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English 102

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### World Views: Cost and Benefits of Marriage

Men and women often enter into relationships expecting different outcomes. Since men and women see the world differently they form different opinions on how life should be lived and what should be gained from their lives. A person's belief of how life should be lived can be influenced by their parents, friends, culture, and most notably, gender. Since the idea of gender roles has existed throughout all of human history, men and women often have different, preprogrammed ideas of the correct outcomes of a relationship. The presence of children and domestic roles are two parts of relationships that men and women often see differently, causing them to have clashing views on whether they are a cost or a benefit to the relationship.

The idea that men and women see the world differently is one that is not only seen in real relationships but also explored in literature. In Ernest Hemingway's *Hills Like White elephants*, the author explores the different world views of men and woman and how they affect relationships. Ernest Hemingway describes how the man tries to take the leading role of the relationship by pressuring the girl into having an abortion: "That's the only thing that bothers us. It's the only thing that's made us unhappy" (Hemingway). By pressuring the girl into getting an abortion the man proves that instead of starting a family, he wants to have freedom in his relationship. The girl, on the other hand, resists his pressure and shows her boredom of the state of their relationship by saying, "That's all we do, isn't it—look at things and try new drinks" (Hemingway). Even though the man enjoyed their relationship as one of travel and wanted desperately for the abortion, the woman was tiring of their lifestyle and wanted a family.

The idea that the presence of children in a relationship can be seen as a cost or a benefit is one that differs between the genders. An article by Sandra McGinnis states that, "the presence





of children (although not the number of children) in cohabiting households increased the likelihood of marriage" (McGinnis). Since women often start relationships in hopes of getting married and starting a family, having children present can be seen as a benefit. Men, contradictory to women, enter relationships with the hope of finding someone they can experience adventure with. Since the presence of children increases the likelihood of marriage and settling down, it can be seen as a cost of marriage to men because it imposes on the time they can spend traveling and experiencing adventure. Men and woman also have different views of the cost and benefit of marriage in response to the idea of domestic roles.

It is seen in media, literature, and history that men and women should each have separate domestic roles based solely on their gender. The idea that the man should provide for the woman and that the woman should care for the man and his children is one that is introduced to both men and women at an early age. A study referenced in Sandra McGinnis's article found that, "gender attitudes, domestic roles, and beliefs about domestic equity significantly influence relationship transitions" (McGinnis). Since men see themselves as the providers and women as the caretakers, they may see domestic roles as a benefit of marriage because they can continue to work and provide. Women, on the other hand, may see domestic roles as a cost because they feel as though they are required to give up their jobs in order to care for their husbands and children. Even though it is becoming more common today for men and woman to switch domestic roles, or even for them both to take the role of the provider, the idea of gender roles is still an issue that affects men and women's decision to marry.

Even though popular culture is changing and men and woman are beginning to adapt similar views of the world, there are still contrasting views on relationships between men and woman. It is becoming more popular today for men to look for a partner to experience adventure with instead of someone to start a family with. Also, women are beginning to see having a career as equally as important to having children. Though these views have changes, the presence of



children and views on domestic roles can still be seen as either a cost or a benefit to a relationship depending on the person's gender.

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### Works Cited

- Hemingway, Ernest. "Hills Like White Elephants" *Literature: Craft and Voice*. Ed. Nicholas Delbanco and Alan Cheuse. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw, 2013. 230-232. Print.
- McGinnis, Sandra L. "Cohabiting, Dating, and Perceived Costs of Marriage: A Model of Marriage Entry." *Journal of Marriage and Family* , Vol. 65, No. 1 (Feb., 2003), pp. 105-116. Published by: *National Council on Family Relations*. [jstor.org/stable/3600053](http://jstor.org/stable/3600053)

