Ernest Hemingway, the author of *The Sun Also Rises*, explores the lives of the “Lost Generation” (Gertrude Stein), those expatriates who were left without purpose and belief after the end of the Great War in 1919. Hemingway stresses the continuous cycles of life in which humanity is stuck by incorporating a phrase from Ecclesiastes (Bible) into the title, “One generation passeth away, and another cometh…the sun also riseth and the sun goeth down.” The lives of the survivors of the war are trapped within a cycle of life until direction and purpose is restored. Jake Barnes, the protagonist, strives for this restoration of life after suffering the disastrous effects of war. Represented as a lone fighter, Jake symbolizes the type of life everyone in his generation experiences: a life of solitude and remorse caused by the constant pondering over the sufferings of war and attempts at running away from them in an effort towards finding objectives in life. Bill Gorton, Jake’s close friend, describes the stereotype developed of such expatriates by the American public, "You're an expatriate. You've lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you. You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed by sex. You spend all your time talking, not working. You are an expatriate, see. You hang around cafés" (Hemingway, 115). The constant binge drinking that has become intertwined with the life of many such hopeless souls serves the purpose of forgetting the events in life in an attempt towards a more solaced existence, "It was like certain dinners I remember from the war. There was much wine, an ignored tension, and a feeling of things coming that you
could not prevent happening. Under the wine I lost the disgusted feeling and was happy. It seemed they were all such nice people" (146). Jake, though able to persevere despite the irreversible nature of his mental and physical wounds, fails the penultimate challenge: finding purpose in life.

Jake succeeds in fighting past his desires and moving towards a more complete life but is inevitably thwarted by the prevalence of a war wound rendering him impotent. This inability to express his last few emotions of love and craving comes across as the greatest of horrors. In a world where desires are out of reach, the incompetency to consummate them scars not only the mind but also the day to day actions. Forcing himself to suppress such sentiments through heavy consumption of alcohol, Jake identifies his life as one lacking basic essence. However, he continues to make attempts towards finding purpose through love. While trying to pursue the love of his life, Brett, Jake attempts to win her by ignoring his inability to express his love for her, “‘Couldn’t we live together, Brett? Couldn’t we just live together?’ ‘I don’t think so. I’d just tromper you with everybody’” (30). Brett, though also possessing amorous feeling for Jake, realizes the major flaw that would exist in such a relationship. His incompetence would render her to search for companions to fulfill her sexual desires. Jake’s central conflict is around his need for purpose and he is initially grief-stricken with the prospect of never being able to unite with his love, a direction that could potentially lay the backbone of his future and prevent him from dying victim of the ruthless effects of war. He continuously experiences difficulties in suppressing the feelings of love that he know will never be fully consummated, “I was a little ashamed, and regretted that I was such a rotten Catholic, but realized there was nothing I could do about it, at least for a while, and maybe never, but that anyway it was a grand religion, and I only wished I felt religious and maybe I would the next time” (97). Jake is unable to pray and ask
the Lord for assistance and guidance in his life due to the desires impeding his thought process. Jake’s ensuing realization that failure to overcome such desires would only trap him further in this cycle of life propel him towards persevering against the greatest of human desires, “‘Oh, Jake,’ Brett said, ‘we could have had such a damned good time together.’ […] The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me. ‘Yes,’ I said. ‘Isn’t it pretty to think so?’” (247). Jake, though still possessing affectionate feelings for Brett, is successful in removing unattainable ambitions from his future. Though unable to surmount the challenge posed by his post war life of finding purpose through love in his life, he succeeds in a more important realization that prevents him from his own downfall: living with reality.

The conscious realization of the reality of life develops slowly in Jake’s struggle. Despite the catastrophic effects of the war on his state of mind, the importance of perseverance is clearly visible. The direction of life faces forwards towards progress only when one can personally push it towards the goal. Jake’s experiences in post-war life force him towards changing his outlook of life in a manner similar to what he advocated on the issue of relocation, “Listen Robert, going to another country doesn’t make any difference. I’ve tried all that. You can’t get away from yourself by moving from place to place… There’s nothing to that” (7). One’s circumstances shape one’s life and it is only through perseverance that one can hope to advance towards a more worthy existence. The sun will continue to rise but it is one’s actions under the situations that shape and direct the course of life. Ignoring the cycle of life and holding the faith that all will in due course ameliorate would only lead to the “Lost Generation” never finding its way back to reality. The ability to persevere in drastic times affects one’s life to an extent greater than what one can ever imagine and aid us toward a more complete existence.