

A literary analysis of cat in the rain versus indian camp

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



CAT IN THE RAIN versus INDIAN CAMP
Essay: Discuss a textual element / textual elements that seem(s) to simultaneously occupy the helper and opponent positions (as defined in Greimas actantial model) in "Cat in the rain" and "Indian Camp" by Ernest Hemingway.

Greimas states that elements in a text fulfil a position in his actantial model. We will discuss some textual elements in both "Cat in the rain" and "Indian Camp" by Ernest Hemingway that simultaneously occupy the helper and opponent positions. The helper promotes and the opponent opposes the subject's object. "Cat in the rain" is a story that deals with an American wife and her husband spending their holiday in an Italian hotel. According to Greimas model the wife is the subject. George, her husband is the helper. The girl sees a cat under a table in the rain outside and she says "I'm going down and get that kitty" (line 17), but her husband wants to help her and offers "I'll do that" (line 18). Here the object is "to get that cat" and the helper is George, who supports her. When she decides that she herself will get that cat, he wants to be protective and says: "Don't get wet" (line 19).

After her failed attempt of getting that cat, the wife goes back to their room. When she enters the room George puts down his book and asks her if she was able to get the cat. By putting his book down, he shows that he is interested in what she has on her mind. Another argument that George is the helper, is that on the moment the girl says that she doesn't like herself the way she looks, he confirms that she is beautiful, that he likes her the way she is (line 73). Although it first seemed that George is the helper, when we read carefully, we see that George can also fulfil the position of the opponent

in Greimass actantial model. When the girl sees a cat in the rain, she feels the urge to protect that cat. This is what we call ~childish behaviour: usually only children want to protect pets in the rain. Adults know that rain does not do any harm to pets living on the street. So the American girl behaves as a ~girl rather than a ~wife, she is more a child than an adult. George, on the other hand, behaves as a grown-up. He doesn't want to save a poor cat in the rain, he doesn't feel the need to take care for a cat.

After her nagging all the time, he has enough of it and says: 'Oh shut up and get something to read (line 87). He gets tired of her childish behaviour. On this point of view George fulfils the position of the opponent. George and his wife are on different, opposite levels: He already is a man, she is still a girl. In ~Indian Camp, Nick, his father and his uncle George go to an Indian lady who is trying to get a baby. From one point of view, we can say that the Indian lady is the subject according to Greimass model and ~having a baby is the object. Nick's father, a doctor, is the helper, he helps the lady to give birth. He operates her: 'Later when he started to operate (!) (line 64). We can also say that the doctor is the opponent.

Normally, when a woman is giving birth doctors are nice and friendly. In this story on the other hand, Nick's father treats the Indian lady almost like an animal: 'Doing a Caesarean with a jack-knife and sewing it up with nine-foot, tapered gut leaders (line 89-90). After the doctor has delivered the baby, 'he was feeling exalted and talkative(!) (line 86). This is also a sign of the doctor's superior and opposite feelings towards the Indian people. From another point of view, we can say that in this story Nick is the subject and

the object is ~a lesson of life, of birth and death. Here again the father is the helper, he gives a description of everything he does during the operation. Nick is slowly learning new things.

But the father can also be the opponent. Hes learning Nick wrong things. During the operation of the woman, he was sometimes so cruel that Nick had to look away: œHe was looking away so as not to see what his father was doing (line 71). Treating a woman like an animal is not a right lesson in life.

After the analysis of these two stories, we can see that there are textual elements which can simultaneously occupy the helper and the opponent positions. Greimass actantial model is useful to analyse stories