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**ROLE OF NATURE IN THE LIFE OF HUMANS AS DEPICTED IN
ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S "ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE
TREES"**

Abstract:

Ernest Hemingway is one of the great writers all around the globe. He is one of those writers who represents his thought and experience into action through writings. His way of writing is simple and easy to understand. Most of his writings are associated with nature and war. He is one of those writers who participated in the two world wars. The book "Across the River and into the Trees" has got lots of natural elements present in it and the way humans behave towards nature is also beautifully portrayed by the author. The researcher here is trying to find out the role of nature in the life of humans in the book.

Full length paper:

In the book "*Across the River and into the Trees*" Hemingway beautifully portrays the beauty of relationship between the nature and human. The destruction of nature due to greed and domination can be clearly seen through waging war against each other. The beautiful natural landscape of Venice is being talked off and the romance between young lady Renata and a dying Colonel Richard Cantwell are also beautifully portrayed. The profession of hunting which was prevalent in those days are also beautifully crafted.

"It was all ice, new-frozen during the sudden, windless cold of the night." (1) Here the author displays how the natural phenomenon can impact the life of humans. The hunters were travelling by boat for hunting but to their dismay the sudden change in the weather causes

certain obstruction to their journey. Probably, it would have been easy hunting travel during the summer but it became difficult due to seasonal change and the time of their hunting. Especially hunting at night is a very difficult task. This shows that nature plays an important role in everyday life of human beings.

“It was green along the banks and men were fishing along the far shore where it ran deep.” (9) The dependence of nature for the livelihood is beautifully crafted by the author in the above line. The scenic beauty of nature is also clearly shown. The Major was travelling on the way to Venice and he saw the fresh green shrubs beautifully planted along the banks of a river and was further mesmerised by the way men were fishing on the shore. It seems those men were never ending like the course of the river.

“This wind is off the mountains now and she makes it along pretty good. It’s liable to turn really cold tonight if this wind holds and it ought to bring in plenty ducks.” (18) Here the author beautifully crafts the connection between the natural elements viz. the cold wind and the course of the river. The Colonel tells the boatman about what might happen after a short period of time. He has a vast experience of the place as he was a war veteran and participated in the World War I. He has the experience of both the cold wind and the Sile canal as these were his companion in the past. He further tells the boatman that the weather might get severe if the wind does not pass the mountain though it should be bringing lots of ducks down the mountain which will make their hunting trip a fruitful one. This shows how men treat nature and their thought of dominance over nature and its allies.

“The Colonel looked out of the windows and the door of the bar onto the waters of the Grand Canal. He could see the big black hitching post for the gondolas and the late afternoon winter light on the wind-swept water.” (39) Gondolas are the main means of transport in Venice. It is a flat bottomed boat used for navigation of city’s canals. The Colonel was looking at the beautiful water scenery of the Grand Canal from the bar. Further he could view the winter light and the black post of gondolas where the wind was sweeping the water. This shows that human uses water as a source of transportation and water provides livelihood to the gondolas drivers. Moreover, the bar was built above the water further signifies the dependence of human on nature for their needs.

“There’s a lot of oxygen in this air, he thought, as he faced into the wind and breathed deeply.” (56) The above line clearly shows the availability of forest or place with full of green

plants nearby. The Colonel seems that he could distinguish the various amount of oxygen content just by facing against the direction of wind. This shows that he was a great observer as during the war he could feel the polluted air filled with dust and smell of dead, bullet, fire etc. Oxygen is the product of nature exhaled out during the process photosynthesis by the green plants, trees etc. This shows men's dependence on nature for respiration to live.

“Just then the lobster was served.” (83) A lobster is a sea animal found mostly in the deep parts of the sea. Venice is a place with most of it on the side of water. Sea provides shelter for many water animals this in turn help the fisherman catches these and sell them for their living. After this these animals are again bought by other man, factories or hotels. In those days, lobster was a very favourite dish of Venice. In the above line too, the colonel, his lover and sergeant was served with lobster. This show how important is nature for the survival of human beings.

“There was no light as yet in the east across the Grand Canal, but his eyes could see how rough the water was. Be a hell of a tide today, he thought. Probably flood the square. That's always fun. Except for the pigeons.” (118) Colonel has a great compassion for lower order animals like pigeons. He could see the sea water turning violent and thought that it could be the indication of a high tide, a rough weather or a cyclone coming in the later part of the day. He further would love to see flood in the place. The above lines show the feelings of human for other natural animals and between themselves. Further nature has its own way to indicate the coming of danger to other beings and seems to tell others aware of the danger. The relationship of Nature-Man- Animal are beautifully shown.

“There was no promise nor threat of rain; only the same strong wind, cold winds from the mountains. Everyone in the gondola looked cold and the Colonel thought, I wish I could issue these wind-proof coats to everyone on board.” (130) when nature's call comes down, man though smart enough to tackle all the situation cannot confront to such situation. Even though the colonel wishes to help the gondola drivers from the cold winds blowing down from the mountains he could only wish but not supply the coat like his. The above lines shows that even though men is superior to all the animals living on the planet still has to tackle various kinds of threats of nature. This further shows that man who thought for the safety of his comrades should think of helping nature through various means.

“We could plant a few more trees if we found a place with a big enough garden.” (145) Here the colonel is seen talking to his lovely daughter after his daughter informs him that her mother couldn't stay there as there were no trees. He seems to have a concern about nature so, he promises to his daughter on a condition that they could plant different varieties of trees if they could find a big garden. The above line also shows man's awakening from greed of destroying nature to that of conserving nature. This is a good sign that action speaks louder than words.

“There was snow, or something, rain or fog, all the time and the road had been mined as many as fourteen mines deep in certain stretches, so when the vehicles churned down to a new string deeper, in another part of the mud, you were always losing vehicles and of course, the people that went with them.” (181) The colonel was in the midst of the war and what he could see was the destruction of nature, man and machines. During the war, people from both the sides dig up the earth and put mines in it so that anyone who steps on it will be destroyed. The weather in which the war occurred seems to have a natural phenomenon of rain, snow and fog all the time. The above lines show that the author has a great concern over the nature as it is being destroyed by the craziness of the humans among themselves. He visualises that war is not the solution of the problem of greed. To have compassion among human as well as with nature seems to be the solution of all the problems.

“Cortina is in a high valley in the mountains. Sheridan lays right up against them. They aren't any foothills to the Big Horns. They rise high out of the plateau. You can see Cloud's Peak.” (188) The beautiful scenic beauty of Cortina is described in the above lines. Any place along the sides of the mountain has a breathtaking natural beauty. To live in such a place is of great joy. From the top of the place one could see the peak of the cloud. Amazingly, this place is filled with wonderful natural elements. The author wants to portray that if one is truly intact with nature than many then one would be able to see the beauty of nature and its marvellous creation.

“The trees were black and moved in the wind, and there were no leaves on them. The leaves had fallen early, that year, and been swept up long ago.” (197) In the above lines the author wants to portray that nature is very delicate. Due to war, the seasonal changes could be seen and it seems that the autumn season has arrived very early then the previous occasion. Further it can be deducted from the natural phenomenon like the change in the colour of the trees turning to black with no leaves on the branches, the shedding of leaves before its normal

time etc., that the surrounding place is not a healthy one and it is an indication from the nature that it needs proper care.

“The boat came in slowly, breaking ice all the way, and the man picked up the wooden decoys, caught the calling hen and put her in her sack, and, with the dog slithering on the ice, picked up the ducks.” (211) Here, man’s dominance over other lower order animal is portrayed beautifully. The boatman had brought dog and wooden decoys in their hunting to use them find and search for what they came for. They used the dog to go to places where it is difficult for the people to go into and they use decoys to lure the animals towards them. The hunting trip in an unfriendly weather condition shows the motives of man to control over nature and other creatures by any means. This could prove satisfaction to man for a short period of time but in the long run conflict with nature could probably occur.

Conclusion:

Thus, the author believes that after reading the story people would realise the importance of nature and the role it plays in the life of human beings. Further, the unbreakable bond between nature and humans are beautifully portrayed. The roles of nature in the life of humans are great. They either support us by providing food or supplying woods for building houses so that we can be safe. Without nature it will be impossible for humans to survive alone. The author also believes that humans will tend to pay much needed attention towards nature in future. Hemingway further describes the beauty of various natural elements in his own style to captivate the minds of the readers.

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