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Omission and Imagery in Hemingway's "Up in Michigan," Carver's "Chef's House," Ford's "Rock Springs," and Mason's "Residents and Transients"

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Abstract: *Ernest Hemingway's minimalist style, which is based on his "Theory of Omission," has exerted a considerable influence on generations of writers. This article provides additional evidence with respect to his narrative influence on the short fiction of the leading figures of literary minimalism. To fulfil this primary aim, a comparative and an analytical study is carried out using Wolfgang Iser's reception theory. This has been deployed in order to demonstrate that the narrators of Raymond Carver's "Chef's House," Richard Ford's "Rock Springs," and Bobbie Ann Mason's "Residents and Transients" employ the techniques of omission and imagery to affect the readers' imagination and engage them in the construction of the story's meaning .More interesting, they make them feel more than they understand the emotional state of the characters, which is left beneath the surface of things, as does Hemingway in his story "Up in Michigan."*
Keywords: *imagery – influence – literary minimalism – omission – "Theory of Omission."*
الملخص: إن أسلوب إرنست همنغواي البسيط ،المبني على "نظرية الحذف "، كان له تأثير كبير على أجيال من الكتّاب.يقدم هذا المقال أدلة إضافية فيما يتعلق بتأثير تقنيات سرده على قصص رواد أسلوب التبسيط بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.ولتحقيق هذه الغاية، يتم إجراء دراسة تحليلية و مقارنة باستخدام نظرية التلقي لفولفغانغ إيزر لكي نبرهن إن رواة قصص "بيت شيف " ،"روك سبر ينقس" ،و "مقيمين وعابرين" لريموندكارفر، و ريتشارد فورد، و بوبي آن ماسون على التوالي يوظفون تقنيات الحذف و الصور البيانية للتأثير على خيال القراء وإشراكهم في بناء معنى القصة ،وأكثر إثارة للاهتمام، هو جعلهم يشعرون أكثر مما يفهمون الحالة العاطفية للشخصيات التي تركت تحت سطح الأشياء كما يفعل أرنست همنغواي في قصته "حادثة في مشيغن".
الكلمات المفتاحية: الصور البيانية، تأثير، أسلوب التبسيط، الحذف ،"نظرية الحذف".

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1. Introduction

Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, and Bobbie Ann Mason, who have greatly contributed to the revival of the minimalist short story by the end of the 1970s, have modelled their minimalist styles on Ernest Hemingway's minimalist style. In fact, Nagel (1999: para 7), amongst others, acknowledges 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." What makes Hemingway's style powerful and distinct are his narrative techniques which are used to create certain effects on the readers. In this respect, Bloom (1999: 13) reports that Hemingway has long been lauded for his "powerful style forming the mastery of the art of narration." Given the recognized importance acknowledged to Hemingway's contribution in literary minimalism, a close scrutiny of the influence of his "Iceberg Theory," with a focus on his narrative techniques of omission and imagery, is the central point of this article.

To this end, in this article, there is a comparison and an analysis of selected short stories in order to argue that the narrators of Raymond Carver's "Chef's House," Richard Ford's "Rock Springs," and Bobbie Ann Mason's "Residents and Transients" deploy the techniques of omission and imagery to affect the readers' imagination and engage them in the construction of the story's meaning, and more importantly make them feel more than they understand the emotional state of the characters which is shrouded in opacity, as does Hemingway in "Up in Michigan."

Generally, Hemingway and his followers of the Minimalist Movement leave blanks to stimulate the readers' imagination. In fact, Wolfgang Iser (1978: 203) claims that blanks force the readers to use their imagination to visualize "a sequence of colliding images" in order to understand and construct the story's meaning. According to him, in literary texts authors usually leave blanks either consciously or unconsciously and that these blanks "make the reader bring the story itself to life" (Iser, 1978:192). Accordingly, there is a resort to Wolfgang Iser's reception theory because he considers that meaning emerges from the cooperation between the author and the reader. The aim of this article is to look at the ways in which these writers engage in image-making, and how they cooperate with the readers so as to make them not only understand but also feel the evoked emotions.

2. Omission and Imagery in Ernest Hemingway's "Up in Michigan"

Hemingway concentrates on communicating emotions and arousing the readers' imagination through his employment of the techniques of omission and imagery. In his book *Death in the Afternoon*, 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 (Hemingway, 1932: 192).

In Hemingway's stories, there is always a description of actions and objects which represent the "tip of the iceberg" while characters' emotions represent the submerged part of the iceberg. To accomplish this, the author relies on blanks to propel the readers to visualize the scenes by forming mental images. More importantly, he employs images to convey meaning and make the readers feel the evoked emotions.

In fact, in explaining the competencies the reader should possess in order to understand the meanings of the text or its message, Elkeurti Naima maintains that, according to Umberto Eco, the reader relies on both the lexical and stylistic heritage that he disposes so as toupdate and find out the different meanings of the text. Umberto defines the reader's internal knowledge as 'encyclopedia.'So, each individual has an internal encyclopedia which is founded on his own individual experiences and his previous literary readings. In order to comprehend the meanings of the text, the reader needs to possess other competencies in addition to the simple lexical competence (2014: 312). Furthermore, Kadour Ibrahim Mohamed argues that the interaction between the reader and the literary text is based on meaning and taste because the literary text has distinctive features which can be summarized as follows: first, the text is considered the first and the most powerful form of language which enables the readers to learn it from the text, and then understand the true significance of the linguistic base. Second, the literary text loses its value if it stays away from the present and the reality for the reason that the readers' main purpose of processing the text is to find the relationship which exists between the concerns and the interests of their current thinking through analysis and interpretation. The last point, it is worth mentioning that the text revives with every new reading. Hence, if the readers restrict the text to one sense and one constant structure, they push it to death, and more interestingly, they remain outside the text (2016: 16-17). These features of the literary text propel the authors to resort to literary techniques such as omission and imagery in order to involve the readers in the reading process.

In his article "The phenomenon of omission from the perspective of stylistic studies," Meliani Mohamed affirms that the beauty and the aesthetic aspects of speech are reinforced by the technique of omission which is considered one of the most important elements that attracted the attention of researches in different fields such as: grammar, linguistics, and stylistics. Indeed, he argues that omission of specific elements of language structure and information creates defamiliarization which has great effects on the readers (2008: 122). Moreover, as Meliani maintains, linguists view that omission should not lead to ambiguity and misunderstanding as its importance lies in its attractive effects: it stimulates the mind to recognize the deleted elements, and thus, it engages the receiver who becomes an active and alive element in the message which is addressed to him. Based on his individual life experiences, the receiver interprets and interacts with the communicated message (2008: 123).

Hemingway's method of expressing the emotions seems, at first sight, simple but if one looks beneath the surface, one is bound to change his/her tune completely. Hemingway worked hard to develop a style following the guidelines of Ezra Pound and T.S Eliot. He lets the action speaks for itself; Hemingway 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" (Hemingway, 1932: 2). This means that Hemingway is not only concerned with the reflection of the 'real world,' rather, he is more interested in making the readers experience its emotional impact in their attempt to construct the meaning of the story using their imagination and individual life experiences. This fact reveals Hemingway's influence by the principles of new poetics or "imagism" promulgated by Ezra Pound in his 1918 article, "Retrospect."

In "Retrospect," Ezra Pound sets the main rules and objectives of "imagism." He presents his belief about what constitutes good and bad writing and explains his 'principles of imagism' which have to do with cutting, eliminating, omitting, and compressing. He defines an "image" as "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (Pound, 1918: 4). Hemingway gleaned a great deal of insight from Pound with regard to how to deploy images to implicitly convey an emotional truth.

Furthermore, *The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics* provides a definition of the term "imagery" as follows: "imagery refers to images produced in the mind by language, whose words may refer either to experiences which could produce physical perceptions, were the reader actually to have those experiences or to the sense impressions themselves" (Preminger & Brogan, 1993: 560). Indeed, Iser (1978: 107) asserts that authors have to resort to various techniques and tools to activate the readers' imagination. The readers should employ their mental abilities in their attempt to form mental images based on their individual life and literary experiences. Indeed, Anad Ahmed maintains that figures of speech have attracted the attention of abundant researchers of linguistics and rhetorical studies. Linguists have considered them the cores of their research so as many books provided detailed explanations about their importance in the clarification and imagination of speech (2018: 6). Thus, figures of speech help the readers to imagine the scene and feel the evoked emotions.

Hemingway's "Up in Michigan" is shaped like an 'Iceberg' because its main theme and characters' feelings and emotions are left beneath the surface of things. The story is about an adult named Liz Coates; a young waitress who falls in love with a man called Jim Gilmore. Her ignorance about how things work in the world of masculinity leads to her "raping" by the man she loves and dreams to marry. The narrator tells the story from Liz's perspective with the aim of attracting the readers' attention to her emotional state. Besides, he does not make any comments; he merely describes the characters' physical appearances, actions, and gestures to stimulate the readers' mental processes so that they will be empowered to create mental images and fill in the gaps.

Right at the beginning of the story, the narrator attracts the readers' attention to Jim's masculinity by telling them that he has "big mustaches" and "big hands." He also reveals some aspects of Liz' feminity by affirming that she is "the neatest girl she'd ever seen" and she has "good legs" and her "hair was always neat behind" (Hemingway, 1987: 81). By making such references to physical descriptions, the readers can visualize the characters' physical appearances and form perspectives about the characters' sexuality. The fact of informing the readers that Jim is not thinking about Liz makes them curious to know what kind of relationship these characters have.

Additionally, the narrator strives to intensify the readers' emotional response by describing Liz's attraction to Jim and gradually defining what she likes in him with an emphasis on his sexuality: "Liz liked Jim very much .... She liked it about his mustache.

She liked it about how white his teeth were when he smiled…. Liking that made her feel funny" (Hemingway, 1987: 81). This emphasis on the verb "to like" makes the readers more aware of Liz's feelings and her innocent attraction to Jim. Knowing that Jim does not pay attention to Liz, such a repetition arouses a feeling of empathy towards her and establishes certain closeness between her and the readers. The use of the indefinite pronoun "it" in this description creates a kind of ambiguity. Furthermore, the narrator makes the readers sense that she is in love with Jim although she herself does not understand what is happening to her by reporting that she badly misses him when he goes on deer hunting trip. After seeing him coming back from his trip, Liz "feels week and sort of sick inside" (Hemingway, 1987: 82-83). The readers also feel that it is her first time to be kissed or touched by a man. The narrator declares: "she was terribly frightened, no one had ever touched her" (Hemingway, 1987: 84). Still the readers can understand from the clues given in the text that she experiences sex for the first time in her life while Jim knows well what he wants. Under this new feeling, Liz does not appear to have the faintest inkling about how to react and follows him when he pretends to take her for a walk. Once they arrive at the shelter of the warehouse, Jim works to satisfy himself by raping her (Hemingway, 1987: 85). The readers expect her shock after being coerced into a sexual intercourse and losing her virginity in the warehouse.

The ending of "Up in Michigan" reveals Hemingway's influence by the style of Ezra Pound, especially his technique of the direct treatment of the object and the economy of language, and the creation of symbolism through language. After the dock scene and once Liz realizes what has happened to her, the narrator describes her reaction:

> Liz started to cry. She walked over to the edge of the dock and looked down to the water. There was a mist coming down from the bay. She was cold and miserable and everything felt gone. She walked back to where Jim was lying and shook him once more to make sure. She was crying" (Hemingway, 1987: 85-86).

In the above quoted passage, Hemingway relies on the direct treatment of the thing; he describes a series of actions to stimulate the readers' imagination using clear and direct language. The narrator chooses a language which is very relevant to the context, such as: "cold," "miserable," "uncomfortable," "cry," and "mist." Moreover, the actions are organized as follows: Liz is forced to have sex with Jim, she cries, walks, and looks down. When she looks down into the water, Liz thinks about the shocking events she has just experienced, and what she can see is just the mist. Diaz (2009: 16) maintains that these series of visual images, which are verbalized using a particular language, have the power of affecting the readers' emotions as they terminate in a sensory experience. The readers can imagine these actions and feel her emotional state based on their life experiences.

Besides, the narrator arouses the readers' imagination and makes them understand the evoked emotions through the image of the mist which is symbolic within the story. On this point, Diaz (2009:16) sustains that the image of the mist has a symbolic power which is "achieved after the meaning of the natural object is developed throughout the story," especially in the dock scene. Additionally, the writer presents his image through language and tells it from Liz's perspective so as to assist the readers to understand the conditions of its meaning (Comley and Scholes, 1998: 42). If the readers try to understand the final

lines without considering the story's whole meaning, they may be led to think that the writer informs them that the mist of Michigan is cold; however, Hemingway makes them feel the tragic ending of Liz's love story through the direct treatment of the things or verbalization and visualization. These techniques are closely interrelated in a given way so as to allow the readers to perceive the image as an object and form perspectives according to the story's meaning.

The mist stands for Liz's loss of innocence and her worries about her future after losing her virginity. Comley and Scholes (1998: 21-22) sustain that "Hemingway expects us to fill in the gaps of his narrative, to make the story our own. We must supply her feelings of disappointment, which makes them both stronger and less sentimental than they would be if the author has insisted on telling us about them." So, Hemingway purposefully chooses to say less and lets the actions speak for themselves to create certain effects on his readers.

In the last line of the story, the narrator redirects the readers' attention to Liz's sadness, confusion, and unknown thoughts by referring again to the image of the mist thereby offering a powerful experience for his readers. By leaving his story open, the author compels the readers to figure things out for themselves. They may provide answers to this question: Why does the narrator end with the image of the mist exactly? Depending on the readers' experience in the world of adulthood, love relationships, and the many and varied literature-offered, interpretations can be suggested with the aim of establishing the reasons behind the narrator's reliance on the image of the mist and its relation to Liz's emotional state. The readers can also think about what could happen to Liz after going home and how can she cope with her psychological and physical situations after losing her virginity, her reputation in her small town, her confidence to the man she has long been attracted to, and, presumably above all else, her future life?

As is shown in the above analysis, Hemingway employs an effaced narrator in "Up in Michigan" which tells the story from Liz's perspectives in order to focus the readers' attention on her love story which ends with a rape. The readers have to fill in the gaps so as to contribute to the construction of the story's meaning. In addition, Hemingway relies on the technique of imagery to compel the readers to construct mental images while interpreting the story's meaning based on their own individual life and literary experiences. As such, the readers will not only understand but they feel the emotional truth of the girl because of the activation of their mental processes, too.

3. Omission and Imagery in Raymond Carver's "Chef's House"

Influenced by Hemingway, Carver also employs the techniques of omission and imagery with the purpose of making his readers understand the story's meaning and evoking the emotional truth of his characters. Carver cherished invisibility in Hemingway's stories and implemented his own theory of omission which resembles that of Hemingway. In an interview, he states: "If you can take anything out, take it out, as doing so will make the work stronger. Pare, pare, and pare some more" (Stull, 1990: 182). Accordingly, Carver's stories also operate by implication, rendering "every word and every gesture…fraught with significance" (O'Connell, 1998: 133). Thus, the feeling of Carver's characters "remain incomprehensible, so inexplicable that it is safe to say Carver's subtle and precise art is an art of effects, never of causes" (Stull, 1995: para 9).

This means that Carver intends to create certain effects on his readers by leaving the story's emotional truth shrouded in opacity.

"Chef's House" could perhaps be rated one of the most important stories which can best illustrate Carver's reliance on the techniques of omission and imagery to convey the emotional truth of the characters. It portrays the dashed dream of a couple who attempts to restore their marriage and love relationship after renting a furnished house which affords them happy time and a glimpse of a lost paradise. Wes, who is an alcoholic, decides to quit drinking and seeks recovery by moving to live in the house of a recovered alcoholic named Chef. After abandoning his girlfriend, Wes invites his wife to join him in the new house. As is the case in Hemingway's "Up in Michigan," the story is told from the female's perspective. Edna narrates the story while distancing herself from the events so as to make her narration seems more objective. Like Hemingway, Carver uses imagery with the aim of expressing the disappointment and the anguish of his characters and his style has the power of evoking emotions through the conjugation of verbalization and visualization. This fact stimulates the readers' mental processes to create meaning throughout the reading process and feel the emotional states of the characters.

Right at the outset of the story, Edna draws the readers' attention to the conflict between her and Wes. She starts the story by a detailed description of the conversation which has taken place before she accepts to join him:

> He called again and said, Edna, you can see the ocean from the front window. You can smell salt in the air…. A week later he called again and said, Are you coming? I said I was still thinking. He said, We'll start over. I said, If I come up there, I want you to do something for me. Name it, Wes said. I said, I want you to try and be the Wes I used to know. The old Wes. The Wes I married. Wes began to cry, but I took it as a sign of his good intentions. So I said, All right, I'll come up (Carver, 1989: 199).

Although the narrator does not explicitly tell the readers that the couple encounters a big problem in their marital life, it becomes clear from the wife's language that there is something immanent beneath the surface of her descriptions. The readers can understand that the husband seeks his wife's company because he struggles to recover from his alcoholism while she accepts his proposal only after she feels that he is emotionally honest. Saltzman (1988: 129) views that the husband "needs her to complete his self-reclamation project." Certainly, the readers are invited to formulate expectations regarding the real causes of the couple's separation. In his attempt to convince his wife to accept his proposal, the husband describes in two lines the place of the new house: "you can see the ocean from the front window. You can smell salt in the air" (Carver, 1989: 199). Through this verbalization using concrete words such as "ocean," "salt," and "window," the narrator stimulates the readers' mental processes in order that they might visualize the house's image, form different perspectives about its romantic position, and comprehend that the husband genuinely strives to restore his marriage and recover his health. The "ocean" is a natural symbol which emerges from the story's meaning; it stands for the couple's romantic relationship.

In Chef's house things go fairly well for the couple because they renew their love relationship. Nevertheless, their happy time is ruined when Chef comes one day and asks them to vacate the house for his daughter. The narrator describes his coming: "I looked and saw Chef's big car pull in. I could see his car, the access road and the freeway, and behind the freeway, the dunes and the ocean. Clouds hung over the water" (Carver, 1989: 200).The narrator expects that Chef's demand will affect her love relationship with her husband. The readers who concentrate on the repetition of the wife's reference to meteorological signs can infer that the clouds' movement is symbolic within this story. Lehman (2006: para 10) thinks that the couple's "new lease on life is in trouble the moment that 'clouds hung over the water as Chef comes to revoke their lend-lease." The narrator also mentions the weather by pronouncing that the last thing she remembers from her fishing trip "would be clouds passing overhead toward the central valley" away from the coastal house (Carver, 1989: 200). She refers again to the "weather" and the "ocean" while recounting her husband's behaviour after he seems to have lost his hope to restore his marriage:

> I knew that look. He kept touching his lips with his tongue Wes had this look about him. I knew that look. He kept touching his lips with his tongue. He kept thumbing his shirt under his waistband. He got up from the chair and went to the window. He stood looking out at the ocean and at the clouds, which were building up. He patted his chin with his fingers like he was thinking about something. And he *was* thinking (Carver, 1989: 201).

Like Hemingway, Carver relies on the economy of language and direct treatment of the thing to present his images to his readers, and he uses natural objects as symbols. Although the narrator does not explain the significance of the weather, its repetition attracts the readers' attention to its importance as a natural symbol which emerges from the story's meaning. In an interview, Carver asserts that he does not think in terms of images while writing, but he centers his fiction on images which emerge from the story (Stull, 1995: para 15). In his essay "On Writing," Carver makes pretty much the same point: "It's possible, in a poem or a short story, to write about commonplace things and objects using common place but precise language, and to endow those things – a character, a window curtain, a fork, a stone, a woman's earring – with immense, even startling, power" (Carver, 1985: 48). If the readers attempt to understand the story without taking into consideration the couple's emotional situation, then they may understand that the writer is telling them about the weather. Instead, if they relate the characters' emotional state to the weather, they can infer that the image of the clouds has a symbolic power which is achieved after the meaning of the natural object is developed throughout the story.

In the above quoted passage, Carver describes a series of actions using direct and precise language, and the technique of repetition with the purpose of helping the readers to visualize the scene and find out the deeper meaning of the story. These actions are organized as follows: Wes is forced to leave the new house; he touches his lips with his tongue; he keeps thumbing, he gets up from the chair; he goes to the window; he stands looking out at the ocean and at the clouds; he pats his chin with his fingers, and he is thinking. These descriptions give clues about the emotional state of the husband. In this

case, the readers are invited to fill in the gaps and form mental images with the aim of understanding and experiencing the characters' emotional states. They can feel the man's anxiety, anguish, and hopelessness. Indeed, both characters look at the clouds in different scenes. This means that the "clouds," as a natural symbol, emerge from the story's meaning and stand for their feeling of frustration, loss of hope, and confusion about their love relationship. The writer presents his image through language and tells it from the wife's perspective so that the readers can understand the conditions of its meaning and feel her emotional state. Though the story centers on Wes' attempt to recover from alcoholism and restore his marriage, the wife also experiences psychological problems. Yet, her emotional state remains wrapped in opacity.

On the whole, like Hemingway, Carver deploys the techniques of omission and imagery to activate the readers' mental processes. He does not explicitly express the marriage problem of the couple and their love relationship in his story "Chef's House"; however, through the use of symbols from natures and by leaving gaps, he prompts his readers to imagine the scenes. On this way, they become aware that the couple's marriage is disintegrating despite their attempt to restore it by renting Chef's house. As such, he also engages the readers into the construction of the story's meaning and makes them feel the characters' disappointment and fear of the unknown future.

4. Omission and Imagery in Richard Ford's "Rock Springs"

The characteristics of Richard Ford's realist style prompt comparisons with both Carver and Hemingway because Ford also relies on the techniques of omission and imagery. In his story "Rock Springs," he appears to depend quite heavily upon gaps to induce the readers to visualize the scenes by forming mental images and evoke emotions through the conjugation of verbalization and visualization. Earl, who is the first-person narrator, describes the events of the story but he distances himself from the scenes in order to offer possibilities for readers' interpretations of the story's meaning. In "Rock Springs," Ford narrates events in order to make the readers feel the disillusionment of the main characters who fail to realize their dreams and create meaning throughout the reading process.

Earl starts his story by drawing the readers' attention to his miserable situation. He informs about his past mistakes and how he has managed to scrape with the law over several bad checks. Indeed, he informs the readers that he has been in jail for stealing tires and fighting with a man who lost his eye. Because of his bad luck, Edna starts to think about leaving him. Edna also has had her own troubles with her ex-husband who has attempted to enter her house and stole her things after taking his kids (Ford, 1988:11). At this point, the readers can start to form perspectives about Earl and Edna's personalities and love relationship, and get ideas about their harmful experiences and predicaments which enable them to interpret the story's meaning.

Because Earl cannot afford to get caught again by the police, he decides to make a new start with Edna and his daughter, Cheryl, by travelling to Florida. He describes his happiness while enjoying the good time: "I felt like a new whole beginning for us, bad memories left behind and a new horizon to build on" (Ford, 1988: 13). This very enthusiasm makes him keep the car one day longer instead of getting rid of it and steal

another one (Ford, 1988:13). Like Earl, the readers expect a new beginning for him and Edna after deciding to quit their village and build a new life. Suddenly, the car goes bad because there is a problem in its oil (Ford, 1988:21). Walker (2000: 126) believes that in Ford's stories cars or trains hold special importance in that they "suggest at once freedom and entrapment, speed and the mechanistic grooves into which modern lives get stuck." Throughout the story, Earl shows that he loves possessing cars even if he steals them. Ford uses the symbol of the car to imply that Earl searches for his freedom as he wants to leave his past behind him by moving to another safer place. However, the fact of breaking down his car suggests that he fails to achieve his goals as far as he still repeats the same mistakes.

The narrator does not explicitly tell about Edna's feelings yet he implies her emotional state to stimulate the readers' imagination. Edna reacts by "looking out at the mountains, which were becoming black and lost in the distance" (Ford, 1988: 14). The black mountains stand for her feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and alienation. In this case, the readers are invited to participate in the creation of the story's meaning and feel her worries about her future. Besides, they can sense her feeling of alienation through the author's choice of the setting, the West. In his article, Folks maintains that Ford's choice of the setting allows him to create "a more blatant representation of alienation," for "[t]he mountain West offers a convenient symbolic landscape...expressing the rootlessness of an increasing number of Americans" (Folks, 2000: 154). Living in the West, Earl and Edna experience a sense of rootlessness. This is why they decide to move to Florida looking for accommodation.

Furthermore, Edna's story about her monkey affects Earl and Edna's love relationship and reveals much about their personalities. Despite the fact that her story happened years ago, she still remembers it and enthusiastically narrates it. The narrator informs the readers that Edna's influence by her customers' passing words about monkeys led her to commit an inhuman crime against her monkey Mary. A guy, who went to Vietnam, told her that she would be killed by a monkey and informed her that people had been killed in Vietnam by monkeys. Getting freighted, Edna wired the monkey to the doorknob through her little silver collar and went to sleep. In the morning, Edna found that Mary hung herself on the wire line (Ford, 1988: 17). Edna tells Earl that it is a "shameful story" and thinks that it "was an awful thing that happened to [her]" (Ford, 1988:18). The readers can deduce that Edna was badly affected by the monkey's story but she has not assumed her responsibility towards her criminal action. As soon as Edna feels that Earl is not involved into her story, she angrily comments: "You've got a character that leaves something out, Earl. I've known that a long time" (Ford, 1988: 19). Her reaction is a turning point in the couple's relationship because her speech shows that she is unsatisfied with Earl and she cannot even understand his character. By informing the readers about Edna's feelings, the narrator gives them plenty of clues about her emotional state. More importantly, the couple's conversation at this stage gives the readers further opportunities to imagine what could happen in the near future.

Like Hemingway and Carver in afore compared stories, Ford depends on the economy of language and direct treatment of the thing. The narrator does not explicitly reveal the importance of the monkey's story; however, by giving clues to the readers, he makes them question its significance and find out its connection to the main story. Walker contends that "the monkey's story mirrors Earl's life: he, in effect, hangs himself, not

literally, of course, but figuratively. One bad decision leads to the next, and the next, and the next" (Walker, 2000: 126). To put it differently, the monkey's story stands for Earl's life story. This imagery emerges from the story's meaning after telling the readers about Earl's past experiences, the problems he encounters with the car and his love relationship with Edna. By repeating the same mistakes, Earl is putting an end to his own success in life.

Accordingly, Ford narrates a series of actions to propel the readers to create a meaningful story through their imagination. These actions are organized as follows: Earl and Edna were exposed to hurtful experiences in the past; they unite with the purpose of struggling and decide to move to Florida to restart their lives; the car breaks down on the road and Earl shows little response to Edna's story; Edna feels ignored and reveals her dissatisfaction through language and identifies herself with her monkey, figuratively speaking.These series of actions have the potential of stimulating the readers' responses by affecting their emotions as they terminate in a sensory experience. The readers have to fill in the narrative and supply the characters' feelings of disappointment, frustration, and dissatisfaction after failing to realize their dream of renewing their lives. The narrator informs that he is struggling to avoid his troubles: "I thought, then, how I never planned things well enough. There was always a gap between my plan and what happened, and I only respond to things as they came along and hoped I wouldn't get in trouble" (Ford, 1988: 27). His speech arouses the readers' imagination as they have to fill in the narrative with their different perspectives and opinions regarding Earl's expected change after this statement.

Ford leaves his story with an open ending. Earl, who is dumbfounded to see his girlfriend quitting him, endeavours to steal another car in the Ramada Inn's parking lot to continue his road. He poses final questions to the eyes behind the motel room that might wonder to know what he is doing in the dark near the car: "Would you think his girlfriend was leaving him? Would you think he had a daughter? Would you think he was anybody like you?" (Ford, 1988: 37). Clearly, the narrator compares himself to other people in an attempt to achieve self-knowledge and understanding. What connects him to others is his humanity but there are some other crucial differences. According to him, thedifference between a successful life and an unsuccessful one and between him and the others is his capacity to forget the troubles and not be bothered by them (Ford, 1988: 36). Because Earl ascribes all what happens to him to "luck and design," the readers expect him to repeat the same mistakes and stay living in the same vicious circle.

In short, as is the case in Hemingway's "Up in Michigan" and Carver's "Chef's House," the narrator of Ford's "Rock Springs" relies on omission and imagery to stimulate the readers' imagination so that they can form visual images. He also compels them to fill in his narrative by providing different interpretations based on their individual life experiences and background knowledge. After being involved in the story, the readers can understand the characters' mental states and feel their disappointment and hopelessness because they fail to realize their American dream of success and establish a successful love relationship.

5. Omission and Imagery in Bobbie Ann Mason's "Residents and Transients"

Bobbie Ann Mason is another famous minimalist writer whose style resembles that of Hemingway. She insists that feelings and emotions are the most important elements in a literary work. In an interview with Wilhelm, she states that "literature is principally about textures and feelings, not themes and symbols, which are sort of like lead weights on the bottom of a shower curtain. They hold it in place and give it shape, but they aren't the curtain itself" (Wilhelm, 1998: 129). In Hemingway's tradition, she also depends on omission and imagery in her famous story "Residents and Transient" to accomplish an authentic communication with her readers and convey the emotional truth. She propels the readers to fill in her narrative and visualize the scenes by forming mental images. As such, she evokes emotions in the readers and engages them in the construction of her story.

In "Residents and Transient," the textures and feelings are of uncertainty and transformation. However, the writer leaves her story with an open ending and does not clarify if the change and the transformation will take place or not. Like her other stories, the central theme of "Residents and Transients" is the way in which the characters respond to the changes brought about by contemporary culture on formerly rural life in western Kentucky. The author maintains certain objectivity in her narrative despite the fact that the story is told from a first-person vantage point. The narrator, Mary, finds herself in the middle of both emotional and cultural changes. Years ago, when she returned to her parent's home after spending eight years pursuing higher education, she married her husband Stephen. Her parents, who embraced change, left for Florida while she has stayed in their household (Mason, 1998: 162). She reports that there are many changes in her town and that some people do not like to leave their town while some others, "dreamers," want to live in Churchill Downs in Louisville because they expect it to be the grandest place in the world (Mason, 1998:163). She also informs the readers that she is not interested to move to Louisville though she had agreed to that arrangement with her husband before he moved there to start a new job. Her husband still expects her to follow him as soon as he finds a house. Nevertheless, she does not stay loyal to him as she starts a love relationship with a dentist called Larry (Mason, 1998: 162). On this way, right at the beginning of the story, Mary draws the readers' attention to the choices she has to make while she is trying to adjust to the new cultural changes her country undergoes and solve her emotional dilemma.

In spite of the fact that she has two men, Mary's emotional confusion is reflected in her inability to reveal her love to anyone. Though Larry is interested in her and cares about her, she shows little interest and cannot even identify what kind of relationship she has with him: "I can't remember what signals passed between us, but it was appropriate that he drops by" (Mason, 1998: 164). She only hints to the fact that they feel some attraction by declaring: "Larry and I sat on the porch for an interminable time on that sultry day, each waiting for some external sign–a sudden shift in the weather, a sound, an event of some kind–to bring our bodies together" (Mason, 1998: 165). Mary does not explain clearly what kind of relationship they have, yet through these visual images she compels the readers to imagine the scene so as to feel the characters' emotional states and build their own perspectives and opinions.

Regarding her love relationship with her husband, Mary does not say anything about her past experiences with him and does not recount their life together. The only affection

she shows after he phones her by pronouncing: "his voice is familiar I can almost see him, and I realize that I miss him" (Mason, 1998: 166). Although she has been a transient for eight years and she has promised her husband to follow him, she seems to reject his life style and her phone conversations reveal that she is no longer interested to live with him. According to her, as a word processor, he is more concerned with "monopoly money" (Mason, 1998: 173). As is the case with Larry, Mary's emotional relationship with her husband remains unclear for the readers. This shows that she is culturally and emotionally confused.

Like Hemingway, Carver, and Ford, Mason draws extensively upon the economy of language and the direct treatment of the thing in this story. She uses imagery to make the readers understand Mary's feelings, her shattered personality, and the choices she confronts in her life so as to make them understand and feel her emotional state. When Mary recounts her travels with Larry, in so many passages, the narrator describes the land and the farms she is looking at. For example, she says:

> The other day he took me up in a single-engine Cessna. We circled west Kentucky, looking at the land, and when we flew over the farm I felt I was in a creaky hay wagon, skimming just above the fields. I thought about the Dylan Thomas poem with the dream about the birds flying along the stacks of hay. I could see eighty acres of corn and pasture, neat green squares (Mason, 1998: 168-169).

The above description is written with a focus on the concrete words, such as: "land," "fields," "farm," "bird," "hay," and "wagon," "corn," "pasture," and "squares." These words which are organized in simple sentences have the power of stimulating the reader's mental process to create visual images. On this way, the readers can imagine the actual scene according to their own life experiences and sense its emotional effects. They can feel Mary's love of nature and search for stability and happiness. While recounting this event, Mary unconsciously reveals her confusion about her identity by declaring: "I am nearly thirty years old. I have two men, eight cats, no cavities. One day I was counting the cats and absent–mindedly counted myself" (Mason, 1998: 169). Her unconscious identification with the cats of her parents' household asserts to the readers that she cannot easily recognize her identity. Such ambiguity arouses the readers' empathy towards her and makes them feel her cultural and emotional confusion. Like her cats, she feels homeless and emotionally needy, though she has two men.

Mary's many references to her "cats" make the readers feel that their existence has a symbolic meaning within the story. In explaining her viewpoint regarding her people's movement, Mary tells Larry: "In the wild, there are two kinds of cat populations…Residents and transients. Some stay put, in their fixed home ranges, and others are on the move" (Mason, 1998: 170). Through this verbalization using a specific language, the narrator propels the readers to visualize the scene and understand its deeper meaning. Mason chooses a language which is relevant to the context. In fact, the cat population stands for the people of Mary's town who experience cultural changes after the process of modernization. By analogy, there are two kinds of population: the residents and the transients. Mary identifies herself with the cats when she describes her possessions;

this confirms the analogy in this passage. It is clear that Mary has different opinions about the transients. Just at the outset of the story, she recalls telling her husband that she "can't imagine living on a *street* again" (Mason, 1998: 163). Nevertheless, by the end, she supports the transients. Thus, the readers can perhaps straightforwardly understand that she cannot take a definite decision about her own life concerning whether to stay in her town or move to another place.

Additionally, another important imagery occurs by the end of the story. When Mary and her lover Larry drive back to her parent's farm at night, she sees "a rabbit moves. It is hopping in place; the way runners will run in place. Its forelegs are frantically working, but its rear end has been smashed and it cannot get out of the road" (Mason, 1998: 172). Mary experiences this image as a "tape loop" when she contends: "the rabbit is a tape loop that crowds out everything" (Mason, 1998: 172). Like Hemingway' in "Up in Michigan," Mason tells the rabbit scene from the female perspective and presents it in a language which aids the readers to realize the conditions of its meaning. Hence, the readers who follow the development of Mary's psychological dilemma can easily discover that the rabbit, in this case, can serve as a metaphor for her inability to move beyond her current state; like the rabbit, she cannot move in her life because she cannot decide where to stay and with whom. This imagery reinforces the narrative and helps the readers understand better the story's meaning. More importantly, Price (2000: 23) claims that "more unusually, the metaphoric potential of the images is apparent to the story's narrator, which enables her to approach an interpretation of her situation and from this to take some control over the choices that confront her." In other words, like the readers of her story, Mary realizes the image of the rabbit and comes to an understanding of her psychological dilemma. Thus, the image of the rabbit has a symbolic power which is achieved after the meaning of the natural object is developed throughout the story.

In the last imagery, the author makes the readers more aware of Mary's emotional state by revealing her attitudes about accepting a change in her life. She says: "I see a cat's flaming eyes coming up the lane to the house. One eye is green and one is red, like a traffic light.... In a moment I realize that I am waiting for the light to change" (Mason, 1998: 173). The light has got a symbolic power as it stands for the enlightenment, change, and transformation that Mary is waiting for. Nevertheless, since she sends different signals, red and green, it remains unclear for the readers if she is willing to adapt to the new cultural changes or she will stick to her traditional ways of life. She is neither resident nor transient. More crucially, she has not yet decided about the man she will continue her life with, Stephen or Larry. This means that her future is unknown for her as she is still watching herself waiting for something to happen instead of acting. Similar to Hemingway's "Up in Michigan," this open ending offers the readers opportunities to participate in the construction of the story's meaning and anticipate Mary's decision based on their understanding of the story's meaning, their individual life experiences, and background knowledge.

Therefore, by adopting Hemingway's method, Mason narrates a series of actions following an objective stance to stimulate the readers' imagination. She organizes her actions as follows: Mary had come back to her town after spending eight years pursuing educational degrees; she married Stephen who left the town seeking a job; she has started a relationship with Larry and has become torn between two men and two different cultures;

she encounters problems of identity and cannot decide to be a resident or a transient. These series of images, which are verbalized using a particular language, have the power of stimulating an emotional response as they terminate in a sensory experience. While imagining the scenes, the readers can sense the character's feelings of confusion, her fear of the unknown future, and her failure to realize her American dream of success because she is exposed to emotional and identity dilemmas.

All in all, in "Residents and Transients," Mason follows Hemingway's method in engaging the readers in the construction of the story's meaning and affecting their emotions. She omits important details and implies others. She also varies her imagery and relies on the economy of language and the direct treatment of the things, and symbolism for the sake of helping the readers to visualize the scene and find out the hidden meaning of the story. Mary is torn between two men and two cultures and cannot take a serious decision about her future life. The text gaps and imagery guide the readers towards a deeper understanding of her emotional and cultural crises.

6. 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 "Up in Michigan," "Chef's House," "Rock Springs," and "Residents and Transients" revealed that these minimalist writers deployed omission and imagery techniques in the herein studied stories following Hemingway's method. They relied on the economy of language and the direct treatment of the thing along with symbolism to stimulate the readers' mental processes.

Using these techniques, they were able to engage the readers into the story by forcing them to fill in the gaps and imagine the scenes so that they could understand and feel the authentic emotions created by their spare and minimalist styles. As such, depending on their individual life experiences, the readers could contribute to the construction of the stories' meanings and feel the emotional state of the characters including their frustration, depression, and fear of the unknown future. As a consequence, different readings, literal or metaphorical, always lead to a visualization of omission and imagery.

Interestingly, these writers gave the readers and the characters simultaneously quiet spaces to meditate on meanings and contemplate details. The similarities which were established between the compared short stories reinforced to some extent the influence of the minimalist writers by Hemingway's narrative techniques. By saying "less" to mean "more," these writers have created vibrant and heart-touching stories.

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