

**A Pragma- Semantic Analysis of  
Presupposition in  
Hemingway's Cat in the Rain  
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**دراسة دلالية تداولية للافتراض المسبق  
في "قطعة في المطر" للكاتب همنغواي  
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This study investigates presupposition as a pragma- semantic relation and examines its applicability to the analysis of Hemingway's *Cat in the Rain*. It attempts to reveal what is hidden between the lines in the selected short story paying special attention to the background knowledge of the main characters. To achieve these aims, the selected story is analyzed in terms of truth-value relation and negation test based on Leech's model of presupposition (1981). The lexical attitude verbs selected for analysis are *like* and *want*. It has been found that presupposition, involving lexical attitude verbs, truth - value relation, and negation test, is an optimal tool to analyze the story under study. Hemingway effectively employs the repetition of the attitude verbs *like* and *want* to reflect the real relationship of the couple. These verbs are considered a window for showing the subconscious side of the wife and the gap in her relationship with her husband. The negation of the first proposition of the sentences under study does not affect the truth of the second because negating specific situations does not mean negating the real presupposed situations. Hemingway's unique style in using "Iceberg Theory" makes presupposition a suitable device for pointing out the implicit aspects of the characters depending on the surface structure of Hemingway's writing and his choices of words.

Key words: attitude verbs, Hemingway's *Cat in the Rain*, negation test, pragmatics, presupposition, semantics, truth-value relation.

## المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة الافتراض المسبق كعلاقة دلالية - تداولية ، وتهدف الدراسة إلى بيان مدى إمكانية تطبيق علاقة الافتراض المسبق في تحليل قصة همنغواي القصيرة "قطعة في المطر" ، وتهدف الدراسة أيضا الى كشف الجانب المخفي في القصة مع الاخذ بنظر الاعتبار المعرفة المسبقة بالشخصيات الرئيسية . لتحقيق اهداف الدراسة ، تم اختيار نموذجا تحليليا مبني على انموذج ليج (1981) والمتضمن علاقة الصدق و اختبار النفي. وتم اختيار فعلين من أفعال الموقف وهما *يجب* و *يريد* لتطبيق التحليل. لقد توصلت الدراسة الى أن الافتراض المسبق هو الأداة المثلى التي يمكن من خلالها تحليل قصة همنغواي القصيرة. تم تكرار أفعال الموقف "يجب ويريد" بشكل فعال في القصة لبيان العلاقة الحقيقية بين الزوجين. تعتبر هذه الأفعال نافذة لإظهار جانب اللاوعي (الجانب الداخلي) للزوجة والفجوة الموجودة في العلاقة بين الزوجين. ان أسلوب همنغواي المتميز في الكتابة باستخدام "نظرية الجبل الجليدي" يجعل علاقة "الافتراض المسبق" وسيلة مناسبة لبيان الجوانب المخفية للعلاقة بين الزوجين والتي يمكن الوصول اليها عن طريق البنية السطحية للقصة واختيار همنغواي للكلمات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أفعال الموقف ، قطعة في المطر ، اختبار النفي ، التداولية ، الافتراض المسبق ، الدلالة ، علاقة الصدق

## 1. Introduction

Semantics and pragmatics deal with meaning, which is the most important feature of language. Saeed, (2016, p.98) points out that semantics deals with "conventional meaning", whereas pragmatics deals with "intended and context-dependent meaning". Yule (2020, p.129) defines semantics as "the study of the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences." In semantic analysis, the focus is on the conventional meaning of words rather than on the intended meaning by the speaker on a particular occasion, which is the focus of pragmatics.

Asher (1993, cited in Asher, 1999, p. 20) has an attempt to introduce a theory of the "interaction between pragmatics and semantics" by covering a dynamic semantic account of meaning. This theory is called Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT), whose key idea is that "discourse structure is an essential component in discourse interpretation and results from integrating pragmatic and semantic information together".

Asher and Lascarides (1998, p. 239) formalize an approach in SDRT that provides a rich framework for understanding and interpreting presuppositions "where semantic and pragmatic constraints are integrated." The interaction between semantics and pragmatics leads to a kind of dispute concerning the status of certain linguistic relations and phenomena. Concerning presupposition, there is a dispute whether it is "a semantic or a pragmatic phenomenon" (Cruse , 2006, p. 138) . Levinson concludes that presuppositions are "the result of complex interactions between semantics and pragmatics" and it is important for studying how semantics and pragmatics interact (Levinson, 1983, p. 225). Wilson and Sperber (1979) propose that an adequate account of presupposition should be of a semantic-pragmatic nature.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Definitions of Presupposition

The first philosopher who raised the issue of presupposition is Frege . He says that " if anything is asserted, there is always an obvious presupposition that the simple or compound proper names used have a reference . If one therefore asserts ' kepler died in misery' , there is a presupposition that the name 'Kepler' designates something" (Frege, 1952: 69 , cited in Levinson , 1983: 169). Levinson ( 1983 :167) mentions that presupposition is a kind of pragmatic inference that is based closely on the " actual linguistic structure" of a sentence and depending on context factors.

Yule ( 1996 :25 - 27) describes a presupposition as an implicit assumption by the speaker that is prior to making an utterance. Therefore, "speakers, not sentences, have presuppositions." Presupposition implies a relation between two propositions. For example, sentence 1.a contains the proposition (*p*) and sentence 1.b contains the proposition *q* , then by using the symbol  $\gg$  to mean presuppose , the relation can be represented in 1.c :

1. a. Mary's dog is cute. (= *p*)
- b. Mary has a dog. (= *q*)
- c.  $p \gg q$

Finch ( 2005: 165) defines presupposition as " a term used in both semantics and pragmatics to refer to assumptions implicitly made by speakers and listeners that are necessary for the correct interpretation of utterances." For example :

2. a. I am sorry it is raining.  
presupposes

b. It is raining.

Cruse (2006, p. 138-139) defines presupposition in terms of a proposition and truth. It is a proposition whose truth is accepted as true by the speaker although this is not clearly stated. For example:

- 3.a ***Pete has stopped smoking***

presupposes that

- b. ***Pete was previously a smoker***

Mey (2001 : 184) states that the concept of presupposition was first developed in a "semantic environment". Presuppositions are probably "best viewed as complex dispositions which are manifested in linguistic behavior" (Stalnaker ,1972, pp. 387–8, cited in Atlas, 2006: 33) .

## 2.2 Approaches to Presupposition

Leech (1981, p. 278) considers presupposition as problematic category. He proposes two approaches to presupposition. The first is logical in which presupposition is defined in terms of truth and falsehood, and the second is pragmatic in which presupposition is defined in terms of speech act related to the speaker and hearer's beliefs. Leech argues for an in-between position, i.e. "mixed logical and pragmatic account of presupposition."

Saeed (2016, p. 98) agrees with Leech in considering the two approaches to view presupposition. The first is semantic and the second is pragmatic. According to the semantic approach, presupposition is viewed as a truth condition and "meaning is seen as an attribute of sentences rather than something constructed by the participants".. Sentences are viewed as " external objects ". The pragmatic approach views "sentences as the utterances of individuals engaged in a communication act".

Crystal (2008,pp.384-385) has the same view concerning the position of presupposition. He argues that the meaning of an utterance is affected by many factors related to the communicative context and logical relations. Thus, presupposition has attracted the interest of linguists partly in semantics and partly in pragmatics. The question is still open concerning the extent to which presupposition is restricted to "certain kinds of logical or behaviourally demonstrable factors"..

## 2.3 Presupposition Vs. Entailment

Presupposition and entailment are used in linguistic analysis to describe relations between propositions. Yule (1996, pp. 25 - 27) distinguishes between them considering presupposition as a pragmatic relation and entailment as a semantic one. He mentions that presupposition is a speaker – dependent concept, whereas entailment is a sentence-dependent concept. Leech (1981, pp. 278-299) makes a distinction between entailment and presupposition in terms of truth-value:

- a. X entails Y means that:  
If X is true, Y has to be true  
If X is false, Y can be either true or false
- b. X presupposes Y means that:  
If X is true, Y has to be true  
If X is false , Y has to be true

The difference between entailment and presupposition can be captured by "negation test ". Saeed (2016, p. 98) agrees with Leech considering presupposition and entailment as semantic relations. He asserts that semantic presupposition, in some respects, seems to be like entailment in being a fairly automatic relation that involves no reasoning nor contextual effects. The main difference between presupposition and entailment can be captured by the process of negation in which negating a presupposing sentence "allows the presupposition to survive" but negating an entailing sentence fails entailment. Saeed's view of presupposition as "a truth relation" has the following truth table :

p		q
T	→	T
F	→	T
T or F	←	T

Entailment, on the other hand, has the following truth table :

P		q
T	→	T
F	→	T or F
F	←	F
T or F	←	T

The difference between presupposition and entailment relations is explained in the following examples using the negation test:

4.a. I saw my father today.

Entails

b. I saw someone today.

If we negate ( 4. a) to form (5. a) , it no longer entails 4. b:

5.a. I didn't see my father today.

b. I saw someone today.

Compare with the following presupposition pair:

6. a. The mayor of Liverpool is in town.

Presupposes

b. There is a mayor of Liverpool.

If we negate (5.a) to form (6. A) the resulting sentence still has the presupposition, shown as (5. b):

7. a. The mayor of Liverpool isn't in town today.

Presupposes

b. There is a mayor of Liverpool.

Yule( 1996, pp. 26-27) refers to this property of presupposition as constancy under negation.

## 2.4 Presupposition Triggers

Presupposition triggers are aspects of surface structures to which presuppositions can be tied. They can be described as presupposition-generating linguistic items and sources of presuppositions (Levinson ,1983, pp.179,181).

A presupposition triggered by a word or structure in a sentence is supposed to be background information assumed to be already known by the addressee, so it does not count as having been communicated. It is akin to the "encoded-in-the-language meanings" that characterize semantics (Griffiths, 2006 , pp. 143-144). Presuppositions are probably "best viewed as complex dispositions which are manifested in linguistic behavior" (Stalnaker ,1972, pp. 387–8, cited in Atlas, 2006: 33) . Palmer ( 1981, p.170) suggests that presupposition is associated with certain features of specific lexical items, which determine presuppositions. For example :

3. a. I cleaned the room .

Presupposes

b. The room was dirty.

4. a.I didn't clean the room.

Presupposes

b.The room was dirty.

Levinson (1983, p. 206) refers to the conventionality of presuppositions. He points out that even if presuppositions are not semantic inferences, they are considered part of the conventional meaning of the linguistic expressions. Thus, some linguistic expressions trigger presuppositions.

The most important triggers are proposed by Karttunen who identified about 31 kinds of Presupposition . These Triggers or sources of presuppositions are summarized by Levinson (1983, 181-185) , Yule ( 1996, 26-30), Chapman ( 2011 : 34- 35)and

Saeed (2016, pp.100-103):

The main presupposition triggers are the following :

1. Definite description
2. Structural presupposition
  - a. Cleft sentences
  - b. Pseudo-cleft
  - c. Time adverbial clauses
  - d. Comparative clauses
3. Lexical triggers
  - a. Factive verbs
  - b. Non-factive verbs
  - c. Verbs of judgements
  - d. Aspectual verbs
  - e. Iterativeness

### 2.5 Hemingway's cat in the rain

Hemingway is known for his unique style in writing using "Iceberg Theory" whose main principle is that the surface meaning represents 1/8 of reality, whereas the deeper meaning represents 7/8 of reality that is inferred by the reader. Hemingway chooses this theory for passing his intention and message to the reader because he thinks that using iceberg principle makes his work stronger and more effective.

Hemingway in this short story presents an American couple who stay in an Italian hotel in a rainy weather. The wife apparently wants many minor things, but in fact, behind her physical demands, there are many possible meanings and symbols that express her real desires and her relationship with her husband. She needs care, protection, attention, and freedom .

Hemingway (1999, p. 134) explains the principles of the ice-berg theory and the purpose behind developing it in his writing:

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing. A writer who appreciates the seriousness of writing so little that he is anxious to make people see he is formally educated, cultured or well-bred is merely a popinjay.



Hemingway offers in 'Cat in the Rain' the relation between identity and desire. He emphasizes that identity is inseparable from desire (Thomières , 2013:1). Hussein (2019, p. 60) describes the reaction of the American couple to the circumstances in 'Cat in the Rain'. They react differently according to their own personality and inner structure. The husband shows a passive acceptance. He always neglects his wife's desires and spends his time reading, whereas his wife's response reflects her inner struggle and "debate on her own identity". The cat that she sees in the rain triggers an inner conflict that reveals her identity crisis. The wife's idea of saving the cat is indeed, saving herself in an unconscious way (Zhang, 2016, p. 2).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. The Adopted Model of Analysis

The study adopts Leech's model (1981 ) of semantic presupposition. It is employed to show how semantic presupposition can reveal the couple's real relationship in Hemingway's *Cat in the Rain*, and to identify the semantic relation between the proposing and the proposed sentences. To achieve this, presupposition as a truth relation and negation test are applied as follows:

Step 1: "If p (the presupposing sentence) is true then q (the presupposed sentence) is true".

Step 2: "If p is false, then q is still true."

#### 3.2 Data collection

To achieve the goal of the study, the lexical verbs like and want are selected from Hemingway 's short story *Cat in the Rain* . The story is written in less than two pages . The verb *like* is repeated 7 times and the verb *want* 16 times.

Hemingway's repetition of the verbs *want* and *like* helps to establish the background of the couple's relationship.

#### 3.3 Analysis of Data

Presupposition implies a relation between " two propositions", which are (*p*) and (*q*) and the relation between them can be represented by using the symbol  $\gg$  to mean presuppose. The negation of the first proposition is represented by (*not p*) and the second proposition (*q*) .

Step 1: "If p (the presupposing sentence) is true then q (the presupposed sentence) is true".

Step 2: "If p is false, then q is still true."

The analysis is restricted to the attitude verbs *like* and *want*. The first seven sentences contain the verb *like* and the other sentences contain the verb *want*..

1. a. "She liked the hotel-keeper." P

$\gg$  She likes anyone who respects her and takes care of her because she lacks love, emotional attention , and care . q

$p \gg q$

b. "She didn't like the hotel-keeper." not p

$\gg$  She likes anyone who respects her and takes care of her because she lacks love, emotional attention, and care . q

Not p  $\gg$  q

Pragmatically, she likes anyone who respects her and takes care of her because she lacks respect, love , and emotional attention. The hotel-keeper stood up and bowed to her when she passed . The use of the verb *like* is intended to reflect her need to love and respect. Thus, the negation test shows that she likes anyone who respects her, not necessarily the hotel-keeper.

2. a. "The wife liked him." p

p

$\gg$  The wife likes the man who makes her feel safe and protected. q

$p \gg q$

b. "The wife didn't like him." not p

not p

>> The wife likes the man who makes her feel safe and protected . q  
Not p >> q

Pragmatically, she likes anyone who loves her because she lacks love and emotional attention. The use of the verb *like* is intended to reflect her need to love and care. Thus, the negation test shows that she likes anyone who loves her, not necessarily the hotel-keeper.

3. a. "She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints. " p  
>>The hotelkeeper has a serious way to receive any complaints. q  
p>>q

b. "She didn't like the deadly serious way he received any complaints. " p  
>> The hotelkeeper has a serious way to receive any complaints . q  
not p>>q

Her husband lacks any way to receive any complaints. He neglects her desires and complaints. Therefore, the negation test shows that she likes anyone who receives her complaints, not necessarily the hotel-keeper.

4. a. "She liked his dignity ." P  
>> The hotel-keeper has dignity. q  
p>>q  
b. "She didn't like his dignity. " Not p  
>> The hotel-keeper has dignity. q  
not p>>q

The negation test shows that she likes dignity to be the trait of her husband. The hotel-keeper has dignity but the problem is not with the hotel-keeper . It is with her husband.

5. a. "She liked the way he wanted to serve her . " p  
>> He wanted to serve her. q  
p>>q  
b. "She didn't like the way he wanted to serve her. " Not p  
He wanted to serve her. q  
not p>>q

The hotel-keeper wanted to serve her. She likes to be served but her husband does not do that. He neglects her and he spends his time reading.

6. "She liked the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. " p  
>> He felt about being a hotel-keeper seriously. q  
p>>q  
b. "She didn't like the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper." Not p  
He felt about being a hotel keeper seriously. q  
Not p>>q

The hotel- keeper likes his job and feels seriously about being a hotel-keeper.  
Her husband has no job and he spends his time reading.

7. a. "She liked his old, heavy face and big hands. " P  
>> He has old , heavy face and big hands . q  
p>>q  
b. "She didn't like his old, heavy face and big hands . " Not p  
He has old , heavy face and big hands . q

She likes certain features in a man that do not exist in her husband.

The writer uses the present participle form of like (liking) in the following sentence :

Liking him she opened the door and looked out

This sentence shows that she opened the door for new life when she likes the mentioned features and qualities in the hotel-keeper.

The following sentences contain the verb *want* , which triggers the hidden desires and needs of the wife.

8. a. "I wanted it ( the cat) so much. " p  
>> She wants something so much. q  
p>>q  
b. "I didn't want it (the cat) so much." Not p  
>> She wants something so much. q  
Not p>>q

The context of the first utterance describes the inner structure of the woman, which is triggered by the cat that she sees in the rain . The use of (so much) implies her emergent need to something that she is emotionally involved with. The relationship of the couple lacks emotion, love, and harmony.

9. a. "I wanted a kitty ." p  
>> She wanted something. q  
p>>q  
b. "I didn't want a kitty ." Not p  
>> She wanted something. q  
Not p>>q

The use of the verb *want* and the indefinite noun *a kitty* indicates that she wants new things and she wants a change in her life. Her husband always neglects her desires .

10. a. "I wanted it so much. " p  
>> She wanted something so much. q  
p>>q  
b. "I didn't want it so much." Not p  
>> She wanted something so much . q  
Not p>>q

The wife wants to save the cat and protect it from the rain. The cat and the wife need protection and care.

The hotel-keeper tries to rescue the wife from the rain and she tries to rescue the cat.

11. "I don't know why I wanted it so much." p  
>> She wanted something so much. q  
p>>q  
b. "I know why I wanted it so much." Not p  
>> She wanted something so much. q  
Not p>>q

The wife wants the cat but she does not know why she wants it so much. Her need to the cat reflects her inner need to be protected and respected. Her husband offers no real concern for her.

12. a. "I wanted that poor kitty. " p  
>> She wanted something. q  
p>>q  
b. "She didn't want that poor kitty. " Not p  
>> She wanted something. q



The wife uses "that poor kitty" referring to her need to a baby. The relationship of the couple lacks fertility . She is longing for having the cat because she needs a baby.

13. a. "I want to pull my hair back tight." p  
 >> "She does not have long hair." q  
 p>>q
- b. "She doesn't want to pull her hair back right." Not p  
 She does not have long hair. q  
 Not p>>q

The wife tries to create a conversation with her husband. She has short hair because her husband likes it the way it is. She wants to have long hair and pull it back right . She wants to change her appearance. The negation test does not affect her desire to have long hair.

14. a. "I want to have a kitty." p  
 >> She does not have a kitty (a baby). q  
 Not p>>q
- b. "She does not want to have a kitty." Not p  
 >> She does not have a kitty (a baby) . q

The wife uses " a kitty " referring to her need to a baby . The relationship of the couple lacks fertility. She is longing for having the cat because she needs a baby.

15. a. "I want to eat at a table with my own silver." p  
 >> She does not eat at a table with her own silver. q  
 p>>q
- b. "I don't want to eat at a table with her own silver." Not p  
 >> She does not eat at a table with her own silver . q  
 Not p>>q

The wife fails to have the cat and long hair, therefore she wants "to eat at a table with her own silver" . She does not do this before.

16. "I want candles." p  
 >> She does not have candles . q  
 p>>q  
 "She does not want candles. " Not p  
 She does not have candles . q  
 Not p>>q

The wife wants candles. The candle symbolizes "light in the darkness", hope, and comfort. She feels that her life is dark and hopeless.

17. a. "I want it to be spring. " P  
 >> It is not spring. q  
 b. I don't want it to be spring. Not p  
 >> It is not spring. q  
 Not p>>q

The wife prefers spring to winter and fall. Spring is the most positive season. It refers to hope, whereas winter and fall are associated with rain and bad weather. Her choice reflects her need to hope and comfort.

18. a. "I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror. "      p  
 >> She does not have long hair.      q  
       p>>q  
 b. "I don't want to brush my hair. "      Not p  
 >> She does not have long hair.      q  
       Not p>>q

The wife wants to have long hair but her husband likes short hair. She wants to feel free and have her individuality . She refuses the man's dominating power.

19. a. "I want a kitty."      p  
 >> She does not have a kitty.      q  
       p>>q  
 b. "I don't want a kitty. "      Not p  
 >> She does not have a kitty.      q  
       Not p>>q

The wife uses " a kitty " referring to her need to a baby . The relationship of the couple lacks fertility . She is longing for having the cat because she needs a baby.

20. a. "I want some new clothes. "      p  
 >> She has old clothes.      q  
       p>>q  
 b. "She doesn't want new clothes. "      Not p  
 >> She has old clothes.      q  
       Not p>>q

The wife needs new clothes and she wants to change her appearance. Her husband does not fulfil her material desires, but instead he asks her to "shut up and get something to read".

21. a. "Anyway, I want a cat. "      p  
 >> She wants something.      q  
       p>>q  
 b. "She does not want a cat. "      Not p  
 >> She wants something.      q  
       Not p>>q

22. a. "I want a cat. "      p  
 >> She wants something.      q  
       p>>q  
 b. "She does not want a cat. "      Not p  
 >> She wants something.      q  
       Not p>>q

23. a. "I want a cat now. "      p  
 >> She does not have a cat.      q  
       p>>q  
 b. "She does not want a cat now. "      Not p  
 >> She does not have a cat.      q  
       Not p>>q

The last three sentences have the same point. The wife uses the adverbs *anyway* and *now* to emphasize her needs. She wants a cat but indeed, she needs something else. She needs love, care, protection, change, and a child. She uses the adverb *now* to show her urgent need to care, emotion, love, and protection.

## 3.4 Discussion of Analysis

Hemingway's Iceberg theory makes the reader understand the kind of relationship between the wife and her husband by the choice of words. Using the verb *like* repeatedly by the narrator to describe the feeling of the wife towards the hotel - keeper is intended to compare the hotel-keeper's personality with her husband's. There is no matching. The wife also keeps using the verb *want* repeatedly to express her physical and emotional needs to love, change, attention, care, respect, a baby, and protection, which reflect the unraveling relationship with her partner. The wife's behavior indicates that she feels lonely, unwanted, unhappy, and neglected. She sympathizes with the cat because both are similar in many respects. They share the feeling of lacking protection and care. As the cat hates the rain, the wife hates the surrounding environment.

The analysis reveals the fruitfulness of using presupposition to enhance the understanding of the inner side of the wife and her relationship with her husband in *Cat in the Rain*. The first proposition (p) of the sentences under study represents a specific example of what the wife lacks, whereas the second (q) represents the wife's real desire and need. Thus, the negation of the first proposition does not affect the truth of the second because negating specific situations does not mean negating the real presupposed situations.

## Conclusions

According to the previous analysis, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Presupposition is a powerful tool for revealing the deep aspects of the couple's relationship.
2. The repetition of the attitude verbs *like* and *want* helps to establish the background of the couple's relation. The verbs *like* and *want* have the power to trigger the hidden wishes and needs of the wife.
3. The iceberg theory of Hemingway can be well understood by the application of the negation test and truth-value relation implied in presupposition.
4. The negation test and truth-value relation are effective in showing the inner side of the wife. Negating the first proposition does not affect the truth of the second one in the sentences under study.
5. The iceberg theory of Hemingway can be well understood by the application of the negation test and truth value relation implied in presupposition.

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## Appendix

### Hemingway's Cat in the Rain

"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(3). 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, l' 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 cosa, 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 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 . ‘I like it the way it is.’

‘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.’ ”