

FOREGROUNDING  
THROUGH  
PARALLELISM AND DEIXIS  
IN  
HEMINGWAY'S  
*CAT IN THE RAIN*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores one of the stylistic strategies that Hemingway employs in his short story "Cat in the Rain", by which some key literary meanings are encoded throughout certain linguistic features. To achieve particular aesthetic effects or literary meanings, such features are crucial and given a special attention. In this respect, Hemingway uses linguistic foregrounding to urge readers to pay attention to two groups of foregrounded linguistic features that stimulate certain literary insights: the orientational features of language, or deixis, and the repeated syntactic structures, or syntactic parallelism. Consequently, linguistic foregrounding in the story is brought about by: first, concentrating on the recurrent syntactic structures, used in two suggestive paragraphs related to the wife, second, by the subtle and minute repetition of deictic expressions that are remote in terms of tense, place, and even in the social sense. This might reflect, according to the researcher's argument, the emotional rift between the wife and the husband. The analysis undertaken might not be final, however, it may show the aesthetic functions which might be ascribed to foregrounding as a stylistic strategy, this in turn would bring certain artistically relevant linguistic features to the fore.

### 1. Introduction

It is no longer doubtful that the linguistic theory can add a lot to our comprehension of literature. What literature is, how it works, and why it is there at all, are some of the questions that the theory of linguistics tries to provide answers to\*. As a result of the increasing interest in practicing linguistic procedures in order to analyze literary texts, linguistics has contributed a significant body of concepts and strategies to literary criticism (Finch, 2000:192). In so doing, the practical importance of linguistics tends to be measurable in terms of the applicability of its techniques to point out some outstanding features that can be ascribed to the literary text. Undoubtedly, such features might be missed if we are not equipped enough with an awareness of how the language works (Jakobson, 1960:350).

In this respect, foregrounding represents one of the most significant concepts widely employed by stylisticians to impart a linguistically based account of literary merit, or worth (Finch, 2000:192). In spite of the multiple-senses attributed to the concept, as it is oftenly used in text linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, . . . etc\*\*, the linguistic sense of foregrounding, as developed by Jakobson and Mukarovsky (Cook, 1995:153), holds our interest in this paper.

Under such a linguistic orientation, foregrounding is defined as being a stylistic strategy that refers to "a form of textual patterning which is motivated specifically for literary-aesthetic purposes" (Simpson,2004:50). The

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\*See Mukarovsky, *Aesthetic Function; Norm and Value as Social Facts*. London : OUP, 1970

\*\* See Van, Peer. *Stylistics and Psychology; Investigations of Foregrounding*. London: Croom Helm, 1986

concept has been made use of most in textual analysis. It is a useful tool to describe particular characteristics of the text, or to explain its specific poetic effects on the reader (Hakemulder, 2004:38). Thus, in purely linguistic terms, the textual representation involves new information conveyed throughout textual features which do not conform to the linguistic rules and norms- called *the foreground*, in contrast to those other features which are linguistically normal-called *the background* (Short, 1996:12).

This does not mean that there are some portions which are insignificant in the literary text, but those portions or parts in the foreground are more important than the other ones (ibid.). Being important, the linguistic features of these parts should be highlighted or made prominent via foregrounding. As a process, foregrounding is either achieved through the linguistic deviation of an aspect of the text from a linguistic rule, maxim, or convention, or where an aspect of the text is brought to stand out through repetition or parallelism (Simpson,2004:50).

This paper is an attempt to examine the foregrounded parts in "Cat in the Rain", a short story by Ernest Hemingway. After examining the most outstanding linguistic features of such foregrounded parts, an interpretation will be provided in a way that links those parts altogether. So, the attention will be restricted to those linguistic features (e.g. parallelism, and repetition of certain deictic features in our case) which attract some degree of foregrounding and which the author was trying to highlight as being crucial to our understanding of what he has written. Throughout this paper, it might be feasible to see how some key literary meanings in the story are made

accessible by giving rise to foregrounding through parallelism, and the subtle, careful, and repetitive use of deictic expressions. Where appropriate, some interpretative comments will also be included.

## 2. Foregrounding Through Parallelism

It is very crucial to distinguish between parallelism and simple repetition, though some linguists consider the latter as being a limited case of the former (Short, 1996:13-14). The mere repetition of whole phrases or clauses (in terms of both: structure and lexical items) is just one case of parallelism and it is a simple one which entails that everything is paralleled and nothing is varied (Leech and Short, 1981:142). Thus, repetition is one restricted device of producing foregrounding that attracts the reader's attention to some clear-cut repetitive lexical groupings or whole structures excluding any possibility of variety (Short, 1996:18).

In "Cat in the Rain", parallelism holds our concern as being a rather more interesting device that has the power to foreground the key parts of the story in a way that stimulates literary insights. Simpson (2004:50) defines it as one guise of foregrounding, besides *deviation from a norm*, which comes in the form of *more of the same*. Not only is it a process of replicating a specific pattern, but also it attracts our attention where "some features are held constant" (Short, 1996:14), like the structural features in our case, while others, like the lexical items, are varied.

The researcher's main concern is foregrounding through one specific kind of parallelism called: "*syntactic*

*parallelism*" that occurs when the structure of one sentence, clause or phrase repeats the structure of another. Two paragraphs are foregrounded in the story by the repetition of certain parallelistic structures, as the following display shows:

### FIRST PARAGRAPH

The wife liked

- him. (1)
- the deadly serious way he received any complaints (2)
- his dignity. (3)

She liked

- the way he
  - wanted to serve her. (4)
  - felt about being a hotel-keeper. (5)
- his
  - old heavy face (6) and
  - big hands. (7)

## SECOND PARAGRAPH

I want to [ pull my hair back [ tight | and  
smooth | (1)  
make a big knot at the back that I can  
feel. (2)  
have a kitty to [ sit on my lap | (3) and  
purr | (4) when I strike  
her

And I want [ to eat at a table with my own silver, (5)  
candles. (6)  
it to be spring. (7)  
to brush my hair out in front of a mirror, (8)  
a kitty (9)  
some new clothes. (10)

The parallelisms, or structural equivalences, have been placed in brackets, while the mere repetitions of the same structure and the same lexical items have been placed outside the brackets as displayed above. We have mentioned previously that parallelism, not like repetition, permits variety in the sense that it is identified by structural repetitions in which variable elements occur. Thus, we notice the examples in the first paragraph which are foregrounded by a recurrent one pattern exhibited in sentences (2), (4), (5) which consists of :

She liked the way he + V1 + N1, she liked the way he + V2 + N2, she liked the way he + V3 + N3;

in which the (V) and (N) are the only variable elements. While the recurrent pattern in sentences (1), (3), (6), (7) consists of:

The wife liked + N1, she liked + N2, she liked + N3, she liked + N4;

in which the (N) is the only variable element.

Sentences (1), (2), (3), (4), and (8) illustrate the first recurrent pattern in the second paragraph which consists of :

I want to + V1 + N1 + Adv1, I want to + V2 + N2 + Adv2, I want to + V3 + N3 + Adv3, I want to + V4 + N4 + Adv4, I want to + V5 + N5 + Adv5;

in which the (V), (N), and (Adv) are variables.

However, the second repeated pattern in the same paragraph is expressed in sentences (6), (7), (9), and (10) which have the following sequence:

And I want + N1, and I want + N2, and I want + N3, and I want + N4,

where the (N) is the only variable element.

### 3. Foregrounding Through Deixis

"Cat in the Rain", as a narrative discourse, gives us clear and deliberate indications that the deictic features, being chosen by Hemingway insofar as there is a choice,

involve foregrounding and backgrounding of certain aspects of the discourse. Lyons (1968:275) describes deixis as "the orientational features of language relative to the time and place of the utterance." In stylistics, "deixis" refers to "those features of language which orientate our utterances in time, space, and speaker's stand-point" (Finch, 2000:214). So, it involves all the linguistic features related to the speaker's viewpoint considering the latter as if it were a deictic center.

Such features cut across the grammar of English: for example, the TENSE system has a deictic function because it gives the events imaginary locations in the present or the past (ibid.). Deixis applies to space as well as time, thus, 'here', and 'there' are deictic adverbs because they presuppose and assert 'closeness' or 'distance' from the speaker or the deictic center (Short, 1996:270), "a", and "the" are deictic articles related to the unfamiliarity and familiarity of the speaker's (or writer's) view point (Leech and Short 1981: 96). Even the first-person pronouns (I), (we), and the second-person pronoun (you) are also looked at as being deictics as long as they establish a perspective that is recognizable as that of the speaker.(Finch, 2000:214-15)

In the remaining part of this paper, we shall discuss how some of the deictic features mentioned above are used in a way which attracts the reader's attention to certain portions and expressions in the text under study:

### 3.1 Tense

The most obvious instance of linguistic orientation for English speaker is the phenomenon called TENSE

(Traugott, 1980:278). In its semantic sense, tense involves "locating what we talk about on an imaginary time line, of which the speaker is the reference point."(Lyons, 1977:679) Thus the verbal forms related to the inflection (-ed) and the adverbs (yesterday), (last week), all have their own orientations in the speaker's past at the time of utterance (ibid). It is evident that tense, as an orientational system, is speaker-deictic in the sense that it is oriented in the perspective of the speaker.

However, since the corpus of this paper is a narrative discourse, we are interested in the narrative tense which is considerably different from the grammatical tense system. Going through the differences between the narrative tense and the grammatical tense in detail is far beyond the scope of this paper, nevertheless, we need to realize the major difference between them: in writing, the moment of utterance and that of reading do not co-occur simultaneously (Traugott, 1980:297), or it should be made clear that "narrator and reader are not co-present in time; narrator's now is not reader's now"(ibid.).

It is a well-known definition of narrative as being "basically a recounting of something that happened at some earlier time, at a distance from the time of narration" (Scholes, 1966:22). This process of recounting is mainly connected with the ways in which English in general uses the verbal aspect as a tense configuration to establish a sort of deictic function related to perspectives on actions (ibid: 33). To be more specific, in English, for example, (be + ing) emphasizes activity in progress, as in:

It is/was raining.

while the simple forms do not:  
It rained/rains.

It is important to mention here that not all verbal forms involve a view adopted toward an action, especially whether it is being viewed in terms of completion or duration (Traugott, 1980:297). Thus, the difference between:

It rained.  
It was raining.

is not a difference in tense (both are past), but a difference in what is called "verbal aspect". In addition to (be + ing), which expresses duration, another aspect-marker in English is (have + en), as in:

It has rained.

which indicates activity that is completed but has some present relevance, for example,

It has rained therefore I am wet.

It is true that we have to realize the difference between tense and aspect, nevertheless, both of them have to occur together in surface structure (ibid).

What holds our concern in "Cat in the Rain" is how aspect is used to signal an extended deictic function involving foregrounding and backgrounding. For example,

the progressive ( be + ing) can have a backgrounding function in contrast with simple-tense (Scholes,1966:23). In ( He was running when he fell), for example, "running" is the frame of reference or the background for the action of falling.

In "Cat in the Rain", narration is typically based on narrative clauses that are characterized by finite active verbs in the simple past tense. However, other tenses and aspects are used performing a deictic orientational function. The tense-structure in "Cat in the Rain" is indicated by simple past narrative clauses, while orientation appears in past progressive and past perfect as being not part of the narrative sequence, in other words, as being foregrounded aspects. Consequently, such past progressive and past perfect orientation stands out as a foreground which acts against the simple past tense background. This kind of tense-structure is well illustrated in certain portions throughout the story:

"The American wife *stood* at the window . . . The cat *was trying* to make herself so compact . . ."

"Liking him she *opened* the door and *looked* out. It *was raining* harder. A man in a rubber cape *was crossing* the empty square . . .

" 'You must not get wet,' she smiled, speaking Italian. Of Course, the hotel-keeper *had sent* her."

"George *was reading* again."

"George *shifted* his position in the bed. He *hadn't looked* away from her since she *started* to speak."

"She *laid* the mirror down . . . It *was getting* dark."

" 'Oh, shut up and get something to read,' George said. He *was reading* again."

"His wife *was looking* out of the window. It *was* quite dark now and *still raining* in the palm trees."

"George *was not listening*. He *was reading* his book. His wife *looked* out of the window where the light *had come* on in the square."

All clauses with finite verbs in the simple tense are part of the narrative sequence, while those with finite past progressive and past perfect are not part of the sequence in question, as aspect indicates. If we put background-foreground distinction in practice, we would find that conveying narrative action through simple past tense is the background against which some passages and clauses, with past progressive and past perfect, are foregrounded.

However, the contrast between past simple and past progressive in the narrative structure has some communicative importance: it is artistically relevant to note

that almost all clauses in the progressive aspect are related to a description of what is happening outside the window:

"The cat *was trying* to make . . ."

"It *was raining* harder."

"A man in a rubber cape *was crossing* . . ."

"It *was getting* dark ."

"His wife *was looking* out of the window . . ."

"It was quite dark now and *still raining* . . ."

This creates a sense of ongoing action, giving us a dynamic, and non-monotonous setting regarding the life outside the window, while every thing related to the life inside is conveyed through simple past narrative clauses except the husband's activity of reading that is handled by the progressive aspect:

"The husband *went on reading*"

"George *was reading* again."

"He *was reading* again"

"He *was reading* his book."

It is a suggestion that the husband remained immovable, passive, and unaffected by his wife's needs, but the only thing that he cares about is reading, this would justify the artistic use of the progressive aspect to express this activity throughout the narrative. Moreover, such a device of transferring narrative into the narrative past tense is a deictic indication of distance from the narrator and it implies that the narrator is not involved in the action.

## 3.2 Place

Other deictic markers besides tense might be taken into consideration as being deictic expressions related to place. The spatial deixis, as used in the story, comprises three uses of spatial categories:

1. adverbials ('here'/'there');
2. demonstrative pronouns ('this'/'that');
3. verbs ('come'/'go').

Because deixis is speaker-related it can easily be used to highlight particular, and changing viewpoints (Simpson, 2004:28). Insofar as spatial deictic expressions are concerned, the speaker's (in our case the writer's) viewpoint is indicated in terms of his closeness or distance from the people and place mentioned in the story. To understand the deictic functions of closeness and distance signalled by the spatial expressions mentioned above, we need to look at the following alignment of spatial deictics, suggested by Traugott (1980:275), using an abstract performative structure (I X you):

I	X	You
this		that
here		there

According to this basic system, 'this', and 'here' indicate closeness: (I have this), and (I am here) (ibid.), while 'that', and 'there' express a remote perspective and used with 'you'

as in: (you have that), and (you are there.) (ibid: 276). However simple this model might be, it gives us a skeleton for certain spatial relations in which the speaker has to select appropriate ways for the hearer to orient him/herself in such a way as to recognize and share what is being talked about.

The spatial deictics in "Cat in the Rain" establish a remote perspective background in relation to two different deictic centers: the first is the writer's viewpoint, and the second is the relationship that holds between the characters themselves. A point of particular appeal is the beginning of the story: "*There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel.*" The deictic adverb 'there' presupposes that the perspective concerned here is Hemingway's, being the deictic center, and it asserts distance from the two Americans. However, Hemingway's perspective is not fully known to us which creates a sense of 'disorientation', because we cannot fully recognize the writer's perspective. This effect of 'disorientation' has its own significance in emphasizing the nature of the two characters as being stereotypes or typical samples of the American spouses. Moreover, 'there' is repeatedly used through the narrative whenever the writer occupies his position as a deictic center:

"*There* were big palms and . . ."

". . . *there* was always an artist . . ."

"The table was *there* washed . . ."

Insofar as the writer's perspective is concerned, we can infer his attitude in perceiving the American husband and

wife as being 'remote' and 'distant' even in the psychological sense. Meanwhile, the relation between the wife and the cat can be inferred from the linguistic observation that "there", and "that" are always used by the wife, the wife is considered as being another deictic center here, whenever she refers to the cat:

"*There* was a cat, 'said the American girl'."

"I wanted *that* poor kitty."

The cat is seen from the wife's perspective as something 'remote', something she cannot get, reflecting the wife's deep frustration in relation to fulfilling her desires.

Thus, the overwhelming background appears to be that of a remote spatial deixis as indicated by 'there', and 'that'. Nevertheless, there is only one 'close' deictic expression in the last sentence which stands out as being foregrounded against the remote background mentioned above:

"Excuse me", she said, "the padrone asked me to bring *this* for the Signora."

The use of the demonstrative 'this' here has a special importance in indicating the "closeness", or even the intimate relationship between the wife and the hotel-keeper who had sent the maid with the cat.

Moreover, the spatial deictic verbs 'come', and 'go' involve more complex deictic relations in "Cat in the Rain" insofar as their directional senses are concerned. With 'go', for example, linguists distinguish three meanings:

" Hearer movement to where speaker is not:

1. Go there.

Speaker movement to where hearer is not:

2. I'll go over there at six o'clock.

(Past or future) speaker movement to where speaker is not:

3. a. I went there after the movie.

b. I'll go there after the movie. "

(ibid: 277)

But with 'come', we have the following meanings:

"Hearer movement toward where speaker is:

1. Come here!

Speaker movement toward where hearer is:

2. I'll come over there at six o'clock.

(Past or future) speaker movement toward where speaker is:

3. a. I came here after the movie.

b. I'll come here after the movie."

(ibid: 276)

'Go', particularly, is used in the story in its third (past) meaning which involves orientation toward a directional sense of distance:

"The wife *went* downstairs . . ."

"She *went* on up the stairs . . ."

"She *went* over and . . ."

"She laid the mirror . . . and *went* over to . . ."

This restriction of the verb 'go' to the wife's activity throughout the story is just a deictic orientation of her attempts to escape from the monotonous atmosphere she finds herself living in, it is a linguistic indication of her endeavor to widen the scope of her world. If we can consider such a deictic use of 'go' in its third sense as another orientational background, the sole use of 'come', in its first directional sense, is clearly foregrounded in respect of its meaning of 'closeness': " 'Come, Signora,' she said."

As far as we are concerned with the spatial deictic expressions, it is evident that the spatial background of distance is overwhelming whether in terms of the use of 'there', or 'that', or 'go'. But the directional sense of 'closeness' is foregrounded, which is reflected through the uses of 'this', and 'come', against the distant background revealed in the forms mentioned above.

### 3.3 Social Deixis

So far, we have seen how place deixis could be used to infer psychological attitudes. It is possible to view social relations as 'deictic', in the sense that we can feel 'close' or 'remote' to other people in social terms (Short, 1996:272). However, we can make a quizzical look at such a relationship by examining a few specific aspects of communication: namely, the use of naming and address terms (Wardhaugh, 2002:259).

The way we name or address another is an indication of the social relationship that we perceive to exist between us and the listener (ibid.). For example, if we feel that we are socially 'remote' to someone, we would refer to him with 'title + last name', or 'T + LN', however, we would refer to those people to whom we are 'close' by their 'first name', or 'FN' (ibid: 267), or by some other kinds of combinations which are beyond the scope of this paper. This contrast between such social relationships is reflected in the narrator's naming strategy which attracts attention to one particular foregrounded aspect of the social web that controls the relations between the characters.

Hemingway's naming strategy in "Cat in the Rain" reveals the linguistic choices he makes to indicate the relationships that hold between the characters. This strategy is exploited in a way that makes us recognize the 'closeness' or 'remoteness' of the relationships between the characters : for example, inside the hotel room, the naming formula consists of only "T":

"The American wife . . . her husband . . ."

"The wife went . . ."

"The wife said . . ."

This would assume a rather formal and socially distant relationship between the wife and the husband in a way which foregrounds a sort of a rift between them. Personal and possessive pronouns are more likely to be used by social equals who are close to each other (Short, 1996:287), thus, Hemingway refers to the wife as 'she' and the hotel owner as 'he' when the former first meets the latter :

" . . . The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints . . . she . . . his dignity . . . She . . . he . . . She . . . he . . . she . . . his old heavy face . . ."

This shift in the naming strategy from 'T' to 'the personal pronoun' coincides with the moment at which the wife liked the owner. So, the close relationship that holds between the wife (she), and the owner (he) is foregrounded this time. However, such social deixis are used to reveal certain sides of the relationships between the characters, Hemingway sometimes tends to foreground certain sides of the same character to build up a *many-sided picture* of each character. Thus, from the very beginning of the fiction, the author employs variant socially relevant expressions for the same person, for example, he uses varying expressions in third person reference (sometimes called 'elegant variation') referring to the wife:

The American wife.

The American girl.

It is not only an avoidance of repetition by the substitution of different descriptive phrases, but it is a strategy of drawing attention to two varying aspects of the wife's traits. Consequently, the woman is seen at one point in relation to her husband as "the American wife", or "the wife", while she is seen, at another point, as "the American girl" in relation to the cat or the "kitty" she is longing to get.

## 4. Conclusion

The linguistic examination of the foregrounded features in "Cat in the Rain" assumes as indispensable one major point: some aspects of the literary meaning can be ascribed to certain characteristic linguistic features in a way that linguistic observation stimulates literary insights. Thus, the foregrounded features of the linguistic texture of the story stimulate certain literary-aesthetic purposes the writer endeavors to communicate. So, in seeking an aesthetic function ascribed to such means we need to admit that the recognition of such related features can provide us with an entry for literary interpretation: some key literary meanings in the story are brought into some degree of prominence via certain foregrounded linguistic patternings. In our case, the main focus is on parallelism and deixis. The way they have been foregrounded contributes a lot to the literary meanings related to the emotional relations between characters and the setting in which the events of the story take place.

As a foregrounded feature, syntactic parallelism detected in the story achieves a sense of familiarity that dominates the wife's action throughout the story, the repeated syntactic structures echo a circular life full of sameness, a life distinguished by a recurrent rhyme, however, it gives the wife an impulse to escape from the routine environment she finds herself trapped in. This sense is also achieved by the use of certain deictic tenses that make most events inside the hotel occur in the simple past enhancing the dull and repetitive refrain of the wife's life.

One more key literary meaning we may associate with the deictic expressions used in the story is the distancing effect brought about by:

1. the deliberate employment of spatially remote deictic verbs, adverbs, and demonstratives,
2. the dynamic use of socially remote deictic expressions represented by :
  - a. the naming system,
  - b. elegant variation, or the use of varying expressions to refer to the same person.

This distancing effect reflects the emotional poverty of the relationship that holds between the American wife and the American husband, it refers to the rift that is getting worse and worse between them.

Though the linguistic texture of the story shows different degrees of foregrounding, (for example, foregrounding through parallelism is more apparent than that through deixis), we must acknowledge that the linguistic analysis of foregrounding in the story enables us to incline towards a particular interpretation.

However, it is undeniable that there is no escape from being subjective in dealing with a literary text, the linguistic traits of the story, represented by syntactic parallelism and repetition of certain deictic expressions, direct our interpretative tendency in a rather rigorous way towards certain foregrounded meanings which are artistically relevant.

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# Appendix

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## *Cat in the Rain*

By

Ernest Hemingway

There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel. They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and from their room. Their room was on the second floor facing the sea. It also faced the public garden and the war monument. There were big palms and green benches in the public garden. In the good weather there was always an artist with his easel. Artists liked the way the palms grew and the bright colors of the hotels facing the gardens and the sea. Italians came from a long way off to look up at the war monument. It was made of bronze and glistened in the rain. It was raining. The rain dripped from the palm trees. Water stood in pools on the gravel paths. The sea broke in a long line in the rain and slipped back down the beach to come up and break again in a long line in the rain. The motor-cars were gone from the square by the war monument. Across the square in the doorway of the café a waiter stood looking out at the empty square.

The American wife stood at the window looking out. Outside right under their window a cat was crouched under one of the dripping green tables. The cat was trying to make herself so compact that she would not be dripped on.

'I'm going down and get that kitty,' the American wife said.

'I'll do it,' her husband offered from the bed.

'No, I'll get it. The poor kitty out trying to keep dry under a table.'

The husband went on reading, lying propped up with the two pillows at the foot of the bed.

'Don't get wet,' he said.

The wife went downstairs and the hotel owner stood up and bowed to her as she passed the office. His desk was at the far end of the office. He was an old man and very tall.

'*Il piove,*' the wife said. She liked the hotel-keeper.

'*Si, si, Signora, brutto tempo.* It is very bad weather.'

He stood behind his desk in the far end of the dim room. The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints. She liked his dignity. She liked the way he wanted to serve her. She liked the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. She liked his old, heavy face and big hands.

Liking him she opened the door and looked out. It was raining harder. A man in a rubber cape was crossing the empty square to the café. The cat would be around to the right. Perhaps she could go along under the eaves. As she stood in the doorway an umbrella opened behind her. It was the maid who looked after their room.

'You must not get wet,' she smiled, speaking Italian. Of course, the hotel-keeper had sent her.

With the maid holding the umbrella over her, she walked along the gravel path until she was under their window. The table was there, washed bright green in the rain, but the cat was gone. She was suddenly disappointed. The maid looked up at her.

' *Ha perduto qualche cosn, Signora?*'

' There was a cat,' said the American girl.

' A cat?'

' *Si, il gatto.*'

' A cat?' the maid laughed. ' A cat in the rain?'

' Yes,' she said, ' under the table.' Then, ' Oh, I wanted it so much. I wanted a kitty.'

When she talked English the maid's face tightened.

' Come, Signora,' she said. ' We must get back inside. You will be wet.'

' I suppose so,' said the American girl.

They went back along the gravel path and passed in the door. The maid stayed outside to close the umbrella. As the American girl passed the office, the padrone bowed from his desk. Something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance. She went on up the stairs. She opened the door of the room. George was on the bed, reading.

' Did you get the cat?' he asked, putting the book down.

' It was gone.'

' Wonder where it went to?' he said, resting his eyes from reading.

She sat down on the bed.

' I wanted it so much,' she said. ' I don't know why I wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty. It isn't any fun to be a poor kitty out in the rain.'

George was reading again.

She went over and sat in front of the mirror of the dressing-table, looking at herself with the hand glass. She studied her profile, first one side and then the other. Then she studied the back of her head and her neck.

' Don't you think it would be a good idea if I let my hair grow out?' she asked, looking at her profile again.

George looked up and saw the back of her neck, clipped close like a boy's.

' I like it the way it is .'

' I get so tired of it,' she said. ' I get so tired of looking like a boy.'

George shifted his position in the bed. He hadn't looked away from her since she started to speak.

' You look pretty darn nice,' he said.

She laid the mirror down on the dresser and went over to the window and looked out. It was getting dark.

' I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel,' she said. ' I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her.'

' Yeah?' George said from the bed.

' And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes.'

' Oh, shut up and get something to read,' George said. He was reading again.

His wife was looking out of the window. It was quite dark now and still raining in the palm trees.

' Anyway, I want a cat,' she said. ' I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can't have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat.'

George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked. Out of the window where the light had come on in the square.

Someone knocked at the door.

'Avanti,' George said. He looked up from his book.

In the doorway stood the maid. She held a big tortoiseshell cat pressed tight against her and swung down against her body.

' Excuse me,' she said, ' the padrone asked me to bring this for the Signora.'