

Evolution of Relationship Between Human and
Nature as Forecasted in Ernest Hemingway's
"Men Without Women"

Nongmaithem Suraj Kumar

Research Scholar,

Department of English, Nagaland University.

surnong5@gmail.com

Abstract : Ernest Hemingway was a great novelist who has shown the world about the importance of relationship between human and nature. Most of the books written by him are mainly of his personal experience. Through his works he wants to show the readers about the way of life, how the humans treat nature and the treatment of people over other people, which was prevalent in his time. The words deployed by the author are rather quite easy and simple to understand.

Keywords: Mountains, Valley of Ebro River, passionate observer of nature.

Main Paper: "*Men without Women*" is a collection of short stories where most of the settings were done in Spain and Italy. The stories mainly deal about men's competitive nature, culture over natural environment, aggression over other natural beings, war, loss of innocence, deception etc. Moreover, these stories are influenced by the author's staying during and after the First World War.

"There was much game hanging outside the shops, and snow powdered in the fur of the foxes and the wind blew their tails. The deer hung stiff and heavy and empty, and small birds flew in the wind and the wind turned their feathers. It was a cold fall and the wind came down from the *mountains*." (33) The above lines are the opening lines in the short story "In another Country". The author is talking about Milan, where in winter the sun sets very quickly. There was very less activity in the market place. Moreover the wind which was blowing down from the mountains was very cold such that the birds which were flying along the direction of it turned their feathers cold. Further the deer which were hanging outside the shops were heavy, the fur of the foxes was powdered with the snow and their tails were blown by the cold shivering wind.

Winter in natural is a phenomenon where the condition of a place is not favourable to human as well as to other creatures of nature. Further, due to the quick fall of sunlight by the evening all the shopping activities as well as the human activities were less. Thus the author believes that winter season is disliked by all the beings living on the planet. The quoted lines beautifully blend the natural activity of wind in a simple manner.

“The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out flies.” (38) The above lines show the development of society with the compromise of surrounding environment. The hills across the *Valley of Ebro River* were long and white due to the destruction of forests on the hills for the building railway coaches and tracks. Due to this there were neither trees nor shade. While on the near sides of the station, there were many bars and in one of such bar one could find a curtain made of strings of bamboo beads hanging across the open door to keep flies away.

Here the author is trying to show that man in the name of development does not see any sign of effect due to the cutting down of the trees in the forests. Further the humans could know the effect of it only when they fall above them. There was no shade as there were no trees. Further there was a disturbance in the natural habitat such that people uses natural method to keep the flies from entering into the bar.

Thus the author is trying to say that creating imbalance in nature does not only hamper in the weather conditions of a place but also the living conditions of the people nearby it. Further, the mode of development of human race implies that there could be only destruction and no development from the side of the humans. So, the author meant to say through these quoted lines that people should not only think for themselves but also about other natural beings and environment surrounding them. Humans should not be harsh on nature but develop a good relation with them by planting more trees and taking care of it in each and every way they can.

“Give me chicken croquettes with green peas and cream sauce and smashed potatoes.” (44) George was ordering the dinner at a hotel named Henry’s Lunch room. All kinds of dishes were served in the hotel. The menu of the hotel itself shows that humans have great dependence on nature, other domesticated animals for food. The green peas and

potatoes are all products of nature. Further, chicken is another living creation of nature. Though humans grow and domesticate. These items belong to nature. So, the author is trying to show through this short story “The Killers” that humans should have a cordial relation with nature for it is nature that gives and satisfy the need of humans.

“The road of the pass was hard and smooth and not yet dusty in the early morning. Below were the hills with oak and chestnut trees, and far away below was the sea. On the other side were snowy mountains.” (54) The beautiful scenery of nature is described in the above lines. Two persons were about to set on a travel trip. One of them was the author himself and the other named Guy. The author was talking about the condition of the road in the early morning. The road was clear with no dust particles and the surface of the road was smooth and hard. Further he could view few hills filled with oak and chestnut trees and the sea still further away. He could also view the snowy mountains on the other side of the hills.

This shows that Hemingway is a *passionate observer of nature*. From the above lines once can understand that the road of the place would have been filled with dust in the later part of the day. Further the author is trying to convey that the best part of the day to set out on a trip is in the early morning where one could feel the grace of the nature. Thus, the author views that one can have a good time with nature and advises the readers to set on a trip where there is abundance of natural surrounding and feel the nature and only then the importance of nature could be felt by one and thus in this way one could have a good communication with nature.

“There was a big sea running and waves broke and the wind blew the spray against the car. A river-bed that, when we had passed, going into Italy, had been wide, stony and dry, was running brown and up to the banks. The brown water discoloured the sea and as the waves thinned and cleared in breaking, the light came through the yellow water and the crests, detached by the wind, blew across the road.” (60) While the author was travelling with his friend, he came across a brown river which was running up to the banks. Here the term “brown” is used to indicate that the river is polluted due to dissolved impurities. This was an indication that nearby the river there was a factory and all the products of the factory was disposed off in the river. Further the river water polluted the sea water and the water turning yellow.

The author was travelling across a place which was highly industrialised and due to which he believes the area is polluted. So, the author believes that nature has the tendency to

show that they are in need of attention by showing different signs just like the turning of river water into yellow and brown.

Thus Hemingway through this short story is trying to show that we should have a habit of checking the natural environment so that nature can be saved from further pollution and degradation. He further believes that humans tend not to take care in such activities and he wants the readers to spread the message of conserving nature.

“It was hot coming down into the valley even in the early morning. The sun melted the snow from the skis we were carrying and dried wood. It was spring in the valley but the sun was very hot.” (105) The above lines clearly shows the arrival spring season. The author was seen coming down the valley from the snow covered hills after skiing. Further the author believes that in spring season the sun was not suppose to be hot as it should be in summer. Here one could view that the sudden change in the season is due to the environmental destruction of the nearby forest by the human activities. Thus the author conveys the message that if human wants to experience the pleasant season then one should try to conserve nature and care for them.

This shows that the author could see the beautiful outskirts beyond the town. The mill with the water wheel could be found only in the outskirts of the town where one could feel everything fresh from air to breathe in to that of the organic foods. The quoted lines describe the distinction between the town and the outskirts regarding the condition of the road and the natural elements present in both the place.

“Sometimes I found insects in the swamp meadows, in the grass or under ferns, and used them. There were beetles and insects with legs like grass stems, and grubs in old rotten logs; white grubs brown pinching heads that would not stay on the hook and emptied into nothing in the cold water, and wood ticks under logs where sometimes I found angle-worms that slipped into the ground as soon as the log was raised.” (125) The above lines describes the beautiful relation of insects with nature. The author was searching for his fishing baits and uses natural elements which were found mostly in the swamp meadows, inside the grass or under ferns. He describes that there were few insects which would not stay on the hook and disappears suddenly in the cold water; sometimes he would find wood ticks under the logs and as soon as the log was raised the angle-worms would slip into the ground. The quoted lines show that the author was fond of fishing and has great experiences with the various relations between other living creatures like insects and nature.

Like human, other living creature also has a great relation with nature. The dependence of nature for food and living could also be clearly seen. Here the author shows that not only humans but also other living creatures have a great intact with nature. Their relationship might be similar in various aspects but the main difference was that the former destroys nature while the later has a spontaneous relation. The quoted lines further show the intention of humans to use other lower creatures for their purpose and seems like humans never care for them. Further it seems that humans never tend to stop utilising nature for their benefits.

Conclusion: Thus the author shows that humans have the tendency to utilise all the available natural resources that may be either in the form of living or non-living, for their use and never tends to show their effort to bring harmony and care for them. It's just like use and throws. Further humans have forgotten the love and care they use to show nature in their early stages of human life. The nature which gave them all their needs is long forgotten and seems not to care for nature anymore. The relationship of human and nature is further degraded due to overpopulation in the recent years. So, the author beautifully shows that humans can have a beautiful relation with nature and experience the entire natural phenomenon happening around us.

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