

The impact of setting on the Lucifer effect in “the most dangerous game”

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the significant impact of social setting on Rainsford’s Lucifer Effect in *The Most Dangerous Game* – a short story-written by Richard Connell in 1924. In his initial conversation with General Zaroff, Rainsford revolted at the idea of hunting or murdering human beings, which revealed his true nature although he himself was a well-known hunter whose book was even read by General Zaroff. Despite his will, General Zaroff endangered his life by forcing him to play a sadistic game of survival. During the three days he had to either win or lose this game, Rainsford faced a loss of personal identity, a struggle between life and death, helplessness, dehumanization, desperation, deprivation of sleep as well as privacy and a constant fear due to General Zaroff’s surveillance. Such feelings which resulted from the social surroundings of the island, fundamentally impacted Rainsford psychologically and led to his metamorphosis to evil, or in other words: turning into General Zaroff.

Keywords: The Lucifer Effect, Rainsford, General Zaroff, Setting, Hunter, Hunted, Evil, The Most Dangerous Game

Introduction

The early twentieth century is the time when “the new pressures of the age – the accelerating growth of cities, the Great War of 1914–18, the financial boom and consequent slump, the Wall Street Crash of 1929 – led to a fiction which reflected the breakdown of older certainties: the loss of the solidarity of small, cohesive communities, and increasing social mobility among the middle and working class. The intellectual changes of the period... led to a sense of human nature and society cut off from its older roots”^[1]. It was also when “the culmination of the Naturalistic tradition in fiction.... [resulted in the themes of] deterministic forces... a vague ‘Fate’, as overpowering influences in a ... poignant, tough, and

undeniably real, way”^[2] and a time that Theodore Dreiser, a naturalist, refers to as “a sense of the fumbling, yearning, confused response to the simultaneously enchanting, exciting, ugly, and dangerous metropolis that had become the familiar residence for such large numbers of Americans by the turn of the century”. Consequently, it led to Imagist movement like Hemingway’s whose “protagonists have been wounded in some important way, and many of them, having lost faith in traditional values, strive to establish new codes to guide their behavior”^[3]. Therefore, Twentieth century American short stories are “unified by a continuing narrative voice, by the setting, and by coalescent motifs, these stories also feature a dominant central character... whose quest for self-realization and maturity creates a primary line of development”^[4]. In his quest, Rainsford- the protagonist in *The Most Dangerous Game*-undergoes The Lucifer Effect, which is the metamorphosis of good into bad; as in Lucifer into Satan, who ‘avenged against God by corrupting God’s greatest creation; humankind’^[5]. In other words, “it is the processes of transformation at work when good or ordinary people do bad or evil things”. In this definition, evil means: “intentionally behaving in ways that harm, abuse, demean, dehumanize, or destroy innocent others- or using one’s authority and systemic power to encourage or permit others to do so on your behalf”^[5]. The term “The

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Lucifer Effect” was first introduced by Dr. Philip Zimbardo- a social psychologist- who closely observed the daily behaviors of volunteer prisoners and prison guards in the harsh situation of The Stanford Prison for seven days. After the experiment, he carefully analyzed The Stanford Prison’s impact on prisoners’ and prison guards’ daily behavioral changes into evil. In this research paper, Rainsford metaphorically represents the prisoners, General Zaroff stands for the prison guards and the Ship-Trap island in the Caribbean Sea signifies The Stanford Prison. Similar to Zimbardo’s experiment, the impact of the Ship-Trap island on Rainsford’s metamorphoses into evil will be closely analyzed as well as how it has already shaped and transformed General Zaroff into evil. The evil qualities that Rainsford will eventually possess, will indeed be compared to General Zaroff’s, as the representation of evil.

The Impact of Setting on Rainsford’s Lucifer Effect

To begin understanding the roots of The Lucifer Effect, social psychologists first perform a social analysis to “understand the causes of any puzzling, unusual behavior”. This is done by asking “what questions”; For instance “what conditions could be contributing to certain reactions? What circumstances might be involved in generating [such a] behavior? What was the situation like from the perspective of the actors?”^[5]. The answers to such what questions lead to the motives and root causes of evil deeds. Likewise, the following questions can be posed regarding Rainsford’s behavioral changes: What conditions led him to becoming an evil? What events changed his morality? What caused him to turn into a murderer while he claimed he was only a hunter and not a murderer? What made him take over General Zaroff’s bed? In order to answer these what questions, the setting of the narrative both before and after reaching the island will be examined thoroughly. In order to analyze the setting, it is worth considering Abram’s definition of this literary term first; “the overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of a single episode or scene within such a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place...The Greek term *opsis* ("scene," or "spectacle") is now occasionally used to denote a particular visible or picturable setting in any work of literature”^[6].

The first step towards understanding the impact of setting is locating the route of Rainsford’s voyage clearly for the reason that “fiction happens in space, is the product of interrelations, emerges in the dimension of coexistence, and is always in a state of becoming”^[7]. Thus, understanding the “interrelations” between his intended destination and the final destination is a step forward. Since Rainsford is from New York –for he introduces himself; “I’m Sanger Rainsford from New York”, this will be regarded as the beginning point of his journey. The destination is originally the Amazon for hunting jaguars and as Whitney mentions that they would arrive “in a few days”, therefore the Ship-Trap island cannot be too close to the Amazon. On the other hand, the Ship-Trap island is “off there

to the right”^[8] in the Caribbean Sea, but there are not many islands which can be tracked on the right side of this supposed course. Hence, based on these pieces of information, the route and the approximate location of Ship-Trap island would resemble Figure 1.

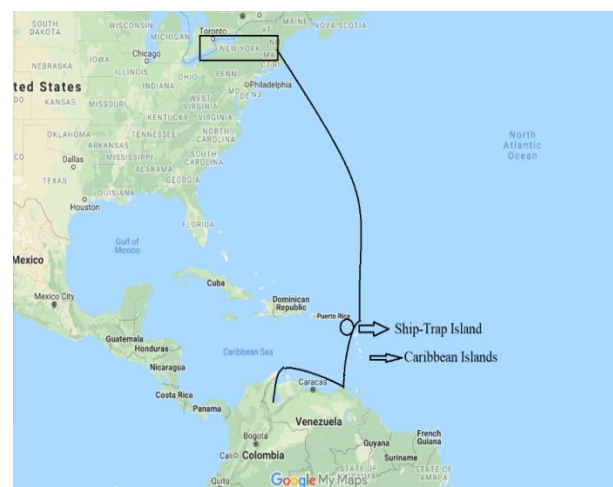


Figure 1: The route of Rainsford’s voyage

In The Telegraph, Ben Fogle refers to a brief history of the Caribbean Sea by stating that this area is famous for its piracy; “pirates, privateers and buccaneers infested the area from the early 1600s to the 1700s...the shallow waters provided the perfect place for experienced pirates to lure heavily laden merchant ships and Spanish galleons on to the reefs, where they were wrecked and relieved of their cargos”. This is indeed very similar to how General Zaroff uses a man-made channel in the sea to trap ships for his game. Interestingly Fogle continues and mentions that, “the most famous pirate was Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard. He was feared across the Caribbean”^[9]. Similarly, the appearance of General Zaroff is described as such; “his hair was vivid white; but his thick eyebrows and pointed military moustache were as black as the night from which Rainsford had come”^[8]. This facial description is put together with the setting to emphasize that Rainsford has come from the Caribbean Sea, and both Edward Teach and General Zaroff have done ‘piracy’ on this Sea. On the other hand, the intended destination of Rainsford was the Amazon. Similar to what the Caribbean Sea is famous for, “Amazon River... when translated into Portuguese, the word becomes *amassona*, meaning boat-breaker, which was used to describe the strong and complex root systems of local hydrophilic plants”^[10]. Again, an underwater ‘system’ traps ships and boats. Moreover, if Rainsford reached Amazon, he would hunt jaguars which is considered as “the largest cat in the Western Hemisphere”^[11]. The careful choice of using jaguars as the prey is quite noteworthy in this story since on the first night of game, Rainsford declares that he “must play the cat of the fable” but at that very night he says “the Cossak was the cat; he was the mouse”. This emphasizes the idea of degradation and dehumanization –which will be discussed later in this article- in that the concept of jaguar demeans to cat and cat degrades to mouse; this process symbolically represents Rainsford’s

psychological transformation and implies the foundations of turning into evil. Also, “in Mayan mythology, the jaguar was seen as the ruler of the Underworld, and as such, a symbol of the night sun and darkness”^[12]. These interrelations introduce the initial aura of darkness, piracy and death.

Early on in the story, as Whitney and Rainsford are sailing along; it is realized that Rainsford has never heard of the Ship-Trap island and it is Whitney who first introduces him to this place: “off there to the right- somewhere- is a large island”. But due to the darkness of night, Rainsford is unable to see it. Whitney is astonished that Rainsford cannot locate the island as he believes Rainsford has “good eyes [which can] pick up a moose moving in the brown fall bush at four hundred yards”. From the beginning lines, it is also concluded that not only does Whitney fear the Ship-Trap island, but also Captain Nielsen – “who’d go up to the devil himself”^[8]- and the crew are terrified of this place. But it is only Rainsford who reacts to the three gunshots, moves to the rail and eventually falls off the yacht. Since “in the short story, language has a multitude of other roles, beyond simply achieving the narration, for instance, in any description of the setting ...the language (enhanced by symbol and imagery) will have the theme implicit in it”^[13]; Therefore, symbolically speaking, number three represents “a life cycle: birth, life and death”^[14]. This symbol implies that, Rainsford begins his journey by swimming to the island (birth), struggles to survive (life), metamorphasizes into a new person by the end of the third day (death) and experiences a rebirth as if his old self is dead and a new evil Rainsford is born. Furthermore, this number has been symbolically used when Rainsford has only three days to either win or lose General Zaroff’s game. Here, number three can represent that “man is a threefold creature having spirit, mind, and body. Likewise, every system has a first, middle, and a last part; so 3 was considered the first perfect number”^[15]; a perfect number to show Rainsford’s true metamorphosis by focusing on how his journey began on the first day, how it moved on to the second day and how it ‘ended’ by the end of the third night.

In the beginning lines of the story, the words “island”, “sea” and “night” carry further symbolic meanings. Correia quotes Cosgrove in her book who states that, “landscape is an image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing the atmosphere that surrounds us; when landscape is studied as image and symbol, a common ground is found between different disciplines concerned with representation, aesthetics, landscape and culture: geography, art, literature, social history and anthropology”^[16]. Hence, island suggests a separation from other countries, a detachment from civilization where rules may differ from the norms. “The island is also a symbol of isolation, of solitude, of death. Most island-deities have something funereal about them...One could perhaps postulate an equation between...monster and hero on the other”^[17]. This is true as General Zaroff plays his game on this island and his preys are forced to play it at the expense of their lives. Similarly, “the sea has always been alien and dangerous, and those who have made it a second home have learned special skills and habits... the sea has symbolized chaos and the bridge among orderly lands, life

and death, time and timelessness, menace and lure, boredom and the sublime”^[18]. In a like manner, Rainsford struggles with life and death while swimming in the sea; that is “he fought the sea”^[8]. It is also the symbol of “the transitional and mediating agent between life and death. The waters of the oceans are thus seen not only as the source of life but also as its goal. ‘To return to the sea’ is ‘to return to the mother’, that is, to die”^[16]. Such a symbol is reinforced with the collocation of “the blood-warm waters”, which implicates the deadliness of sea. Regarding the use of collocations, Toolan refers to Hoey’s idea who declares; “we can only account for collocation if we assume that every word is mentally primed for collocational useas a word is acquired through encounters with it in speech and writing, it becomes cumulatively loaded with the contexts and co-texts in which it is encountered, and our knowledge of it includes the fact that it co-occurs with certain other words in certain kinds of context”^[19]. Moreover, “night is of course the time of unseen dangers... [it] is also symbolic of spiritual error [and] stands for death”^[20]. It is at night when Rainsford hears about the mystery of Ship-Trap island when it was too dark that “[he] could sleep without closing [his] eyes; the night could be [his] eyelids”. Also, he heard gunshots “off in the blackness” and upon his arrival in the island he “heard a sound [which] came out of darkness”^[8]. Therefore, the initial setting unveils terror, danger, mystery, evil, a struggle between life and death and a detachment from civilization.

In their initial conversation, the true natures of Rainsford and General Zaroff are revealed. This conversation is of a high value as the reader understands how Rainsford’s future actions deeply differ from his initial state of mind, how evil General Zaroff is and what type of evil Rainsford turns into in the end or in other words, how Rainsford transforms into General Zaroff. When dining at the table, Rainsford is bewildered at the words of General Zaroff when the General reveals that his invented animal which can reason is actually a human being; “I can’t believe you are serious, General Zaroff. This is a gisty joke...Hunting? Good God, General Zaroff, what you speak of is murder”. General Zaroff keeps questioning him or in better words brainwashing him and continues the conversation by maintaining reasonable justifications regarding his hunting practice- what he considers reasonable is drastically different from the standard concept of *reasonable*. He explains that as soon as they begin the game, Rainsford is going to change his position regarding hunting; “[he] can show [him] that [his] scruples are quite ill founded”. He justifies his action by stating that this is a gift that life itself has bestowed upon him, so nature has granted him the permission to continue his hunting; “The weak of the world were put here to give the strong pleasure. I am strong. Why should I not use my gift? If I wish to hunt, why should I not?”. He then continues by remarking that he does not force anyone to play this game and those who have gotten involved have done it willingly; “I give him his option, of course. He need not play the game if he does not wish to hunt”. Regardless of these explanations, Rainsford still believes that his education, modern life in America, civilized personality, war experiences and personal past have not made him “a cold-blooded

murderer” and firmly opposes such a hunting practice by asserting that “they are men”, then he tries his best to escape from the game- which proves to be unsuccessful.

In this conversation, the underlying foundations of General Zaroff’s evil deeds are also referred to: an island where it has its own rules- hunting humans- lacking any institutions which would punish citizens’ immoral actions and being ruled by an anonymous person; “I bought this island, built this house and here I do my hunting” ^[8]. “Anything, or any situation, that makes people feel anonymous, as though no one knows who they are or cares to know, reduces their sense of personal accountability, thereby creating the potential for evil action”. This anonymity was also performed in The Stanford Prison where guards wore “silver reflecting sunglasses ... along with standard military style uniforms” ^[5] to remain anonymous which resulted in more violent actions compared to the times they were not wearing them. It is vividly understood that General Zaroff has successfully remained anonymous since no one has ever escaped this island alive and “to this date [he has] not lost”. Also, despite the fact that he is sure Rainsford would not defeat him; he still tells him that if you win “you...must agree to say nothing of your visit here” ^[8]. Another evidence regarding the anonymity of this island is that Whitney never mentioned the General’s name; neither he nor the sailors had ever heard of the person who was behind the Ship-Trap island. Instead, all they knew about was the cannibality of this island.

Besides this initial conversation, another approach to apprehend General Zaroff’s true evil nature is by examining his palace for “the “interior” is ...one’s inner nature...[this] definition is at the heart of literary modernism” ^[18]. A quick look at his wall decorations reveal his personality further; “about the hall were the mounted heads of many animals- lions, tigers, elephants, moose, bears; larger or more perfect specimens Rainsford had ever seen”. Such a collection shows his profound experience and how Rainsford’s hunting skills minimally compare to them as his next hunting was supposed to be jaguars, while even bigger animals like the Cape Buffalo are not the biggest game for General Zaroff anymore. But by the end of the story, hunting humans will be the biggest game for both equally. Another interior item is worth discussing here; “as the general pressed a button, far out to the sea Rainsford saw a flash of lights...they indicate a channel...where there’s none: giant rocks with razor edges crouch like a sea monster with wide-open jaws...I have electricity. We try to be civilized here.” ^[8]. This “reminds us of the extent to which the modernists routinely drew on the discourses of science and technology for purposes of self-definition and self-validation” ^[21]. Therefore, General Zaroff has used modern devices and technology of the time at his benefit towards his evil goal and in line with his evil nature. In addition, he mentions a “cellar” where his “training school” is with “a dozen pupils”. This might refer to not simply a cellar, but a dungeon where he keeps his future preys for his game. Besides these clear evil confessions, he tried to cover his evil nature initially; General Zaroff offered his ‘guests’ high quality food and drink, comfortable soft silk bed, tailor-made suit, palatial

shelter and likewise; “we do our best to preserve the amenities of civilization here” ^[8].

The exterior of the palace also carries further notable information regarding General Zaroff’s evil essence as it adds an atmosphere of gothic to the story. The first time Rainsford encounters it, he notices that “all the lights were in an enormous building- a lofty structure with pointed towers plunging upward into the gloom... a palatial Château; [which] was set on a high bluff, and on three sides of it cliffs dived down to where the sea licked greedy lips in the shadows” ^[8]. The first Gothic feature present in this building is “the height of the structure...new techniques allowed them [people of the medieval times] to build very tall structures, almost like touching the sky... the buildings were tall, grand and graceful” ^[22]. The second characteristic is its location by the cliffs similar to “the Hohenberg dynasty, descendants of the counts of Zollern, [whose] typical ... construction of clifftop castles [stood] as a symbol of ruling power”. The third feature is the lighting of the palace. The Gothic palaces normally had enormous windows in order to pass through natural lighting into interiors, “so that moldings and other architectural features were visible to the onlooker” ^[23]. Thus, at nighttime when interior lights were on, the brightness could be seen from outside. Because of this, Rainsford initially mistakes all the lights for “a village”, but then realizes that all are coming from this palace. This emphasizes the microcosm of the world; that the palace represents a place with its own rules- as stated previously. Also, the tips of the towers touch the “gloom”, which reinforces the dark atmosphere. In addition, the palace is located just by the sea, which is being described by the dreadful personification of “licking its greedy lips in the shadows”. This suggests the idea that it is awaiting unfortunate ships to crash into the channel, which General Zaroff has contrived out in the darkness. The presence of such gothic elements in this story emphasizes the idea of evil, death, terror, and General Zaroff’s evil nature which are all very similar to later Gothic fictions that picture “uncanny or macabre [events] or melodramatically violent, and often deal with aberrant psychological states” ^[6].

Rainsford’s first day of game begins with a supply of “hunting clothes, food, a knife” by Ivan, a quick introduction of places to avoid like the “Death Swamp” by General Zaroff and a reminder of the time that the General will follow him- at night. To General Zaroff these supplies and explanations seem to be just enough to create an equal social level between the hunter and hunted. But depriving Rainsford of shelter, privacy and sleep, filling him up with the terror of death, telling him that he is being followed, forcing him into struggling with survival at the expense of his life and not providing him with a pistol for self-defence are the first steps towards Rainsford’s moral changes. Also, the fact that General Zaroff begins hunting at night resembles the actions of prison guards; “the most sadistic behaviors we observed took place during the late-night and early-morning shifts, when, as we learned, the guards didn’t believe that we were observing or recording them, in a sense, when the experiment was ‘off’” ^[5]. As Rainsford is thinking about finding a way to survive, he thinks to himself “I have

played the fox, now I must play the cat of the fable" ^[8]. By implying that he is being degraded from the fox to the cat, he now understands that he is no more a hunter; the powerful figure, the proud human superior and is rather demeaned to the hunted; the prey, the inferior animal. This is his first psychological experience towards feeling dehumanized. "One of the worst things that we can do to our fellow human beings is deprive them of their humanity, render them worthless by exercising the psychological process of dehumanization ... The misperception of certain others as subhuman, bad humans, inhuman, infrahuman, dispensable, or "animals" is facilitated by means of labels, stereotypes, slogans, and propaganda images" ^[5].

By the first night, General Zaroff enters the scene sadistically. The fact that he stops below the tree smoking a cigarette rather than hunting Rainsford- "[he blows] a smoke ring deliberately in the air" while "smil[ing]" ^[8]- shows his playful and sadistic intentions. In similar authorial situations, a prison guard at The Stanford Prison claimed that "my enjoyment in harassing and punishing prisoners was quite unnatural for me because I tend to think of myself as being sympathetic to the injured, especially animals. I think that it was an outgrowth from my total freedom to rule the prisoners, I began to abuse my authority". Another prisoner guard, a young volunteer's self-decription before the experiment was: "I live a natural life and love music and food and other people ... I have a great love for my fellow human beings". But, after the experiment, he stated: "Once you put a uniform on and are given a role, I mean, a job, saying 'your job is to keep these people in line', then you're certainly not the same person if you're in street clothes and in a different role. You really become that person once you put on the khaki uniform, you put on the glasses, you take the nightstick, and you act the part. That's your costume, and you have to act accordingly when you put it on" ^[5]. On the other hand, Rainsford "held his breath [he] froze there, every muscle tensed for a spring... The general was saving him for another day's of sport! The Cossak was the cat; he was the mouse. Then it was that Rainsford knew the full meaning of terror...he forced his machinery of his mind to function" ^[8]. Rainsford's dehumanization debases from "a cat" to "a mouse" in just half a day. Also, as a result of this barbaric social setting, he now considers his mind a "machinery", this suggests that his humanly identity is being demeaned. In this regards, Zimbardo states that "the most apparent thing that I noticed was how most of the people in this study derive their sense of identity and well-being from their immediate surroundings rather than from within themselves, and that's why they broke down- just couldn't stand the pressure- they had nothing within them to hold up against all of this" ^[5]. Though Rainsford's identity is being degraded due to the social setting, luckily he keeps telling himself, "I will not lose my nerve. I will not". This is the key to Rainsford's eventual survival, because this is how he survived the sea when he fell off the yacht; "a certain cool-headedness had come to him; it was not the first time he had been in a tight place" ^[8] and this is how he is surviving each day by maintaining his cool while reminding himself that he cannot lose his nerve as he is

struggling for survival- though his feelings fluctuate on the second night. Such a repetition of behavioral pattern is an example of "'fixed action'... a pattern of regular behavior that exemplifies his way of life and to some extent helps establish his situation and his characterization" ^[14].

On the second night, Rainsford's terrible feelings are intensified and consequently he experiences depression; "it was flight now, a desperate, hopeless flight, that carried him on for some hours. Dusk came, then darkness, and still he pressed on" ^[8]. Likewise, Zimbardo explains that at The Stanford Prison, prisoners started to undergo a mental illness due to "experiencing a loss of personal identity and [being] subjected to arbitrary continual control of their behavior, as well as being deprived of privacy and sleep, generated in them a syndrome of passivity, dependency, and depression that resembled what has been termed 'learned helplessness- the experience of passive resignation and depression following recurring failure or punishment, especially when it seems arbitrary and not contingent upon one's actions' " ^[5]. In such a rough and wild situation, nature also appears to be very cruel to Rainsford; "the ground grew softer under his moccasins; the vegetation grew ranker, denser; insects bit him savagely". Unfortunately, he steps in the Death Swamp- which General Zaroff warned him of earlier; "he tried to wrench it back, but the muck sucked viciously at his foot as if it were a giant leech" ^[8]. Indeed, his struggle with overcoming nature shapes his fate. In this respect, Stephen Crane, a naturalist, believed "that environment counts for a great deal in determining human fate...nature is...indifferent, flatly indifferent. Biology, environment, psychological drives, and chance, that is to say, play a large part in shaping human ends." ^[3]. But, to overcome the cruelty of nature as well as his depression and to survive General Zaroff's game; he digs himself a Burmese tiger pit like a "prehistoric beaver" and hides there as "he lived a year in a minute". His dehumanization, lack of privacy and deprivation of identity are sharply heightened when he experiences the life of an animal in this pit. Similar to the first night, again Rainsford understands that he is being played with; as the general says "thank you for a most amusing evening" ^[8] before leaving. For him, this means that everything depends on tomorrow night. He has been located in his hiding places twice, which might mean that he will be detected tomorrow as well. This indeed maximizes his tense feelings. Such a horrific experience was also present at "The Stanford Prison [which] was a very benign prison situation, and it ... caused the guards to become sadistic, prisoners to become hysterical, other prisoners to break out in hives. Here you have a benign situation, and ...it promoted everything a regular prison promotes. The guard role promotes sadism. The prisoner role promotes confusion and shame. It's a quiet rage, malevolence, you can keep down but there's nowhere for it to go; it comes out sideways, sadistically" ^[5].

On the third daybreak, Rainsford "was awakened by the sound that made him know that he had new things to learn about fear". At night, it is not only General Zaroff who pursues him, but also Ivan and the hounds. Therefore, "his mind worked frantically. He thought of a native trick he had learned in

Uganda". His trick indeed works partly, because as he looks back he realizes that Ivan is not on his feet anymore; "the knife, driven by the recoil of the springing tree, had not wholly failed". We understand later that Ivan is dead as General Zaroff is thinking that "it would be difficult to replace Ivan" ^[8]. This is Rainsford's first hunting, or in better words, his first murder. "Good people can be induced, seduced, and initiated into behaving in evil ways. They can also be led to act in irrational, stupid, self-destructive, antisocial, and mindless ways when they are immersed in "total situations" that impact human nature in ways that challenge our sense of the stability and consistency of individual personality, of character, and of morality... Social situations can have more profound effects on the behavior and mental functioning of individuals, groups, and national leaders than we might believe possible. Some situations can exert such powerful influence over us that we can be led to behave in ways we would not, could not, predict was possible in advance". This is an illustration of the effect of "bad situations in making good people behave in pathological ways that are alien to their nature" ^[5].

By the end of the third night when General Zaroff pursues Rainsford and reaches the sea, he thinks that Rainsford has killed himself by jumping into the sea. His utmost reaction to Rainsford's 'death' is that "he shrugged his shoulders. Then sat down, took a drink of brandy from a silver flask, lit a perfumed cigarette, and hummed a bit from *Madame Butterfly*"; this is followed by "an exceedingly good dinner... with a bottle of Pol Roger". During his dinner "only two slight annoyances kept him from perfect enjoyment"; we understand that the first one is regarding Ivan, but not anything like mourning over his death; just the fact that it would be hard to find someone with his qualities to replace him. The second one is that his "quarry escaped him.. the American hadn't played the game" ^[8]. He refers to a human being as a "quarry", as an animal, as a hunted. Equally, he does not refer to Rainsford by his name, he uses the word "American" to just categorize a race; as we do for animals: mammals, reptiles, birds and likewise. Furthermore, although both "annoyances" refer to two people's death, they are merely "slight". This reaction to the value of a human's life reinforces General Zaroff's true evil nature. It also foreshadows the heartless evil that Rainsford will turn into when it comes to killing another man- General Zaroff.

The full metamorphosis of Rainsford takes place in the very last lines of the story. It is revealed to the reader that Rainsford never jumped into the sea as an act of suicide or even an escape, but to swim his way out of General Zaroff's game and to take revenge. Here, we are reminded of another swim which saved his life: when he swam to get to the island. Both swims are regarded as his rebirths, but indeed the second rebirth is his metamorphosis into evil. Surviving or running away from the game is not enough for Rainsford, nonetheless his winning even when General Zaroff acknowledges this by saying; "I congratulate you.. you have won the game" ^[8]. At this point, after three days of being treated animalistically and living in extreme situations, Rainsford believes that he is still "a beast at bay". This suggests that his feelings can only be settled by killing

General Zaroff and putting an end to the source of his anguish and sufferings. Similarly, a prisoner in Ohio State Prison told Dr. Zimbardo of his agonies and 37 months of solitary confinement; "I know that thieves must be punished and I don't justify stealing, even though I am a thief myself. But now I don't think I will be a thief when I am released. No, I'm not rehabilitated. It's just that I no longer think of becoming wealthy by stealing. I now only think of "killing." Killing those who have beaten me and treated me as if I were a dog" ^[5]. Hence, Rainsford's true rebirth and the value of his new life are only achieved by killing General Zaroff; "that moment when the sufferer perceives the cause of his suffering, when he undergoes a rebirth into knowledge, becomes a metaphor for the whole life" ^[24]. As a result, when he restfully lays in the General's bed- "he [Rainsford] never slept in a better bed" ^[8]- he gets the satisfaction he has longed for. The "ending ... jolts us into perceiving something fundamental about what we have been reading... The ending is where the forces at play in the narrative come to light. Final twists are one way of unleashing the full power of the antithetical forces" ^[25]. By this surprise ending, the writer encourages us to think about Rainsford's action; "consider the possibility that each of us has the potential, or mental templates, to be saint or sinner, altruistic or selfish, gentle or cruel, submissive or dominant, sane or mad, good or evil. Perhaps we are born with a full range of capacities, each of which is activated and developed depending on the social and cultural circumstances that govern our lives". Hence, the reader understands that "being part of a system shapes views, rewards adherence to dominant views, and makes deviation psychologically demanding and difficult" ^[5]. This holds true for Rainsford whose exposure to General Zaroff's system caused him to behave brutally in the end.

Since the twentieth century's "short story has been called an 'end directed form', that is to say it 'starts near the end' as it were, or is focused from the first on the ending, which usually clinches or drives home the story in some way. And the ending must connect – in some way – with the beginning" ^[26]; Therefore, "he [the reader] must often apply the five methods- solution of the problem, natural termination, antithesis, manifestation of a moral or theme, and encapsulation- in new ways. The reader, too, must often deal with the open story, the story that seems to extend beyond the end point... twentieth century writers have thrived on challenging the reader" ^[27]. On the other hand, "though scattered with death, modernist fiction shifts the focus from the dying character to the survivors, who are called upon, often unsuccessfully, to make sense of what, in Mepham's words, turns out to be 'an event in the lives of the living'" ^[28], and since "in stories concerning metamorphosis, death serves as catalyst and witnessed postscript. The long, luminous turning between life and death is the subject of the work" ^[29]; hence by understanding the ending where it is Rainsford who is the new evil of the island, considering Rainsford's mental and psychological transformations that led to his metamorphosis and connecting them with the beginning, it is perceived that when future sailors refer to the Ship-Trap

island and its mysterious dark fame, they are actually referring to Rainsford and his evil nature.

Results Discussions

In *The Most Dangerous Game*, the social setting of the island, the sadistic behaviors of General Zaroff which exposed Rainsford in extreme situations where he was deprived of his rightful human needs- as in sleep, privacy and identity, the feeling of helplessness, the struggle for survival, the lack of having a pistol for self-defence, the detachment from society and civilization, the feeling of being treated unhumanly, the constant feelings of being under General Zaroff's surveillance, the idea of being played with on the first and second night and as a result feeling the terror of death at its maximum and the harsh intensity of his situation as a day passed after another caused him to murder Ivan and General Zaroff unregretfully and satisfactorily in the end. Similarly, Zimbardo's experiment at the Stanford Prison and the close analysis of prisoners and prison guards' behavioral changes clarifies the “toxic impact of bad systems and bad situations in making good people behave in pathological ways that are alien to their nature. The narrative chronology of this study, vividly reveals the extent to which ordinary, normal, healthy young men succumbed to, or were seduced by, the social forces inherent in that behavioral context... The line between Good and Evil, once thought to be impermeable, proved instead to be quite permeable.”^[5]

Conclusion

Social setting, environment, atmosphere and time have direct determining influences on how human beings deal with new situations. In harsh and rough circumstances which negatively affect people psychologically, performing a social analysis by creating a list of what questions; as in what events resulted in an aggressive actions, can lead to the root causes of extreme behaviors. In the case of Rainsford, he was “pressed to desperation, [in which] man will resort to any means to stay alive. Consequently, it is evident that Rainsford, who initially revolted at the thought of violently attacking others, has struggled with his own value systems and eventually decided that self-preservation may require dire and even immoral action. His personal impulse toward morality at the beginning of the story is thus, at the story's end, overcome by the necessity to survive”^[30]. Therefore, it becomes evident that a sadistic social setting can activate the evil side of any human being and result in his metamorphosis to evil or his Lucifer effect.

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Nomenclature

Evil: Intentionally behaving in ways that harm, abuse, demean, dehumanize, or destroy innocent others- or using one's authority and systemic power to encourage or permit others to do so on your behalf.

Learned helplessness: The experience of passive resignation and depression following recurring failure or punishment, especially when it seems arbitrary and not contingent upon one's actions.

The Lucifer Effect: The metamorphosis of good into bad; as in Lucifer into Satan, who avenged against God by corrupting God's greatest creation; humankind. In other words, it is the processes of transformation at work when good or ordinary people do bad or evil things.

Total Situations: Total situations are those in which one is physically and then psychologically confined to the extent that all information and reward structures are contained within its narrow boundaries.

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