

Hills like white  
elephants, symbolism  
and theme, ernest  
hemingway



## Full Hills Like White Elephants Hills Like White Elephants (Hemmingway)

portrays two people in conversation on a bar looking at the hills and drinking beer while waiting for their train. They are obviously travelers who stopped by the place and who, according to the story, have been travelling staying in various hotels. Their relationship was not identified except for the fact that they have been together during their travels so that their conversations are made all the more difficult for the reader to understand. The story is presented like a puzzle where the conversation was revealed in a way that the specific issue was veiled. The two characters exchanged words without giving a clue to what they were really talking about so that the reader is left to make his/her own story based on the judgment made from the conversations. Looking at the style of Hemmingway in presenting the story, symbolism could be a more magnified element the author wants the reader to be directed to. Analyzing the story, an individual's attention is brought to the title of the story as well as the mention of the white elephants in the story. The opening sentence ' The hills across the valley of the Erbo were long and white', offers symbolisms right away. Valley symbolizes fecundity (Fram) and hills, with their rising form represent pregnancy. Thus, the story suggests that the woman in the story is pregnant which is of course not specifically mentioned. The theme of the story will be based on such an interpretation as other symbolisms will be noted in the following discussions. According to Buddhism, an elephant symbolizes strength and steadfastness (Choskyi). Thus, it could be said that the theme of the story is about these symbolic characteristics of an elephant as made out from the conversations of the main characters. Their words revealed they are in a situation where they were deciding on something, the only thing that ' bothers them... that <https://assignbuster.com/hills-like-white-elephants-symbolism-and-theme-ernest-hemingway/>

made them unhappy', wherein the man was decidedly convinced what they were going to do was ' perfectly simple'. The elephant was probably more symbolic of the mental strength of the man who was decided and steadfast while the gray elephant was symbolic of the woman with uncontrolled or confused mind (Chovskyi). On the other hand, the white elephant symbolizes a controlled mind, which is achieved after taming the gray elephant or the polishing of character. Furthermore, the white elephant is considered by Indian's as special and are believed to have the power to produce rain. Looking at the hills, representing the woman's pregnancy and saying they look like white elephants, this might be symbolic of the trouble the couple are about to encounter with whatever they are deciding on, which can be surmised as abortion from the words of the man, ' It's really an awfully simple operation'. The woman also made a comment about their drink, Anis del Toro saying it tasted like liquorice, just like how everything tastes, an absinthe which made the man ask her to ' cut it out'. Anis del Toro is an alcoholic drink manufactured in Spain known for its toxicity which can kill in a slow manner (thedispersion. net). As mentioned by the characters, though it is toxic, it tastes of liquorice, something sweet. This could represent their relationship which is sexual, that is why the girl got pregnant, and addictive because of its sweet taste but like Anis del Toro, it can be toxic. References Chovskyi, Ven. Jampa. Symbolism of Animals in Buddhism. Buddhist Himalaya, volume 1, number 1. 1988. Web. February 23, 2011. Fraim, John. Books. Symbolism. org. 2001. February 23, 2011. Hemmingway, Ernest. Hills Like White Elephants. Gummyprint. com. 2007. Web. February 23, 2011. Jack. Anis del Toro. The Dispersion. 2011. Web. February 23, 2011.