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## "Hills Like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemingway

"Hills Like White Elephants," is a short story, written by author Ernest Hemingway. It is a story about a man and a woman waiting at a train station talking about an issue that they never name. I believe this issue is abortion. In this paper, I will support my thoughts that the girl in the story, Jig, finally decides to go ahead and have her baby. Even though the man, who does not have a name, wants her to have an abortion she will decide to keep the baby. First of all, I will showcase that it is an abortion that this couple is discussing. The man says that it is an "operation," and an abortion is an operation. Also, he says that it is "just to let the air in," which can be interpreted as meaning that the doctors who are performing the abortion will let the air into the uterus as they remove the fetus. The man says that he has "known lots of people that have done it." Which suggests that this is a common operation. It also shows the moral depravity of the lives these people live because so many women are having abortions. Finally, the man says that he wants their relationship to be "just like we were before". This suggests that the relationship has changed, as it would with a baby. If the girl has an abortion, things will return to the same as before the pregnancy. "The nature of this interchange is that of an argument: the woman wants to have the baby, the man wants her to have an abortion, and both presumably want to change the others mind," this is a quote from Donald and Heather Hardys criticism on this paper (Source 1). What they have to say here is a second opinion in which compliments my analysis on the story. The reader can't know what the couple acted like before the pregnancy, however, the characters are certainly not written in the sense of liking their relationship as they talk about the abortion.

Now that I have established that the couple is having an abortion, I will establish the girl's behavior. This is important for understanding the direction in which she has made up her mind at the end. Early on, the reader gets a glimpse at Jig's disgust with her male partner. She looks at the hills in the distance and says "They look like white elephants". The man responds that he has "never seen one" after which he drinks more beer. Jig then responds: "No, you wouldn't have"? Donald and Heather Hardy explains their criticism on this quote, "...exploits the Maxim of Relation to generate the implicature that the man is too literal-minded to appreciate nature and intimacy through metaphor,". The man becomes extremely defensive when she says that he wouldn't have seen a white elephant. This particular scene is important because it shows that from the very beginning of the story Jig is talking down to the man and does not have much respect for him. The fact that she is not surprised he's never seen a white elephant. She thinks him to be a narrow-minded pig. A white elephant is something that is unwanted. And the man never deals with things that he does not want. He just shuts his mind to his unwanted objects like the girl in this scene seems to recognize. One example of the man's white elephants is his own unborn child.

Since we see Jig acting with condescension and sarcasm right in the first scene when the couple talks about white elephants, we need to keep this attitude in mind when we read their subsequent conversations. For example, the mans various replies throughout the scene suggest that Jig is not using a sincere tone when she says that she does not care about herself. Drawing on the evidence of the discussion of white elephants, we can conclude that Jig is being sarcastic here. She does care about herself and she does not think everything will be okay. Closer to the end of the story, on page, the man keeps making comments like "I don't care

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anything about it." As been seen, the man does care about his baby and Jig has become upset by his insincere and contradicting statements. She tries to quiet him by saying "please please please please please stop talking" and also "I'll scream". Both her condescending attitude toward the man earlier and her efforts to shut him out at this point in the story suggest that she has had enough of his advice and is going to make her own decision. David Wyche says "Jig is both well aware that the intrusion of a child will send the man packing and certain that their relationship will be radically altered, perhaps destroyed, if she goes through with the abortion," this shows that Jig has a tough decision to make. Will she keep her unborn child full term or go along with the mans wishes and live like before?

At the end of the story, he picks up two heavy bags and carries them around the station to the other racks. He looks up the tracks but could not see the train. Coming back, he walked through the barroom, where people waiting for the train were drinking. He drank an Anis at the bar and looked at the people. They were all waiting reasonably for the train. He went out through the bead curtain. She was sitting at the table and smiled at him. "Whatever the outcome of the negotiations we have witnessed, the relationship is terminated and an abortion has taken place not in an operating room, but in Jigs- and the readers- mind. Jig now knows what she needs to do: perhaps this is why she smiles,".

The first time she has smiled or seemed content in the entire story was when she finally knew what she needed to do. She was not content when the man was bullying her into getting an abortion, so we can conclude that her happiness at this point in the story is the result of being left alone for a few minutes so that she could decide what she want to do on her own. Her final comment "There's nothing wrong with me" lets us know that she no longer sees the pregnancy as something wrong. She has accepted her pregnancy and plans to keep the baby. In conclusion, Ernest Hemingway's short story "Hills Like White Elephants" is about a man and a woman struggling to deal with an unwanted baby. The author, Hemingway, never explicitly tells us what the girl decides to do about the baby, but he does give us enough clues to figure out what she has decided by the end of the story. These clues have to do with the story's tone like the way the words the man speak make us understand Jig's tone of disapproval. Overall this story is like an iceberg with most of the substance hiding beneath the surface. The story is really about a couples struggling decision on whether to keep their unborn child or abort the pregnancy. Symbolism and metaphors are prevalent in this short story and the two subjects are shown well here.