saying that " The contrast between this real truth of nature and the lie of culture that poses as if it were the only reality is similar to that between the eternal core of things , the thing- in- itself ,and the whole world of appearance : tragedy , with its metaphysical comfort , points to the eternal life of existence which abides through the perpetual destruction of appearances." (Nietzsche ,1995,P29 )

Nietzsche concluded that tragedies function as cathartic reproduction of everyday disasters resulted from the inevitability of change and his notion contradict the first epigraph but Hemingway makes use of both dominating his narrative with new perspective revealing that the upheavals and disasters of the individuals including the destruction and loss resulted from wars can be defused within the eternal life of existence.

### Conclusion

It is apparent from the historical content that Hemingway based his novel on real characters from real life and through the wounded protagonists of the novel ,Hemingway refers to the disillusionment , frustration , destruction of the society and at the same time asserts that the individual must create a code for himself from realizing the real meaning of life and this was the aim of opening the novel with two different epigraphs.

### References

- [1]. Baker,Carlos. *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* . New York::scribners,1969
- [2]. Farrell ,James T. *The League of Frightened Philistines* .New York: Vanguard press,1945.print
- [3]. *Holy Bible ,New king James Version* .The Gideons: Nashville. 1980.
- [4]. Nietzsche, Frederic ."The Birth of Tragedy. "*The philosophy of Art :Reading Ancient and Modern* .Ed. Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley .New York :McGraw – Hill ,1995. 26-35 print
- [5]. Reynolds , Michael S . *Hemingway: The Paris years* .Oxford :basil Blackwell ,1989. Print
- [6]. Svoboda ,Frederic Joseph. *Hemingway and the Sun also Rises: the crafting of a style* .Lawrence: University press of Kansas ,1983 Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley .New York :McGraw – Hill ,1995. 26-35 print