

Implication and Omission in Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants," Raymond Carver's "Why Don't you Dance," Richard Ford's "Great Falls," and Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh"

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Abstract: Ernest Hemingway developed the "Theory of Omission" by which he would deploy interrelated techniques of implication and omission with the aim of strengthening the narrative and creating certain effects on readers. To provide additional evidence with respect to his influence on the leading figures of American literary minimalism, this article argues that the narrators of Raymond Carver's "Why Don't you Dance," Richard Ford's "Great Falls," and Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh" employ the techniques of implication and omission in order to engage readers in the construction of meaning and make them feel more than they understand the emotional reality of the marital dissatisfaction, which is left beneath the surface of things, as does Hemingway in "Hills Like White Elephants." To this end, the analytical and the comparative study is carried out using Wolfgang's Iser Reception Theory.

Key Words: "Iceberg Theory"; Influence; Implication; Omission.

المُلخَص : باللغة العربية: طور إرنست همنغواي "نظرية الحذف" التي بوظيفتها تقنيات مترابطة من الحذف والتضمين لتعزيز تقنية السرد وخلق تأثيرات معينة على القراء. من أجل تقديم أدلة إضافية فيما يتعلق بتأثير همنغواي على رواد أسلوب التبسيط بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، يبرهن هذا المقال أن رواية قصص: "لماذا لا ترقص"، و "سقوط عظيم"، و "شيلوه" لريموند كارفر، و ريتشارد فورد، و بوبي آن ماسون على التوالي يوظفون هذه التقنيات لإشراك القراء في بناء المعنى وجعلهم يشعرون أكثر مما يفهمون الواقع العاطفي لعدم الرضا الزوجي الذي ترك تحت سطح الأشياء كما يفعل إرنست همنغواي في قصته "التلال مثل الفيلة البيضاء". لأجل ذلك، يتم إجراء دراسة تحليلية ومقارنة باستخدام نظرية التلقي لفولفغانغ إيزر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: "نظرية الحذف"، التأثير، التضمين، الحذف.

Introduction: Admittedly, Ernest Hemingway's style, which is based on his "Theory of Omission" or the "Iceberg Theory," was very influential inside and outside the United States. Praising Hemingway's style, Van Wyck Brooks claims: "He was [...] a great artist in prose, the inventor of a style that has influenced other writers more than any other in our time."¹ Undeniably, the leading figures of the Minimalist Movement including Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, and Bobbie Ann Mason modelled their minimalist style on the style of Ernest Hemingway and learned much from his innovative narrative techniques. Indeed, James Nagel, amongst others, has already acknowledged Hemingway's contribution to literary minimalism by affirming that his "kind of writing gave rise to the minimalist movement in American fiction, to the work of Raymond Carver and Susan Minot and others who sustain the legacy of Hemingway's fictional prose."² As is known, what makes Hemingway's style powerful and distinct are his narrative techniques which are used to create certain effects on readers. Cynthia W. Hallett notes that literary minimalism inherited the technique of omission from five highly influential writers, amongst them Ernest Hemingway, "whose conscious codes of omission are designed to make audiences feel more than they understand [...] and Hemingway's communication of complex emotional states by the ostensibly simple patterning of concrete details--his "tip of the iceberg" effect."¹ Hence, Hallett focuses on Hemingway's "Iceberg Theory" which relies on the description of concrete details to make readers visualize the scene and feel the emotional effects.

Accordingly, the aim of this study is to reinforce the idea of Ernest Hemingway's narrative influence on the short fiction of Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, and Bobbie Ann Mason. To this end, an analytical and a comparative study is carried out in order to argue that the narrators of Raymond Carver's "Why Don't you Dance," Richard Ford's "Great Falls," and Bobbie Ann Mason's "Shiloh" employ the techniques of omission and implication to engage readers in the construction of the story's meaning and make them feel more than they understand the emotional effects of marital dissatisfaction as does Hemingway in his story "Hills Like White Elephants." In fact, these stories are chosen on the ground that they best exemplify the narrative techniques of implication and omission and have a thematic harmony with one another: they tackle one of the most vital themes in minimalist fiction which is the rupture of love relationship between

couples. Moreover, since the minimalist story relies on gaps, which prompt readers to participate in the construction of the story's meaning, I consider that both the author and the reader contribute to shaping the texts' meaning. Wolfgang Iser thinks that in literary texts authors usually leave blanks either consciously or unconsciously and that these blanks "make the reader bring the story into life."³ Hence, I will resort to Iser's phenomenological response theory because I will focus on the effect of the minimalist blanks on implied readers.

1. Implication and Omission in Ernest Hemingway "Hills Like White Elephants"

Ernest Hemingway's aesthetic is, principally, based on his "Theory of Omission." According to Rama Rao, Hemingway's "Iceberg Theory" alludes to suggestiveness or implication which means "implied expression rather than explicit statement, or a subtle hinting at something by creating an impression through suppression." Suppression involves the use of figures of speech such as symbols, metaphors, metonymies, and ironies in order to reinforce implications and understatement of emotions and help the reader discover the deep meaning of the stories.⁴ Implication is achieved through omission or by leaving blanks. Indeed, Hemingway first articulated his aesthetic theory in *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), employing the metaphor of the iceberg to carry the weight of his argument. He explains how his fiction works:

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he doesn't know them only makes hollow places in his writing.⁵

In Hemingway's stories, there is always a description of actions and objects which represent the "tip of the iceberg" while characters' emotions are left underneath the surface. More important,

he advocates that the writer's crucial role is to describe the action that creates the emotion: "Remember what the noises were and what was said. Find out what gave you that emotion; what the action was that gave you the excitement. Then write it down making it clear so the reader will see it too and have the same feeling that you had."⁶ This means that Hemingway is not only concerned with the reflection of the 'real world' but rather he is more interested in making readers re-experience its emotional impact.

Ernest Hemingway's famous story "Hills Like White Elephants" is considered a prime example of his "Iceberg Theory." It illustrates his use of omission and implication in order to achieve certain effects on readers. It is one of his simple and deceiving stories as it doesn't have an overt action and its main theme and character's emotions are left beneath the surface of things. Only through a close reading that readers become aware of the characters' emotional problem. The story's narrative begins with a minimal exposition. Right at the beginning, the narrator draws the readers' attention to the emotional states of the characters through his symbolic description of the setting: "The Hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun [...] The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade, outside the building. It was very hot [...]"⁷ Thus, facing the sterile mountains, the characters sit in a place where there is "no shade" and "no trees," and where it is very sweltering. This setting, symbolically, refers to the characters' relationship which has become bare and sterile like the mountains. The hot weather may refer to the hot and decisive debate which takes place between them. The visual images of the setting stimulate readers' mental processes so that they engage in image making in their attempt to construct a meaning of the story. As such, they can sense the characters' feeling of hopelessness, sadness, and alienation.

The story does not contain any historical context which facilitates its understanding. But based on their American culture,

readers can detect that it was first published at the beginning of the 1920s, in a time where abortion was forbidden. To create tension and ambiguity, the narrator deliberately omits the keyword: "abortion." The absence of this word is considered one of the most oft-cited examples of Hemingway's omission technique. In their brief exchange, the characters tend to refer obliquely to the subject rather than mentioning it. This fact raises readers' curiosity to know more details which can help in understanding the meaning.

Indeed, readers are given enough clues to detect that the characters face the obstacle of an unexpected pregnancy. The character's shorthand conversation is filled with figurative language which enables readers to discover the subject matter. For example, the girl looks at the dry isolated hills and comments that they are lovely like rare and precious white elephants in the shimmer of hot air ("They look like white elephants").⁸ The phrase "white elephants," which occurs in the title, is repeated several times throughout the text. This repetition draws readers' attention to search for its significance. Generally, in American culture, "the white elephants" connotes an unwanted gift of great value. It refers, metaphorically, to the unwanted unborn baby.⁹ In addition, the overuse of "two" is, definitely, symbolic because it evokes the idea of two-ness. There are: "two rails," "two minutes," "two glasses," and "two Anis de Toro."¹⁰ The two rails, for instance, may refer to the directions in which the couple may go: either they choose to go towards Madrid and abortion or towards a family life. It may also refer to the characters' different views regarding pregnancy issue. Furthermore, when the couple starts drinking Anis de Toro, the girl comments: "It tastes like licorice [...]. Everything tastes of licorice. Especially the things you 've waited so long for, like absinthe."¹¹ The girl's life, like absinthe, has become bitter because she can't realize her dream of building a family. Her statement invites readers to imagine her life in order to understand and feel her emotional state of depression, disillusionment, and fear from the unknown future.

Moreover, the narrator uses irony in his dialogue in order to make readers feel the disappointment of the girl. For example, in trying to convince the girl to abort her baby, the man so often insists that the operation is perfectly simple: “‘You’ve got to realize,’ he said, ‘that I don’t want you to do it if you don’t want to. I’m perfectly willing to go through with it if it means anything to you’.”¹² “It’s really a awfully simple operation, Jig”, the man said. “It’s not really an operation at all.”¹³ Such insistence makes readers and the girl aware of his irony and his real intentions. Embraced by feeling of shame, the girl “did not say anything.”¹⁴ When she realizes that her relationship will never remain the same, she desperately implores him to stop talking: “would you please please please please please please please stop talking.”¹⁵ The word “please” here is the tip of the “iceberg.” This hysterical outburst tells much about the girl’s psychological pressure. Following her screams, like the woman, the man “did not say anything. He just looks at the bags against the wall [...]. There were labels on them from all the hotels where they spent night.”¹⁶ By telling this information, the narrator implies to readers that the man is more interested in travelling from one hotel to another while the girl wants a stable life. What’s noticeable is the characters’ silence. More interesting, the characters’ silences indicate that they suffer from a lack of communication and that they can’t find words to express their feelings. Thus, the couple’s speech has become the cause of their deep pain since, as Lid notes, “their private language of love has become unbearable.”¹⁷ Thus, when the characters implicitly refer to abortion, they only hurt each other.

The open ending is the most essential omission which occurs in this story. The story ends before the arrival of the train when the girl smiles at the man and assures him that she is fine: “There’s nothing wrong with me. I feel fine.”¹⁸ Clearly, the narrator gives readers plenty of clues to her emotional state and intensifies their curiosity to know what may happen after this event. Interestingly, one effect of this omission technique is already explained by Hemingway: “the omitted part would strengthen the story and make the people feel something

more than they understood.”¹⁹ Readers can become aware of the girl's irony. They can also feel that there is more to say than the narrated events. They have to provide answers to questions such as: why she smiles at him? Does she accept to do the abortion or not? On this way, the narrator arouses a feeling of empathy towards the girl and establishes certain closeness between her and the readers. Readers have to fill in the gaps and sense the characters' feeling of shame, sadness, and confusion.

Therefore, Hemingway integrates various elements including the figurative language, omissions, objective point of view, and implication to make readers feel how “less becomes more” and force them to uncover the submerged emotions which are left beneath the surface of things. In doing so, they participate in the construction of the story's meaning and feel the characters' psychological suffering.

2. Raymond Carver's “Why Don't you Dance”

The style of Raymond Carver, the godfather of literary minimalism, is based on implication and omission. On this point, Carver states that he is interested in implementing a theory of omission which resembles Hemingway's theory: “If you can take anything out, take it out, as “doing so will make the work stronger. Pare, pare, and pare some more.”²⁰ So, it can be argued that the minimalist style resembles Hemingway's style in the emotional focus of the story and the reader's role: what is unstated is more significant than what is stated. In this respects, Gordon Burn thinks that Carver's style “derives its power as much from what is left out as what is put in.”²¹ Accordingly, Carver's stories also operate by implication, rendering “every word and every gesture [...] fraught with significance.”²² Thus, Carver's narrative techniques in the third person are also detached, which gives his readers an opportunity to fill in the gaps and interpret the meaning of the story. They are forced to find out the implied meaning and discover the emotional truth which lies beneath the surface of things.

"Why Don't You Dance" is a typical example of Carver's use of omission and implication to achieve certain effects on readers. As is the case with Hemingway's "Hills like White Elephants," this story is about marital dissatisfaction or the rupture of the love relationship between couples (an old couple and a young couple). At the surface, it seems to be about a yard sale. However, close examination of the text reveals that, though the third objective narrator omits key details, he gives clues which allow readers to infer and appreciate the submerged meaning.

To begin with, the narrator doesn't provide any physical or psychological descriptions of his characters. So, readers can only assume through the analysis of their actions and speeches. He focuses his readers' attention on the marital problem of the old man and his wife in his description of the setting: "In the kitchen, he poured another drink and looked at the bedroom suite in his front yard. Things looked much the way they had in the bedroom--nightstand and reading lamp on his side of the bed, nightstand and reading lamp on her side."²³ The reference to the words "his side" and "her side" leads readers to meditate that a recent conflict with his wife or partner is the cause of his desperation. In fact, these two words may also demonstrate that there is a barrier between the man and the woman which cannot be crossed. The collapsed marriage of this old couple is symbolized by the recent departure of his partner or wife, the image of the bedroom furniture, and the television arranged in the front yard by the husband. In his essay, Carver claims that tension or "menace" can be created also by "the things that are left out, that are implied, the landscape just under the smooth [...] surface of thing."²⁴ Accordingly, readers become aware that there is some unspoken tension because the narrator does not reveal the emotional state of the man. It seems that the lack of romance has been a main factor of the couple's conflict and separation. With this reading, Saltzman thinks: "the inversion of his home imitates the reversal of his fortunes [...] this bizarre personal inventory appears to be the self's going-out-of-business sale, a systematic exteriorization of old wounds."²⁵ This idea emphasizes that

the inversion of the house reflects the man's emotional state but its reasons are left implied.

Additionally, the narrator doesn't provide any historical or physical information about the young lovers. He reports their bed conversation without making any comments or judgments. Readers have to interpret their actions and speeches in order to understand their emotional states. At first glance, the characters seem happy when they begin to inspect the man's belonging. However, when the girl asks the man to join her on bed, he expresses a certain hesitation to accept her request and emphasizes that he "feels funny" where he is.²⁶ This refusal creates tension and makes readers realize that below the surface of their conversation there is something submerged or imminent. Regarding this point, Nessel explains: "The tensions here, filling the interstices of a conversation they conduct lying down, of all places, on a bed, are grounded in sexual politics."²⁷ The girl makes her comments, "wouldn't it be funny if" but she doesn't finish her sentence because she doesn't feel that she needs to. The boy responds by laughing.²⁸ Again, the boy's laughs invite readers to question his reaction and try to understand the dynamics of the couple's love relationship. They can assume that, like the old man, the young couple is suffering from an emotional distance. In fact, the narrator does not express things explicitly but he forces readers to interpret the characters' actions and imagine the scene by filling in the gaps. Besides, Bethea comments on this scene: "If he laughs at the half-stated suggestion to have sex and is wrong to do so, a lack of passion is implied."²⁹ According to him, the boy's reaction indicates that he is not interested to join her in bed as he lacks passion.

Like his mentor Hemingway, Carver leaves his stories with an open ending. So, an important omission and implication occur by the end of "Why Don't you Dance." Despite the fact that the girl discovers weeks later that the man looked desperate when she danced with him, she explains that it is impossible to justify all the "shit" the "old guy" gave them. The story concludes with these lines: "She kept

talking. She told everyone. There was more to it, and she was trying to get it talked out. After a time, she quit trying.”³⁰ So, like most Carver’s characters, the girl ends up in despair after failing to communicate her emotions and ideas. Hence, like Ernest Hemingway, Raymond Carver is interested in writing as an act of communication in order to convey reality. In a short essay, Carver argues: “A poem or a story—any literary work that presumes to call itself art—is an act of communication between the writer and the reader.... The need is always to translate one’s thoughts and deepest concerns into language which casts these thoughts and concerns into a form—fictional or poetic—in the hope that a reader might understand and experience those same feelings and concerns.”³¹ Indeed, the narrator does not explain what happens to the girl. Yet, by informing readers about her inability to express her feeling, he makes readers feel her depression and hopelessness based on their life experiences. He also makes them sense what there is more to say than the narrated events. Hence, they build more perspectives about this ending.

Moreover, the characters’ silences invite readers to participate in the construction of the story’s meaning. Indeed, Laurie Champion affirms that just as the narrators, Carver’s characters leave surface details unspoken and their silences imply their “inability to communicate.” Carver’s pared-down plots and sparse narrative invite readers to participate in the interpretation of the text. Likewise, his characters’ silences invite readers to consider possible “discourses alternative to silence.”³² Evidently, the ending of “Why Don’t you Dance” leaves questions unresolved because the girl stops talking without giving enough details. Readers are forced to fill in the gaps and try to imagine answers to questions such as what the girl wants to say? Why she is unable to say it? Will she encounter more emotional problems because she tried the man’s restless bed? In doing so, readers will not only understand but also they can feel her emotional state and contribute to the construction of the story’s meaning.

Therefore, "Why Don't you Dance," provides an outstanding example of how less is more in Carver's fiction. The narrator implicitly depicts the disillusionment of an old man and a young couple who experience a rupture in their love relationship in the postmodern world. By omitting key details of events, characters, and settings, Carver forces readers to interpret characters' actions and speeches in their attempt to grasp the whole meaning. In doing so, he invites readers to fill in the gaps and make them feel the emotional truth of the broken hearted characters. His employment of the third objective is also relevant and effective to his minimalist style as it reinforces its implication.

3. Richard Ford's "Great Falls"

Richard Ford is considered one of the most genius writers due to his distinct style and his interest in recording American social disillusionment. Praising his narrative techniques, Vivian Gornick considers him a creator of the latest version of "a certain kind of American story that is characterized by a laconic surface and a tight-lipped speaking voice."³³ Gornick maintains that Ford employs narrators who "[have] been made inarticulate by modern life" in order to paint individual's isolation and loneliness in the modern world.³⁴ Thus, like his mentor Hemingway, Ford attempts to engage readers in the construction of the story's meaning and make them feel the emotional suffering of his characters in his story "Great Falls." He also relies on omission and implication techniques to convey the theme of the rupture of love relationship between family members.

At the surface level, "Great Falls" seems slightly plotted and meaningless. The adult Jackie Russell, an adolescent boy aged sixteen, recounts the incidents that changed the course of his teenage years and shaped his personality and attitudes towards the others. After the separation of his parents, Jackie sought maturity in an isolated Montana. More interesting, he suffered from an emotional loneliness due to a parental failure but he does not reveal it explicitly to readers. To seem more objective and distance readers from his narration, he

sets up his story within a story. First, the story's main theme is implied in its title and setting. The title, "Great Falls," refers to the falling apart of the family. On this point, Griffin asserts that the story's title represents the setting which is an allegory of the family's dissolution and disintegration.³⁵ Moreover, Brian Henry views that "the large physical distances are mirrored by an equally large emotional distance between the characters."³⁶ Leder also thinks that the choice of the setting is symbolic because it is meant to reinforce the individual's feeling of insignificance and isolation.³⁷ Thus, the narrator's descriptions of the landscape and family's solitary house, which is "out of town," emphasize the characters' alienation from their society.³⁸ Thus, the narrator's selection of the story's title and setting introduces readers to its main theme and keeps them interested to know more details about the story's events.

Additionally, similar to Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants," "Great Falls" starts in media-res and finishes with an open ending. In fact, character's histories and physical descriptions are omitted. Readers become aware of Jackie's suffering because the narrator gives them plenty of clues to his emotional and mental states. The story opens with Jackie's words warning readers that it is not a happy story. Then, he tells about his life with his parents when he was a young boy: "This is not a happy story, I warn you. My father was a man named Jack Russell, and when I was a young boy in my early teens, we lived with my mother in a house to the east of Great Falls, Montana."³⁹ The fact of referring to his parents separately implies their emotional separation and increases readers' curiosity to know its reasons and its effects upon the son.

Indeed, the narrator witnessed his parents' marital disjunction which distanced him from them. Though he does not provide a detailed explanation about the reasons behind the collapse of the parental structure, he focuses on showing its effects upon him as a son. He reports that it started as a miscommunication between them. Then, it developed into a serious problem and a profound rupture.

From the son's accounts, readers can also recognize that his father did not work to fulfill his mother's desires and wishes. So, her dreams of seeing the world with his father were dashed and her feelings of loneliness and isolation pushed her to betray him. After discovering his wife's adultery with a young man called Woody, the father acted violently against her pushing her to walk out of the house. While his father felt frustrated, his mother stayed calm. The narrator does not describe this violent and menacing scene but rather he leaves it for readers' imagination.⁴⁰ By doing so, they engage in the construction of the story's meaning based on their life experiences. Leder thinks that the mother behaves like other women characters in Ford's fiction because "she stands untouched and controlled amidst chaos and change, moving away from her son into the mysterious realm of her own sexuality)."⁴¹ Excluded from the lives of his parents, the son could not fully identify with a violent father and a mysterious mother. The emotional effects were so strong to make him feel as if his life has "turned suddenly."⁴² This fact arouses readers' empathy with Jackie and makes them feel his loneliness and sadness.

Certainly, the narrator creates the vital omission and implication in the open ending of his story. Though Jackie has many questions in his mind, he asserts that he doesn't try to get an answer to these questions. Yet, he summarizes his philosophy about life: "It is just low-life, some coldness in us all, some helplessness that causes us to misunderstand life when it is pure and plain, makes our existence seem like a border between two nothings, and makes us no more or less than animals who meet on the road--watchful, unforgiving, without patience or desire."⁴³ Feeling alienated from his society, the narrator becomes pre-occupied with human predicament, existence, and nothingness. In his statement, he thinks that the existence of some "coldness" and "helplessness" inside human beings differentiates one person from another. Readers are expected to interpret his epistemological questions so as to realize his situation because the narrator doesn't explain what he means. They may also inquire about his current and future life. In an interview, Ford confirms that "the

inherent loneliness of human being condition” is a central theme in his works because he believes that “if loneliness is the disease, then the story is the cure.”⁴⁴ Thus, shattered between the self and the other, Jackie’s construction of his story becomes an act of consolation and redeeming loneliness for the reason that he wants readers to feel his emotional suffering of depression, alienation, and loneliness.

All in all, influenced by Hemingway’s “Iceberg Theory,” Ford employs the techniques of omission and implication to convey his theme of the rupture in love relationship between family members and show its effects on the son in “Great Falls.” The narrator deliberately omits key details and implies others in an attempt to force readers find out the emotional truth which is left beneath the surface of things. In doing so, he gives readers opportunities to participate in the construction of the story’s meaning and makes them feel his predicaments, confusion, and loneliness.

4. Bobbie Ann Mason’s “Shiloh”

Bobbie Ann Mason is considered a master of the short story genre in the Minimalist Movement and in Southern Literature. Her stories, which show a special concern with the fragility of modern marriages like that of Raymond Carver, have long attracted the attention of readers. Moreover, influenced by Hemingway’s “iceberg Theory,” Wilhelm thinks that “she avoids unnecessary embellishments” and she is concerned to tell the truth that lies beneath the surface.⁴⁵ Her famous story “Shiloh” can be compared to Hemingway’s “Hills Like White Elephants” because it is shaped like an ‘iceberg.’ The narrator relies on implication and omission techniques to convey the main theme: the rupture of love relationship between young married adults. He activates readers’ mental processes by giving them opportunities to participate in the construction of the story’s meaning and feel the characters’ emotional states.

Mason’s “Shiloh” seems simple and deceiving at the surface level. Like Hemingway’s “Hills Like White Elephants,” it starts in

media-res without describing the character's histories and their physical or psychological traits. Besides, readers are told details and events which do not explicitly reveal the couple's marital conflicts. However, through a close reading and based on their background knowledge of American history and culture, they can uncover the emotional reality of the couple. First, the idea of the disintegrating marriage is implied in the story's title, "Shiloh." It refers to the bloodiest battle of the Civil War, a symbol of destruction in the story. Blythe and Sweet recognize the importance of the title and note: "death and desolation permeate the Moffitts' existence."⁴⁶ Yet, the real reasons of the collapse of this couple's marriage are left underneath the surface.

In fact, the couple has long believed that they can realize their American Dream through hard work. Though it is unsaid, readers can expect that their disrupted lives can be caused by the husband's unemployment and his physical disability. However, the collapse of the couple's marriage is also closely related to the rapid changes which have occurred in the hometown due to the process of modernization. In a simile, the narrator evokes these emotions by reporting: "subdivisions are spreading across western Kentucky like an oil slick."⁴⁷ On this point, Price notes, "Leroy observes with a sense of bewildered helplessness, alienation and fear from the changes taking place in his hometown, his wife, and his marriage."⁴⁸ Additionally, an important dream of the husband is to build for his wife a log cabin, "Lincoln Logs."⁴⁹ The husband's interest in building a log cabin makes readers aware of his efforts to satisfy his wife with the means he has. Henning thinks that the interest in the activity of building becomes a displacement "for Leroy's feelings about his marriage and his life, emphasizing the pain and alienation Norma Jean and he are experiencing."⁵⁰ This implies that while the husband makes efforts to maintain the stability of his marriage, his wife seems disinterested and starts distancing herself from him.

Dissatisfied with her life, Norma Jean makes efforts to construct a new identity and create a new self-image. She seeks personal autonomy through working, taking up to body building, and enrolling in further education. So, in contrast to her husband, she responds positively to the new changing norms and assimilates fragments of feminist discourse to realize her American dream of success. Readers can infer that the wife's new cultural norms contribute to the creation of a class difference between her and her husband. The narrator doesn't explain these facts, but he reports the fear and the emotions of the husband by noting that he watches these changes in his wife and realizes, intuitively, that "something is happening" and that he knows "he is going to lose her."⁵¹ Their marriage, which was not founded on a love relationship, has become meaningless and empty after the dramatic death of their baby. Ironically, the narrator implies to readers the death of the couple's relationship by making the place Shiloh a battleground for the couple's discussion of their marital life together. In an epiphany, Leroy recognizes that "he is leaving out a lot [...]. And the real inner workings of a marriage, like most of history, have escaped him."⁵² He finally realizes his mistakes but he has to face the truth that his marriage has collapsed. This epiphany arouses readers' empathy and makes them feel his confusion and sadness.

The most important omission occurs in the last scene when Norman Jean moves away while her husband tries to "hobble towards her," though his leg still hurts him. The narrator, metaphorically, describes how she turns towards him: "Now she turns toward Leroy and waves her arms. Is she beckoning to him? She seems to be doing an exercise for her chest muscles. The sky is unusually pale—the color of the dust ruffle Mabel made for their bed."⁵³ This open ending invites readers to interpret the evoked ambiguity of Norma Jean's gestures and expect the responses of Leroy who is literally and symbolically unable to keep up with her. Readers become curious to know if she accepts to re-include him in her life and give him another chance to restore their love relationship. In truth, it is expected that

Norma Jean, who has adopted new cultural norms, can no longer accept to live with her husband. In this respect, G.O Morphew defines Norma Jean as a “downhome feminist”-a woman who simply wants “more breathing space with [her] man.” What she really seeks is her independence and selfhood apart from her marriage or “heterosexual love relationship.”⁵⁴ In fact, Leroy’s responses are also implied. In the last sentence, his observation that the sky is pale and the dust ruffle is beige, Mabel-made, refers to their unhappy and fake marriage which was forced by his mother-in-law. In his shock, he provides such description to readers who can feel more than they understand his loss.

On the whole, Mason’s “Shiloh,” narrates the unhappy and disintegrating marriage of a postmodern couple. The third objective narrator describes the movement which takes place within the characters’ memories, perceptions, and thoughts without making any comments. The story is shaped like an “iceberg” since its key details are left beneath the surface. In order to find out the implied meaning and the characters’ emotional reality, readers have to interpret the author’s metaphors, symbols, and signals. More interesting, the story shows how less can become more in the minimalist style.

Conclusion

This article tackles the influence of Ernest Hemingway’s “Iceberg Theory” on the short stories of Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, and Bobbie Ann Mason. Indeed, the comparative study of “Hills Like White Elephants,” “Why Don’t You Dance,” “Great Falls,” and “Shiloh” reveals that these writers employ the techniques of implication and omission in order to engage readers in the construction of the story’s meaning and make them feel more than they understand the emotional reality of marital dissatisfaction. The stories’ titles, setting, figures of speech, characters’ gestures, actions, and silences imply much about the dynamics of love relationships between the characters and display the implied themes. It is also established that omission, generally, emerges at the narrative level, in the construction of scenes, and fanciful and emotive description of

setting and characters. Interestingly, these writers give readers and characters, simultaneously, quiet spaces to meditate on meanings and contemplate details. Readers have to fill in the gaps and imagine the scenes so as to understand and feel the authentic emotions which are created by the writers' spare and minimalist styles. As a consequence, different readings, literal or metaphorical, always lead to a visualization of omission and implication. Therefore, Hemingway's method of omission and implication are of a paramount significance in developing American minimalist style because it aid writers in creating a fiction where "less is more" and where emotions are the submerged part, making the story more enjoyable and heart touching.

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