The Ramifications Of The West Essay, Research Paper

The Ramifications of the West

‘The Girl at Cabe Ranch’ focuses on three main characters, Harris, Sidonie Cabe, and Dr. Powell, whom all associate themselves to the West. Whether it is by living environment or by hometown, each identifies with the western lifestyle. Not only can Harris relate to the West’s customs, he is also part of its customs. He is a cowboy. Sidonie Cabe does not share this relationship with the West, but she has a profound connection to it. She has two very opposite feelings for the West, love and hatred. Dr. Powell, knowing the West only as his hometown, comes back only to find he loves the West he once hated.

Harris embodies the western cowboy appearance. He “… [wears] an old Stetson Double X with the wings folded up rodeo style.” Dr. Powell comments on how the boy was ‘nice looking, neat around the neck, and his hair was clean.’ Generally, these comments reiterate the fact that he is a cowboy. He continues to associate himself with the West by his demeanor. For example, he is a man characterized by his good sense of direction. In fact, a lady at the Chamber of Commerce even says that he is ‘known in Toller as someone that knew the country better than anyone.’ He suggests that Dr. Powell and him ‘go in his old pickup truck,’ because ‘the roads might be a little hard on’ the Chrysler. These few phrases verify the exaggerated sense of masculinity manifested within Harris. To the reader, he assumes an arrogant role. Harris’s recurring arrogance appears in the following conversation: “I don’t think I’d want to live out there, even if I owned it all,” Dr. Powell said. “He doesn’t own it all. He’s got two brothers own part of it.” Powell replies, “well, I wouldn’t want to live on it if I had ten brothers.” Harris says, “he’s just got two,” in a way that seems arrogant and humble at the same time to Powell. This conversation also indicates that he has a dry sense of humor and a repetitive ‘macho’ attitude. Harris’s response to Sidonie signifies the repetition of his macho attitude. “…You just came the wrong way to get there in an automobile,” Sidonie says. Harris ‘grinned.’ He then says, “We’re not in an ‘automobile.’ We’re in a pickup.” Another important passage explains and reasons out his arrogance. Sidonie questions Dr. Powell asking if Pomeroy was at the fort they live near. Dr. Powell positively confirms and quickly Harris responds, “I knew it,” something the reader notices as competition between two men. One may even think that he tries to prove to Sidonie that he was not just a feeble-witted cowboy. At one point, Sidonie gets perturbed with Harris and exclaims, “You’re just… an ignorant cowboy that’s all you are… You don’t want to be anything else.” Aside from her negative views of Harris, Dr. Powell says ‘the boy knew where he was going.’ Dr. Powell grows a respect for Harris and accepts him the way he is. Sidonie differs from Dr. Powell in that way. She says that she would ‘marry [Harris] if he was different,’ when, in fact, not one person can change another. Sidonie can not accept this truth.

Unlike Harris, Sidonie experiences no love for the West. For her, life on Cabe Ranch diminishes, which builds up her unsurpassable desire to leave. As a matter of fact, she strives to appear more metropolitan. Dr. Powell describes how her hands weren’t ‘hard and dry like some country hands [were] from work and weather. But, then, [they were not] soft and moist either.’ Sidonie is a young, good-looking, country girl with ‘deep blue eyes.’ She invites Harris and Dr. Powell in to have some water. They converse about the history of the town, which sparks an account of Pomeroy. Dr. Powell relates it to Sidonie’s comment, “… I’d go away and I’d stay wherever it was I went.” Powell tells the story of Pomeroy’s son Catlett whom brought his ‘young beautiful bride’ to the town. She eventually went back to Virginia. “She just went back to have a baby and live while her husband was on frontier duty,” Powell voiced. She retorted, “I’d have divorced him.” At which point, Harris and Sidonie get into an altercation about her fancy to leave town. She holds her position very firmly, but she confuses herself just as Dr. Powell did when he left. Harris reassures himself that he can make Sidonie understand that she is but a flustered, young lady with honest intentions. He declares to Sidonie that she ‘can’t even spend a weekend in Dallas without wanting to come back.’ Just as Sidonie wants to leave the West, Dr. Powell wanted to leave twenty-five years prior.

Dr. Powell’s attitude reflects the severity of that hot day of July. He states that it was ‘a bad day in a bad month in a bad season to make the trip.’ Irritation surfaces in everything he says. Even ‘the tires on the concrete highway [sound] …like sizzling flesh and [go] bumpity-bump, bumpity-bump as they hit the tar-filled joints. The sound took the place of the conversation [he] wasn’t having with Harris.’ From the beginning, Dr. Powell’s attitude reflects everything that he feels, but his mannerisms change. He comes to the realization that ‘the country [is his] too and [he is] its.’ He begins to defend the West by defending Cabe Ranch when Sidonie rebukes it. In a sense, Dr. Powell can relate to both Harris and Sidonie. Dr. Powell develops a similar love for the West as Harris’s. Sidonie, just as Dr. Powell twenty-five years prior, hated the West. Through all the animosity, Dr. Powell’s changes surface several specific details.

Dr. Powell’s negative tone depletes by the end of the story. He refrains from his ‘contemptuous’ attitude of the West, and learns what all individuals should learn. Firstly, one needs not to escape their past, but to resolve the former issue. Lastly, one can love a place for reasons different from others.