

“Hills Like White Elephants”

Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)

- American Modernism
- Late 19th and early 20th centuries
- Outdated forms of art & literature
- Ezra Pound, 1934, “Make it new!”
- Experiment with form
- Draw attentions to processes and materials used in creation

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)

- Style:

- Economy
- Understatement
- Short sentences
- Hard-boiled
- Heavily edited down
- No superfluous language
- Journalism

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)

- Protagonists:

- Stoic
- Emotionally stilted men
- Often war vets
- Unable to connect with women
- Unable to connect with each other

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- Iceberg Theory

“If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A good writer does not need to reveal every detail of a character or action”

“Hills Like White Elephants”

- Setting:

- Ebro River in Spain
- Train station
- Bar
- Parallel tracks heading in opposite directions

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- 2 characters: man (the American) & girl
- Passive-aggressive conflict
- Conversation mundane and tense
- Pressing her into an operation
- Implication = an abortion

“Hills Like White Elephants”

- What is NOT said in the conversation?
- What does this way of communicating say about the relationship?
- Gender issues?
- Nationalist/Cultural issues?
- How is this a critique of Americans abroad?

“Hills Like White Elephants”

- Why are they travelling?
- How does the title relate to the content?
- What do the white elephants represent?
- How does the railroad station relate to the conversation?