

# Example of hemingways hills like white elephants essay

[Family](#), [Abortion](#)



Ernest Hemingway's story, "Hills Like White Elephants" relies on dialogue to present two fully rounded characters and to illustrate their relationship, and the dilemma within it. A story of a young couple who disagree over the decision to have an abortion, the piece is written intelligently and clearly while avoiding any definitive words describing the nature of the disagreement. Hemmingway also uses symbolism, through setting, to reiterate the situation. Overall, this short story conveys a complex theme and characterisation while using relatively few narrative devices.

"Hills Like White Elephants" tells a story with an almost exclusive use of dialogue. It explores a young woman's decision of whether or not to have her pregnancy terminated. Despite such a complex topic, Hemmingway simply presents the conversation between the young woman and her partner to the reader, rather than setting the tale up with backstory or description. Just as a person may overhear a conversation in a café, the reader does exactly this, catching only a snippet of, presumably, a much longer conversation. The dialogue within the conversation leaves out the words of the actual dilemma, for example "baby" and "abortion." This provides an elephant in the room for the reader, which may be partly reflected in the title of the story.

The words spoken by the American man demonstrate that he is in favour of the abortion and is trying to talk Jig into it. He refers to the "awfully simple operation" (Hemingway) and makes other similar statements which show that he is trivialising the situation. Furthermore, the American's references to Jig's pregnancy are similar to those about the abortion itself, both of which he refers to as "it." The American confirms that he does not want a baby later in the conversation when he says to Jig, "But I don't want anybody but

you" (Hemingway).

While the exchange exposes the self-interest of the American, it similarly exposes the thoughtfulness of Jig. Her numerous comments such as mentioning that, to her, the hills look similar to white elephants, her looking out across the fertile land by the station and saying that " we could have all this," show that she is considering the situation far more intensely than is the American, who seems to trivialise every part of the issue (Hemingway). If dialogue on its own is insufficient to confirm the subject that Jig and the American are discussing, the author offers a selection of hints via symbolism within the story's setting. At the beginning of the story it becomes apparent that the couple is sitting facing the barren land beside the station. However, Jig later sees that the other side of the station has a wide space of fertile land. This is clearly representing the choices that are available to Jig: to continue with the pregnancy or to have an abortion. At the conclusion of the story, the American moves their bags to the fertile side of the station. Jig then smiles at him, which suggests that she has convinced him that the right course of action is to keep the baby. However, this is not explicitly said and is ultimately left up to the reader's interpretation.

Hemmingway relies on dialogue and symbolism to convey a difficult theme and rounded characterisation. Other than these literary devices, he uses very few others to fulfil his purpose. " Hills Like White Elephants" is thoughtful, poignant, and shows the author at his very best.