**Symbolism in *Hills Like White Elephants***

Student's Name

Department, Institutional Affiliation

Course Name

Professor's/Instructor's Name

Date

**Symbolism in *Hills Like White Elephants***

Ernest Hemingway is an incredible writer famous for not giving readers detailed information. In *Hills Like White Elephants,* the writer applies a plethora of symbolism to emphasize the significance of ideas. *Hills Like White Elephants* is filled with symbolism that requires the reader's creativity to realize and determine a more profound connotation.

**Hills and White Elephants**

The first symbol in the story is derived from its title. The hills represent the pregnancy and the body of the girl. At the story's beginning, Jig reiterates that the surrounding hills resemble white elephants. Even though it seems like a casual and offhand comment, the writer uses it as a segue for Jig and her American boyfriend to discuss pregnancy and probable abortion. The writer uses hills to symbolize the belly of a pregnant woman, which he compares to white elephants, a euphemism for an unwanted possession that is difficult to dispose of (Fonseka, n.d.). The girl retracts her earlier comments and states that the hills do not resemble white elephants and are lovely, which symbolizes a change of perception and a hint that perhaps she is willing to keep the baby (Yusupova, 2021). White elephants symbolize Jig's pregnancy and represent an unwanted gift. The pregnancy was a white elephant, especially to the American boyfriend, who was determined to convince Jig to conduct an abortion.

**Train**

The advent of the train is symbolic of the decision that Jig must make about her unborn baby. At the story's genesis, Jig and her American boyfriend await a train at a bar in the valley of Ebro. Unlike a car, a train goes one way, and once it comes, it goes. The author uses the train to symbolize the girl's choice: if she decides to terminate the pregnancy, there is no turning back. The American boyfriend makes his choice clear by taking their bags to the train tracks. He hopes that Jig would also make a similar choice to abort the pregnancy. The train station symbolizes a sense of transition from one experience to another.

**The Bamboo Bead Curtain**

The bamboo bead curtain is another symbol in the story that represents the boundaries and thresholds that Jig and the American boyfriend face. The bamboo bead curtain hangs across the open door of the bar to prevent the flies (Hemingway, 2016). Foremost, the bamboo bead curtain symbolizes the barrier between Jig and her American boyfriend when it comes to keeping the baby. Jig feels like holding the baby, while her American boyfriend feels it is prudent for her to undergo an abortion. The bamboo bead curtain symbolizes a barrier to free life that the couple is used to because bamboo would change them and even force them to settle down (Fonseka, n.d.). A baby comes with lots of responsibility, curtailing freedom; hence, the American boyfriend feels it is not the opportune time to settle down.

**The Number "Two"**

The author uses a recurrent theme of the number "two" in *Hills Like White Elephants* to symbolize different things. For instance, the American orders two beers, the Spanish bartender brings two more beers and two felt pads, the American carries two heavy bags to the tracks, and the train stops for two minutes. The recurrent theme of the number two can symbolize two things. Foremost, it can symbolize that Jig and her American boyfriend are contented with their situation and are not ready to bring a third person into their lives. It may symbolize the couple's happiness in being together as two people, which is why the author emphasizes the word "two" (Hemingway, 2016). However, it may also symbolize that Jig is ready for the baby as she could see herself and the baby as two. Given that the American boyfriend has made his choice about abortion known, Jig believes that having the baby might change things. Thus, she could see herself and the baby as two.

**Depiction of Landscape**

There are two depictions of the landscape at the train station which play a symbolic role. In the beginning, the author describes the landscape: on one side, there was no shade and trees, and the country was brown and dry (Hemingway, 2016). Later, the author describes the other side of the train station as having fields of grains and trees along the banks of the Ebro valley. The two depictions of the landscape symbolize Jig's indecision on abortion. The first depiction, where the landscape is dry with no shade and trees, illustrates the couple's relationship status in case the abortion results in death (Fonseka, n.d.). The latter depiction of fields of grain and river depicts fertility and symbolizes life; thus, Jig is open to the possibility of motherhood.

In his story *Hills Like White Elephants*, Ernest Hemingway uses various symbolsto enforce readers' creativity. He uses hills, a white elephant, a train, the bamboo bead curtain, the number "two," and the two depictions of the landscape as symbols to allow readers to determine a more profound connotation.

**References**

Fonseka, E. G. (n.d.). Dissuasion Resulting in Determination: Paradox in "Hills Like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemingway.

Hemingway, E. (2016). Hills Like White Elephants." 1927. *Available on:< https://genius. com/Ernest-hemingway-hills-like-white-elephants-annotated> Access in: Oct*, *15*.

Yusupova, K. (2021). Metaphorical interpretation in Hemingway's stories. *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, *11*(10), 216-219.