

A Bakhtinian Perspective for the Chronotopic Evaluation of Symbols in “Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernest Hemingway

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Abstract: *This paper discusses the metaphoric and spatial representations in the short story “Hills Like White Elephants” from the perspective of Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope. Bakhtin explains the concept of chronotope in literary texts as the intersection of space and time configured either in abstract or concrete entities, represented by symbols and metaphors or real-time objects and spaces. In the story, an unmarried pregnant girl and the child's father are portrayed at a train station discussing their and their unborn child's future. The story reflects the qualities of a typical Hemingway style, the “iceberg theory” he favours in storytelling. The train station in the story is located at the intersection of railway lines in the direction of Barcelona and Madrid, and this location becomes a symbol of the decision the couple will make at that particular historical time about keeping or aborting the baby. The station is situated between a patch of dry brown land and long and white hills across the fertile valley of the Ebro river, where the characters are about to decide whether to go back to their old, barren life or keep the baby and move on to a promising and happy life. This spatial juncture, the train station, symbolizing a public space of modernity, and the contrasting hills like white elephants, symbolizing the personal dilemma of the pregnant girl, intersect in the characters’ lives and illustrate Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope. This particular chronotope reveals the conflict and tension between the hills like white elephants and the train station near the barren, dry, brown earth, as well as between the woman and man in their perceptions of their lives and future together.*

Keywords: *space; spatiality; Bakhtin; chronotope; Hemingway;*