The Sun Also Rises By Ernest Hemingway Essay, Research Paper

The Sun Also Rises

In Ernest Hemingway s The Sun Also Rises, Jake Barnes is a lost man who wastes his life on drinking. Towards the beginning of the book Robert Cohn asks Jake, Don t you ever get the feeling that all your life is going by and you re not taking advantage of it? Do you realize that you ve lived nearly half the time you have to live already? Jake weakly answers, Yes, every once in a while. They book focuses on the dissolution of the post-war generation and how they cannot find their place in life. Jake is an example of a person who had the freedom to choose his place but chose poorly.

This point of Jake s life is centered on readjusting himself to normal life after World War I. Jake is lost and doesn t know what to do. He has a few friends with whom he goes and drinks and eats with, but it seems at times that he doesn t enjoy this nor does he really like his friends. Jake also at times seems to realize how bad his life is, but then never regrets it. He is in love with Brett Ashley, but she is always with other people, including Robert Cohn, which makes Jake jealous. This jealousy turns to anger when Jake gets into a fight with Robert and is then knocked out.

Jake relates to the other characters only superficially because he only looks at what he can get from them. Jake wants Brett Ashley so that when he gets older he ll have companionship. Jake makes fun of Robert Cohn to make himself look better than he is by

putting someone else down. Jake also uses Bill Gorton just to keep himself busy and not get bored. Near the end of the book Jake states, Next morning I tipped every one a little too much at the hotel to make more friends…I did not tip the porter more than I should because I did not think I would ever see him again. I only wanted a few good French friends in Bayonne to make me welcome in case I should come back… This statement show what friends really meant to Jake. They were people that would be some type of service to him.

Unfortunately, Jake does not undergo a change throughout the book. Jake stays the same uncaring, selfish person from the beginning where Jake said he never thinks about how much he s wasted his life to Robert Cohn, until the last line where Brett Ashley says, We could have had such a damned good time together, and Jake responds by nonchalantly saying, Yes, isn t it pretty to think so?

And since he is still as lost in the world as he was at the beginning of the book as he is at the end, this only furthers the proof of how disillusioned the lost generation was. If the book was, in fact, somewhat autobiographical to Hemingway s life, it s surprising that Hemingway waited until his sixties to kill himself.