

**THE DYNAMICS OF MASCULINE CAMARADERIE AND RIVALRY IN E.
HEMINGWAY'S LITERARY WORK THE SUN ALSO RISES**

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ABSTRACT: This article explores the complex dynamics of masculine camaraderie and rivalry in Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*. It analyzes how male bonding among the characters, particularly Jake Barnes, Robert Cohn, and Mike Campbell, reflects deeper psychological insecurities, post-war disillusionment, and shifting gender roles in the aftermath of World War I. Drawing on gender studies and psychoanalytic literary criticism, the paper examines how Hemingway constructs a fragile sense of male identity through competition, emotional suppression, and performative masculinity. The study argues that while camaraderie among the male characters offers temporary solidarity, it is frequently undermined by rivalry, jealousy, and unresolved trauma, ultimately revealing the instability of traditional masculine ideals in modernist literature.

Keywords: Ernest Hemingway; *The Sun Also Rises*; masculinity; male rivalry; camaraderie; modernism; gender studies; post-war literature

INTRODUCTION

Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) stands as a seminal work of modernist literature that captures the disillusionment and fragmentation experienced by the so-called "Lost Generation" after World War I. Centered on a group of American and British expatriates in Europe, the novel delves into the emotional and psychological aftermath of war, chronicling the characters' efforts to reconstruct meaning and identity in a world stripped of traditional values. Among the most compelling aspects of Hemingway's narrative is his portrayal of masculine relationships—specifically, the interplay of camaraderie and rivalry among male characters. The novel's central figure, Jake Barnes, represents a wounded masculinity—both literally, due to his war injury, and figuratively, as he grapples with emotional detachment and impotence in a world where masculine prowess and emotional resilience are culturally valorized. Around him orbit other male characters such as Robert Cohn, an outsider seeking acceptance; Mike Campbell, whose bravado masks financial and emotional instability; and Bill Gorton, who exemplifies Hemingway's ironic treatment of male bonding through humor and stoicism. These men engage in complex relationships marked by mutual dependence, competition, and emotional ambiguity.

Masculine camaraderie in the novel often emerges through shared activities—drinking, traveling, fishing, and bullfighting—that seem to reaffirm male solidarity and traditional gender roles. Yet beneath this surface lies a volatile undercurrent of rivalry, particularly in relation to the enigmatic Brett

Ashley, whose presence intensifies male competition and exposes the fragility of masculine identity. Rather than serving as a stabilizing force, camaraderie frequently devolves into alienation and resentment, revealing the contradictions within the social codes that dictate how men should relate to one another. This paper aims to examine how Hemingway constructs and deconstructs the notions of male friendship and rivalry in *The Sun Also Rises*, situating these dynamics within the broader cultural and psychological context of post-war modernity. By applying perspectives from gender studies and psychoanalytic criticism, the study explores how male characters negotiate their identities through emotional repression, performative toughness, and competitive behavior. Ultimately, the paper argues that Hemingway's portrayal of masculine dynamics is not merely a reflection of male bonding but a critical exploration of its limitations and failures in an age of existential uncertainty.

CONCLUSION

In *The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway presents a nuanced and often contradictory portrait of masculine identity in the early twentieth century. Through the dynamics of camaraderie and rivalry among Jake Barnes and his male companions, the novel critiques the fragility and performativity of traditional masculine ideals. The shared experiences of war, travel, and social detachment create a superficial sense of male bonding, yet this solidarity is constantly disrupted by underlying tensions, jealousy, and unresolved emotional trauma—particularly in the context of romantic competition over Brett Ashley. Hemingway's exploration of masculinity is neither celebratory nor entirely condemnatory; rather, it is a reflection of the deep confusion and existential displacement faced by men in the aftermath of World War I. The characters cling to conventional markers of masculinity—physical strength, emotional stoicism, sexual conquest—not as affirmations of identity, but as compensatory performances masking internal dislocation and impotence, both literal and metaphorical. Jake Barnes's war wound serves as a powerful symbol of this fractured masculinity, simultaneously stripping him of conventional male power and positioning him as the most emotionally self-aware character in the novel. Rivalry among male characters, especially over Brett, not only underscores the instability of male friendship but also reveals the characters' broader struggle with control, validation, and belonging. Brett, as a liberated and independent woman, acts as both catalyst and mirror—exposing the deep insecurities and contradictions within the male psyche. In this sense, Hemingway's work subtly critiques patriarchal assumptions by showing how such assumptions fail to provide lasting emotional connection or psychological resilience.

Ultimately, *The Sun Also Rises* challenges the reader to reconsider the nature of male relationships and the societal expectations surrounding masculinity. Hemingway's minimalist style, often associated with masculine toughness, paradoxically allows for a rich undercurrent of vulnerability, loss, and longing. The tension between camaraderie and rivalry, between connection and alienation, becomes a central theme—not only in the lives of the characters but also in the broader cultural reckoning with gender, identity, and the human condition in the post-war era.

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