



Hemingway's themes

Research paper

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Hemingway beautifully describes the main theme love his short story, "Hills Like White Elephant":-The American and Jig lived a long time together as they spend hours of time together in various hotels and this brought them more closer as they enjoy sensual pleasure together as the bags lying on the railway station Has many labels on them as when, "he looked at the bags against the wall of the station. There were labels on them from all the hotels where they had spent nights". While he knew that she was pregnant and this makes him uncomfortable as she would hardly have time for him so he tells her to abort the baby. And so he always console her that the operation was less frightening as he said, "it was a simple operation" and he would love her even if the procedure was done. While Jig also conforms her that loves her so much that she would get this operation done. Even he feels guilty and worries for her operation out of honesty, loyalty and respect towards her so he puts this pressure upon her so he tells her that, " he does not want Jig to get it done if she does not want". He even assures her that, " I don't want anybody but you" so she too surrenders her wishes as she agrees to get this abortion done which describes the gender peculiarity of a male over a female to comply and to agrees with him just like Jig. He seeks this abortion to get the freedom to enjoy their previous life. Although getting an abortion was illegal still Jig is convinced to get this abortion done. Even the American man thinks wants her to get it done only if she too wants to get this done and if she does not want to get this abortion done then she cannot have this procedure done. And it was her only decision to get this procedure done which saves their relationship and also bring happiness back in their life. It is an illusion that Jig forms as she feels that life would be more comforting just like before they use to live.

The other themes in this short story are:-

Happiness and togetherness-The American man too tells her to enjoy this time as she said, "All right as the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn't that bright?" "That was bright." "I wanted to try this new drink. That's all we do, isn't it-look at things and try new drinks?" "I guess so." The girl looked across at the hills. "They're lovely hills," she said. "They don't really look like white elephants. I just meant the coloring of their skin through the trees." "Should we have another drink?" "All right." (pg-230) Jig looks at the hills across the valley which seems like the white elephant which symbolizes her born baby for whom she eagerly awaits.

HOPELESSNESS-The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white this symbolizes that life is very long and lonely. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun all this symbolizes that life has two choices to make which is either to live or to die just like the process of giving birth and getting an abortion done symbolizes birth or death which are the two deep side of life. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep the flies away.

Hiding self identity-Hiding the emotions and easy for them to understand each other as the American and the girl-Jig were waiting at the railway station for the express train which would come in forty minutes from Barcelona. Jig and the American man are sitting in the bar talking only why and how important the abortion is and even tells her that she can reject the procedure if she does not want to get this abortion done. This single topic of abortion keeps them both entangled into lives mysteries that make them hide their personal feeling which hides their honesty and faith towards each other.

MASCULINITY-The American man is seen as very rational person who influences Jig's opinion very easily as Jig tries to defend her own emotions which reflects the masculine power more empowering the female as Jig describes the mountains to white elephant but then tells that they really never appears to look like white elephants. She says this because firstly she believes to gave birth to a baby so the mountains appear to her in the form of a baby but later on seeing the American man's decision of getting the abortion done it seems to her that it appears that the mountains no longer appears to look like white elephant.

Confusion:-They both are confused to decide what would happen if the procedure does not take place and how the change in their relationship would turn so these thoughts and changes made their life struggle. Both are unable to discuss this matter easily as they disagree with each other as when," the girl looks at the bead curtain, put her hand out and took hold of two of the strings of beads which symbolizes that beads were playful things but are separated from each other just like their relationship as each time the curtains keeps the flies away in the same manner the curtain becomes a barrier between both the American man and Jig which keeps them both away from the conversation of abortion which Jig does not want to get done .

Struggle:-Mental tension is seen more in Jig's life as she does not want abortion done while the American man tells her that," an abortion can make their problem solve as she has to go through a simple operation. But as Jig does not want to lose their relationship which is the legal right of a woman so she agrees to get this procedure done without understanding the struggle she would go by getting this operation done.

HOPE- The American man walks back from the platform as he hopes to convince her to get the abortion done for the betterment of their relationship as he hopes that she would agree and come in terms with him by get the abortion done.

Sacrifice-But as the birth of the baby would keep them busy and less time was given to their relationship so they both plan get the abortion done so "the white elephant" symbolizes the unwanted baby as the mountain seems to appear as "the white elephant" to Jig . The sacrifice of Jig is very important as being a mother she agrees to undergo and operation.

LOVE -Then differences in their liking and disliking takes place when the American man and Jig were having beer and then suddenly want to try a new drink Anis del Toro to which she says that everything tastes like licorice as nothing changes not even an abortion can make their liking and feelings change towards each other as nothing changes things are always the same. Jig feels that their relationship will improve more after having the baby so she compares the hills to a symbol of happiness.

Hopeless and dislikes-but as the American man feels that relationships cannot be maintained by having a baby which would keep her preoccupied in babysitting so she would get no time for him.

Analysis of the short story, "Hills Like White Elephants."

1. Love:-The American and Jig lived a long time together as they spend hours of time together in various hotels and this brought them more closer as they enjoy sensual pleasure together as the bags lying on the railway station has many labels on them as when, "he looked at the bags against the wall of the station. There were labels on them from all the hotels where they had spent nights". While he knew that she was pregnant and this makes him uncomfortable as she would hardly have time for him so he tells her to abort the baby. And so he always console her that the operation was less frightening as he said, "it was a simple operation" and he would love her even if the procedure was done. While Jig also conforms her that loves her so much that she would get this operation done. Even he feels guilty and worries for her operation out of honesty, loyalty and respect towards her so he puts this pressure upon her so he tells her that, "he does not want Jig to get it done if she does not want". He even assures her that, "I don't want anybody but you" so she too surrenders her wishes as she agrees to get this abortion done which describes the gender peculiarity of a male over a female to comply and to agree with him just like Jig. He seeks this abortion to get the freedom to enjoy their previous life. Although getting an abortion was illegal still Jig is convinced to get this abortion done. Even the American man thinks wants her to get it done only if she too wants to get this done and if she does not want to get this abortion done then she cannot have this procedure done. And it was her only decision to get this procedure done which saves their relationship and also bring happiness back in their life. It is an illusion that Jig forms as she feels that life would be more comforting just like before they use to live.

ACCEPTANCE OF HIS BABY-"I've never seen one," the man drank his beer. "No, you wouldn't have." "I might have," the man said. "Just because you say I wouldn't have doesn't prove anything." LOVE-"They were drinking beer while the girl notices at the hills," They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry." "They look like white elephants," she said. The mountains look like "white elephant" to Jig as she remembers her unborn baby in this shape:-LOVE-MAKES EVERYTHING TOO SIMPLE AND EASY-"I think it's the best thing to do. But I don't want you to do it if you don't really want to." LOVE BRINGS HAPPINESS AND TOGETHERNESS-"And if do it you'll be happy and thing will be like they were and you'll love me?" "I love you now. You know I love you." "I know. But if I do it, then it will be nice again if I say things are like white elephants, and you'll like it?" "I'll love it. I love it now but I just can't think about it. You know how I get when I worry."

Struggle-WORRIES AND FEAR -"If I do it you won't ever worry?" "I won't worry about that because it's perfectly simple." "Then I'll do it. Because I don't care about me." confusion-"What do you mean?"

LOVE NEEDS CARE and ATTENTION-"I don't care about me." "Well, I care about you." "Oh, yes. But I don't care about me. And I'll do it and then everything will be fine."

"I don't want you to do it if you feel that way."

"The girl looked at the bead curtains.

"They've painted something on it," she said, "What Does it say?"

Struggle-STRESS OF GETTING ABORTION DONE-"Anisdel Toro. It's a drink." "Could we try it?" Then they again ordered wine and say that it is good with water. And then the girl said, "It tastes like licorice, putting the glass down." "That's the way with everything."

"Yes," said the girl. "Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you've waited so long for, like absinthe." "Oh, cut it out." "You started it," the girl said. "I was being amused. I was having a fine time." (pg-229) Jig says, "everything tastes like licorice" which symbolizes sorrow.

Confusion:-They both are confused to decide what would happen if the procedure does not take place and how the change in their relationship would turn so these thoughts and changes made their life struggle. This mental tension is more seen in Jig who does not want this operation procedure to be done as the American man tells her that, "an abortion can make their problem solve as she has to go through a simple operation. While Jig does not want to lose their relationship which is the legal right of a woman so she agrees to get this procedure done without understanding the struggle she would go by getting this operation done.

Hopelessness-

Both are unable to discuss this matter easily as they disagree with each other as when, "the girl looks at the bead curtain, put her hand out and took hold of two of the strings of beads which symbolizes that beads were playful things but are separated from each other just like their relationship as each time the curtains keeps the flies away in the same manner the curtain becomes a barrier between both the American man and Jig which keeps them both away from the conversation of abortion which Jig does not want to get done .

HOPE- The American man walks back from the platform as he hopes to convince her to get the abortion done for the betterment of their relationship as he hopes that she would agree and come in terms with him by get the abortion done.

Confusion-But Jig dislikes the American man's opinion as he dislikes her giving birth to a baby so they both are struggling to come to terms as both have a different opinion so they are confused in getting this operation done or not. The mental struggle makes Jig away from the American man so she decides the struggle and pain to get this operation done. Jig hardly cares for her health and agrees for undergoing the struggle present in the operation.

3.Sacrifice:-

Love-The most precious gift of god was a child. And the unborn baby was the bond of love between the American man and Jig.

Sacrifice-But as the birth of the baby would keep them busy and less time was given to their relationship so they both plan get the abortion done so "the white elephant" symbolizes the unwanted baby as the mountain seems to appear as "the white elephant" to Jig . The sacrifice of Jig is very important as being a mother she agrees to undergo and operation.

Hopelessness-While the desert unfertile land symbolizes the dullness and miseries faced when the baby was aborted this would have made their life more hopeless and sad as she eagerly wants to have but sacrifices this natural gift of god for the sake of the American. As this sacrifice would unite them.

Happiness and togetherness-The American man too tells her to enjoy this time as she said, "All right as the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn't that bright?" "That was bright." "I wanted to try this new drink. That's all we do, isn't it-look at things and try new drinks?" "I guess so." The girl looked across at the hills. "They're lovely hills," she said. "They don't really look like white elephants. I just meant the coloring of their skin through the trees." "Should we have another drink?" "All right." (pg-230) Jig looks at the hills "across the valley which seems like the white elephant which symbolizes her born baby for whom she eagerly awaits.

Hopelessness- While the American man responds to her reply saying, " I've never seen one". This suggest he has no imagination or liveliness in terms of happy living as he is having no feelings towards her. This symbolizes his indifference towards his beloved.

4.Fear:-The American fears that Jig would get this abortion done or not as he makes her feel relieved by saying, " It's not really an operation at all", "It is the best thing to do" and "We'll be fine afterwards". This makes Jig feel that she would not be able to carry her relationship anymore with him so Jig does not want to give up as the place.

5.Hope that acceptance and adjustment in life gives hope to live a better satisfied life:- The American man and Jig were waiting for the train to arrive. And there across the station, " the fertile land " symbolizes the happy and better life which would provide her comfort with the hope that everything will be alright just like before so she agrees to get the procedure of abortion done. "The girl looked at the bead curtain, put her hand out and took hold of two of the strings of beads." Convincing Jig- "And you think then we'll be all right and be happy." "I know we will. You don't have to be afraid. I've known lots of people that have done it." "So have I," said the girl. "And afterward they were all so happy." Consoling to relieve the fear within her:- "Well, the man said, " if you don't want to you don't have to. I wouldn't have you do it if you didn't want to. But I know it's perfectly simple." "And you really want to?" Morally accepting illegal practices to make her beloved happy-Although getting an abortion was illegal still Jig is convinced to get this abortion done. Even the American man thinks wants her to get it done only if she too wants to get this done and if she does not want to get this abortion done then she cannot have this procedure done. And it was her only decision to get this procedure done which saves their relationship and also bring happiness back in their life. It is an illusion that Jig forms as she feels that life would be more comforting just like before the same way they use to live. "I think it's the best thing to do. But I don't want you to do it if you don't really want to." "And if do it you'll be happy and thing will be like they were"

6.Hopelessness:-The American man and Jig awaits for the train at the railway station from where, " the brown and dry landscape is seen" this symbolizes the lost hope as they chose not to have the baby so white elephant symbolizes useless gift as this gift has no utility as it expresses something around which actually never comes to life as no amount is spend on its upkeep. As the American man puts pressure upon Jig to get the operation done again and again making her feel hopeless away from the feelings of motherly love and responsibilities which she long ago awaits for but feels hopeless to feel her this desire. The emotional reluctance to get happiness in life keeps them hopeless as they have to sacrifice their baby to live a life together in the form of, " the surrounding hills " which symbolizes the harshness, lost of hope, desire and dream which personally Jig wanted to have. At the end the assurance the girl gives to the American man makes him feel comfortable when she conceals her hopes and desires by saying, " I feel fine". Separation-Although their relationship was going to fall apart as the American man seeks to control the decision and actions of Jig.

As the warm breeze blows the beads of the curtain, the man said,

"The beer's nice and cool."

"It's lovely," the girl said.

3.Consoling-"It's really an awfully simple operation, Jig," the man said. "It's not really an operation at all.

6.Hopelessness:-The American man and Jig awaits for the train at the railway station from where ,” the brown and dry landscape is seen” this symbolizes the lost hope as they chose not to have the baby so white elephant symbolizes useless gift as this gift has no utility as it expresses something around which actually never comes to life as no amount is spend on its upkeep. As the American man puts pressure upon Jig to get the operation done again and again making her feel hopeless away from the feelings of motherly love and responsibilities which she long ago awaits for but feels hopeless to feel her this desire. The emotional reluctance to get happiness in life keeps them hopeless as they have to sacrifice their baby to live a life together in the form of,” the surrounding hills “ which symbolizes the harshness, lost of hope, desire and dream which personally Jig wanted to have. At the end the assurance the girl gives to the American man makes him feel comfortable when she conceals her hopes and desires by saying,” I feel fine”. Separation-Although their relationship was going to fall apart as the American man seeks to control the decision and actions of Jig.

Consoling-“The girl did not say anything.I’ll go with you and I’ll stay with you all the time. They just let the air in and then it’s all perfectly natural.”

“Then what will we do afterwards?”hopeless puts him into fear-“We’ll be fine afterward. Just like we were before.”“What makes you think so?”“That’s the only thing that bothers us. It’s the only thing that’s made us unhappy.”(pg-230) Hopeless;-“Nor that isn’t good for me,” she said.“I know. Could we have another beer?”“All right.But you’ve got to realize-“Hopelessness and distress- “I realize,” the girl said. Can’t we maybe stop talking?”They sat down at the table and the girl looked across at the hills on the dry side of the valley and the man looked at her and at the table.“You’ve got to realize,” he said,” that I don’t want to. I’m perfectly willing to go through with it if it means anything to you? We could get along.”“Of course it does. But I don’t want anyone else. And I know it’s perfectly simple.”“Yes, you know it’s perfectly simple.”

Struggle-Fear-“It’s all right for you to say that, but I know it.”“Would you do something for me now?”Jig restrict tension-“I’d do anything for you.”“Would you please, please, please , please, please, please, please stop talking?”Jig wants to avoid the discussion of getting the abortion done as her pregnancy was not a gift she is willing to give as she has always dreamed to have a baby. He did not say anything but looked at the bags against the wall of the station. These were labels on them from all the hotels where they had spent nights.

Love-The American man restrict Jig-“But I don’t want you to, “ he said.”Courage of Jig to revolt against his restriction-“I don’t care anything about it.”“I’ll scream, “the girl said. The woman came out through the curtains with two glasses of beer and put them down on the damp felt pads. “The train comes in five minutes,” she said.“What did she say?” asked the girl.“That the train is coming in five minutes.”Freedom and dynamic -The girl smiled brightly at the woman, to thank her.The American man gives her ample time to think before putting pressure to get the abortion done-“I’d better take the bags over to the other side of the station,” the man said. She smiled at him.Even Jig waits for him.“All right. Then come back and we’ll finish the beer.”

Struggle-In tension he moves away from her because she did not agree with him-He picked up two heavy bags and carried them around the station to the other tracks. He looked 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.

Love-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.”“Do you feel better?” he asked.“I feel fine,”she said. “There’s nothing wrong with me. I feel fine.”Love-Self-reliant and bravely-The Girl agrees to get the procedure done:-Jig tells the American man that she feels fine and agrees to get the abortion done. She tells him that she does not worry about the procedure and was ready to undergo an operation.

Conclusion:-

Love-The girl took up and walked to the end of the station. Across, on the other side, were fields of grains and trees along the banks of the Ebro. Far away, beyond the river, were mountains. The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grains and she saw the river through the trees. Self reliant , hope and optimistic-“And we could have all this,” she said, “And we could have everything and every day we make it more impossible.” “What did you say?” “I said we could have everything.” “No, we can’t.” “We can go everywhere.”

Hopelessness-“No, we can’t. It isn’t ours anymore.” “It’s ours.” “No, we can’t. It isn’t ours anymore.” “It’s ours.” “No, it isn’t. And once they take it away, you never get it back.” “But, they haven’t taken it away.” “We’ll wait and see.” Threaten- “Come on back in the shade, he said. “You musn’t feel that way.” “I don’t feel any way,” the girl said. “I just know things.” “I don’t want you to do anything that you don’t want to do- Hopelessness-“The American loves her and wants her to get the abortion done as he says,” It isn’t ours anymore while Jig too believes and hopes that the procedure of abortion would retain the past happiness and closeness in their life so her inner strength to get the procedure of abortion and done or not regains a different attitude as she became calm, quiet and peaceful when the American saw the change that she is fine and not cheating him. And hopes to continue her mutual relationship more than getting a baby.

Love-HAPPINESS AND BOND OF TOGETHERNESS-The American man and Jig were waiting for the train to arrive. And there across the station,” the fertile land “ symbolizes the happy and better life which would provide her comfort with the hope that everything will be alright just like before so she agrees to get the procedure of abortion done.

