King Solomines Mines-Survival Essay, Research Paper

Natural selection conceived of as a struggle for life in which only those organisms best adapted to existing conditions are able to survive and reproduce (Dictionary.com). In the classic adventure King Solomon s Mines by H. Rider Haggard, death and survival were one of the most common happenings of the book. The idea of survival of the fittest occurred non-stop throughout the books entirety. While survival of the fittest favors the strong, sometimes the not so noble survived or the weakest survived. The idea of survival helps make a great action story for in order to survive, adventures and daring actions usual occur in harsh situations. The idea of survival of the fittest plays a large role in the book because of the elephant hunting scene, the witch-hunts, and the escape from the treasure room.

One reason why the idea of survival of the fittest plays a large role in the book is because of the elephant-hunting scene. A young Zulu boy named Khiva was violently ripped apart by an elephant attacking Sir Henry. While Sir Henry was running away from the charging beast, he fell and was rescued when Khiva through a spear right into the elephant. As you may imagine, a weak little spear is nothing against a raging elephant. The elephant then attacked the brave Zulu. With a scream of pain the brute seized the poor Zulu, hurled him to the earth, and placing his huge foot on to his body about the middle, twined his trunk round his upper part and tore him in two (56). This proves how weak and feeble the young Zulu was up against the brute. In this case, the winner was not the noblest for the elephant could not really be called noble when it is only an animal but giving the fact that the elephant was giving characteristics of the actions of what a human may imagine, it is far to call the elephant not noble. Who would not think that in reality, an elephant would just run past or over the Zulu boy and not stop to think of stomping and on and tearing a boy into two. Another example of survival of the fittest that we can recognize from this scene is right after the slaughtering of the boy, the white men shot many bullets into the elephant which caused it to fall on the dry earth. In this case the elephant had no chance to fight for the technology and power of the white man was too much for the elephant. We rushed up mad with horror, and fired again, and again, and presently the elephant fell upon the fragments of the Zulu (56). This proves that an overwhelming force also slaughtered the elephant, which was done by the white man. In this case, the strong survived proving Darwin s theory correct. Because of these examples, one can see that the idea of survival of the fittest plays a large role in this classic adventure book.

Another reason why the idea of survival of the fittest plays a large role in the book is because of the witch-hunts. Witch hunting was when chosen tribe members randomly picked out people from a crowd and said they were witches. The penalty for being a witch ? Immediate Death. The white men witnessed a witch-hunt when they were guests of the evil King Twala. Random people were picked and then killed in front of the king. An example of this is the first person that was chosen. Suddenly the end came. With a shriek she sprang in and touched a tall warrior with the forked wand. Instantly two of his comrades, those standing immediately next to him, seized the doomed man, each by one arm, and advanced with him toward the king. This shows us part of how the picking of the witches took place and the betrayal of comrades for the safety of ones own life. The poor warrior had no chance in surviving for the second he was chosen, his comrades carried him to his death. This soldier was the weak individual who was killed by the strong. All sorts of important people were lost. People full of knowledge and nobility were not spared including generals of the army. It was a most disturbing site to see. Almost before the words were uttered, the horrible deed was done. One man had driven his spear into the victim s heart, and to make insurance doubly sure, the other had dashed out his brains with his great club (149). Because of these examples, one is able to obtain a better understanding about the use of the idea, survival of the fittest.

Furthermore, another reason why the idea of survival of the fittest plays a large role in the book is because of what happens in King Solomon s treasure room. The Witch Gagool tricks the white men by getting them crazy over the diamonds in the treasure room. She then attempts to escape and trap them in the room blocked by a 30-ton rock but fails when she is smashed beneath the immense structure. To begin, this right here is an example of nature and survival of the fittest because the over powering rock killed the weak and evil witch. Down, down it comes, all the thirty tons of it, slowly pressing her old body against the rock below then a long sickening crunch (255). The author uses this to get rid of the witch that everyone hates and to do so while entertaining the readers. Another example is when Gagool stabs Foulata who dies within minutes. The witch and young girl put on quit the struggle but the old hag was the stronger of the two and therefore won the battle. The red blood of the former runs to her knee, but still the brave girl holds the old witch. Who fights like a wild cat (255). This shows one the greatness and purity of the struggle and how the witch was like an animal straight out of the wild and untamed nature. Survival of the fittest was first came from Darwin when he was studying animals. The witch was described like a wild cat while she fights which makes the idea of survival of the fittest even stronger. In addition, another example of survival of the fittest is used to make the book suspenseful by trapping the white men in a sealed room. While in the room, they ponder for forty-eight hours about dying and ways to escape. It is now man vs. nature. Luckily, the men discover a fresh draft coming from a far wall. They attempt to move a slab of the floor and succeed which allows them to escape. Because of these examples, one is able to further their understanding of the use of the idea of survival of the fittest and how it affects stories.

The idea of survival of the fittest plays a large role in the book because of the elephant hunting scene, the witch-hunts, and the escape from the treasure room. The use of the idea of survival of the fittest helps make an adventure story a great adventure story. The idea adds flavor and excitement to the story for an extra-added punch of entertainment. One also learns that the idea is used as a creative tool by the author to eliminate unwanted or hated people and vice versa. Because of the numerous occasions in which survival of the fittest takes place in this classic adventure book and makes it even more entertaining, one can only truly imagine where this idea/technique will take you next time.