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Birdsong and Hills like White Elephant's portrayal of gendered relationships.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "*Birdsong*" and Ernest Hemingway's "*Hills Like White Elephants*," are both representations of women being silenced by men or by the men-driven society, with both female protagonists having to endure situations in which they are not comfortable because of gender pressure. The women in both stories feel they have no choices, since the men in their lives advise them on choices that should have been the woman's. The choices the women make, including their dialogue tells the reader they and chose to approach these difficult interactions with men submissively despite their feelings.

In Jig from *HLWE*, pressure presents itself since she and her partner are on the verge of a life-changing decision, meaning to abort or not their baby. Though this is not explicitly told, its inferred when the man uses the words "simple operation," and explains that he knows lots of people who've done it. When it's clear it's an an abortion is when the man continuously refers to the fetus/ baby as an "it," for instance on the third page of the story when he says: "Once they take *it* away..." Throughout the story, the man is trying to convince Jig to perform the abortion though she is very doubtful to do it and as well does not wish to talk about it. Jig expresses "It isn't ours anymore," when her partner tells her "We can have the whole world," meaning she already sees her fetus as a child that's their responsibility. Despite the man continuing to talk about it, trying to convince her of this, she twice asks him to stop talking about the topic, this

tells the reader she is uncomfortable discussing this, most likely because in her mind she already knows what she wants to do, and it's not the outcome her partner desires.

Jig's power is immense because the fetus is in her body and ultimately it's her right to choose, though she doesn't feel like this because of her partner's manipulative tactics. On the other hand, her partner's desire to do the operation is so big it becomes fear or at least desperation, and it's clear because of his use of words diminishing the abortion such as "simple operation," and "it's really not anything." He even goes so far as to emotionally manipulate her by saying: "*That's* the only thing that bothers us. It's the only thing that's made us unhappy." The theme here is an illusion of power coming from men when women are the ones really in power, and we will see this in the next story as well.

Chimamanda Adichie's "*Birdsong*" is a story about an unnamed woman that has an affair with an important government official who is married and has children. The story begins when she's stuck in traffic and fantasizes about a glamorous woman that is next to her in traffic to be her "lover's" wife. Though we never get confirmation of the woman actually being the lover's wife, the story surrounds this event as the main character goes on her inner dialogue about how she met her lover and some experiences they've been through. In all her recounts of their moments together, the lover seems to be the one in power, because of his position in the government which might give him an air of narcissism to manipulate people like he does to the main character. On the first argument between the couple that we read about, he throws the main character out of his house because she comforts him about his last affairs, he even makes fun of her while saying they were "Feisty. They were feisty like you." Finally, she calls him a bastard and he throws her out of his house and says, "This is unacceptable." This phrase lets us know a lot about his own desire to be more powerful than any person he encounters, or at least with his romantic relationships.

o him, a person in power should be treated with dignity and respect, and at the first sign of disrespect from our female protagonist, he reacts aggressively, only to five days afterwards call her and in her own words act “As if nothing happened.” This is a story regarding male desire because none of this wouldn’t have happened if the man hadn’t wish for it, and since the relationship was mainly sexual and he already had a family, we can see he gives into desire but wishes to maintain his reputation anyway. The main character doesn’t even acknowledge that she has much more power than her lover since she has the information that a married government official who’s supposed to be dignified has an affair with a woman, despite him even having kids with his wife.

As can be shown in both short stories the true power lies in the women, but they cannot see this because of the manipulation tactics imposed on them by male desire, one for an abortion and one for adultery sex without consequences. These manipulations however are easily imposed because of the patriarchy that allows men to bend women into their will because of their desire, leaving women questioning if they have any choice over their own lives.