

THE IMPACT OF THE ICEBERG THEORY IN LITERATURE: A CLOSE READING OF  
*THE SUN ALSO RISES AND INVISIBLE CITIES*

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts in English

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## **DECLARATION**

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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# Approval

The thesis titled “The Impact of Iceberg Theory in Literature: A Close Reading of *The Sun Also Rises* and *Invisible Cities*” submitted by

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of Summer, 2020 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English on January 6, 2021.

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## ABSTRACT

In Ernest Hemingway's novels and short stories the priority to narrate the plot was evenly distributed between the content as well as the style of the writing. In a nutshell, he used a special writing style to hint at the inner meaning and purpose of the novel – without actually writing it out alphabetically. This unique style of Hemingway is widely known as the Iceberg theory. The purpose of this theory then becomes, to motivate the readers to through apparent surfaces into layers of possible 'truths' and subtexts as they repeatedly read the same work through multiple perspectives. Even though this theory is closely related to Hemingway's prose, other famous authors around the world, such as Italian writer Italo Calvino, Japanese contemporary writer Haruki Murakami etc. also applied this device to narrate their fictions. In this paper, a close reading and in-depth analysis will be given to two novels by Ernest Hemingway and Italo Calvino. Their novels *The Sun also Rises* and *Invisible Cities* master the concept of deferring underlying signification or meaning to hindsight for the readers to decipher. The reason this topic is given a form of research in this paper is to show how the Iceberg theory serves the readers a unique writing style separate from other potentially relevant theories such as intertextuality, heteroglossia and polyphony that not only holds a beautiful narrative to meet the thirst of the eyes but also several layers of philosophical truths that satisfy the needs of the mind.

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### **Discussed Literary Theories:**

- Iceberg Theory – Ernest Hemingway
- Dialogism – Mikhail Bakhtin
- Polyphony - Mikhail Bakhtin
- Heteroglossia - Mikhail Bakhtin

**Discussed Books:**

- *The Sun also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway
- *Men Without Women* by Ernest Hemingway
- *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino
- *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* by Lisa Zunshine

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Born in 1899 Ernest Hemingway gained much fame because of a new technique of writing that he practiced which is called – the Iceberg theory. To explain his own theory, he stated in his book *Death in the Afternoon* that “If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing, 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 iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water” (3). He also said “If it is any use to know it, I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There are seven-eighths of it under water for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that does not show. If a writer omits something because he does not know it then there is a hole in the story” (182). From this elaboration of his well-known analogy, it can be understood that this theory emphasizes minimalism in terms of writing. Further, it adds layers of meaning to a plot that otherwise seems much plain when given a casual read.

A very famous novel written by Hemingway himself is *The Sun also Rises* that focuses on the destructive effects of war on human minds. Through the casual representation of sex, traveling, unexpressed emotions, etc. Hemingway addressed a primary issue of war – that it destroys the power of human minds to grasp the significance of anything anymore. Hence, by describing the casual and confusing lives of a few characters – Hemingway painted the actual scenario of the lost generation within the two hundred pages of his prominent novel.

In addition to that, Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities* is one of his many well-known literary works. Born in 1923, Calvino was an Italian journalist and a writer. For about two years of his

life, he fought the German as well as the Italian fascists. Hence, just like Hemingway his works also focused greatly on the dark side of war. Some of his other famous novels are: *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, *Mr. Palomar*, *The Cloven Viscount* etc. In this paper, his novel *Invisible Cities* will also be analyzed to show the multiple layers hidden within the lyrical descriptions of fifty-five cities.

It is often said that a thousand people reading the same book is like creating a thousand new books from the multiple versions of that particular book. This is because every human mind can be considered a parallel universe where numerous interpretations and analogy can be made of societal aspects such as – love, ambitions, religion, sex etc. Because a tiny portion of these matters is actually shared and thus visible to the naked eye, it is very common for the writers to leave their novels open ended for every kind of interpretation. To put theoretically, it is the reader's reception theory that creates a relationship between the readers and the book through their strategy of analysis. This also allows the readers to form an intertextuality of their own through the presence of similarities that they have felt among their different reads. It also allows the readers to work their way through the novel, to think critically and give a novel a shape of their own beliefs. The Iceberg theory is an example of this practice as it is also known as the theory of omission where most of the story is hidden – like an iceberg underneath the water. Hence, in this paper *The Sun also Rises* and *Invisible Cities* will be analyzed and deciphered to portray the application of this theory by the authors Ernest Hemingway and Italo Calvino.

### **1.1 Research Question**

The overarching research question that will be focused on this paper is – what is the impact of the Iceberg principle in literature? Also, by analyzing some contemporary and postmodern

novels using this theory, it will also be shown why the Iceberg theory is still significant to understand literature. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to understand the use of Hemingway's theory beyond his texts and literary era.

## 1.2 Summary

Firstly, a brief discussion will be held on the Iceberg theory and how it was originated and perceived all around the literary world. Due to the fact that the main concept of the Iceberg theory is often thought of as the same as the literary devices of allusion and imagery, this paper will also spend some passages portraying how they are different. Next, I will broadly discuss the novel *The Sun also Rises* as well as some short stories by Hemingway to show the creator's application of his theory. In order to keep my research precise and focused, I have chosen to use instances from two stories only and these are "Hills like White Elephants" and "Today is Friday".

Afterwards, we will take a leap of forty-eight literary years and discuss Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* as it was published in 1972. Here we will take a brief look at the fifty-five cities described through allusions by Calvino and how the combination of all these allusions requires the reader to look beyond the surface level of text. This technique of looking beyond the surface level' is shared by many theories apart from Iceberg, such as dialogism, polyphony, heteroglossia, etc. All these theories focus on the connection of the text and its inherent meaning but from separate viewpoints. In other words, the concept of intertextuality is what such theories explore as it shapes a text through its meanings. It connects different texts of literature that has similar impact on the readers' analysis. Julia Kristeva was the first to use the word "intertextuality" in order to make a whole idea of Ferdinand de Saussure's study of signs

(semiotics) that derive their meaning within the structure of a text with Bakhtin's dialogism. Dialogism suggests a continual dialogue with the works of literature and other authors as well as his examination of the multiple meanings, or heteroglossia in each text, especially novels. For Kristeva, "the notion of intertextuality replaces the notion of intersubjectivity" (*Nous Deux*, 43), that is when we comprehend that meaning is not transferred directly from the writer to the reader, rather it is instead mediated through hidden meanings created to the writer and reader by other texts. This intertextual view of literature supports the concept of Hemingway's Iceberg theory as well where the meaning of a text does not reside in the text, but is produced by the ability to decipher through the ambiguity of the text. Regarding this philosopher William Irwin wrote, the term (intertextuality) has come to have almost as many meanings as users, from those faithful to Julia Kristeva's original vision to those who simply use it as a stylish way of talking about allusion and influence" (*Against Intertextuality*, 20).

Hence, the connection of all these modern theories with Hemingway's Iceberg principle will also be interpreted in that section. In the conclusion part, the whole idea of the research will be summarized in a nutshell one more time and the thesis topic will be asserted again that – the Iceberg theory is timeless.

### **1.3 Thesis Statement**

Hence, the aim of this paper is to identify the ways through which the Iceberg principle created impacts on literature and why it is timeless. It will be done via close readings of *The Sun also Rises* and *Invisible Cities*, as well as the difference between the Iceberg principles with other modern literary theories. I have chosen this topic as the effect of conveying a message in the

hindsight has made many texts quite substantial and this study will show the readers how the Iceberg principle actually works – as in why it is timeless.

## **Chapter 2**

### **2.1 Research Methodology**

This research focuses on understanding the technique and impacts of the Iceberg theory that was first used by Ernest Hemingway. The selected novels show how the theory is not just limited to any particular genre. Rather, it has been used to intensify the layers of meaning in urban literature as well as a novel to depict the lost generation. As Ernest Hemingway is considered the pioneer of the Iceberg theory, there are multiple types of research that show the use of this technique in *The Sun also Rises*. However, *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino is considered to be a novel about the power of imagination through the allusion of fifty-five unique cities. This novel also hints at the impacts of architecture in urban literature. Hence, as most readers see it through some specific lens, applying the Iceberg theory adds to the existing literature as well as fills the gap between the symbolism and the ambiguity of the overall meaning of the book that requires Hemingway's theory to be understood. However, this paper will not compare the two selected prose pieces in any form or shape as the ultimate purpose of this paper is to reflect on the significance of a narration technique to critically understand literary prose. The reason then why these two novels were selected is because they were published in two different literary eras as well as they both follow completely different genres. Hence, by showing how the Iceberg theory works here, this research would like to highlight the diverse impact of the iceberg narrating technique.

Having said that, this paper heavily borrows from other research works and journals as it is also not an isolated analysis. The literature review section contains multiple references and quotations that justify my thesis. The discussion parts separately analyze the two novels also through the support of other external research references. Lastly, the main theory of this paper is the Iceberg theory which will also have its own section of analysis.

## **2.2 Research Methodology for the Iceberg Theory**

As this paper is highly concerned with theories, specifically Hemingway's Iceberg theory or the theory of omission, it will be broadly discussed and exemplified through several literary pieces. While *The Sun also Rises* and *Invisible Cities* will be used as primary texts, Hemingway's other short stories as well as the idea of hiding meaning through allusions in other books such as Haruki Murakami's *Men without Women* and *The Birthday Stories* will be briefly discussed too. The analysis of all the texts selected will be done through maintaining certain parameters so that the readers will only get to see these texts through the lens of the Iceberg principle which will result in re-interpretation of the many themes and motifs these texts provide.

Apart from that, this paper also aims to present a broad discussion that will defend the thesis that – the Iceberg theory is timeless. Having originated during the early 1900s, this technique of writing has surpassed its era and now has evolved into many other forms by keeping its essence the same. To solidify this claim many similar theories by Mikhail Bakhtin such as Dialogism, Polyphony, and Heteroglossia will be brought into the discussion too. The comparison of all of these theories will show the readers how the act of writing through hindsight is quiet common among these theories and lastly what makes the Iceberg theory unique by focusing on its impact on literature.



Afterwards, some secondary resources will also be used as references that will show what other critics and scholars opine about the impact of this theory on literature. Such journals will be taken from scholarly resources through preliminary research and the gained information will be narrowed down according to the focus of this paper in the literature review section. The main aim of collecting such resources is to show why my paper sets apart from already published literature and by claiming that the Iceberg theory is timeless, this paper intends to put something new in the archive of literary researches. It is also quite significant to mention that, the Iceberg theory is the main question of my thesis – which asks why is this theory timeless? Thus, by posing my analysis of the theory as a research, I intend to identify the main concepts or keywords to be used in this paper.

### **2.3 Preliminary Research**

Before the research had begun, a preliminary search was conducted to see if there are enough materials out there to help this thesis to be defended. Keywords with appropriate titles were searched in the BRAC University's library's reference collection (such as encyclopedias and dictionaries) and in other sources as the catalog of books, periodical databases, and internet search engines. Additional background information was also collected from literature courses provided by BRAC University, such as ENG201: Composition II, *ENG 355: Survey of American Literature II*, and *ENG 364: Theories of Fiction*. All these gathered primary information were necessary to adjust the focus of this topic in light of the resources available.

### **2.4 Evaluation of Sources**

In order to provide credible, truthful, and reliable information many additional steps were taken right after the first draft. For credibility, firstly any journals that were cited were selected through

the credentials of the authors. As Italo Calvino and Ernest Hemingway were legendary writers, it was suitable to take the opinions of professors from universities who have expertise in the field of literature. Random internet articles were not taken into consideration as they lacked credibility. Furthermore, such scholarly journals were also favorable as they were peer reviewed. In terms of accuracy, it was maintained that the information used is up to date, detailed, exact, and comprehensive. Any secondary sources used in this research were published within the years 2000 to 2018, hence providing reliable and true ideas in the fast –changing field of researches. Lastly, MLA 7<sup>th</sup> model was used to cite all these resources.

## **2.5 Research Methodology for the Novels**

This paper focuses on two primary texts, which are *The Sun also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway and *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino. For Hemingway’s novel, firstly the historical background of *The Sun also Rises* will be explained. In the next section, certain dialogues will be analyzed. Following that, will come the discussion on the novel’s connection with the Iceberg theory. A lot of ideas will be borrowed here from other scholars such as Gertrude Stein and Liza Zunshine. Afterward, some pivotal characters such as Brett, Cohn, and Jake will be analyzed following the theory.

In terms of *Invisible Cities*, first and foremost the structure of the book will be deconstructed. Next, the conversations between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan will be analyzed. And then to keep the paper focused and narrowed down, only a few cities from the fifty-five cities will be discussed through the lens of the Iceberg theory which will be then followed by a paragraph discussing the comparison between Mikhail Bakhtin’s literary theories and Hemingway’s Iceberg theory. The fourteen cities that are chosen for this paper from the fifty-

five cities are: Diomira, Isiodra, and Zaira from “Cities and Memories”, Dorothea, Anastasia, and Despina from “Cities and Desire”, Tamara and Zirna from “Cities and Sign”, Isaura and Fedora from “Thin Cities”, Melania and Eusapia from “Cities and the Dead”, and lastly Thekla and Beersheba from “Cities and the Sky”

## **Chapter 3**

### **3.1 Literature Review: Iceberg Theory**

As the main focus of this paper is to observe the multiple dimensions of the Iceberg principle, it is important to see it first through the opinions of other critiques and writers. Researcher Shahla Sorkhabi Drazikola wrote an article titled “The Iceberg Principle and the Portrait of Common People in Hemingway's Works” In the introduction of the book she captured the idea of this theory by saying, “Hemingway employs iceberg method to depict definition and complexity to a character without straight stating what the person who reads should be thinking. The Iceberg Theory is a term used to define the writing approach of Hemingway. He considered the factual meaning of a part of inscription should not be obvious from the surface fiction for the reason that the main point of the work is under the surface” (2). On the other hand, Monash University in Australia has the following definition of the Iceberg Principle “A theory that suggests that aggregated data can hide information that is important for the proper evaluation of a situation.” Apart from that, Hupert Zapf in his article "Reflection vs. daydream: Two types of the implied reader in Hemingway's fiction" wrote on this matter that “Hemingway believed the deeper meaning of a story should not be evident on the surface, but should shine through implicitly” (3). Sigmund Freud also added to the matter in his own way saying “the unconscious mind is the

primary source of human behavior. Like an iceberg the most important part of the mind is the part you cannot see” (8).

There is a reason this particular theory is titled after a literal iceberg. Regarding this James Plath stated that,

“The “iceberg theory” describes that only 10-20% of the story is directly revealed through prose. In comparison to an actual iceberg, that is usually the portion of the floating ice mountain that is visible above water. The other 80-90% of the story lies behind the scenes and is integrated in the structure of the story. This is akin to the remainder of the iceberg that is located underwater: the part that is not visible on the surface of the sea” (5).

Having said that, writing through maintaining this technique requires an author to be quite strategic as,

“While this is a brilliant theory, it must be used with caution. A writer cannot cut apart his or her story with a sharp knife, omitting all details. The story will lose its structure, its value, its poetry. A writer needs to balance how much detail to give the reader and how much to withhold, ingraining the omitted details within the story’s structure itself. A bond must be forged with the readers and then, and only then, can the writer determine how much to give to the reader superficially and how much to bury deep within the text” (Plath 7).

When it comes to the timelessness of this theory many contemporary critiques still look for the need of this theory for the books to be more effective. For contemporary science-fiction and fantasy books, this is the suggestion David M. Rabbe made,

“With some novels, especially in Fantasy and Sci-Fi, authors tend to walk down the treacherous path of endless description... *The Name of the Wind* series by Patrick Rothfuss starts with a 100-page world building and setting experience. Same with *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien can go on for pages describing a setting, especially if it has anything to do with nature. It can sometimes result in a less immersive and engaging reading experience. This is where the Iceberg model can come of use. Icebergs exist both above and below sea-level. Imagine the iceberg to be your fictional world and all the elements in it. The top (above sea level) is the part you actually share in your story. That’s what you show your reader. The part below sea level (which is usually way bigger) is the rest of your fictional world. For the sake of this article I’ll focus on Fantasy and Sci-Fi. The part below sea level can be background information, character sketches, history, complete magical systems, technological developments, governmental issues, etc” (40).

The Iceberg Theory of writing can also be considered a very unique introduction to the literary world as,

“As opposed to hyperbolic schematization of 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian literature, the iceberg principle opts for apothegmatic, pithy and laconic style of way with words. It corroborates succinct writing with telegraphic dialogue. Hemingway's style indulges with

removing details and using formal conversational syntaxes. It thus highlights succinct writing and casual telegraphic style of conversation” (C.A.O 4).

### **3.2 Literature Review: Iceberg Theory in *The Sun also Rises***

As mentioned before, there were several authors who discussed the influence of the Iceberg theory in *The Sun also Rises*. For instance, Writer Zoe Trodd wrote in the article that "iceberg theory of omission demanded that the reader feel the whole story: just like it was embedded in *The Sun also Rises*" (10). He explained this theory to function in a way that sooner or later makes the readers respond to the plot according to their own pace of understanding. To illustrate an example of this, in another article writer Hannah Torma wrote "The characters' allusion to "sickness" is an example of the Iceberg Theory. The sickness the characters are really discussing, anxieties about post-- WWI" (2). This analogy captures the repeated and vague reference of sickness throughout the story that was done by the main protagonists – Jake and Brett. This sickness was not necessarily Jake's impotent condition; rather it was the trauma (specifically PTSD) that was in disguise of the sickness. Apart from the sickness, the only female character of the novel Brett is also said to be Hemingway's "medium of causing ambiguity" by Lorrie W. Fulton. She wrote in an article that "Brett is one of Hemingway's richest female characters. Her personality gradually emerges as an intriguing mix of femininity and masculinity, strength and vulnerability, morality and dissolution. Yet she can be taken as a destructive force in the plot if one follows the Iceberg theory" (2). Lastly, author Stonebrack also considers the novel *The Sun also Rises* as an "example of Hemingway's Iceberg theory of fiction" (5).

To further show how this technique works on this novel Zoe Trodd writes, "This story is considered a work of art due to how its plot and characters unfold. Most of it's done by the

iceberg theory. For example, Jack Barnes, the protagonist has an unforgettable issue -his wound from WWI. Many believe that underneath this lies a deeper message about the war and its horror” (Trodd 8). Apart from that Wolfgang Rudat also wrote that,

“The basis for the novel was Hemingway’s 1925 trip to Spain. The story centers around a group of American and British expatriates who travel from Paris to the Festival of Fermín in Pamplona to watch the running of the bulls and the bullfights. The setting was considered unique and memorable, presenting the seedy café life of Paris, the Pamplona festival, with a middle section devoted to fishing in the Pyrenees. Equally startling was Hemingway’s spare writing style, combined with his restrained use of description to convey characterizations and action, which became known as the iceberg theory” (18).

He adds to his discussion on the Iceberg theory in this novel by saying that, “... the effects of WWI, Gertrude Stein’s Lost generation, failure of love, impotency and sterility, alienation, failure of communication, Hedonism, etc. are just some of the key themes that lies underneath the Iceberg in this novel” (20).

Adrian Bond further points out the use of this technique through Hemingway’s writing structure of this novel as he wrote, “Hemingway's style includes the use of short, choppy sentences that are descriptive and have underlying meanings that are integral to the work. Hemingway uses this technique, the iceberg, to portray meaning and depth to a character without directly stating what the reader should be thinking. The iceberg technique allows readers to use their intelligence to figure out Hemingway's underlying meanings” (22). Similarly, David Blackmore has found the application of this theory through the character development of Lady Brett Ashley. He wrote, “*The Sun also Rises*, deals with interpretations not of the supposedly

chauvinistic writer's male characters but rather, the main female character, Lady Brett Ashley. This shows a promising development in Hemingway scholarship and a broadened understanding of the complexity of his writing, a style which he coined the "iceberg theory" of writing, which invites analysis as only one-eighth of the meaning lies on the surface of the text. The scholars analyzing Lady Brett Ashley have discovered that this iceberg style is relevant in the analysis not only of Hemingway's male heroes but also of his female characters that are too often superficially read and dismissed" (24).

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Iceberg Theory**

To portray the main idea of Hemingway's theory a tremendous accident from the past can be used as an allusion. The Titanic, a British passenger ship collided with an iceberg in 1912 and sank. Of the estimated 2,224 humans on board, more than 1,500 lost their lives. The relevant point here is that The Titanic sank because of damage that came from below the waterline, a damage the crew could not see. The Iceberg theory is very similar to this essence as it is a term used to define the writing approach of Hemingway. He considered the factual meaning of a text should not be obvious from the surface reading for the reason that the main point of the work is under the surface. The uniqueness of this theory is in its process where it does not use explicit adjectives and rhythmic sentences that focus on the action more willingly. Rather, Hemingway believed in the impact of mirror images. His creation of this technique is the result of a deliberate procedure of choosing merely those elements necessary to the fiction and hiding the whole thing else away. He reserved his text plain and straight; employing a method he named the Iceberg principle. It works on the idea that we cannot always estimate the depth or significance of a



situation – just like an iceberg whose tip is always visible to the naked eye while most of it is invisible.

Hemingway's previous job of a journalist is often considered a prime reason for his creation of the Iceberg principle. Journalists are always on the move and they are given a limited word limit to produce their content. Their 'iceberg' style sometimes prevails when they become authors of novels. To illustrate, the writing styles of Mark Twain, Willa Cather, and Stephen Crane can be used as examples. They were also journalist before they started writing books.

Literature works as an influencing instrument for our feelings, motives, and decisions. The narratives of the characters often make us wonder about our past experiences and present condition. Ernest Hemingway's writing style using this principle was often criticized by other authors. They claimed that he wrote in such a manner so that he could distance himself from his characters. Despite the criticism, the technique of the Iceberg theory still succeeded to provoke thoughts and by the end of the plot, the readers can surely relate to the circumstances of the characters, if not the characters themselves. Hemingway applies the Iceberg method to portray definition and complexity to a character without straight stating what the person who reads should be thinking. For example, the first read of the "Hills like White Elephants" could easily mislead several readers to think that it's a plain short story of two people waiting for a train. However, the application of the Iceberg theory shows us that there is an unmentioned anxiety that is lurking between Jig and the American man. This anxiety is related to something emotionally troublesome for Jig – her child's abortion, that is the elephant in the room is Jig's abortion. Similarly, all the stories in Hemingway's *Men without Women* have several hidden

anecdotes that a reader needs to dig through to find out. Even to this day many Hemingway lovers still wonder why Ole Anderson resigns himself to his fate in “The Killers”.

According to the Iceberg theory, the author takes away the primary clues and provides the readers with the bare minimum to make a conclusion of their own. Just like an iceberg in the middle of the ocean hides its greater mass, so does Hemingway’s stories hide the true circumstances causing conflict in the plot. The reason he practiced such a method of writing is because he believed in the idea of minimalism that stated ‘less is always more’. In fact regarding this Mark Cirino wrote in his book *Reading Hemingway's Across the River and Into the Trees: Glossary and Commentary* that “Hemingway firmly believed that perfect stories conveyed far more through subtext than through the actual words written on the page. The more a writer strips away, the more powerful the “iceberg,” or story, becomes clear” (8). However, in contrast to Cirino’s statement, James Plath said “Hemingway stripped so much from his stories that many of his contemporary critics complained that his fiction was little more than snippets of dialogue strung together. Others have called his writing overly masculine—there are no beautiful phrases or breathtaking passages, just the sheer basics” (19).

Among these different perspectives regarding the Iceberg theory lies the true paradox. As readers, we are always curious to know every little detail about the plot and the characters. We want to know the whos and whys so that the thirst of our mind to be omniscient can be fulfilled. As readers, we are always in an attempt to reduce the fictional characters to the point where we can relate them easily with our daily lives.

In order to illustrate the effect of this technique in the mind of the readers, I will use an example written in two different styles:

First, “the white knight wearing his red military uniform rode on a black stallion across the wet field.”

Second, “the knight wearing his military uniform rode a horse across the field.”

The first example was descriptive of the knight, uniform, horse, and field. There was little for the readers’ imagination to figure out. The second example let you decide the colour of the knight, uniform, and horse that the readers get to choose the field themselves. Is it wet or dry? Green or brown? This is exactly what the Iceberg theory does. Hemingway allows the reader to come beside him and discover the world ourselves without telling us every detail.

Needless to say Ernest Hemingway did not work to please these particular desires and made his characters mysterious and alive in all their unpredictable situations. He lets the reader develop his own ideas about the background or intentions of the characters and wanted the reader to “fill(ing) in ‘the creative void’”.[...] “His primary aim was to arouse the reader’s own personal emotions, deeply involve him in the experience created for him and thereby enable him to discover ‘the real thing’” (Giger, 52), which ties this theory back to dialogism, reader’s reception theory, and intertextuality.. Even though the technique of the Iceberg theory can be frustrating for some readers who will need to turn back to the story repeatedly to solve the puzzle, Hemingway lovers have celebrated his style for years after years for its minimalism and simplicity. And because of this Anna Di Biasio wrote in her article "The Gaze and the Iceberg: War Tourism in Ernest Hemingway’s" A Farewell to Arms" that “There is no doubt that reading Hemingway can be hard work, but his (Hemingway’s) fewer misleading words paint a truer picture of what lies beneath” (20). Thus, with its impactful techniques of provoking the senses of

the readers, the Iceberg theory becomes a crucial part of literature that many authors have applied in their works to enhance the depth and layers of meaning.

#### **4.1 In Comparison to Other Literary Devices**

As the Iceberg theory is often considered the same as many literary devices, such as symbolism, allusions, and metaphors, this section will compare these literary features with the said theory and show what differentiates them from each other. After researching the features the Iceberg theory possesses, it can be stated that in nearly all Hemingway's works symbols are used very broadly. "Symbols dominate the existence of Hemingway's characters, a subtle spectator of all deeds, full of sensitiveness. The use of constitutive symbols, image verbalization and reality are characteristics of the main themes in Hemingway's works such as hostility, nada or nothingness, sex" (Trodd 23). However, there are some in-depth features that set these two literary devices apart from the Iceberg principle.

Firstly, from the definition of symbolism, we can understand that it is just the representation of an action, person, place, or word through any objects. For example, the use of wedding rings to symbolize commitment dove to represent peace, etc. On the other hand, a metaphor is a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance. For example, "he is a shining star" or "chaos is a friend of mine". Having said that, it is important to remember that these aspects are a part of the Iceberg theory but not the whole theory itself. While symbolism is a direct reference of an object to represent something, the Iceberg theory does not necessarily use a particular object, rather it's the whole plot or scene that stands as a mystery to a bigger meaning. Similarly, metaphors are known to compare two unlikely objects in order to heighten the impact of the text, but the Iceberg theory blends the emptiness of the missing message without putting forward any

hyperboles or unlikely contrasts. Hence, despite the similarity between these concepts, they are highly different in terms of their contribution to a literary text.

## **Chapter 5**

### **5.1 *The Sun also Rises***

*The Sun also Rises*, first major novel by Ernest Hemingway was published in 1926. The plot of this book revolves around a group of expatriates in postwar Spain and France. They can be described as alcoholics who lived fast-paced, emotionless lives as part of the cynical Lost Generation. Two of the novel's main characters are Lady Brett Ashley and Jake Barnes. Jake, one of the main protagonists, is a journalist and World War I veteran. During the war Jake suffered an injury that rendered him impotent. Jake and Brett met and fell in love during the war, when Brett was a volunteer nurse. She is also aware of Jake's injuries as she helped treat him during the war. Although it is not said explicitly, it is implied that they are not together because Jake is impotent and Brett unwilling to give up sex.

With a lot of partying, drinking, and bullfighting this novel portrays an aimless picture of a group of traumatized people who no longer understand the meaning of communication and love. It all ends with an unclear message, with Jake and Brett talking in a taxi in Madrid. In the final lines of the novel, Brett tells Jake she thinks they could have had a wonderful time together. Jake replies, "Yes, isn't it pretty to think so?"

As bitter and unclear the story is, it is quite fitting as *The Sun also Rises* captures the existential and delusional characteristics of the Lost Generation. Its main characters—Jake, Brett, and other supporting characters—are mentally, emotionally, and morally lost. Their lives lack motivation and purpose as their romantic attachments are chaotic. Although they regularly spend

time together, their communication is mostly meaningless. Filled with alcohol, the expatriates wander from bar to bar, having senseless conversation over women and sex. All of the characters (especially the war veterans) use alcohol to distract themselves from their lost lives and the unpleasant feelings they associate with the war.

## **5.2 *The Sun also Rises* in Relation to the Iceberg Theory**

*The Sun also Rises* is considered to be an important piece of fiction that captures the post World War-I period in America. This book elaborates on the quote by Gertrude Stein “you are all lost generation”. Here, by the term ‘lost’ Stein referred to a particular mindset of people that was disoriented and demotivated. Such a condition was the result of World War-1 and in *The Sun also Rises*, the casual partying; meaningless travelling and lovemaking of Hemingway’s characters resemble Stein’s idea of the post World War-1 period. However, to connect both the ideas Hemingway did not necessarily use additional monologues or side notes. Rather, he wrote only of the aimlessness and futile lifestyle of Jake, Brett, Cohn etc. It is the Iceberg theory that helps the readers to realize the true reason of such a chaotic plot – the cultural shock caused due to the First World War. The reason Hemingway kept the idea of lost generation tangled with the Iceberg technique is to enhance the true meaning of ‘lost’ – something that needs to be rescued or found.

According to Lisa Zunshine’s *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (2006), she claims that, “depending on an author’s particular technical proficiency, it can be easier or harder to use theory of mind in literary engagement. Some novels contain sufficient behavioral markers within their narratives to make it easier for us to sustain that challenging state of ‘self-conscious reading’” (118). Zunshine used Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* as an

example where the characters convey messages through their body language. *The Sun also Rises* has similar linguistic gaps and requires mind-reading by the readers as suggested by Lisa Zunshine.

Throughout the whole novel, Hemingway avoids giving detailed information and allows the conversation between the characters to speak for them. In other words, we see a lot of conflicts taking place without the narrator or the author explicitly stating the reasons to us. A prime example of this technique is Jake Barnes' injury. This injury is shown to be the sole factor that keeps Brett and Jake apart despite their honest feelings towards each other. Also, this much-mentioned injury plays a big role in Jake's life as he feels inferior because of it. Not once did Hemingway talk about any specific region of his body that is injured, however, it is through his actions and conversations with Brett that makes the readers understand that the war caused him to be impotent. To illustrate this point further if the conversation between Jake and Brett in chapter six is taken as an example, we can see that:

[Jake:] "Couldn't we live together, Brett? Couldn't we just live together?"

[Brett:] "I don't think so. I'd just tromper you with everybody."

These two statements capture the central conflict of the whole novel that hints at Jake's injury. As in Hemingway's prose little is said and much is communicated, the readers must pay close attention to see what is being said here. Even though Jake is begging for a chance to spend the rest of his life with Brett, she replies with the French word 'tromper' which means adultery. As the wound he received during the war affected his sexual capacity that is why Brett will need other men to give in to her desire for sex. With her dialogue "I'd just tromper you with

everybody” she is blatantly stating that she will go behind Jake’s back having sex with other men leaving Jake humiliated and hurt.

This example is quite similar to Jig’s abortion in “Hills like White Elephant” as mentioned earlier written by Hemingway himself. The American man never speaks about any illness related to Jig and repeatedly says she does not need to do anything she does not want to. Lastly, he claims that it's "just to let the air in" (Hemingway, 1) and "I don't want anybody but you. I don't want anyone else, (...)" (Hemingway, 2) which implies abortion as there will be somebody else other than them who need to be getting rid of through an operation. Hence, it can be said that the Iceberg theory is Hemingway’s own aesthetics that he practices through his exposition, dialogue and characters. Regarding this, Robert W. Coachran wrote “The ‘Iceberg Theory’ refers to Hemingway's literary technique of conveying a great deal of information without actually writing it. (...) *The Sun also Rises* is a classic example of what scholars call Hemingway's ‘Iceberg Theory’” (6). Also, Wolfgang EH. Rudat in his article titled "Hemingway's" *The Sun also Rises*": Masculinity, Feminism, and Gender-Role Reversal." said “Equally startling was Hemingway’s spare writing style, combined with his restrained use of description to convey characterizations and action, which became known as the iceberg theory” (8).

Moreover, one of the most iconic interactions between Jake and Brett occur in the end where Hemingway wrote, ““Oh, Jake,’ Brett said, ‘we could have had such a damned good time together.’ Ahead was a mounted policeman in khaki directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me. ‘Yes,’ I said. ‘Isn’t it pretty to think so?’ ” (Hemingway 102). The hidden ideas behind such an ending to this novel has been explained by



writer Wolfgang Iser as he wrote, “In this concluding passage, the lament over what could have been is truly poignant, and for many this represents the novel’s finest moment. Just as Brett voices, one last time, the dream that the two of them could have had a relationship, a policeman raises his baton and symbolically signals a halt. The car’s sudden deceleration presses Brett tantalizingly close to Jake, echoing a number of similar scenes earlier in the novel, but the barrier between them is quite clear now” (40).

From the conclusion of this novel, let us now jump back to its beginning where the narrator gives us a description of Robert Cohn. If we analyze the description of Cohn, we can find that “Robert Cohn was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton. Do not think I am very much impressed by that as a boxing title, but it meant a lot to Cohn. He cared nothing for boxing, in fact he disliked it, but he learned it painfully and thoroughly to counteract the feeling of inferiority and shyness he had felt on being treated as a Jew at Princeton” (Hemingway 10). These lines open the novel, as Jake begins a brief biographical sketch of Robert Cohn. This passage presents many of the themes and motifs that the novel goes on to develop, such as competitiveness and resentment between men and insecurity. For example, Cohn suffers from feelings of “inferiority” because he is Jewish, and, as soon becomes clear, nearly every male character in the novel finds something about which to feel inferior. It is significant that none of the themes in this brief passage is presented directly; rather, they are all invoked implicitly, demonstrating Hemingway’s style of stating relatively little but implying a great deal.

To further show how this technique works on this novel Zoe Trodd writes, “This story is considered a work of art due to how its plot and characters unfold. Most of it’s done by the iceberg theory. For example, Jack Barnes, the protagonist has an unforgettable issue -his wound

from WWI. Many believe that underneath this lies a deeper message about the war and its horror” (Trodd 8). Apart from Jake’s injury, the central female character of the novel also plays a crucial role to understand the Iceberg technique applied here. It is because by portraying Brett having different personality traits Hemingway defies the traditional ‘stay-at-home’, feminine, ‘modest’, and silent view of the female by the society. Brett is seen to be the female version of Casanova as she changes her partner in every trip she makes. Because of the way she was portrayed many critics gave her many titles such as a ‘rebel’ who ignores gender boundaries. Other twentieth-century scholars, however, often criticize Lady Brett Ashley as a “bitch-goddess” (Martin, 5), “metaphorically whore-like” (Lewis 46) and a “nymphomaniac.”(Baker 6). Consequently, they create a misogynistic reading of the novel and choose to ignore her harrowing past that Hemingway attached through the Iceberg technique.

Even in the text often she was compared to ancient rebellious female character. For example Robert Cohn and Mike Campbell called her “He calls her Circe ... He claims she turns men into swine” (Hemingway 149). Regarding this Peter L. Hays wrote “even if it comes from an unappealing mouth. For the Circe myth not only informs Brett’s beguiling characterization, it redefines her status ... relegating her to a Manichean pole of evil, whose only counterweight of Hemingwayesque good is Pedro Romero” (157). Also in her essay “The Iceberg of Lady Brett Ashley: Criticisms, Praise, and Misinterpretations” Allen Smith wrote:

“*The Sun also Rises*, deals with interpretations not of the supposedly chauvinistic writer’s male characters but rather, the main female character, Lady Brett Ashley. This shows a promising development in Hemingway scholarship and a broadened understanding of the complexity of his writing, a style which he coined the “iceberg theory” of writing, which

invites analysis as only one-eighth of the meaning lies on the surface of the text. The scholars analyzing Lady Brett Ashley have discovered that this iceberg style is relevant in the analysis not only of Hemingway's male heroes but also of his female characters that are too often superficially read and dismissed" (4).

Hence, through Lady Brett, Hemingway signaled at the drastic change of gender-philosophies that challenged all the existing ideologies as well as stigma. A woman now no longer fears the society- not because she has any flaw in her character but because of the traumas she has faced in her life. Regardless of what scholarly opinion makes her character, hardly did anyone consider the trauma she faced as a VAD nurse. She witnessed brutal and gruesome injuries and countless deaths. She also lost her true love to a disease and got married to an abusive man with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These events convey that Brett attempts to cope with the trauma when she has casual sex and avoids commitment.

Thus, through Lady Brett Ashley's character, Hemingway portrayed two ideas through his Iceberg technique. Firstly a woman is always associated with being calm, restricted, shy etc. whereas for a man it is very common to act unstable and have multiple partners at once. That is why the shift of gender roles shocked several readers and scholars as they were forced to call a rebellious Brett as a bitch. Secondly, the impact of the war was so tremendous that the survivors were living with no hope and to them attachment, morality etc. were mere facades. That is why in the book apart from Cohn most characters were emotionally exhausted and continuously seeking escapes.

### **5.3 "Hills like White Elephant"**

“Hills like White Elephants” puts the reader directly into the story as it begins with a description of a landscape and a railway station without telling where exactly the described scenery takes place. When the man and the girl discuss the operation we see her not giving any answers rather she just looks at the ground. The author does not let the readers know what kind of an operation he is talking about nor why the girl is so silent. Regarding this Z.H.A.N.G Li-li wrote in her article that “Hemingway purposely refrains from doing so, knowing that the emotional impact is much more intense if the emotion is supplied by the reader”. As the story progresses, the writing style starts giving in, and the readers realize that the operation is actually an abortion.

As many first-time readers read “Hills like White Elephants” as just a casual conversation between two people waiting for a train they end up overlooking the unspoken dramatic anxiety lurking between each line. As a result, it takes repeated reads for many people to realize that the two are actually talking about having an abortion and going their separate ways. Hence, this technique of creating a puzzle through writing is what makes the story so revolutionary for its time. As the poetics of the Iceberg Theory works, Hemingway hid everything but the bare essentials from the story, leaving readers to ponder what was left of the dialogue and bits of narrative on their own. Just like the actual visible tip of an iceberg hides a far greater mass of ice underneath the ocean surface, so does Hemingway’s dialogue carry the actual drama between his characters. It is because Hemingway firmly believed that impactful stories conveyed far more through subtext than through the actual words written on the page. The more a writer strips away, the more powerful the “iceberg,” or story, becomes.

#### **5.4 “Today is Friday” by Ernest Hemingway**

"Today is Friday," was published in 1926 as a one-act play in much the same format as his "The Killers". And the subject of this story is the aftermath of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The play opens with three Roman soldiers who are still drinking after the crucifixion. As the first and second soldiers want to try a particular red wine, the third complains of a stomach-ache. But nevertheless, as he drinks the cup down, the soldier makes a face, exclaiming "Jesus Christ." To this, the second soldier says, "That false alarm!" and the first soldier answers, "Oh, I don't know. He was pretty good in there today." The three men continued their discussion and finally, the wine-seller closed his shop.

Despite being quite short and ambiguous, this play carries several layers of meaning within. To illustrate, let us observe the following dialogue:

Wine-seller – You were in bad shape, Lutenant. I know what fixes up a bad stomach.

*[The third Roman soldier drinks the cup down.]*

3d Roman Soldier – Jesus Christ. *[He makes a face.]* (Hemingway, 43)

While the soldier's comment may sound really vapid, Hemingway clearly alludes to Jesus' ability to heal sickness. This is a clear example of Hemingway's Iceberg theory of omission, where only the necessary details are written, as here the inference to Jesus' healing powers was given without the need for an in depth explanation. Regarding this, Paul Smith wrote in the introduction of his book titled *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* that "Hemingway's prose has been extensively analysed for its minimalistic style, which came to be known as the Iceberg Theory of omission which is much visible here ("Today is Friday")" (9).

Apart from that, the characterization of Christ, the modern Americanized language used by the soldiers and the Hebrew bartender, and the play within another play formula utilized by Hemingway in this story, also contributes to the Iceberg principle. As the language used in the play defies the historic accuracy, it shows the disrespectful attitude the soldiers possessed towards Jesus. Related to this, Clancy Sigal in his book *Hemingway Lives!/: Why Reading Ernest Hemingway Matters Today* commented on the style of the conversation between the soldiers as “casual sports-game like and thus rendering the piece to become 'all the more vivid' to modern audiences” (6). Thus, “Today is Friday” occupies a unique position in literature as a rare insight into Hemingway’s vision of Christianity and playwriting.

## **Chapter 6: *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Originally published in Italian as *Le città invisibili* in 1972, *Invisible Cities* is considered to be a great example of Postmodern literature. On the surface level, as this book seems to be a travel novel, the application of the Iceberg theory also layers a philosophical novel underneath. One prime example of this could be the climax of the novel where everything Marco described so far was not about fifty-five random cities but Venice in particular. This captures the very essence of the Iceberg theory, which is, having multiple or implied understandings buried underneath whereas to the naked eye it looks like a plain and singular entity.

The plot of this novel contains two protagonists: Marco Polo and Kublai Khan. As Kublai Khan listens attentively, Marco Polo describes numerous cities that sound unbelievable to the king. Yet, he listens to everything with utmost interest as he grieves the matter that despite being

the ruler of so many states, he hardly knows anything about them. Thus, through Marco's stories he draws an abstract idea of the cities that belongs to him. To draw attention to the historical facts of these characters, Letizia Modena wrote in her book *Italo Calvino's Architecture of Lightness: the Utopian Imagination in an Age of Urban Crisis* that,

“(…) *Invisible Cities* is far less concerned with the historical Marco Polo and Kublai Khan, and instead uses these figures as stand-ins for travelers and powerful individuals, respectively. Calvino is far more interested in the expansion of the modern world, the rise of cities and suburbs, and the consequent overcrowding that began during the Industrial Revolution and has continued into the present” (30)

There's no physical antagonist in this novel, but Calvino implies that everything that causes corruption, capitalism, and greed in a city will forever be the antagonists to human lives. To explain this novel through the lens of the Iceberg theory first the structure of this book will be discussed, then the descriptions of some selected cities and categories will be used as examples to dig through the hidden messages that Calvino sent to his readers. Lastly, the conversation between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan will also be analyzed to find a philosophical content.

## **6.2 Structure of Calvino's *Invisible Cities***

The very structure of the table of contents of this book plays a significant role that carries the Iceberg theory within itself. The book is divided into nine chapters with eleven thematic sections and every section has five cities with all female names. McLaughlin's book *Italo Calvino* that is dedicated to the study of structure in the works of Calvino represents the table of contents of *Invisible Cities* in a remarkable graphic way. He wrote “adding the number of cities

(55) to the number of chapters (9), the result obtained (64) corresponds to the exact number of squares on a chessboard” (McLaughlin, 4) which complements the fact that there is a presence of an actual chessboard while both protagonists are discussing. Hence, the architecture of the story is submerged and analogic, almost allegorical. In short, the unconventional structure of the table of contents suggests a postmodern storytelling. It carries the underlying meaning that this book is not your regular traditional literary piece. Rather, it breaks boundaries and does not require conventional analysis. Hence, by writing in a very structured way Calvino ironically defies the conventional, structural writing limitations and the table of contents or the structure of the book itself carries the hidden claim that encourages freedom of reading.

### **6.3 Conversation between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan**

The conversations between these two protagonists are one of the most unique features of this novel as they carry the themes of cycles of civilization as well as storytelling and its interpretation. Kublai Khan even learns Marco Polo’s sign language in order to communicate with him, which also shows how they both share a bond of strong emotions. Through this, Calvino lets the readers know that the success Kublai Khan has experienced as an Emperor is not actually fulfilling. Which furthermore could suggest to us that Kublai’s empire is beginning to decline and he intends to learn the way Marco Polo’s signs because he wants to interpret them as data for his empire. This is where the technique of the Iceberg principle comes in hand, as these conversations indicates that there is a mysterious pattern to Marco Polo’s descriptions about the fifty-five cities that sheds light on the cycle of civilization, and we as the reader should begin the novel by searching for these patterns so that we can too, figure out how Kublai’s empire is declining.



Apart from that, even the initial reaction to Marco Polo's stories is the same for both Kublai Khan and the readers. While Kublai Khan cannot comprehend the need of him to narrate these stories, the readers also do not understand what these cities mean and what the whole novel is about. In response to that both Marco Polo and Calvino note the same thing: as Kublai Khan will always see things from his palace steps, the readers will also make sense of the book through his/her own perspectives. It is because, anyone's own perspective decides how they will see the world and its art. So, the Iceberg Principle helps the reader to dig their way through the book as Calvino has created this novel to be open-ended and suitable to any interpretation.

#### **6.4 Cities and Memory**

Diomira is the first city from the 'cities and memory'. "It has 60 silver domes, bronze statues of gods, and a golden rooster that crows from a tower. These sights are somewhat normal, but Diomira has a unique quality: when a traveler arrives on a fall evening, they will feel envious of people who believe they've experienced an evening just like this one and believe they were happy then" (Calvino 3). Now, while Diomira appears to be a wonderful place, it is also implied through the layers of the Iceberg that any city alongside all its wonders like Diomira, will be a victim to common people's envy as it is in the very core of human being to feel insecure. It is the beauty of any city that misleads to people thinking it's a perfect place and they should have a better lifestyle compared to where they are living in. However, every city is made through its citizens and their insecurity creates a flaw in this image of perfection. To illustrate, we see countries like Dubai and America getting so romanticized all the time in media channels. But truly, how fair and just are these countries to its citizens of multiple social classes and races? Thus, through Diomira, Calvino implies that there is no true utopia or perfect place in the world regardless how charming and developed a place is.

The second city in this section is Isidora. Marco Polo describes this city as, “When a person rides through the wilderness, they’ll desire a city. Eventually, they’ll come to Isidora. In Isidora, buildings have seashell-encrusted spiral staircases and people make telescopes and violins. If a man in Isidora is hesitating between two women, a third woman will inevitably appear. This is the city of a man’s dreams, but there’s one difference between dreams and reality: he’s young in the dream version of Isidora, but in the real Isidora, he’s old. His desires are now just memories” (4). Just like Diomira, Isidora appears to be a city made of dreams. However, the irony is in the matter that no one can enjoy their dreams in Isidora until they grow old with time and their desires become memories. Thus, in this city of “city and memory” desires exist only through nostalgia and it is impossible to actually ever find perfection. Also, by claiming that perfection exists only in people’s dreams, the Iceberg principle shows us that sometimes dreams are better than the reality.

Zaira is the third city of this section and its “...streets are stairs and roofs are covered in zinc, but that’s not what Zaira is about—Zaira consists of relationships between measurements and past events. For example, the height of a lamppost corresponds to the distance from the ground of a hanged man’s feet, while the height of a railing corresponds to the leap of an adulterer sneaking out a window. The rips in fishnet correspond to three old men who talk about the city’s history. Memories flow in like waves and Zaira soaks it all up. As such, to describe Zaira in the present means describing all of Zaira’s past. However, Zaira doesn’t recite its past—the past is written in every object in the city” (Calvino 6). Now, by stating that the objects in Zaira hold its past, Calvino might imply the matter that objects can be used as a symbol for the past. For example, in Bangladesh the artifacts collected in the National Museum and the Liberation War Museum speaks about the bloody history of our country and how it achieved

independence. Similarly, in *Zaira*, one cannot just name down all its objects without narrating the history behind it. Rather, a person must explain everything these elements have witnessed over the course of their time in *Zaira*. Thus, according to the theory of Iceberg, it can be interpreted that *Zaira* is not just formed of its objects. Instead, *Zaira* is all of the meanings and messages that those objects hold, and just like understanding the Iceberg theory, it is important to see beyond the visible layers of these objects to understand their significance.

## **6.5 Cities and Desire**

The first city of this section is Dorothea and “It’s possible to describe Dorothea in two different ways. First, one could say that it has four aluminum towers, seven gates with drawbridges, and nine quarters separated by canals. In Dorothea, one can find bergamot, amethysts, and sturgeon roe—and with these facts, it’s possible to learn everything about Dorothea’s past, present, and future” (Calvino 5). The camel driver who first brought Marco Polo to Dorothea described it from the perspective of his youth where he took in the smiling women and the fluttering banners. Prior to arriving in Dorothea, he had only known the desert. After being in Dorothea, he still looks to the desert, but he also knows that Dorothea showed him other paths. It is important here to note that, the two different ways of describing Dorothea is a direct symbolism of a person’s multiple perspectives which can influence on how they choose to look and interpret a place. To illustrate, to someone who acts as an engineer the architecture and construction facilities of a place can seem important. However, to a person who travels with personal and emotional interests, a city can open multiple layers of meanings to them depending on the depth of their perspective.

The second city from the “cities and desire” is Anastasia. In this city “... a person can find excellent pheasant and, according to rumors, beautiful women who invite men to bathe with them. The true essence of Anastasia, however, is that it awakens a person’s desires and promptly stifles them. The city’s desires are different from humans’, so people can only sit with their desire. Some people argue over whether this power is malignant or benign. People who cut agate and onyx give form to others’ desires, and a visitor believes they’re enjoying Anastasia when really, they are a slave to it” (Calvino 7). Anastasia is one of the cities of this novel that speaks more about an idea than an actual city. From the perspective of the Iceberg principle, Anastasia can be read as “... a critique of modern, capitalist society, which holds that people can work to achieve their goals and their dreams. But for most people, especially in the eyes of someone who is not enamored of capitalism, it does not actually allow people to experience success, even if it has the ability to make people feel as though they are making progress” (Yanarella 17).

The third city of this section is Despina, where “A traveler can reach Despina by ship or by camel. A camel driver will see skyscrapers, radar antennae, and belching smoke, but it will look like a ship ready to take him away from the desert. A sailor, meanwhile, will see a camel’s saddle and though he knows Despina is a city, he’ll think of it as a camel carrying wonderful foodstuffs into the desert, where there are freshwater oases and palaces filled with dancing girls” (Calvino 9). The hidden meaning is quite clear for Despina, as it seems that Calvino is implying how people always view the world through the lens of what they wish to have but do not still possess. Thus, Despina is a pivotal example of “cities and desire” as it captures how vulnerable a person’s deepest desires can make him/her.

## **6.6 Cities and Sign**

Marco Polo described Tamara as the first city of the “cities and sign”. He says, “In Tamara, a person doesn’t see things. Instead, they see pictures of things that mean other things, such as a picture of scales denoting the grocer’s. Statues depict lions and dolphins, signifying that something has a lion or a dolphin as its sign. Some signs offer warnings or suggestions. Statues of gods include the god’s attributes so pilgrims can pray correctly, while schools, palaces, and prisons are exactly what they look like. Vendors’ wares aren’t valuable, but connote the value of other things. A person in Tamara reads the city as if it were written, making it so a visitor doesn’t actually visit—they just record the words that Tamara uses to define herself, and it’s impossible to truly discover it”(8). Regarding this, John Welsh wrote,

“Tamara functions as a lesson in semiotics, or the study of signs and symbols and how people know what they mean. To take the novel’s example, a paw print is a sign of a tiger because humans know that tigers make prints—otherwise, the print would just be a random shape. In other words, semiotics posits that people move through the world reading things like they read written language, even when those things themselves have nothing to do with what they signify” (4).

Thus, when seen through the Iceberg theory, we can see that perhaps Tamara suggests that symbols made-up by human beings are the representations of their hegemonies and if they are imposed strictly by the society, a person will never be able to experience a city fully. It is because dominant ideologies of the upper class strip away a city from its true essence which further impacts on every commoner living within and they start seeing life from others’ perspectives.

The second city of this section is Zirna which is remembered by people for its specific matters, such as “a blind black man shouting, a lunatic on a skyscraper, or a girl walking a puma. In reality, however, most of Zirna’s blind men are black; all skyscrapers house madmen; and there are no girls with pumas. Zirna is redundant and repeats itself so that people can remember it” (Calvino 10). From this description of Zirna, it can be interpreted through the Iceberg principle that the hidden layer of this description holds the varying impact of people’s different perspectives. People see and contemplate the present depending on what and how they have experienced matters in their past. To illustrate, if a child has a fearful experience of drowning, chances are high that it will grow up avoiding water. On the other hand, if a child is born and raised in a sea-side/coastal area, it might feel at home whenever it comes near the sea in its future. Thus, through Zirna, the Iceberg theory suggests us that different people see things differently depending on how they have experienced it in the past.

## **6.7 Thin Cities**

The thin cities basically deal with a person’s theological belief and what affects his/her understanding of the divine. The first city of this section is Isaura which is described as a city of “...a thousand wells and supposedly exists over a deep, underground lake. Wherever people dig wells they can draw water, and it has a dark green border that follows the edge of the underground lake. Because of this, there are two forms of religion in Isaura. Some people believe that the city’s gods live in the lake. Others think that the gods live in the buckets that draw water up to pumps, windmills, and rooftop reservoirs. Isaura only moves upward” (Calvino 12). The Gods in the lake could refer to the idea that we as humans have never seen God but we will continue to believe in His existence just like our blind faith that water will always be there in a lake. On the other hand the Gods in the buckets tell us about those religion where the believers

have actually seen Gods and they mimic everything the Gods did in order to be like Them. Thus, Isaura talks about wells and Gods on the surface level, but is actually hinting at the multiple ways of looking at religion by common people.

Another city of this section is Fedora which "...is a gray stone metropolis and in the center, there's a building with a crystal globe in every room. Each globe contains a model of a different Fedora that never came to pass. This building is the city's museum and inhabitants visit to study the globe that best corresponds to their desires" (Calvino 17). However, if we use the Iceberg theory to understand this city we can see that "Although Marco insists that all of these cities—the stone Fedora and the globes—are all Fedora, they're still all not the same one" (Leeuwen 26). Again, this city emphasizes on the matter that people view things through their own perspective and sometimes view the same place through different ideas as suggested by the multiple models of the same city. As well as "the existence of the globes in the first place again suggests that humans can't achieve perfection, and further, that perfection is different for every person" (Leeuwen 29).

## **6.8 Cities and the Dead**

Calvino presents a group of cities with some unique emotional appeal in the category of "cities and the dead". The first city of this section is Melania. "Whenever someone enters the square in Melania, they get caught in a dialogue between a braggart soldier, a young wastrel, a prostitute, and an amorous daughter. If they return years later, they find that the dialogue is still going on. This is because Melania's population constantly renews itself; as someone participating in the dialogue dies, someone is born to take their place" (Calvino 56). This continuous cycle of Melania suggests that the world almost never changes and history always repeats itself. People

play specific roles and those roles are always filled by someone from the next generation, and the conversation never truly ends. Thus, the Iceberg theory creates an image of the modern world that is repetitive and stuck.

Another city of “cities and the dead” is Eusapia where its inhabitants have constructed an identical city underground. The corpses of the dead people who once lived there are taken in the underground version of Eusapia so that they can continue living there forever. On the other hand, “...The living do what they can to keep up with the dead and so the living Eusapia is a copy of the dead Eusapia. Some say that the dead built the living Eusapia in their image. They say that in Eusapia, it’s impossible to tell who’s alive and who’s dead. The living do what they can to keep up with the dead and so the living Eusapia is a copy of the dead Eusapia. Some say that the dead built the living Eusapia in their image. They say that in Eusapia, it’s impossible to tell who’s alive and who’s dead” (Calvino 75). Such an effort to replicate the dead gives us this message on the hindsight that we are always trying to copy our ancestors by blindly believing their orthodox ideas in this postmodern world. Such a reliance and imitation of the dead elders often cause us to feel confused between what the reality is and what superstition is.

## **6.9 Cities and the Sky**

Cities and sky talk about the following cities: Eudoxia, Beersheba, Thekla, Perinthia, and Andria. In Beersheba people believe that there is another Beersheba in the sky that is virtuous another Beersheba underground that contains everything vile and unworthy. Such an idea suggests that the way people behave is largely based on how they perceive their own position. Apart from that, Thekla is another such intriguing city where whenever a passenger arrives they will find the city to be always under construction. “If the traveler asks why it’s taking so long to



build Thekla, the inhabitants will answer that it's so that the city can't begin to fall. If the traveler then asks if they're afraid that the city will fall to pieces, inhabitants reply that it won't just be the city that disintegrates" (Calvino 85). This continuous processing of Thekla represents the fear of human beings regarding the end of mankind. In the minds of the residents of Thekla, it is imprinted that the only way to stop their city from disintegrating is by never finishing its construction. Similarly, human beings come up with new discoveries and technological advancements in order to ensure longer and safer human lives.

### **6.10 Literature Review: Comparison between the literary theories of Bakhtin and Hemingway**

*Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino is described as "There are themes, and then there are more themes, in Italo Calvino's dense and fascinating book. It's possible to read this book on at least three levels" by Carolyn Springer in her article "Textual Geography: The Role of the Reader in" *Invisible Cities*". She also adds

"On one, there are themes like the nature of power; the cycle of life, death and rebirth; the illusion of happiness; and the power of language. On a second level, there's the theme of travel being the source of imagination and vice versa. On the third level is the theme of self-discovery. (...).None of this emerges on the first reading of the book. You have to read it at least twice and have a good long think about it in your own head, before a lot of this becomes clear" (5)

As mentioned before according to Shahla Sorkhabi Drazikola's words "...the factual meaning of a part of inscription should not be obvious from the surface fiction for the reason that the main point of the work is under the surface" (2). The analysis given by Carolyn corresponds with the

definition of the Iceberg theory given by Drazikola. Hence, in this paper analyzing Calvino's novel through this theory holds a prime significance. It is because in the novel, the chapters are filled with allusions of different imaginary cities but the main message is to reflect on urban life, urban lifestyle, human life cycle, individuality etc.

However, even though this research will analyze Calvino's novel from the perspective of Hemingway's theory, it is also quite important to see the other lenses through which it was scrutinized. Some of such other popular concepts through which this novel was or can be seen are the ideas discussed by Mikhail Bakhtin – dialogism, polyphony, and heteroglossia. Michael Holquist the author of *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* said “In dialogism, the very capacity to have consciousness is based on *otherness*. And this otherness is what we learn on the hindsight. In short, dialogism is otherness” (18). Apart from that, polyphony is another concept which is much similar to the principle of allusions and/or the Iceberg principle. In a journal article titled “Polyphony, ventriloquism, and constitution: In dialogue with Bakhtin”, writers François Cooren and Sergeiy Sandler wrote that “Polyphony literally means multiple voices (...) unmerged into a single perspective. Each of these voices has its own perspective, its own validity, and its own narrative weight within the novel” (7). They further wrote “The text appears as an interaction of distinct perspectives or ideologies, borne by the different characters. The role of the author is fundamentally changed, because the author can no longer monopolise the ‘power to mean’” (10). When it comes to heteroglossia Adrian Blackledge and Angela Creese wrote in their journal article that “...Even within a single perspective, there are always multiple voices and perspectives, because the language which is used has been borrowed from others. Hence, this analysis (heteroglossia) emphasises the combination of existing statements or speech-genres to construct a text” (8).

Despite the similarities between dialogism, polyphony, and heteroglossia with the Iceberg principle there is a fine line that distinguishes Hemingway's technique as it differs from the other concepts. As mentioned before dialogism refers to the use of conversation or shared dialogue to explore the meaning of something. It uses previously presented information to map out a context. However, in the case of the Iceberg theory, the surface layer and the hidden layer of the context are the same. It's just the hidden overall message is just not visible to the readers in the first read but it becomes clear once they can decipher the structure of the story. Unlike dialogism, the layers of meaning are not different and not seen as missing from each other. Polyphony on the other hand, occurs to validate the perspective of any given voice that can be both existing and invisible in the text. In short, it is the blending of multiple voices together from where the readers might take their willpower to identify which voice belongs to which character and shape the story. However, in terms of the Iceberg theory, there is no specific requirement to have more than one voice. In terms of Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, this focus is more on spatiality where each city plays a different character. To illustrate, while describing the city Raissa Calvino wrote, "...there's an invisible thread binding living beings together, making it so the unhappy city contains a happy city that doesn't know it exists" (98). Such a description highlights the fact that no city is entirely good, nor are they entirely bad. One's interpretation of a place depends on where they look and on what they focus. This idea is not just limited to Raissa or Calvino's own city of Italy. Rather, Calvino uses this singular image of Raissa to voice the whole world at once.

## Chapter 7: Impact of the Iceberg Theory on Postmodern and Contemporary Literature

### 7.1 *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is a renowned Modernist play that shows the conflict between spiritual beliefs that provide a living guideline for human beings, and the phenomenon of existential crisis that throws the entire meaning of human lives into a question. Even though this play portrays a pessimistic picture of abandonment and loneliness, through the character of Godot, a reader can interpret the need of hope in human life.

*Waiting for Godot* was published after the Second World War and hence the characters can be considered as symbolic representations of the war victims out of many other things. One of the most dangerous consequences of any war, revolution, and political upheaval is the existential crisis it creates among the common people through violence. The main two characters of *Waiting for Godot* had hardly any purpose left in their lives as they did not have any value for time. This is illustrated by their meaningless waiting for days for someone they had never even seen or known. At a certain point, both the characters even failed to identify how long it has been since they began their conversation. The irony of waiting for someone who is not even real makes Vladimir and Estragon clueless human beings and through this chaos Beckett has created this art of a play. Beckett had the first-hand experience of war and it may have influenced him in creating the characters.

The existential philosophy always deals with the connection between an individual's own life and the society. The ideology itself can be helpful to find out the complicated structure of the play. Despite the tremendous vagueness the audience receives from the external layer of the play, much like Hemingway's Iceberg Principle, *Waiting for Godot* carries a lot of meaning within the

inherent images of Vladimir and Estragon. Regarding this Warren Lee in his journal titled “The Bitter Pill of Samuel Beckett” wrote, “The ritual was rich in details, but too often this Vladimir and Estragon were not the familiar figures through whom I have so often in the past found or refound marvelous insights, but symbolic figures, devoid of personality” (42).

Thus, *Waiting for Godot* shows how the characters were suffering from uncertainty and waiting for salvation from ‘Godot’ and Hemingway’s Iceberg principle helps us to perceive this idea from the purposefully made vague setting and repetitive dialogues. This makes the impact of the Iceberg theory more significant as it can be used in other genres of literature such as plays (apart from prose).

## **7.2 *Men Without Women* by Haruki Murakami**

The literary style of writing coined by Ernest Hemingway is still quite relevant in today’s era. In 2014, Japanese writer Haruki Murakami published a short story collection titled *Men Without Women*. It was translated and published worldwide three years later in 2017. All the stories here are about men who have somehow lost the women of their lives to cruel situations of life. Every story in this book creates a scenario that leads to an uncertain ending. Much like the stories of Hemingway, the conclusion is unclear and open to all sorts of interpretations which ties back to the Iceberg theory in terms of the privilege it provides to the readers to carve out their own meaning. That is why this book will be discussed as a part of this paper to further stress the surpassing effect of the Iceberg theory from the era of the lost generation to the contemporary world.

The first story in Murakami’s *Men Without Women* is “Drive My Car”. The protagonist of the story is Kafuku, an elderly actor who lost his wife to death. We get to know about his life

through the conversation he has with Watari, his chauffeur. She is portrayed as a woman who had gone through a life that was extreme and harsh, which had given her a level of maturity and competence beyond her age. Kafuku often tells Watari about his late wife's extramarital affairs. At one point, he even befriended one of her lovers to cause harm to him out of spite. However, he ended up respecting his perspective of life and thus sympathizing with him. After hearing his story, Watari states that perhaps his wife having affairs actually had nothing to do with love and that was a good enough reason to cheat on him. After contemplating this proposition, he falls asleep as she continues driving.

Regarding this story, Michelle Barboza wrote in her article "Women in Haruki Murakami's *Men Without Women*" that "...the central theme of the story ("Drive My Car") is about loneliness and about the innate longing for interaction and relationship as human beings. The author has brilliantly portrayed the very delicate and often overlooked human emotions through his protagonist" (4). The blind spot often mentioned in this story is Kafuku's blindness towards understanding women. His idea of females is very narrow. He thinks women are over emotional and thus unfit to become drivers. This over-generalization is also the reason behind him not being able to understand why he was not enough for his late wife. Hence, following the Iceberg theory, the hidden moral here is the lack of understanding and obliviousness to the concept of femininity that caused Kafuku to lose his wife long before she was dead.

Another story from Murakami's *Men Without Women* is titled as "Samsa in Love" which is a retelling of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. The protagonist of this story is Gregor Samsa who wakes up as a naked and hungry human. His sudden transformation from a bug to a human made it difficult for him to understand the lifestyle of a normal individual. He lacked knowledge in speaking as well as in the physical movement of a human. Afterwards, a hunchbacked female

locksmith comes to his house to fix a lock. While at it, Samsa fails to understand some words used by her and is surprised to see her rotating her arms so often. When asked the reason, she says that her brassiere is uncomfortable on her. This causes Samsa to have an erection right in front of her. In the end, the locksmith leaves as Samsa requests her to stay and talk about the mysterious ways of the world.

This story is considered as "... a redemption for Samsa, a chance to grow as a human from which he had been deprived after being inflicted with the plight as life as an insect" (Snyder, 02) by Stephen Snyder in his article "Insistence and resistance: Murakami and Mizumura in translation." Just like Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* this book does not satisfy with a concrete ending and leaves the idea of intensified pleasure hanging. This leads the readers to assume the hidden message that a foreign body, or a drastic change of emotions brings. It could be someone's first love, first sexual desire, first heartbreak, etc. that can make their life more human. As Kafka gave us the message that the daily capitalistic life has made most of the youth a dull bug, it is Murakami who retells the story and lets us know that it is love and desire that can again make us human.

To conclude, both Ernest Hemingway and Haruki Murakami have their own short story collection titled *Men Without Women*. As Murakami is a contemporary author, he has taken inspiration from several literary classics such as *Metamorphosis*, *Uncle Vanya* etc. He was also much inspired by Hemingway's fiction and style of writing that made him rewrite a book based on his collection with similar themes and titles. Thus, the literary technique of the Iceberg theory, that is made famous by Hemingway, is also a significant style found in the stories by Haruki Murakami.

### **7.3 Graphic Novels**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a graphic novel is “a full-length story published as a book in comic-strip format.” For the purpose of my research, this genre can be seen as a thought that is out-of-the-box. The main essence of the Iceberg theory lies in the rule that “say less, express more.” While regular prose novels following the Iceberg theory show this rule through vague dialogues, graphic novels do it through its pictorial cryptic messages that are exposed to multiple interpretations. That is why, it can be considered that graphic novels carry the unconscious application of Hemingway’s Iceberg theory in order to convey its messages.

### **7.4 *A Contract with God: And Other Tenement Stories* by Will Eisner**

This novel by Eisner is considered as one of the earliest graphic novels as it was published in 1978. In this book, Eisner captures the same message as Calvino. He talks about the inhabitants of an urban city alongside their flaws and troubles. The only difference is that Calvino does so through allusions while Eisner writes through pictures and art.

*A Contract with God: And Other Tenement Stories* is a collection of some short pictorial stories that deal with themes of misanthropy, cruel humanity, adultery, anti-Semitism, rape, abuse, etc. The irony is, very little of such crimes are actually punished in the book which is a hard reality of modern day urban towns. To exemplify, in the story “Cookalein” we can see the character living in the facade of confused identity. Benny and Goldie, who have both gone to a summer resort, each think the other is richer. However, by the end of the story they realize they are equally broke and the insecurity of being poorer made them anxious all these time. As a result, Goldie claims, “Benny, if you love me, nothing else matters!” (Eisner, 8) to which Benny replies “It’s a whole new ballgame now, baby” (Eisner, 8).



With this small dialogue one can conclude that the story is about two lovers fighting for each other through poverty. But that is not truly the case. Just like any novel following the Iceberg theory, this story too has an abrupt and absurd ending where Goldie marries a rich doctor and Benny seduces an heiress. As mentioned before, no one is punished for fraud yet everyone wins at the cost of their true desire. The Iceberg theory then shows us through a collection of sketches and short dialogue that – living in a city means being a victim of Capitalism as it is entwined with urban life. Here, money speaks louder than feelings and richness precedes humanity.

To conclude this section, Eisner probably felt free to criticize that world as much as he liked, even though it was the world he grew up in (or perhaps he grew up in it despite it). If we follow this book through the Iceberg theory we can see from even the title that the mere idea of a contract with God is intriguing. Through the short stories Eisner implies that some people do lose their fate when something really bad happens to them. Some people find faith in times of hardship. Others doubt their entire life. But believers do expect something of their faith. So who can be blamed? God? Or was it only a faulty contract?

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSION**

Jacques Marie Émile Lacan, a French psychoanalyst came up with his own theory of psychoanalysis that was very much influenced by Freudian interpretation of the human mind. According to Dany Nobus, the author of *Jacques Lacan and the Freudian Practice of Psychoanalysis*, “the linguistic, philosophical and political scope of Lacan’s new discourse stirred the Western intelligentsia and he was called ‘the most controversial psycho-analyst since

Freud” (24). Apart from Freud, other philosophers who had influenced him are the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure.

Lacan suggested a new version of Freudian theory with a big focus on the human unconsciousness. The central pillar of Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory is that “the unconscious is structured like a language”, which he substantiates in the essay “The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious.” The connection between Lacan and Saussure lies on the fact that the same signifier may have different signified meanings for which Lacan suggests a ceaseless flow of the signified under the signifier. This again ties back to the main gist of the Iceberg theory that a text which is signified as a specific genre can carry multiple signified meanings, which is not always directly stated to the readers. Hence, the Iceberg theory is very much a technique that uses the human unconsciousness to arrange its conclusion, that is, the author allows the readers to identify the moral or the final message through the deliberate as well as the unconscious interpretation of their mind.

In this way, the Iceberg theory relates to the other mainstream theories of fiction, such as polyphony, heteroglossia, minimalism, dialogism, readers’ reception theory, Freudian theory, Lacanian theory of psychoanalysis, and so on. As Ernest Hemingway was the founder of this theory, his novels and books like *The Sun also Rises* and *Men Without Women* have a unique portrayal of this technique, but given its vast impact, we can also read other novels such as Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*, Haruki Murakami’s *Men Without Women*, Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, Harold Pinter’s *The Birthday Party* and many more.

The main gist of the Iceberg theory is that like a literal iceberg a lion portion of it is hidden and it is the part that does not show that holds the key to the hidden layers. By discussing

some of the above mentioned books using this technique, this paper seeks to explore the impact of Hemingway's theory in the literary world and what makes it timeless. Also as mentioned before, this theory goes along with several other literary theories as well as the literary devices such as allusions and imageries. So, to set the Iceberg theory apart and to focus on its impact, this paper has also discussed the factors that make Hemingway's theory unique.

To conclude this research, according to the Iceberg theory, the factual meaning of a text should not be obvious from the surface reading as the main point of the work is under the surface. The most alluring aspect of this theory that makes it unique is that it does not use flowery adjectives and rhythmic sentences that focus on the action more willingly. Rather, Hemingway believed in the impact of mirror images. His creation of this technique is the result of a deliberate procedure of choosing merely those elements necessary to the fiction and hiding the whole thing else away. He reserved his text under plain and straight plots; employing a method he named the Iceberg principle. It works on the idea that we cannot always estimate the depth or significance of a situation – just like an iceberg whose tip is always visible to the naked eye while most of it is invisible. As literature works as an influencing catalyst for our feelings, motives, and decisions where the narratives of the characters often make us wonder about our past experiences and present condition – theories like the Iceberg help us ponder more deeply which makes its impact timeless.

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