**Hills Like Reader Response/Formalistic/Feminist/Sociological Elephants**

**Reader Response:**

1. Would you feel differently about the story if the man and woman’s role were to be reversed? How so and why?
2. Have you ever had a conversation that felt similar to the American and Jig’s? What was it about and why?

**Formalism:**

1. What is the story about? What is the “simple operation” the man and the woman are discussing? Do they have the same opinion about it?
2. A “white elephant” is a idiom meaning a gift or possession difficult to keep, unwanted. How does this meaning inform your understanding of the story?
3. Explain the following symbolism:
   1. Hills
   2. The Beaded Curtain
   3. Railway
      1. “two lines of rail”
   4. Shade
   5. The “dry side”
   6. The fields of grain, trees, and river
   7. Alcohol
      1. Liquorice
   8. Their bags
   9. The people “all waiting reasonably for the train”

**Feminism:**

1. What kind of relationship is there between the man and the woman? Do they seem to get on well together? What was their past life?
2. Analyze their names:
   1. The man/American
   2. The girl/Jig
3. Why does the girl ask so many questions? How does the American respond?
4. How does the fact that only the man speaks Spanish affect the story?
5. Analyze the use of the word “bright/brightly” in the story.
6. What does the girl “realize”?
7. Why is the girl always looking at the hills?

**Sociological:**

Review your notes on Modernism and what you know about the Roaring 20s. Think about the fact that the story occurs is Spain and these people are expatriates traveling after WWI.

1. How does each of the characters seem to view life/the future? What are their values?
2. “‘I wanted to try this new drink. That’s all we do, isn’t it—look at things and try new drinks?’” What does Jig’s comment suggest about their lives?
3. “‘Then what will we do afterwards?’”

“‘We’ll be fine afterwards. Just like we were before.’”

What does this exchange suggest about society at this point in time?

1. Look at the bottom of page 2 between “‘And we could have all this’” to the bottom of the page. What are their different viewpoints and how do they reveal the basic struggle of the age?
2. Why is there so much dialogue v. description? How does it reflect society’s feeling at the time?
3. Why do they drink so much alcohol (relate to history and implications for society)?

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