

The Sun Also Rises Theme

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Themes

Masculinity : In the novel, masculinity is shown in different ways. The men often try to prove they are “real men” through drinking, fighting, or bullfighting. Characters like Jake, Mike, and Cohn feel insecure about their manliness. Jake’s war injury makes him question his masculinity because he cannot have a physical relationship. Romero, the bullfighter, represents traditional strong masculinity—brave, confident, and admired by everyone. The novel shows how the war changed the idea of masculinity.

The “Lost Generation” : The term “*Lost Generation*” describes young people who survived World War I but felt aimless afterward. In the novel, characters like Jake, Brett, Bill, Mike, and Cohn drink heavily, travel, and party, but deep inside they feel empty. They try to escape sadness and trauma by living recklessly. The war destroyed their old beliefs. They feel unsure about love, morality, or the future. The novel shows this generation’s brokenness and their search for meaning in a world scarred by war.

Love : Love in the novel is intense but also painful. Jake loves Brett deeply, but they cannot be together because of his war injury. Brett loves Jake but chooses relationships with other men, often for passion or escape. Her affairs with Mike, Cohn, and Romero show how love can cause jealousy, betrayal, and conflict. True love seems impossible for these characters—they want it but cannot achieve it. The novel shows that love, especially after the war, is complicated and unfulfilled.

War Trauma : World War I leaves a deep scar on the characters’ lives. Jake carries a physical wound that affects his masculinity and relationships. Others, like Mike and Bill, hide their emotional pain behind drinking and jokes. Cohn, who did not fight in the war, often seems out of place because he doesn’t understand their suffering. The war destroyed their faith in traditional values like honor, religion, and love. As a result, they feel broken inside. The novel shows how the war has left a scar on them, both physically and emotionally.