Hills Like White Elephants Abortion Debate and Scholarly Interpretations

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Literature Review

The essay is about blending the ideas of the scholars who have made an interpretation of the story "Hills Like White Elephants" and determining the method of their analysis to agree or disagree with their opinion on whether the lady in the story had an abortion (Bausch, 2015; Rankin, 2005).

A closely related analysis is available in Hills like White Elephants by Ernest Hemingway.

Fredric Busch's Point Of View

Theme On Antifeminist

Fredric Busch interprets the story as being anti-feminist. He expresses the notion of men controlling and being superior to women. The American man says she loves the girl the way she is and doesn't want anyone else but her. The man is in favor of abortion, but the lady feels she should not have the abortion. Jig has to make a decision and, to make her husband happy, she is most likely to have the abortion so as to keep the relationship. The woman has to do what the man wants and not according to her feelings. "Then I'll do it, because I don't care about me."

"The girl looked at the ground of the table legs and….." She didn't say anything. This shows the girl is weak and will be easily swayed by whatever the husband wants. It is like she doesn't have a choice but to follow her husband and proceed to have the abortion.

Symbolism

After the conversation with the American about the idea of the operation, Jig stands up and moves to the end of the station. She wonders what will happen after the operation. She sees the beautiful scenery across the other side. Fredric feels this is the other beauty of their relationship when the girl undergoes the operation.

When the train is about to arrive, the man takes both pieces of luggage and carries them. They go to

the tracks where the other passengers are waiting for the train. He then moves to where she is sitting and asks her how she feels. She says, “I feel fine.” This probably shows the man won, and Jig will probably have an abortion.

Use Irony

Fredric uses irony. The title of the short story, ‘Hills Like White Elephants,’ is beautiful, and the story seems like it will be nice. But once you read the story, things start to change. The story is sophisticated, complex, and full of disharmony. The couple is in disagreement on whether to keep their baby or have an abortion. The title is completely ironical with the story. Unlike the beautiful title, nothing good is to happen, and the girl will most probably get an abortion.

There is a bamboo bead curtain separating the people inside and outside the bar. It has the words ‘Anis del toro’ written on it. Jig asks the American man what it means. The man responds that it is a drink and they should try it. Jig agrees and surrenders to what the man says. This shows that she will also follow what the American man says and have the abortion.

Patrick Burchett Interpretation

Use Of Dialogue

Hemingway narrates the story entirely through dialogue. He describes the characters in the story by what they say. The author gives scanty information about the characters’ background information and also what happens afterward. The view on whether or not the girl had the abortion depends completely on what is conveyed through the dialogue. Hemingway portrays the American man as mature, experienced and smart. On the other hand, the girl is pointed out as weak, undecided and easily persuaded. From what we learn, it is most probable that the girl was persuaded and agreed to have the abortion.

Symbolism And Plot Setting

Burchett views the white elephant as an unwanted gift or a curse that we must get rid of. He views this as a pregnancy that is uninvited, and Jig tries to get rid of it. On their side, there was no shade, no trees. The station was in between; on the other side, there was a field, a river and trees. The plot setting shows life and the challenges that come along the way. We have to make choices on whether to be on the barren or the fertile side. The girl probably had the abortion so as to be on the happy side with her husband.

Stanley Renner Interpretation

Renner feels that 'Hills Like White Elephants' sympathizes with the woman, and he sides with the girl and her values. He prejudices the idea of abortion and the idea of the male's selfish act of proposing an abortion (Renner, 1995).

Symbolism

The hills symbolize the womb, and the white elephants symbolize what is sacred and beautiful, hence valuable. Everyone would make a decision to cherish that which is beautiful and valuable. Pregnancy is a gift, and so is a new baby, so Jig is likely to make this decision and keep and treasure her unborn child.

According to Renner, life can be viewed as a train's journey. You can decide to continue with your journey or go back. Jig has choices in her life. She can decide to have an abortion or to keep the baby. However, this is an express train to Madrid, and it doesn't turn back. The train was to stop for only two minutes at the station and then continue with the decision. Likewise, Jig is to follow her mind and make her own decision to keep the baby. She knows once she makes the decision there is no turning back. Once she has the abortion, she can never go back to having her baby back.

The bamboo bead curtain that separates the inside and outside of the bar is also symbolic and represents the opposing feelings of Jig, who wants to keep the baby, and the American, who is for the abortion. 'Just let the air in.' From this, we can also deduce the American simply means the lady has the decision to do what she wants. Jig stands up and walks toward the end of the station. She moves on to watch the other side of the station to discover her own feelings. Renner interprets this as the girl distancing herself from the male influence. Jig will probably follow her instincts and follow what her heart is telling her—keeping the baby.

The plotting and the scene endings look just like a part of a film, and we are unaware of what happens before or after, and it is up to the reader to decide. In my own view, both Burchett's and Fredric's views are strong, and Jig could have probably had the operation to save her relationship from breaking.

Work Cited

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