



College of Graduate Studies

Applied Linguistics MA Thesis

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A Stylistic Analysis of Yuri Herrera *Signs Preceding the End of the World* and Ralph

Ellison *The Invisible Man*

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis, submitted for the Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics and the Teaching of English Language is prepared by my own research, and it has not been submitted for any other degree.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated:

to the Sake of Allah, my Creator and my Master,

to my parents (Ishmail and Fareedeh),

to my husband (Sohaib),

to my son (Ghassan),

to my sisters (Riham and Jinan),

to my brothers (Adam and Ahmad),

and to all my family members,

for all, I dedicate my MA thesis.

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Abstract

The reader which is I or anyone who is reading this research paper will analyze both novels written by both authors *The Invisible Man* by *Ralph Ellison* and *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera. This study aims to use and investigate a few stylistic devices which are irony, symbolism, and foreshadowing to analyze both novels and examine the social phenomenon of how invisibility and racism is constructed in both novels. This paper highlights the struggle, oppression, and challenges of the main protagonists in the process of self-discovery which is affected by society's stereotypes. Ralph Ellison, a black author is known as one of the most distinguished African American writers who shows his concern for the problem of racism that exists in America and tackled social injustice by the white supremacy.

Ellison's goal is to expose the truth of the harsh conditions African Americans face by telling his story from his point of view. On the other hand, Herrera, who is known to be a Mexican writer displayed the difficulties of Mexicans to reach the north, crossing the border, and migrate to the U.S due to racism, and exploitative conditions by white people. This research will be fulfilled by answering the following questions: 1. In what ways do irony, symbolism, and foreshadowing contribute to the development of the protagonists in both novels? 2. Why is it difficult to be seen and accepted in both novels? 3. How is the concept of "privilege" portrayed in both novel?

Keywords: Stylistic Devices, Invisibility, Racism, Oppression

Abstract in Arabic

سيقراً القارئ ويفهم ويحلل الروائيتين (الرجل الخفي) لـرالف إيسون (والعلامات التي تسبق نهاية العالم) بقلم يوري هيريرا يهدف هذا البحث إلى استخدام والتحقيق في عدد قليل من الأدوات الأسلوبية التي هي السخرية والرمزية لتحليل كل من الروائيتين ودراسة الظاهرة الاجتماعية لكيفية بناء الخفاء والعنصرية في كلتا الروائيتين. تسلط هذه الورقة الضوء على النضال والقمع والتحديات التي يواجهها الأبطال الرئيسون في رحلة اكتشاف الذات التي تتأثر بالقوالب النمطية للمجتمع. يعرف رالف إيسون المؤلف الأسود بأنه واحد من أبرز الكتاب الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي الذي يظهر اهتمامه وبمشكلة العنصرية الموجودة في أمريكا ومعالجته الظلم الاجتماعي الناجم عن تفوق الأبيض.

هدف إيسون هو فضح حقيقة الظروف القاسية التي يواجهها الأمريكيون الأفارقة من خلال سرد قصته من وجهة نظره. من ناحية أخرى، أظهر هيريرا، المعروف بأنه كاتب مكسيكي، صعوبات المكسيكيين من أجل الوصول إلى الشمال، وعبور الحدود، والهجرة إلى الولايات المتحدة بسبب العنصرية، والظروف الاستغلالية من قبل البيض. سيتم إنجاز هذا البحث من خلال الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية: 1. لماذا يصعب رؤيته وقبوله في كلتا الروائيتين؟ 2. ما هو الامتياز في كلتا الروائيتين؟

الكلمات الرئيسية: الأدوات الأسلوبية الإخفاء العنصرية، القمع

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1. Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

In *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera, both novels are an inspiration to people since they convey a message to the world which enables readers to think of the real-world situations that people usually deal with. These situations do not only exist in one's country rather all around the world. Within these novels, the authors use the protagonists as a representation of their situations and construct the reality of the mistreatment by the oppressors. The process of this paper addresses some literary devices which are irony, symbolism and foreshadowing that focus on how invisibility and racism is constructed in both novels.

In *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, the novel addresses the important issues of African American history. Some important concepts mentioned in the novel are blindness, invisibility, and exclusion. In the novel, Ellison mentions the struggles of a young black man living in a society of segregation. Ellison elaborates that whether the young black man is above or underground, his existential condition will never be seen by the whites. In *Signs Preceding the end of the World* by Yuri Herrera, it is a novel that displays the struggling obstruction to cross the border.

Firstly, Herrera has displayed irony in many ways to present his point of view. To begin, the narrator is sent to work at a paint company and the name of the company is called Liberty Paints. Within a glimpse, the narrator noticed an electric sign written "KEEP AMERICA PURE WITH LIBERTY PAINTS" (Ellison, 151). To begin, Ellison explains that by hanging this sign, the factory has many meanings to portray. By means, the factory

belongs to white people and the ironic situation of the factory is that it displays how white people are considered superior to black people. As Madhavi (2020) states, “the authorities of the factory with their slogans emphasize the concepts of whiteness and purity symbolizing the moral superiority of their whiteness” (Madhavi. p.63,2020). By using white paint, the paint expresses an attitude of dominance for white people and that the paint will cover up anything especially black.

For this reason, by covering up anything, the whiteness of the paint covers the identity and appearance of the narrator. That is, that narrator is treated in an unfair way while working in the company. He only felt hatred and was criticized and unaccepted by the workers. That is, Madhavi (2020) notes that “the liberty paints emerge as a symbol for the racial dynamics in white society” (Madhavi, p.63,2020). In other words, since the name of the company is Liberty Paints, the narrator expected to feel welcomed with unity. However, in the hands of the white people, liberty has a different definition. Ellison explains how liberty is ironic because the narrator is treated with disrespect and is oppressed.

Ellison explains how the narrator is invisible throughout the novel. To explain, in the beginning of the novel, Ellison opens the story with everyone attending the Battle Royal, an event that takes place in a ring between the narrator's black classmates and white men. The black men wear blindfolds, are cursed at during the fight, and are forced to fight on an electric rug filled with money. By noting all these, the Battle Royal symbolizes their inferiority towards the white men in the crowd. Madhavi notes, “the boys who fight in the Battle Royal symbolize their powerlessness to recognize their exploitation at the hands of the white men (Madhavi, 62). Besides this, the title of the novel, *The Invisible Man*,

symbolizes the invisibility of the narrator. The narrator does not exist in a white man's world and will continue to struggle to fit in a white society's expectations.

Moreover, Ellison elaborates about the narrator's calfskin briefcase that he keeps throughout the novel. This briefcase symbolizes the injustice of the narrator. On account of, the briefcase includes his high school diploma, a scholarship to the State College for Negroes, coins, and the Sambo Dolls which represent African culture. As a result, Ellison elaborates that as soon as the narrator was given the briefcase, he could only think of his future and the scholarship. The superintendent who gave him the briefcase told him, "Keep developing as you are and some day it will be filled with important papers that will help shape the destiny of your people" (Ellison, 26).

On the other hand, near the end of the novel, when the narrator fell under the hole, he was desperate to burn everything in his briefcase to have light underground. Ellison explains that the act of burning the papers in the briefcase symbolizes the death of the narrator's old self and world. Everything that he has dreamed of was a lie since he is controlled by the white society. Ironically, the narrator burned those important papers in the briefcase because he had no choice. Ellison explains how the narrator had dreams to fulfill but was manipulated.

Neighboring on, Ellison notes that African folk music symbolizes the hardships of black people. In the novel, the narrator notes,

"I'd like to hear five recordings of Louis Armstrong playing and singing "What Did I Do to Be so Black and Blue" -- all at the same time. Perhaps I like Louis Armstrong because he's made poetry out of being invisible. I think it must be

because he's unaware that he is invisible. And my own grasp of invisibility aids me to understand his music” (Ellison, 6-7).

To clarify, Ellison states that men of color were to perform their own music alone without an audience. Furlonge adds that *The Invisible Man* “is to construct a powerful cultural voice that receives its authority from creative imitation of vernacular exemplars” (Furlonge,3). African artists were not allowed to socialize with the white society. Therefore, the lyrics sung by the Africans emphasized their pain, and invisibility in the society.

Additionally, the dark-lensed glasses symbolize the narrator's invisibility. Ellison elaborates how the glasses made the narrator a different person and that he had to play the role of a different character in order not to be disguised and noticed by people. As Furlong states, “they are the “transplanted” Americans who were completely stripped of their history and heritage. In a word, their identity was forcibly snatched away from them by their destiny and the white men in the New World” (Furlonge, 6). Metaphorically speaking, Ellison explains how the narrator removed the blindfold and did not feel a sense of rejection by others. The way the white society shapes the narrator's identity is by noticing his appearance and not his identity.

Ellison notes, “here I had thought they accepted me because they felt that color made no difference, when in reality it made no difference because they didn't see either color or men” (Ellison, 393). For example, the citizens of Harlem thought that the narrator was a man called Rineheart. By playing the role of another character, Ellison explains that the narrator felt protected, accepted, and wanted in the eyes of the white society. To clarify,

since people thought that he was Rineheart, the narrator was approached by a white woman, and changes his way of how he speaks with people.

According to Ellison, the narrator's grandfather's words lead to foreshadowing many events for the narrator. In the novel, Ellison elaborates that the grandfather told the narrator, "I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, undermine 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction, let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open" (Ellison, 13). Ellison foreshadows the words of the grandfather to make the narrator realize that he must act and perform according to the white society to succeed.

However, Zouankouan states

"It is a kind of shadow or darkness or exactly "Blackness" which hides his individuality as a human being in the white men's vision and the perception that is why white people refuse to recognize him, to take him as an equal human being, as a human of quality, rights, thinking, mind, and importance" (Zouankouan, 27).

During the hall meeting, the narrator obeys all the harsh conditions during the Royal Battle. By obeying, the university president offers him a scholarship. However, the narrator was deceived the entire time of his struggle to adapt to the white society. For example, the university president expels him from the college and gave the narrator letters to find a new job. However, he was deceived and later, the narrator joins the Brotherhood to make a change for the black community yet is deceived and expelled.

Following, another scene that foreshadows many events that happen in the novel is when the narrator fought in a boxing match blindfolded with white men called the Battle Royal. During this scene, Ellison elaborates that the narrator discovers that he got himself

involved in other fights with other black men. This is to say, as the narrator arrives Liberty Paints to work in the factory, he encounters a black man called Lucius Brockway. Subsequently, Lucius fears that the narrator will take his place in the factory after being informed that the narrator has met up with the union in the factory while he went to get his lunch. Lucis exploded with anger, and eventually, both end up physically fighting and the narrator is expelled from Liberty Paints.

Chiefly, throughout the novel, Ras the Exhorter, who is a black nationalist becomes enemies with the narrator. Ellison notes that the narrator believes that white and black men can unite which is why he joined the Brotherhood. However, Ras is against this logic and the Brotherhood. Therefore, both the narrator and Ras end up physically fighting with each other and use violence.

To continue, in *Signs Preceding the End of the World*, by Yuri Herrera, Herrera elaborates about the ironic events that took place in the novel. To explain, Herrera mentions the irony about how Makina's brother left Mexico to claim land for his mother. Proceeding, he was adopted by an American wealthy family living in the United States. The family decided to choose Makina's brother to join the war instead of their son to secure and protect their son's identity. They feared for their son to never return which is why they offered Makina's brother to take his place and offer him money.

On the other hand, ironically, he survived the war and returned alive. Nostitz states, "Scholars of US history will find that imaginations of the western border region as a site of conflict between 'civilization' and an ostensibly ever-encroaching 'wilderness' have not only nourished a sustained interest in Western fictions but

also helped to legitimize national myths such as ‘Manifest Destiny’ and the ‘American Frontier’ (Nostitz,13-14). Suddenly, after receiving news of his arrival, the family refused to give him the money they promised him and “they stared at him with eyes like saucers, astonished to see him there, alive and decorated: alive” (Herrera, 90).

Chiefly, Herrera explains the irony about how Makina’s brother refused to return to Mexico. As he is requested by his mother to claim land and return to his family, he refuses to return because he has no desire to achieve anything upon his return. As he states, “he stopped and reflected for a minute. I guess that’s what happens to everybody who comes. We forget what we came for, but there’s this reflex to act like we still have some secret plan” (Herrera, 92). Ironically speaking, his mother is devastated by the news since he is never planning to come back to where he belongs.

Notably, Herrera notes the irony of the Americans living in the United States. As Makina arrives the U.S after a long journey, she notices that Mexicans are not treated equally like the Americans. The Mexicans are treated unfairly regarding work opportunities. They are given jobs that are considered low but truly the jobs that the Americans see as insufficient are of major importance in the economy.

Moreover, Herrera mentions the symbols in the novel to elaborate how the protagonist experienced a difficult journey to cross the border. Herrera opens the chapter of how a sinkhole has swallowed up a man, car and dog in search for her brother. Makina said,

“I’m dead, Makina said to herself when everything lurched: a man with a cane was crossing the street, a dull groan suddenly surged through the asphalt, the man stood

still as if waiting for someone to repeat the question and then the earth opened up beneath his feet: it swallowed the man, and with him a car and a dog” (Herrera, 11).

The sinkhole symbolizes how Makina will undertake a difficult journey to reach the U.S. On the other hand, Makina survived this sinkhole and continued her journey. Herrera clarifies that the life in Mexico has many obstacles to survive. Nostitz explains that the “mythical renditions and notions of ‘the border’ have undoubtedly played a decisive role in shaping a distinct US American identity by stimulating a shared sense of self and Other” (Nostitz, 13).

Surely, Herrera mentions how Makina’s brother went to the U.S to claim land. On the other hand, Herrera mentions in the novel how Makina’s brother said, “there wasn’t any land to claim. Course you already know that he said” (Herrera, 93). To clarify, by this fantasy of claiming land, Herrera explains that this is a symbol of reality. The Mexicans believe in hope that there is something waiting for them in the U.S, yet the reality is that they do not have anything that belongs to them symbolizing an illusory vision. As Nostitz says, “for those arriving in the US, the once static physical border now ubiquitously defines their identity. They are trapped in a state that perpetually marks them as somehow different and that bars them from ever fully ‘belonging’ to US society” (Nostitz, 17).

Furthermore, Herrera explains in the novel how Makina works at a telephone switchboard. As a worker, Herrera emphasizes that Makina is perceived as a confident woman who is willing to help others. To elaborate, Makina’s job is to connect family members on the line living in America and Mexico to stay in touch since they are separated from each other due to distance. Despite the family members living apart from each other,

the telephone switchboard symbolizes tradition of how people choose to use this type of technology instead of their phones.

Not only this, but the telephone switchboard symbolizes how Makina speaks three languages with the dialers. As Makina responds,

“Sometimes they called from nearby villages and she answered them in native tongue or latin tongue. Sometimes, more and more these days, they called from the North; these were the ones who’d often already forgotten the local lingo, so she responded to them in their own new tongue. Makina spoke all three, and knew how to keep quiet in all three, too” (Herrera, 19).

By speaking three languages with the dialers, the telephone switchboard symbolizes how Makina wants to keep her language preserved by speaking Spanish and not changing or abandoning her native tongue. Nostitz clarifies that,

“It furthermore seems that discourses on immigration are particularly prone to mythical ‘narrativization’ because evocations to certain myths appear to mobilize distinct political responses and myths can fulfill the strategic role of mediating national identities” (Nostitz,18).

Moreover, as Herrera opens the scene of how a sinkhole swallowed a man and a car, Herrera mentions how this scene foreshadows Makina’s difficult and struggling journey throughout the novel. As mentioned, “The Little Town was riddled with bullet holes and tunnels bored by five centuries of voracious silver lust” (Herrera, 11).

By means, Herrera clarifies that throughout Makina's journey to the North, she survived the unexpected locations she had to go through. Nostitz explains, "in the novel, Makina is thus not characterized as a criminal herself but is forced to depend on the criminal infrastructures that permeate both physical and social spaces around her" (Nostitz, 22). For example, as Makina begins her journey, she entered the bus on her way to the city and encountered two young men who tried to harass her, "two men ogled her in the bus ticket line, one pushed his face close as he passed" (Herrera, 30).

As Makina sat in her seat, one of the men sat next to her and attempted to touch her,

"Makina felt the first contact, real quick, as if by accident, but she knew that type of accident: the millimetric graze of her elbow prefaced ravenous manhandling. She sharpened her peripheral vision and prepared for what must come, if the idiot decided to persist" (Herrera, 31). However, Makina managed to "with the other hand yanked the middle finger of the hand he'd touched her with almost all the way back to an inch from the top of his wrist; it took her one second" (Herrera, 31).

As Makina tries to cross the river to reach the north, she almost drowned but Chucho saved her from drowning. As mentioned, "but suddenly the riverbed ducked away and an icy current began to push their feet away like a living thing, relentless. Row, Chucho said; Makina already was but the tube was being tugged into the current as though adrift" (Herrera, 39).

Both Makina and Chucho cross the mountains to reach their destination to the north, both encounter police officers who shoot at them, "the rancher shot to kill" (Herrera, 49).

As both try to escape from the officers, Makina noticed that she has been shot, “the bullet had entered and versed between two ribs” (Herrera, 50). Moreover, as Makina continues to search for her brother, she has slept in an ATM booth during the night, “where she curled up like a dog and after much bone-trembling managed to fall asleep” (Herrera, 73-74).

Moreover, as Makina reaches the border, she encounters racist police officers and commands her to get in line with other men who were on their knees. One of the police officers noticed that a young man was holding a poetry book and began mocking him. Nostitz states,

“Signs presents the state of terminal liminality through its depiction of the ‘flock of damned souls’ who, bereft of their individual identities, merge into a homogeneous mass of people, damned to forever be viewed as the other in US society” (Nostitz, 27). The police officer “ripped out one of the last pages, laid it on the books cover, pulled a pencil from his shirt and gave it to the man. Write” (Herrera, 98). On the other hand, the young man was nervous and couldn’t write from his fear.

In this case, Makina grabbed a pencil and a book, and wrote,

“We are to blame for this destruction, we who don't speak your tongue and don't know how to keep quiet either. We who didn't come by boat, who dirty up your doorsteps with our dust, who break your barbed wire. We who came to take your jobs, who dream of wiping your shit, who long to work all hours. We who fill your shiny clean streets with the smell of food, who brought you violence you'd never known, who deliver your dope, who deserve to be chained by neck and feet. We who are happy to die for you, what else could we do? We, the ones who are waiting

for who knows what. We, the dark, the short, the greasy, the shifty, the fat, the anemic. We the barbarians” (Herrera, 99-100).

As the officer read the paper, he decided to crumble the paper and let them all go. The words of Makina had changed the mind of the officer and not arrest them. This moment has made Makina feel powerful with her strong words by responding to the officer.

1.2. Statement of the Problem:

The statement of the problem in *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison indicates the social issues African Americans face in a white society. African Americans struggle with their personal identity, racial standards, and invisibility of having a black identity. In the novel, the black man is identified as the narrator whose name is unknown and seeks to act according to the values of a white society. The challenges that the narrator addresses resolve around the idea of blindness in which the life of a black man is invisible to white people.

Invisibility expresses the obstacles of the life of a black man attempting to accomplish his goals placed in his path by a racist society and the unwillingness of other people to notice him. The narrator has been trained to respect the white-controlled system. The statement of the problem in *Signs Preceding the End Of The World* by Yuri Herrera indicates how a young smart woman is to deliver a message to her older brother on her mother’s behalf throughout her journey North to an unnamed destination. The challenges that Makina faces throughout the novel are related to immigration, scenery, and dangerous experiences during her struggle to cross the US/Mexico border.

1.3. Significance of the Study:

The importance of this study centers on providing a stylistic analysis of the two novels *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Signs Preceding The End Of The World* by Yuri Herrera in a literary framework. Thus, this study will focus on analyzing the stylistic devices in both novels and revealing their significance in conveying its theme to observe the different styles used by both authors.

1.4. Objectives of the Study:

The research aims at investigating some of the stylistic devices that are employed in *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Signs Preceding the End Of The World* by Yuri Herrera. Also, this research aims at reflecting upon the importance in conveying the themes of invisibility and racism of both novels.

1.5. Questions of the Study:

The objectives of this research will be fulfilled by answering the following questions:

1. In what ways do irony, symbolism, and foreshadowing contribute to the development of the protagonists in both novels?
2. Why is it difficult to be seen and accepted in both novels?
3. How is the concept of "privilege" portrayed in both novels?

1.6. Summary

This chapter presented a brief background of the research field. It included a concise introduction of the background of the study, offered the statement of the problem, significance, objectives, and finally the research questions of the study.

2. Chapter two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter sheds light on various literary studies related to *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Signs Preceding the end of the World* by Yuri Herrera. Many studies were found about both novels such as some of the studies are articles. Other studies including doctoral dissertations focused mainly on the literary analysis of both novels.

2.2. Theoretical Background on the Stylistic Devices and the term Privilege

Irony has a wide array of definitions which is a powerful tool that is used in literature in which something is expected to happen but what actually occurs. Authors use irony in their work to make their readers think about what has occurred. Irony can be defined as an indirect presentation since it is associated with reality and expectation such as one thing is said but its opposite is said. For example, a person would say, the weather is beautiful today, when it is raining outside. That is, a person implies something, but the opposite happens.

Moreover, symbolism is the use of words to symbolize specific concepts and is used by writers to make the meaning of their work deeper such as the actions of the characters or describe any mode of expression. For example, metaphors use symbolism such as life is a roller-coaster, or time is money. Also, symbolism is found in colors such as the color black is used to represent death, whereas red can symbolize blood, or danger etc... In addition, foreshadowing is defined as a literary device in which warnings about events to come are planted. When a scene of foreshadowing shows up early in the story, it may hint towards something that is going to happen later in the narrative. The purpose of foreshadowing in a

narrative is to give the reader a sense of suspicion of what will happen near the end of the narrative which is why foreshadowing events are found at the end of the chapters.

Privilege is recognized as a special advantage which is granted and not earned. There are two types of privileged groups which are advantaged and disadvantaged groups that establish the societal norms. The advantaged groups are seen as superior whereas the disadvantaged groups are seen as inferior. The members in the advantaged groups have more power, control and receive privilege in all aspects. These members do not have to worry about being harassed or followed in which they belong to society. For example, white members have more privilege because of their skin color. As for members in disadvantaged groups, the historical background shapes the present, past and continues to shape the future.

For example, black people were shut out of many opportunities due to European colonialism. White people were provided with a financially secure home, along with a well-paying job, a good living environment etc... However, those in a disadvantaged group have faced a long history of discrimination, in which they dealt with segregation, and economic exploitation. To elaborate, members in the advantaged groups lack knowledge and awareness of the oppression others encounter. The privilege that is given to the advantaged members do not realize that the things they have are denied to the members in the disadvantaged groups. Therefore, for people to live in a meaningful and safe life, members in the privileged groups must engage in change and acknowledge the oppression of the disadvantaged members for everyone to live in peace and harmony.

2.3. About the Novels

Different studies were conducted on both novels. For example,

Widyana (2006) talks about the analysis of Discrimination Racism in *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison. In the first place, Widyana (2006) mentions how an educated black man has been oppressed and controlled by white men throughout his life. Provided that, Widyana (2006) also mentions the discrimination between white and black people, the difficult conditions and pressure experienced by the African Americans, the social protest by the African Americans to the government of America in the 1930s, and the social life of African Americans. Given that, Widyana (2006) examined the writing of Ralph Ellison in which Ellison decided to write *The Invisible Man* about black identity, heroism, and history through the use of folklore, and spirituals. Thus, this novel has been awarded with the National Book Award, and Rockefeller Foundation Award.

Moreover, Ibrahim (2016) expresses his thoughts about the Civil Rights Era which has been a struggle for African Americans in the twentieth century. Ibrahim mentions that Ellison is one of the many writers that has devoted his writing to speak about racism and discrimination that African Americans have suffered from. This novel is written in first person narrative to show to readers that this is a novel of social exclusion by the white society. Despite this, Ibrahim notes that the novel *The Invisible Man* made society aware of the concepts of blindness and invisibility in the novel.

In the meantime, Mohammad (2018) notes that two hundred American critics judged *The Invisible Man* as one of the best American novels of the postwar era. He explains that the title of the novel conveys a symbolic meaning of the protagonist's life (the

narrator). To illustrate, Mohammad (2018) provided an example from the novel of how the narrator asked the question, "What Did I Do to Be so Black and Blue" -- all at the same time" (Ellison, 6). Mohammad (2018) explains that Ellison has provided an explanation to the readers that through this song, music is presented as a great influence of black folklore.

Even more, Mohammad (2018) emphasizes that black people in the novel *The Invisible Man* are the most oppressed and exploited people in the world in all ways, racially, socially, economically and politically. Besides this, Mohammad (2018) expresses how black people in *The Invisible Man* are referred as transplanted Americans in which their identity has been snatched away by the whites. Thus, he discusses how the black people undergo an identity crisis but try to achieve visibility in a white society.

To proceed, Widyana (2006) notes that the identification of the problem in the novel focuses on the theme of racial segregation during the twentieth century. To elaborate, Widyana (2006) states that Ellison tries to convey a message about how black people were prevented and did not have the opportunity to work in sector industry, or office facility. For example, some common facilities that separated black people from white people were the toilet, bus, school, trains, parks, and even cemeteries. In other words, Widyana (2006) notes that Ellison wants readers to understand the racism history of African Americans represented in the novel that was built in America.

In essence, Evan (2020) explains that the novel *The Invisible Man* has been considered one of the most important works of twentieth century fiction which was published in 1952. Not only this, but Ellison's novel also won the best works by various writers, including Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck. As Evan (2020) explains, this

novel has been widely read, and admired by many people around the world. Evan (2020) notes that the reason for the book's publication is to offer facts and information about black identity. According to Evans (2020), there has been an attempt to ban the novel *The Invisible Man* such as in high school classrooms due to racial words such as the "n" word. However, due to the interest of the novel, those attempts failed and the novel is still present.

Following, Evan (2020) examines important features in the novel such as the bodily sensations and sensory experience. To be clear, Evan (2020) justifies how the novel conveys an important message such as how the eye and ear dramatize the sensitive scenes in the novel controlling how the protagonist acts due to racial discrimination by the white society. Hence, Evan (2020) mentions that by the year 2002, the novel *The Invisible Man* has been viewed as a documentary film winning an award called the American Masters since it talks about Ellison's life.

To add, Callahan (2004) notes that the novel has been translated into more than twenty languages. Not only had this, but ever since Ellison's death, various editions of the novel sold were more than a million copies. Callahan (2004) explains the theme of identity in which the metaphor of invisibility leads his main protagonist (the narrator) to embrace all the glories of the African language, such as the blues imagery of African American speech. Callahan (2004) also explains that Ellison wrote *The Invisible Man* to tell his story of struggle and hardship. After publication, Ellison's novel continued to grow in popularity and became one of America's greatest novels of the twentieth century.

Zouankouan (2020) elaborates about the idea of visibility and invisibility in the novel. To clarify, the notion of invisibility describes the margin place that black people

have in the white society relating to the terms inferiority and superiority. In detail, Zouankouan (2020) explains that in Ellison's novel, the "inner eyes" can be considered as a metaphor, which determines the relationship between white and black people. The notion of perception by white people reflects how they perceive black people. This is to say, Zouankouan (2020) discusses how Ellison calls upon the question of African Americans existence, status, and value in the white American society.

That is, the narrator in the novel is very clear about the fact that his invisibility is due to the perception that white people have about him. The perception that white people have about black people refuses to see black people in the society referring to their invisibility. Zouankouan (2020) discusses the difference between the physical and inner eyes of a white man. A black man is only visible in their eyes because he is a man of substance of bone and flesh. However, in the inner eyes of a white man, black people do not exist in the real world which causes a real problem for the black man to doubt himself whether he exists or not. Therefore, Zouankouan (2020) elaborates how the major character foreshadows the racial relationships between white and black people and reveals the margin place that black people have in the white society.

Yaszek, (2005) mentions an important topic about Afrofuturism. She notes that Afrofuturism explores the history of black culture and history in which Ellison wants his readers to understand the history of the African diaspora. Yaszek (2005) explains that artists and scholars have invented a name for this kind of narration called Afrofuturism. As for the Afrofuturist artists, their goal is to identity the history of the past, present, and future of Black history. As in Ellison's case, Yaszek (2005) notes that readers should take into

consideration that Ellison's work is viewed as an Afrofuturist work. That is, Ellison's work intends on reclaiming the history of the past and future.

Moreover, Edubirdie (2022) includes an important note about how Ellison fought to keep the title of the novel since another author has named his book the same title, *The Invisible Man*. To add, Edubirdie (2022) explained that Ellison proposed that his title of the novel would confuse people with H .G. Wells's old novel, 'The Invisible Man'. On the other hand, Ellison decided to fight for his title because the title explains exactly how he appears in front of the white society.

Meally (1988) notes that the novel *The Invisible Man* was published thirty-five years ago that continues to grow. Thus, Meally (1988) states that this is a novel that is told by a single Afro-American that lived in the south then migrated to New York City. Meally (1988) also states that this novel is realistic, and a monumental novel which can be seen as an epic of modern American Negro life. Some journals such as, *The New York Times*, *The New Republic*, and *The New Yorker Time* all reviewed and recognized the importance of the novel. Most importantly, the novel was reviewed everywhere with approval and was admired as a successful work in literature.

Besides this, Meally (1988) adds that Signet's fifty-cent paperback edition in July 1953 made the novel *The Invisible Man* available in over 100,000 bookstores, drugstores, and newsstand outlets throughout the country. By this paperback edition, it announced that *The Invisible Man* became known as the Blazing Best Seller of the Year. Later, by 1982, the paperback edition sold out twenty hardcover printings and seventeen paperback printings. In fact, in 1982, the Random House celebrated the novels birthday known as the

“Thirtieth Anniversary Edition”. Specifically, Meally (1988) notes that the Modern Library and Penguin editions have made the book available throughout the English-speaking world and has been translated into fifteen languages.

Meally (1988) clarifies how Ellison did not write this novel only for a white audience rather it is written for both black and white. To clarify, Meally (1988) addresses the important concept of how Ellison wanted his readers to perceive his writing. Ellison focused on writing about the important issues that affect black Americans living in the U.S. such as how a black man can find leadership, rise, and be dominant in a white society nation to show the universality of blackness.

In *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera, Nostitz (2022) explains that Herrera’s work is different from other Spanish writers works because Herrera’s writing focuses on the conceptualization of identity and nationality, and explains how Mexican people “struggle to hold on to a version of themselves that precede their border crossing and the novel resolves around the protagonist’s hero deeply engaged with the complexity of connection in violent environments” (Nostitz,15). Besides, Nostitz (2022) explains that the novel focuses on the themes of border-crossing, and language-switching.

Following, Nostitz (2022) elaborates how a border is recognized as an image of boundaries that can both separate and connect. In other words, a border is found everywhere, yet certain people experience the obstacles of crossing a border since the border does not mean the same for everyone. Moreover, Nostitz (2022) states that the novel *Signs Preceding the End of the World* explores new possibilities and is a journey of a living person and the return of a different person undergoing a transformative passage.

In the foreground, Nostitz (2022) explains how Herrera illustrates the idea of how people perceive a border between two distinct geographical areas and two countries. In other words, the border is perceived as a reality and myth. Nostitz uses an illustration of a myth by the former President Barack Obama's pledge in which he promised the country that anyone is accepted into America regardless of where your originality is from. To put it another way, Nostitz (2022) elaborates that America welcomes all nationalities but turns out to be unrealistic causing problems for people who want to enter America.

Nostitz (2022), explains that for those arriving in the US, the Immigration Enforcement Physical Border defines their identity. These immigrants are trapped in a state that labels them as someone different making it difficult for immigrants from fully belonging to the US society. Hence, Nostitz (2022) notes that Herrera makes it clear those immigrants will always be in a permanent state of liminality and that their identities will forever be excluded from the US and these immigrants are characterized as the "other".

On account of, Nostitz (2022) pointed out how Makina's journey across a landscape of non-places in the novel has a different meaning. To be clear, Nostitz (2022) defines non-places as an area that does not include any organic society and these places include detention centers, and refugee camps in which Makina encounters human interaction with many people trying to cross the border she passes through. Hence, Nostitz explains (2022) the expectations Makina crossing the border in search for her brother, such as she must deal with violence, and drugs.

To add, Nostitz (2022) explains how the Mexican author Yuri Herrera narrates border realities through the eyes of Mexican people to elaborate the theme of

defamiliarization. In other words, Herrera publication of the novel explains what these immigrants go through such as border experiences from the perspective of immigrants expanding the voices of other situational issues about immigration. Not only this, but Nostitz (2022) mentions how Herrera's work views the title of the novel, "SIGNS" as a site of struggle, and battleground. Thus, the novel is viewed as a journey of self-discovery. Thus, Nostitz (2022) notes that Herrera justifies the merging of criminal law enforcement and border security which has fostered the term "cimmigration".

In the meantime, Priem (2019) mentions the idea of the protagonist being a translator. To be clear, Makina (the protagonist) presents the grabbing hold of the narrative voice in the novel. Priem (2019) explains that translation in the novel is seen as a powerful tool. The translator Makina translates the world around her since she speaks three tongues which are the local indigenous tongue, the Latin (Spanish) and the English tongue.

By speaking three languages, Priem (2019) argues that she uses language through emotion and feeling for people to understand her problems and can open new possibilities. Besides this, Priem (2019) adds that Makina makes her way through her journey by knowing when to speak and when to keep silent. Priem (2019) argues how in Herrera's novel, language provides a line of fight and escape such as Herrera's main protagonist uses polylingualism. By speaking several languages, Makina can open new spaces.

Priem (2019) portrays an example when Makina writes in English about oppression, racism, and stereotypes to a racist border patrol. Within this act, Makina saved a group of undocumented immigrants trying to cross the border. Priem notes how translation can be portrayed as a form of accommodation, resistance, and survival while trying to cross the

border. Therefore, Priem (2019) argues that the ability to translate can be a matter of life and death. Priem (2019) argues how migration can be based on individual choice and has an effect on tearing up families, and the construction of another identity. Explicitly, it was not Makina's choice to cross the border, rather it was her mother's command to send a letter to her brother who has left years earlier living in the U.S. to reclaim a piece of land for his father.

Proceeding, Priem (2019) argues that the goal of Herrera's writing is to tell a narrative of life and death and the birth into a new world since the crossing of the U.S is perceived dangerous and cruel. Chiefly, Priem (2019) suggests that since Makina's journey from Mexico to the U.S is difficult and this is explored within Herrera's protagonist, she will encounter obstacles; the crossing of the border constructs a new identity just like Makina's brother. Centrally, Priem (2019) clarifies that ever since Herrera's main protagonist descendance to another world, Herrera's narrative provides new ways of thinking on the concept of becoming a new person.

2.4. Summary

This chapter presented a literature review about both novel's *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera. It is worth mentioning that there are no critical comments by scholars in the discussed study of *The Invisible Man*. On the other hand, in *Signs Preceding the end of the World*, one critic has mentioned the reality and reason of how Mexican immigrants are not welcomed in the U.S.

3. Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The reader which is I or anyone who is reading this research paper will analyze both novels written by both authors *The Invisible Man* by *Ralph Ellison* and *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera. For this purpose, a summary is mentioned about both novels. The Stylistic Analysis Theory (SAT) can be a useful framework to analyze the stylistic devices used in literature. Both novels, *The Invisible Man* and *Signs Preceding the End of the World*, are a work of fiction that portray the realistic scenes of unjust treatment. Both authors aim to reveal the unjust treatment through the employment of stylistic devices. Through creating images of the characters in the novels, it can help the reader receive the authors message and grasp the reader's attention.

To begin, in *Signs Preceding the End of the World*, Makina, a Mexican girl who is the main protagonist in the novel is on a quest in search for her lost elder brother to deliver a message requested by her mother to the North. The reason for Makina's brother migration to the U.S is having a little piece of land. Makina undergoes multiple tests, dangers, and obstacles along the way. During her journey, Makina notices a large sinkhole take down an old man and his dog.

However, Makina manages to escape from the sinkhole. Makina visits three men which are Mr. Double-U, Mr. Aitch, and Mr. Q, who are powerful men. Chiefly, Makina speaks three different languages which are the Latin, Anglo, and the native tongue. For the most part, these three men can help Makina find her brother. To proceed, Makina undergoes her first test during her journey in which she travels to the Mexican city called

Big Chilango encountering Chucho to help her cross the river. On the other hand, both Makina and Chucho almost drowned while crossing.

Additionally, after managing to cross the river, both arrive at a desert noticing a man following them. As a matter of fact, at a short distance, this man turns out to be a border control officer shooting at both and trying to deport Makina and Chucho back to Mexico. Both are caught but Chucho tries to distract the officers in order for Makina to run and escape from the officers. This is to say, Makina heads towards the mountains realizing that she has been shot but her wounds are not that serious.

Surely, Makina has escaped and makes it through the mountains encountering Mr. Aitch's Driver. During the drive, Makina notices many signs that prohibits many things for Mexican people and is informed by the driver that her brother is alive giving Makina her brother's address. Makina slept in an ATM booth during the night and woke up to continue her journey of searching for her brother encountering a woman in a restaurant who remembers her brother giving Makina her brother's address.

Particularly, Makina is told that her brother works at a military base and heads immediately to the base and is astonished to see her brother there. Consequently, her brother tells her a story about his arrival to the U.S. The woman from the restaurant told a family about Makina's brother. The family wanted Makina's brother to do an assignment which is to take their son's identity forever and join the army promising him money and legal papers. Unfortunately, the family thought that Makina's brother would die in war but returned alive. In this case, they gave him little money and disappeared. The letter that Makina was supposed to give to her brother was kept in the envelope. Makina did not give

it to her brother to read instead she opened it herself and read it saying that Cora wants her son to come back.

As it can be seen, Makina and a group of Mexican men are forced to kneel in a lineup by a policeman. Noticing that one of the men has a book, he orders the man to confess his crimes. However, Makina takes the pen from the man ordered to write his crimes and writes a note in English mentioning racism and oppression by the white people. Given that, the police officer is astonished by the note and frees Makina and the men. In essence, the chapter ends with Makina running into Chucho who has been watching her presence the entire time directing her to a door. A man gives Makina a file containing her new identity.

To continue, In *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, the novel first talks about the narrator without giving a name. He is introduced as an invisible man who doesn't seem to exist in the society, and he links his invisibility to his skin color. The narrator elaborates that people refuse to see him because of his race. His blackness is the reason why white men don't recognize him.

The novel opens with the narrator giving a speech at his graduation. Since the speech went well, the narrator was asked to give the speech at a meeting and that he will take part in a boxing match called the "battle royal" of his hometown's white leaders. With this intention, this battle is fought between the narrator's black classmates and white men. The young white men are tough guys and are given boxing gloves to begin the match. In the ring, the black men are blindfolded and are forced to fight without seeing the white men. As the narrator fights, the white men in the crowd perceive the black men as nonexistent. The

“battle royal” allow the white men to express their aggression towards the black community in a ring.

Given that, during the battle, the white crowd yells racist expressions to the black men who are fighting in the ring making the narrator fear. The narrator tries to avoid punches and pretends that he is knocked out. However, he is forced to fight and is left to fight against the biggest white boy, named Tatlock since the narrator is shirking. As much as the narrator tries to avoid the fight, he tried to offer Tatlock money but refuses and knocks him easily. This is a representative way of how the white men control black men.

During the battle royal, the white men prefer to watch the black men struggle and torture for amusement. A small rug is brought out filled with dollar bills and coins. Unfortunately, the rug is electrocuted. The boys are told to jump in pain and take the money on the rug. Explicitly, the narrator is brought back to give his speech in front of the crowd. In the speech, the narrator mentions the words of Booker T. Washington explaining that he wants to make cooperation between black and white people.

On the other hand, the crowd mock, laugh, and do not take his speech seriously. During his speech, the narrator accidentally says “social equality” making the crowd angry and enraged since they do not want to hear this phrase. The crowd asks the narrator what he means by this, but the narrator tells them it was a mistake. As the narrator finishes his speech, the white leaders award the narrator with a scholarship “The State College for Negroes”.

However, the leaders selected this college since he is a black man. The narrator is being kept subservient to white leaders tricking him that he will make progress. To continue, the narrator is introduced to one of the college’s white founders named Mr.

Norton. The narrator has been given the honor to drive Mr. Norton around and pleases all his wishes. He begins to drive Mr. Norton anywhere he orders, and Mr. Norton feels connected to the destiny of the black race.

While driving, the narrator accidently takes Mr. Norton to an unfamiliar area making Mr. Norton curious about this place demanding to stop the car and talk to the owner of the cabin. The owner turned out to be a sharecropper who impregnated her daughter who only brought disgrace to his black community. After hearing this story, Mr. Norton became terrified and the narrator quickly took him to the Golden Day, which is a black bar to buy him whiskey.

As soon as they reached the bar, the bar is filled with a group of white men. The narrator asks the bartender for a drink to carry out but refuses because everyone must drink inside especially since he is black. Immediately, the narrator finds Mr. Norton passed out in the car and calls for help. The narrator felt a sense of rejection because of his blackness in the bar. They can do whatever they want because of their power. Suddenly, a doctor helped Mr. Norton recover from his sickness.

In this manner, both return to campus. The narrator terrified and furious of what will happen was asked to speak with the president of the Black College. Unfortunately, the president decides to send the narrator to New York City to work. By doing so, he must work to earn his next year's tuition. The president decides to prepare him letters of recommendations to start a new job. Arriving New York, the narrator begins with his job hunt, but many people refused his recommendation letters written by the president.

Eventually, the narrator meets a young man for a job interview. The young man allows the narrator to read one of the letters discovering that the letters were not to help

him. The narrator leaves crushed because of the disappointment of the letters but the young man tells him of a job at the factory of Liberty Paints. Immediately reporting to Liberty Paints, the narrator was accepted to work. On the other hand, the narrator experienced hardship while working feeling unaccepted by the members because of his race.

Bing assisted to work with a black man in the basement, the narrator gets into a fight with the black man. The black man attempts to kill the narrator by causing an explosion in the basement. Immediately taken to the factory hospital, he is placed in a white chair being treated with electric shocks as to cure him. The narrator is treated differently. He does not feel that he is treated like a human because of his race. After being discharged from the hospital, he is fired from his job.

Furthermore, a man named Jack offers the narrator a job to make speeches for his organization because he saw the narrator defending a black couple getting kicked out of their apartment. Later, the narrator has been given a new name and continued to give more speeches and was appointed as chief spokesperson of the Brotherhood's Harlem District. On the other hand, the narrator starts to become famous as a public speaker making members of the Brotherhood question his intelligence. Jack informed him that he must be suspended for a while to learn the Brotherhood ideology.

The narrator is introduced to Tod Clifton who is a member of the Brotherhood. The brotherhood focuses on nonviolence and wants all blacks and whites to cooperate for the good of the society. To continue, there has been a clash between the brotherhood and Ras the Exhorter, a black nationalist, who opposes the Brotherhood. Ras is against any member in the Brotherhood because he thinks that the brotherhood wants to make money. Ras

thinks that the narrator and Tod Clifton are sellouts and traitors since they are working for the white system.

Suddenly, the narrator stood on a ladder and began a speech. Given that, that is when the tension began between both parties. Both the narrator and Clifton are attacked by members led by Ras. The next day, the narrator receives an anonymous note warning him to not go to far with his speeches meaning that he has been too much successful with his speeches which is against a white man's world.

A white member in the Brotherhood envies the narrator extremely called Wrestrum. The narrator receives a phone call from a "picture magazine" asking for an interview. However, Wrestrum accuses the narrator as a danger and someone who wants to control the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood agrees that he has become too powerful and must be suspended from the Brotherhood. They offer him a new job which is to lecture on "Women Question".

Moreover, Tod Clifton has been missing for a while. Brother Jack asks if the narrator knows anything about his disappearance. The narrator answers that he does not know. The narrator is instructed to return to the Brotherhood to regain the strength that they have lost. During his search for Clifton, the narrator sees a group of people gathered on the street. The narrator goes out to search for Clifton. During his search, he found Clifton selling dancing paper Sambo dolls on the street to people in which these dolls symbolize black culture. Clifton has gone against the Brotherhood. The police try to stop Clifton, but he pushes one of the officers to the ground. Immediately, the white officer shoots Clifton and dies from his wounds.

To proceed, the narrator begins to question and doubt the Brotherhood wondering if the members are really interested in change. The narrator decides to organize a funeral for Clifton because he was a member of the Brotherhood. By going against the Brotherhood, the narrator wants people to gather to express their grief by the white power system. The narrator is called into a meeting with the committee of the Brotherhood because of the funeral. The committee confronts his actions and is not pleased with this unorganized event. The narrator tries to explain that Clifton was an innocent unarmed man shot in cold blood by the police officer.

In addition, the committee explains to the narrator that he was not hired to think, act, or perform any action without consulting them. As a member of the committee, the narrator's responsibility is to listen and obey even if he is against their claims. They inform the narrator that he is never to act on his own or he will be banned from the Brotherhood since they believe that the narrator is powerful enough to make people listen to him which they dislike of him.

In the long run, the narrator notices Ras the Exhorter giving a speech on the street about Tod Clifton's death. Ras blames the narrator for Clifton's death. Randomly, the narrator notices two of Ras men's chasing him down the street trying to beat him. He escapes by the help of the doorman's theater. Later, he notices three men in suits wearing dark glasses. He becomes encouraged to buy his own pair hoping that this disguise will allow him to walk the streets of Harlem unnoticed. The idea of this disguise helps him be protected by the men on the street. He is now known as Rinehart because of his glasses and hat. The narrator is disguising himself as a different person and he uses his own invisibility to his advantage.

Not only this, but the narrator has also been told that the committee of the Brotherhood chooses not to stand by the people of Harlem and support the black community and that their plans have changed. Therefore, the narrator decides to seduce a white woman from the committee to obtain any secret information. Lastly, the narrator gets an emergency call from the committee in Harlem and must be present. As he reaches Harlem, he hears gunshots, people shouting, and people breaking glass. The police are chasing everyone on the street and suddenly the narrator has been shot in the head. Ras caused the riot because of Clifton's death. Ras wants to express his grievances for the shooting of Clifton.

A group of men in the race riot decide to burn down the building they are living in. The reason for burning their own home is because of racial rights, and force change. The narrator indeed goes against the Brotherhood and decided to join the men. The members of the riot are throwing bricks from the top of the building at the white policemen. The police begin shooting at them and the narrator and Scofield pull out a pistol to start shooting back at the cops. The war has begun between the police and black men which emphasize that this shooting is a symbol of resistance against the white community. The black members are showing their anger towards the white oppression.

Suddenly, Ras appeared in the riot dressed as an African American. Ras only wants to increase his racial tension towards the whites. Ras's men spot the narrator and order his men to hang the narrator since Ras only sees him as a traitor to the black community. The narrator tries to explain to him that he is no longer a member of the Brotherhood but ignores what the narrator has to say. The narrator eventually escapes from the hands of the

men but runs into a group of white men. As he tries to flee from them, he falls down an open manhole into darkness. At this moment, he returns to his invisibility.

All together, the men decide to place the cover over the manhole instead of helping him get out. Therefore, he is trapped in darkness all alone and metaphorically he has returned to the same position he has been his entire life. Throughout this riot, the narrator kept his briefcase which includes all his history. To make light, he finds matches and burns his high school diploma by force to see where he is. As he looks for an exit, he continues to burn most of his important papers to live. As time passes underground, he feels as if he is a prisoner. He begins to tell himself that he should spend time underground until the conditions above ground begin to change and to feel accepted by the white society.

3.2. Design of The Study

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher investigates both novels by applying the Stylistic Analysis Theory (SAT). In other words, the stylistic devices used in the novel are pointed out according to the Stylistic Analysis Theory (SAT) such as themes, and stylistic devices.

3.3. Data Description

The novel *The Invisible Man* is composed of twenty-five chapters that reflect upon the social issues faced by African Americans whereas *Signs Preceding the end of the World* is composed of nine chapters that reflect upon the migrant experience. *The Invisible Man* is one of the greatest novels ever written about African Literature whereas *Signs Preceding the end of the World* is one of the astonishing novels to be published in Spanish.

3.4. Procedures of Analysis

1. The researcher pursued the following procedures:
2. The novels has been read deeply by the researcher.
3. The themes of the novels have been identified.
4. The content of the novel has been classified by these themes.
5. The researcher selected the stylistic devices to be adopted in the analysis of the study.

3.5. Summary

The application of Stylistic Approach was highlighted as a theoretical framework to fulfill the objectives of the research and to answer the research questions, and to understand what both novels are about.

4. Chapter Four: Analysis and Discussion of *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera.

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher displays the analysis of *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera using the Stylistic Analysis Theory (SAT). The researcher will approach this analysis by providing a brief review of the novel's themes, which are invisibility and racism. Consequently, two questions will be countered at the end of this chapter.

Firstly, invisibility plays an important role in both novels; *The Invisible Man* and *Signs Preceding the End of the World*. As Zouankouan (2020) explains how Ellison clarifies that invisibility is an important theme in the novel, the existence of a black man in a white society has many challenges for a black man. Zouankouan (2020) states how Ellison explains that black men are dominated by a white society making it difficult for black men to succeed. In the 1920s and 1930s, African Americans were suffering from racism in the American society, and the Jim Crow laws of segregation were introduced making it difficult for black people to find their visibility.

That is, Ellison, as an African American writer, he is able to examine the human struggle of finding one's identity living in a world with restrictive racial inequalities and those who deny your worthiness. As stated in the novel,

“All my life I had been looking for something, and everywhere I turned someone tried to tell me what it was. I accepted their answers too. I was looking for myself and asking everyone except myself questions which I, and only I, could answer. That I am nobody but myself. But first I had to discover that I am an invisible man!”
(Ellison 13-14).

Not only this, but Ellison assigned the name of the protagonist The Invisible Man because of society's rejection to acknowledge his existence as a human being. More specifically, the American society reveals the superiority and inferiority figures in their society. In the protagonist's case, the American society has placed his identity within their world. Due to such limitations, Zouankouan (2020) states that the protagonist's identity is defined by the dominant white society, and he is unable to display his individual identity due to those in power. According to Zouankouan, (2020) he mentions how Ellison begins the prologue, with

“I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids -- and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me” (Ellison, 1). That is, Ellison notes how these words clarify how someone can exist and be invisible at the same time.

In other words, Zouankouan (2020) focuses on the concept of perception of how people perceive you. As in Ellison's novel, the white people perceive black people invisible because they refuse to accept them for who they are forcing the narrator to doubt his existence, “Or again, you often doubt if you really exist” (Ellison, 1). Therefore, as Zouankouan (2020) explains, he distinguishes the difference between the physical and inner eyes. The white society perceive the narrator through their physical eyes rather than through their inner eyes, they perceive him invisible in the society. Referring to the sentence, in Ellison's novel, “I am an invisible man” (Ellison, 3), “I am” means that the narrator exists

whereas “an invisible man”, the narrator does not exist in the inner eyes of the white society.

Chiefly, Zouankouan (2020) adds that the reason why white people perceive black people invisible is because of their blackness due to their skin color. As Zouankouan (2020) states,

“He is invisible not because he is a “spook”—literally unseen—but because he is a black man living in the racist atmosphere of America in the 1920s and 1930s, unrecognized because of his skin color... The motif of invisibility treats a black man’s situation in the United States. For a long time, an Afro-American’s individuality was ignored by society, and the narrator in *Invisible Man* faces the same problem” (Zouankouan, 27). Therefore, Zouankouan (2020) clarifies that African Americans are invisible in an American society.

Moreover, Edubirdie (2022) explains how Ellison portrayed the theme of invisibility by linking the protagonist’s invisibility to electrical power in which he managed to illegally steal from the Monopolated Light and Power Company. To be clear, Edubirdie (2022) explains that the protagonist is living secretly in a basement in a building that only white members can settle in. As mentioned in the novel, “my hole is warm and full of light. Yes, full of light. I doubt if there is a brighter spot in all New York than this hole of mine. I learned to protect myself. In the basement there are exactly 1,369 lights” (Ellison, 6).

The protagonist is fighting a battle against the whites since they own the company and have no clue that the protagonist is stealing their electricity to light his room. For this purpose, by using their service and not paying the company nothing at all, Edubirdie (2022) discusses that the protagonist’s invisibility serves as an advantage, “now, aware of my

invisibility, I live rent-free in a building rented strictly to whites, in a section of the basement that was shut off and forgotten during the nineteenth century” (Ellison, 5). Therefore, the protagonist is metaphorically invisible to the whites, yet he presents himself as a presence by taking control of their company’s electricity without their awareness. As noted in the novel, “it is sometimes advantageous to be unseen” (Ellison, 3).

In the long run, Edubirdie (2022) notes an incident by the protagonist due to his invisibility. In detail, the narrator accidentally bumped into a tall blond, white man in the dark. Instantly, the blond man called the narrator insulting names. By then, the narrator attacked him and ordered him to apologize. As Edubirdie (2022) explains, the narrator’s appearance does not exist in the eyes of the white man. In Ellison’s novel, “when it occurred to me that the man had not seen me, actually; that he, as far as he knew, was in the midst of a walking nightmare!” (Ellison,4). To elaborate, Edubirdie (2022) explains how the white, blond man refuses to acknowledge the narrator's physical existence and visibility even if he was beaten up to the point of death.

In like manner, Yadav discusses how the protagonist recognized his invisibility. For instance, in the novel, the narrator woke up in the hospital numb and quiet after the incident in Liberty Paints with a black man. Still unconscious, he noticed a doctor asking him questions. One of the questions was, “what is your name?" a voice said” (Ellison, 179). Given that, Yadav asserts that in this moment of questioning, Ellison has presented the narrator in a state of figurative rebirth as a newborn child since he woke up with no memory and lost his ability to speak.

In this case, Yadav (2019) expresses that due to his blackness and invisibility, the doctors treat the patient relying on racial stereotypes and refuse to treat the narrator with the

appropriate surgical treatment. For this purpose, Yadav explains that the protagonist is unable to free himself from racism enabling the white doctors to differentiate him from white patients. Therefore, the doctors use this difference as an excuse to deny his humanity as other human beings.

Furthermore, Mohammad (2018) mentions how he observes invisibility in the novel, “as —the situation of men whose individual identity is denied. Therefore, blindness is the state of those who refuse them as individual beings” (Mohammad, 14). To clarify, Mohammad addresses the concept of how Ellison presents to readers that black people are detached and isolated from the society. Due to the color of their skin, Mohammed (2018) explains that the protagonist will always feel like an outsider and will struggle to attain freedom against the white society.

Despite this, Mohammad (2018) addresses the protagonist’s invisibility through his grandfather. To enumerate, as mentioned in the novel, the protagonist's grandfather has left a message in his deathbed saying, “son, after I'm gone I want you to keep up the good fight. I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a traitor all my born days” (Ellison,13). Mohammad clarifies that to gain independence from the white society, the black man must be a traitor and act according to what the white world wants him to be. As Mohammad states, “the black man must maintain two identities” (Mohammad, 17). Therefore, Mohammad (2018) explains that the words of the grandfather haunt’s the protagonist which leads him to his journey of invisibility.

To continue, Mohammad (2018) expresses the idea of music in the novel. To explain, as the protagonist lives underground, he listens to Louis Armstrong’s jazz records on his phonograph. As mentioned in the novel, “perhaps I like Louis Armstrong because

he's made poetry out of being invisible. And my own grasp of invisibility aids me to understand his music” (Ellison, 8). One song that the protagonist listened to is What Did I Do to Be so Black and Blue. Mohammad states that Ellison included jazz in the novel since African American musicians develop their music as individual soloists serving as a black struggle for individuality.

Another key point, Ouali (2018-2019) mentions how Ellison portrays the characters of American racism under the concept of invisibility. To demonstrate, Dr. Bledsoe which is the head of the university addressed the protagonist, “You're nobody, son. You don't exist -- can't you see that?” (Ellison, 112). At this moment, the protagonist had taken Mr. Norton to an unfamiliar place near campus which is a log cabin encountering Jim Trueblood who is a disgrace to the black community since he impregnated his daughter.

After Mr. Norton has heard the story, he became pale and fainted which lead to the narrator's punishment. To point out, Ouali (2018-2019) explains that the narrator tried to stop Mr. Norton from interacting with the man, but he insisted on hearing the story. However, Dr. Bledsoe ignored the narrator, and rejected to hear what the narrator had to say and told the narrator that he has no power to speak or explain his point of view to a white man. Therefore, Ouali (2018-2019) states that Ellison has portrayed these characters to display how black men must obey white orders and if you violate, you will be punished due to invisibility.

To proceed, Ouali (2018-2019) discusses the language of blackness in the novel. To illustrate, Ouali (2018-2019) explains how Ellison used some techniques for his/her readers to comprehend his message about the concept of invisibility. Firstly, Ellison presents the protagonist as first-person point of view in the novel to allow readers to see through the

protagonist's eyes enabling Ellison to use imagery throughout the novel. By doing so, Ouali (2018-2019) explains that Ellison wants his audience to feel what an invisible man may feel. Thus, by using imagery, readers can see and feel how the protagonist is affected by his invisibility due to white dominance since he is excluded from the society.

Moreover, Ouali (2018-2019) explains how Ellison includes wordplay throughout the novel. To enumerate, Ellison focuses on the ordinary language of African American culture. For example, in the novel, the protagonist stated, "I yam what I am!" (Ellison, 205). This scene is when the narrator buys a piece of yam from an old man selling them on the street. As Ouali (2018-2019) mentions the language of African culture, he explains that the yams remind the narrator of the south and according to the white society, blacks are trained to be ashamed and not represent their culture forcing the narrator to avoid what he wants. Therefore, Ouali (2018-2019) clarifies that due to white dominance, they should act according to social expectations, to a white society and control what a black man wants which leads to the narrator's invisibility that he shouldn't eat what he wants.

Alongside, Ouali (2018-2019) explores another theme of invisibility that appears in the novel is when the narrator is disguised as another man wearing black glasses and a hat. People in the streets of Harlem mistaken the narrator for another man named Rineheart. Rineheart is known in the neighborhood because of his actions, by presenting himself as another person. Ouali (2018-2019) explains that the narrator became visible in the eyes of the white society. On the other hand, the narrator wakes up and realizes that he cannot escape from his invisibility due to the color of his skin, "I finally rebelled. I am an invisible man" (Ellison, 444). Therefore, Ouali (2018-2019) states that the narrator must accept his invisibility since he is a black man.

Ouali (2018-2019) outlines an important idea from Du Bois. In his book, *Souls of the Black Folks*, he explains that for black people to define who they are, fight injustice, and inequality, they need to remove the double consciousness in their mind. As Ouali explores Du Bois ideas, he states from Du Bois book, “the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line” (Ouali, 48). Hence, Ouali (2018-2019) explains that a black man’s identity is divided into two facets making it a problem for black people to build their identity and become visible in the eyes of a white society. In the novel, Ellison says, “still I was more afraid to act any other way because they didn’t like that at all” (Ellison, 14).

To clarify, this creates a conflict for the narrator of how he is expected to act according to the whites and affects his position of his true self. Thus, Ouali states (2018-2019) that “the Invisible Man is suffering from an identity crisis” (Ouali, 48). Significantly, Ouali mentions that the search for voice is a major theme in the novel.

To demonstrate, Ouali (2018-2019) explains that the narrator struggles to search for his identity and is confused and does not know to which group or society he belongs. The narrator is portrayed as a wise orator that can deliver speeches during some events in the novel. To illustrate, Ouali (2018-2019) explains that since the narrator drove Mr. Norton to Jim Trueblood's cabin, and fainted after hearing how he impregnated his daughter, Dr. Bledsoe’s is angered and enraged with the narrator's actions and decides on punishing him without hearing what the narrator has to say.

The narrator tried to explain what happened and that it was not his intention of driving him to the cabin, but Trueblood insisted. However, Dr. Bledsoe responded, “your poor judgment has caused this school incalculable damage. Instead of uplifting the race, you've torn it down” (Ellison, 110). For this reason, Ouali (2018-2019) explains that black

men must obey a white man's command, and that a black man has no power to fight against a white man, "you're nobody, son. you don't exist -- can't you see that?" (Ellison, 112).

In the long run, Ouali (2018-2019) also explains how Tod Clifton who is recognized as a black member in the Brotherhood was selling Sambo dolls on the street but was shot due to an attack by police officers. In this scene, the narrator decided to organize a funeral for Clifton without informing the Brotherhood committee. He also gave a speech during his funeral about Clifton's death since he was heartbroken. The reason why the funeral was organized is because he wants members in the community to express their sorrow, wake up and acknowledge the unfair treatment, and injustice by the white power system. The narrator acts as an individual without the consent of the committee which angers the Brotherhood since the crowd is affected by his speech.

Ouali (2018-2019) explains that this event is risky and can cause a violent fight with the committee. For example, in the novel, when the narrator encountered Brother Jack, the narrator said, "so we went ahead on my personal responsibility" (Ellison, 358). By hearing this, Brother Jack said, "you were not hired to think. Had you forgotten that? "Don't twist my meaning. For all of us, the committee does the thinking. For all of us. And you were hired to talk" (Ellison, 363). Given these points, Ouali (2018-2019) clarifies that a black man should not act according to his beliefs. In other words, the white society chooses what's best for the community and a black man's opinion isn't heard.

Moreover, Tiwari explains that the narrator does not have a name in the novel, which causes his invisibility to the whites. The narrator was given a name by Brother Jack ever since he joined the Brotherhood, "that is your new name," Brother Jack said. "Start thinking of yourself by that name from this moment" (Ellison, 240). Once given a name, the

narrator responded, “for the first time, lying there in the dark, I could glimpse the possibility of being more than a member of a race” (Ellison, 275). Here, Tiwari suggests that the narrator can be visible in the eyes of a white society.

Tiwari mentions an important idea about how white society takes control of everything. To clarify, as the narrator walks on the streets on Harlem, New York, he noticed a window that was decorated with cosmetic products. These products are for black people to use, “you too can be truly beautiful,” a sign proclaimed. “Win greater happiness with whiter complexion” (Ellison, 202). Tiwari explains, “whiteness is related with beauty and happiness, implying that blackness is the opposite” (Tiwari, 5). Therefore, by exploring the theme of invisibility, it gives readers a sense of how a black man struggles to be noticed and accepted in a white society.

In *Signs Preceding the end of the World*, Richardson (2019) explains how the protagonist Makina undergoes a geographical journey moving from a village, to towns, cities, and countries to reach America. As she moves from one place to another, Richardson (2019) discusses how Makina reaches unknown areas. Thus, he states that the protagonist is viewed as a narrative representation in the novel, “Makina feels more like parts of a machine. She is, in fact, by name, a machine—a máquina—with a mission that must be completed” (Richardson, 14).

To elaborate, Richardson (2019) explains how Herrera has displayed Makina as an unwanted and invisible character in the novel to show how Mexicans suffer. If Mexicans want to reach the north and migrate to the U.S, Richardson elaborates how they will struggle to reach their destination. More specifically, Richardson (2019) notes, “It’s all cold, indifferent, and impermeable, a world hermetically sealed to the possibilities of

meaningful, sustained, and open human exchange, the dynamic that converts space-time into place, if not home” (Richardson, 14).

Proceeding, Jennings (2019) presents the concept of racism and inequality leading to Makina’s invisibility in the novel. In Herrera’s novel, Jennings (2019) discusses the ideology of unwanted Mexican immigrants by white Americans since they have a visualized picture of them. In Makina’s case, as she has reached the U.S, she was treated in an unwelcomed manner. Jennings (2019) portrays the contradiction and harsh conditions of those who leave their hometown will be treated in a different way. In Herrera’s novel, Mexican immigrants who migrate to the U.S suffer from racism, and job opportunities receiving low salaries, and few economic rights. Jennings states that the Mexican immigrants are “treated as invisible non-entities by white people” (Jennings).

For instance, Jennings (2019) elaborates on how Mexican immigrants work as “low-paid physical laborers” (Jennings). To clarify, in the novel, Herrera explains how Makina was harassed on the bus on her way north. As she arrived the U.S and continued her journey searching for her brother, Makina,

“Passed the back alley of a restaurant she heard not only a familiar lilt but a voice she knew. She peeked in and saw the youngster from the bus dragging metal cans up beside the restaurant door; he was working energetically, whistling a song from another time, and though he wore only pants and a t-shirt he didn't seem to mind the early-morning chill. He had a small bandage on the hand that Makina had schooled” (Herrera,74). Therefore, Jennings justifies that these workers are “invisible and powerless in a political sense” (Jennings 2019).

In Herrera's novel, as Makina's brother has been assigned a mission to claim land for his mother in the U.S, instead a family offered him to join the army and take their son's identity. According to Jennings (2019), he explains that since Americans refuse to offer them jobs, and view them as invisible, they decide to join the army by force in order to survive due to the economic desperation. Hence, as Makina encounters the racist officer and the officer forces a young man to write, she took the pencil and wrote "we who came to take your jobs, who dream of wiping your shit, who long to work all hours" (Herrera, 99). As a result, because of their desperate conditions, Jennings (2019) emphasizes that since immigrants are treated as underclass, the protagonist wrote in an aggressive manner to point out their desperate needs.

Consequently, Jennings (2019) explains how people in America do not want Mexican immigrants to live and adapt to their living environment. For instance, as Makina and the other men want to cross the border, they all get caught by the racist police officers forcing them to stand in line. Jennings (2019) clarifies how one of the police officers visualizes and has this type of belief that Mexicans are meant to fall in line declaring their supremacy and violence over them. Besides this, Jennings (2019) notes that the white believe that they are civilized using their authority as a power of domination.

For example, in Herrera's novel, the officer states

"You think you can just come here and put your feet up without earning it, said the cop. Well, I got news for you: patriots like me are on the lookout and we're going to teach you some manners. Lesson one: get used to falling in. You want to come here, fall in and ask permission, you want to go to the doctor, fall in and ask permission, you want to say a fucking word to me, fall in and ask permission. Civilized, that's

the way we do things around here! We don't jump fences and we don't dig tunnels” (Herrera, 97).

Moreover, Jennings (2019) mentions how Herrera began the chapter with the words, “I’m dead” (Herrera, 11). Jennings explains that once migrants begin with their journey to the north, they will experience a kind of death and encounter the border as a “place of re-creation” (Jennings). To elaborate, because of their invisibility, Jennings (2019) notes that migration is viewed as a crucial element for Mexicans because they are forced to become something new, abandon who they are, adjust to the Mexican American life and adapt to a new environment. To add, Jennings (2019) expresses how the process of migration from a native country to a new state can shift one’s distinguishing character.

Jennings (2019) conveys an important message about the power of language in the novel. Jennings explains that the protagonist Makina is linked with the gift of language and that Herrera presents Makina as a translator in the novel. Notably, working at a telephone switchboard company, Makina translates calls in all languages such as in English, Spanish, and the indigenous language where people live in her area, and immigrants living in the U.S.

For instance, Jennings (2019) provides an example in the novel when Makina uses language to defend herself and the other immigrants from the racist patriotic policemen. In the scene, by writing a letter to the police officer, Jennings justifies that Makina “forces the policeman to see her and her fellow migrants as full human beings with their own experiences, hardships, and emotional lives, rather than as subhuman invaders or a faceless pool of labor” (Jennings).

This is to say, Jennings (2019) states that the patriotic policemen visualize their appearance invisible. However, after reading what Makina has to say, the officers let me free. Therefore, Jennings (2019) clarifies that Herrera uses language in the novel to show that immigrants can speak back in the same language to defend themselves and elaborate how they know what racist white men think of Mexican immigrants to convey a message that they do exist and are visible.

Jennings (2019) adds how Mexican workers working in the U.S undergo difficulties when returning to their country to visit relatives and how Herrera uses characters to portray the dangers of their journey into the United States. To demonstrate, as Makina continues her journey with Chucho to reach the border, she encounters a dead man lying beneath a tree “his eyes and tongue pecked out by buzzards” (Herrera, 44). Thus, Chucho informs Makina how once he helped a man cross back to Mexico to visit his dying wife but got lost on their way and the man’s wife did not make it by the time he reached her.

Jennings (2019) unfolds the reality of Mexican immigrant’s invisibility of how white people do not see them as they try to reach their destination since white people do not try to help. Due to the hardship, and humiliating oppression by the whites in which they cannot enter the U.S as other people, Jennings (2019) states that “the transformation from a living person to a corpse points to how immigrants’ hopes can be unceremoniously stamped out and left to die by racism and the brutality of life as a migrant worker in the U.S” (Jennings 2019).

Significantly, Jennings (2019) explains as how Makina continues her journey to search for her brother, she bumped into a redheaded white racist Anglo who tried to harass her and refused to help her. She continued to ask if anyone saw her brother but

unfortunately, she has no luck. Not only this, Makina would approach anyone who spoke the Latin tongue but was in a state of helplessness. Therefore, she “slept in an ATM booth, where she curled up like a dog and after much bone-trembling managed to fall asleep” (Herrera, 74). Therefore, Jennings elaborates how Mexicans feel a sense of inferiority, moving from one destination to another suffering from racial discrimination and feeling directionless.

Moreover, shifting to the theme of racism, the authors Yuri Herrera (2009) and Ralph Ellison (1952) approached racism in different ways in their novels. Firstly, Kaushik introduces the article about how Ralph Ellison is one of the famous African American writers who shows his concern for the problem of racism that exists in America who assume that black people living in a racist society cannot afford an identity of their own. Here, Kaushik (2022) notes that the novel “*The Invisible Man* is a comprehensive, real, and profound description of the social phenomenon of racism” (Kaushik, 3).

In other words, Kaushik highlights that Ellison published the novel to reveal how black people are affected by racism, and white supremacy. Hence, Kaushik explains that the events in the novel *The Invisible Man* occurred during the time in which African Americans were suffering racism in all fields of life in America such as education and employment.

Zeb (2023) addresses the important concept about how whiteness is viewed in the novel. In this manner, Zeb notes that,

“Whiteness, as it gives advantages to White, is mainly about the superiority of White toward other races. If white is normality, then the Black is an abnormality, if white is beauty, then the Black is ugliness, if white is civilized then the Black is barbaric and uncivilized” (Zeb, 7).

For this reason, Zeb (2023) discusses that ideology that Ellison has portrayed the narrator with a detailed description that he is an invisible man and is aware that whiteness defines his identity, and the cause of his invisibility comes from a racist society.

Moreover, Kaushik (2020) mentions that Ellison portrays his characters in the novel to convey a message to the world. For example, throughout the journey, Ellison explains that the narrator passes through a series of dramatic events caused by racism such as being a college student, to a worker, and to an orator. To clarify, Kaushik (2020) justifies that the narrator struggled to keep his place in each event. However, due to the racist ideological thinking of black people, the narrator was expelled from his college, was fired from his job working at the factory, and was assigned to speak according to what the white Brotherhood insisted on. Therefore, Kaushik explains that the narrator was dealing with an identity crisis.

On account of, Widyana (2006) emphasizes how Ellison reveals the theme about racialism in the novel. To explain, Widyana (2006) states that Ellison published the novel *The Invisible Man* in 1952 to discuss that this is a novel of social protest by African Americans since white people have differentiated his right as a black man living in a white society. Therefore, Widyana (2006) explains that Ellison uses his experience of life he encountered in the South to shape his writing in his novel. Moreover, Widyana (2006) explores how Ellison mentions why there are problems of racialism in America.

To clarify, before Ellison wrote his novel, he explains how racialism was brought to America by the European colonialism. Besides this, Widyana (2006) notes how African Americans were brought and captured as slaves with a ship forcibly to America. These slaves were separated from their families and motherland. Due to the injustice and harsh

treatment, some slaves suffered from hunger, thirst, diseases, committed suicide, refused to eat, and jumped into the sea choosing death. On the other hand, at the seventeenth century until middle nineteenth century, Widyana (2006) explains that President Abraham Lincoln eliminated slavery to guarantee the civil rights for African Americans.

Chiefly, Widyana (2006) explores the concept of how Race Riots exist in America. For example, groups of different racial backgrounds fight each other between black and whites. Widyana (2006) notes that during the civil war, riots occurred due to job competition since white people feared for their jobs taken away from Southern black people in Northern cities resulting in many deaths. Additionally, Widyana (2006) mentions that in 1917, violence broke out over the issue of employment of black people working in a factory. As a result, the black people responded violently to white assaults.

Thus, due to the issue of employment, black citizens began a social protest but ended into rioting and looting. For instance, Widyana (2006) explains how Ellison has provided an example of a scene that occurred in the novel. The riot was caused by Ras the Destroyer, a black nationalist, who is against the Brotherhood. The riot started because of Tod Clifton's death who was shot by a white racist police officer. Clifton's death has motivated the community to stand together and express their grievances towards injustice.

To proceed, as Zulfikar (2019) discusses in her article, she notes that Ellison mentions the issue of racism in his novel. Zulfikar (2019) explains how racism still exists and has been a never-ending issue in society since the issue of whiteness gives a negative impact on black people. Firstly, Zulfikar (2019) explains how white people define themselves as "the self", where they perceive black people as "the other" making them

racist towards black people. Thus, due to colonialism, Zulfikar (2019) emphasizes that white people use their skin color as an advantage to exercise their power over black people.

Therefore, white people discriminate black people through racist acts which is what Ellison tries to portray in his novel. For example, in the novel, Ellison explains how the narrator bumped into a white man who called him insulting names since he does not have the same color of his skin. The narrator insisted that he needs to apologize for his harsh words, but the white man ignored.

At this point, the narrator kicked him repeatedly to apologize. The next day, the narrator saw his picture in the daily news, “beneath a caption stating that he had been "mugged." Poor fool, poor blind fool, I thought with sincere compassion, mugged by an invisible man!” (Ellison, 4). Zulfikar (2019) stresses the concept that white people have a fixed stereotypical image that black people are violent and savages. In this scene, Zulfikar discusses that this literary depiction is about how the white man interacts with the narrator in which the white man is rude and racist. The presence of the white man enables him to use his power to respond aggressively.

As Zulfikar (2019) states, “the term invisible man in the novel does not refer to a person who is physically invisible or has the power to be invisible in front of other people. It refers to someone who is invisible in the eye of the majority members of the society who are white. His invisibility is mainly because of his skin color” (Zulfikar, 2). For this reason, Zulfikar clarifies that the white society dehumanizes black people as human beings.

In addition, Amari states an important significant event about how Ellison focuses on the image of racism through the protagonist’s experience in the novel. Amari argues that the “brotherhood is a stand-in for the US Communist Party with which Ellison was closely

associated in the 1930s and early 1940s using a sophisticated array of rhetorical strategies to link radical politics with white racism and ultimately promote an ideology of American exceptionalism” (Amari,41).

To explain, Amari (2015) highlights that the narrator’s experience in the brotherhood reflects the reality of racist white American society since it focuses on social activism. The narrator becomes the orator but learns that the Brotherhood only cares about its benefits and does not care about the individuals. Thus, Amari (2015) clarifies that the communist party pretends to fight for justice and equality for all people using black people to promote their own political agenda. In this condition, Amari stresses the idea that Ellison portrays the narrator as an example since he was exploited by the Brotherhood organization to keep black Americans in their place.

Moreover, Fedias (2019) elaborates how Ellison presents a coin bank as an object in his rented room living in Mary’s house that symbolizes racism and stereotyping revealing the narrator’s invisibility. To explain, the narrator discovers a

“cast-iron figure of a very black, red-lipped and wide-mouthed Negro, whose white eyes stared up at me from the floor, his face an enormous grin, his single large black handheld palm up before his chest. It was choking, filled to the throat with coins” (Ellison, 247). In this scene, Fedias (2019) states that the coin bank is in “the shape of a stereotypical black man more specifically a slave who is delighted to eat coins” (Fedias, 32).

Fedias (2019) discusses that concept that the black slave swallowing the coins symbolizes an actual slave doing whatever white men order, can be seen as an amusement for white people and is used as a toy to be played with. Indeed, the narrator is enraged “by

the tolerance or lack of discrimination, or whatever, that allowed Mary to keep such a self-mocking image around” (Ellison, 247). Therefore, the existence of the coin bank serves to symbolize how society’s efforts to eliminate and banish racism have failed and black people are forced to carry the burden of prejudice and stereotyping that will continue to exist in society.

To continue, *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera, it also shares the theme of racism in America and how dehumanized they are. Jennings explains that Herrera presents the main protagonist named Makina, a woman travelling to America to search for her unidentified brother. Along the way with other immigrants heading to America, they encounter a racist cop who says, “you think you can just come here and put your feet up without earning it, said the cop. Well I got news for you: patriots like me are on the lookout and we're going to teach you some manners” (Herrera, 97).

Here, Jennings (2019) addresses how immigrants interact with racist people and how they view immigrants as outsiders. In this case, Jennings states how Herrera unfolds the representation of the self and the other. The cop observes Makina and the Mexican men as an isolated marginalized group. Not only this, but the cop addressed one of the men who was holding a little book and said, “I told you to write, not look at me, you piece of shit. Keep your eyes on the paper and write why you think you’re up the creek, why you think your ass is in the hands of this patriotic officer” (Herrera, 98).

Jennings (2019) clarifies that the cop racially profiled all the Mexican men as uneducated people, assuming they are below his standards because they didn’t know how to communicate in English. In fact, the police officer “didn’t take his hand off the holster where his gun was” (Herrera, 98). Thus, Jennings (2019) argues that *Signs Preceding the*

End of the World by Yuri Herrera is a unique novel because Herrera managed to make the characters voices heard to describe their hardships.

Despite this, Jennings (2019) emphasizes that Herrera makes it clear that white people in America do not want underclass Mexican immigrants especially since they lack documentation. Jennings notes that immigrants are labeled as minoritized identities. On the other hand, Jennings discusses the concept of how Mexicans can challenge their status and mistreatment by white supremacy. For example, in the novel, Herrera mentions the existence of African Americans living in America and how white people observe their status comparable as Mexicans.

As Makina continues to search for her brother, a woman gave her an address of where her brother might be. As she reached her destination, she noticed that,

“The house was beautiful and big and pink and a wooden fence surrounded it. Makina opened the little gate in the middle of the fence, went up to the front door, rang the bell, waited. She heard a man's foot- steps approach and got her hopes up that it was him. The door opened and there stood a small man with glasses, wrapped in a purple bathrobe. He was black. Never in her life had she seen so many black people up close, and all of a sudden, they seemed to be the key to her quest” (Herrera, 77).

At this point, Jennings (2019) expresses that Herrera includes another racial background to present that racism exists for others as well. African Americans also struggle for their civil rights, freedom and existence. Therefore, both Mexican immigrants and African Americans suffer with the exploitative conditions and equality.

4.2 In what ways do irony, symbolism, and foreshadowing contribute to the development of the protagonists in both novels?

These three literary devices increase interest, convey a message and help the readers connect to the protagonist's challenges in which they have faced by the oppressed. By using these literary devices, they can strengthen the narratives written by both authors to express their ideas and make their writing powerful and effective and grab the reader's attention while reading both novels.

4.3. Why is it difficult to be seen and accepted in both novels?

Firstly, in this research, the main protagonists in the novels *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Signs Preceding the end of the World* live in a racial context. The novels unfold the concept of blindness, invisibility, and exclusion which make it difficult for a white man to accept and see both the African American, as well as the Mexican immigrant. This research aims to answer the research question by showing that both protagonists are viewed as “the other” in the American society. To explain, in *The Invisible Man*, the white man will not accept the protagonist due to his existential condition, and how they think they are much more superior than black people due to their attitude of dominance. The protagonist’s blackness is the reason why white men do not accept or see him.

Color has planted hate, and discrimination towards African Americans since the white society shapes the narrator's identity by noticing his appearance and not his identity. African Americans must obey the orders of the white society. Thus, both protagonists are perceived through this physical appearance and not their identity making it difficult for them to be accepted in a white society. Other scholarly writers have showed that due to the racism history of African Americans and the Jim Crow laws of segregation in the 1930s and

1920s that was built in America, it made it difficult for the protagonist to be accepted and seen by the white society.

Due to the European colonialism, scholars emphasize that white people use their skin color as an advantage to exercise their power over black people. Due to the notion of invisibility, the protagonist's invisibility is due to the perception that white people have about him making it difficult for white people to accept and see him and that white people have a fixed stereotypical image that black people are violent and savages.

In this research, as for Herrera's novel, it can be said that the white society fear that Mexican immigrants will take their jobs, treating them unequally like the Americans. The Mexicans are treated unfairly regarding work opportunities and that the protagonist is somehow different from Americans that bars her from ever fully belonging and to be accepted in an American society. Thus, scholars have mentioned that the border does not welcome all nationalities such as Mexican immigrants, in which the Immigration Enforcement physical border defines their identity labeling them as someone different, difficult to be seen, accepted, and that the white believe that they are civilized using their authority as a power of domination to not accept them for who they are. Therefore, by answering this research question, according to scholars, the white people perceive both African Americans, and Mexicans as uncivilized human beings.

4.4. How is the concept of "privilege" portrayed in both novels?

Privilege is a right given to a particular person because of his/her status, or identity and a person may lack privilege because of certain characteristics such as race. In both novels, it can be concluded that both protagonists must act according to what society wants and their responsibility is to listen and obey even if it is against their claims since they do

not have the privilege as a white society. This research sums up that scholars discuss how both protagonists must act and perform according to the white society to succeed especially since they are dominated by a white society making it difficult for them to achieve. In other words, they are trained to respect the white-controlled system. According to a white society, African Americans and Mexicans should not be too successful since it is against a white man's world. The only privilege they have is to think, act, or perform according to what a white society's wants.

Thus, this research shows that in *The Invisible Man*, African Americans do not have the privilege because white men refuse to acknowledge their physical existence and visibility and need to struggle to attain freedom against the white society. Thus, to have privilege, scholars claim that to gain independence from the white society, the black man must be a traitor and act according to what the white world wants him to be and must maintain two identities. African Americans are trained to be ashamed and not represent their culture forcing them to avoid what they want. As having privilege, they are forced to carry the burden of prejudice and stereotyping to survive in a racist society.

In this research, in *Signs Preceding the End of the World*, a border is found everywhere, yet certain people experience the obstacles of crossing a border since the border does not mean the same for everyone. In the protagonist's case, she does not have the privilege to cross the border, rather she encounters difficulty, must deal with drugs, violence to reach America. Thus, by crossing the border, it is difficult for the Mexicans to have the privilege to reunite with their families. Constructing a new identity in a new place is due to not having the privilege to act and perform as what he/she wants. Therefore, this

research displays that in both novels, the protagonists do not have the privilege to obtain their freedom.

4.5. Summary:

This chapter illustrated an analysis of both novels and moved to elaborate on different themes conveyed in the novel including invisibility and racism. The chapter, then, shifted to answer the research questions: why is it difficult to be seen and accepted in both novels, and what is privilege in both novels?

5. Chapter five: Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions.

5.1. Conclusion

Therefore, this study presented an analysis of *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison and *Signs Preceding the End of the World* and aimed to investigate the effects of some stylistic devices in conveying the themes in both novels.

In conclusion, Taoutaou (2016) states that throughout history, many black authors have tackled social injustice and celebrated African folklore, oral culture and traditions in their writing. Indeed, Taoutaou (2016) elaborates that Ellison, a black author, raged against racism and separation and contributed to authenticate the truth by writing his novel. Ellison wrote his narrative *The Invisible Man* to depict the real life of oppressed black people who represent his identity of an African American telling his story from his point of view and attempts to highlight the situation of African Americans who suffer from racism. Thus, Ellison intends to hide his protagonist's name to represent every black man's condition.

Taoutaou (2016) explains that the title of the novel *The Invisible Man* symbolizes the theme of alienation that the protagonist experiences in the novel. Taoutaou (2016) claims that blacks are unseen and rejected in the American society which make them feel alienated and unappreciated. Taoutaou (2016), states that “invisibility emerges as the extreme and the highest form of alienation” (Taoutaou,48). At the end of the novel, Ellison explains that the narrator fell down a hole into absolute darkness after being chased by a group of white men. Ellison states, “I’m an invisible man and it placed me in a hole—or showed me the hole I was in, if you will—and I reluctantly accepted the fact” (Ellison, 443). Therefore, Taoutaou (2016) explains that invisibility suggests alienation from the society.

Taoutaou (2016) mentions,

“Writing a narrative requires the mental ability to produce a piece of literature, and it contributes to change the status of the narrator as the author describes from a “chattel” to “human being”. Literature was a powerful tool to combat prevalent racial stereotypes, to reinforce the cultural pride and self-awareness of African Americans, and to foster the process of racial uplift” (Taoutaou,15).

Therefore, Taoutaou (2016) explains that black authors embrace their case of equality through writing novels to spread self-awareness among African Americans. Thus, Taoutaou (2016) sums up that Ellison chooses to address the struggle of African American literature to showing the world through his writing that African Americans are treated unfairly and want black Americans live in harmony in America.

In addition, Taoutaou (2016) argues that the European colonial expansion to their discovery of America gave them the opportunity to take people’s lives and belongings, maintain power, wealth, and privilege. Thus, due to colonialism, white people think they are superior and dominant than the black people. To be clear, Taoutaou (2016) justifies that white people “refer to Africans as negroes (Taoutaou, 6).

Not only this, Taoutaou (2016) defines the term racism as, “the concept of race was created as a classification of human beings with the purpose of giving power to white people and to legitimize the dominance of white people over non-white people” (Taoutaou,7). For example, in the novel, Ellison emphasizes the idea of how white people perceive black people as negroes. In chapter fifteen, the narrator decided to throw a package of coins that belonged to Mary in her house, but the narrator wanted to get rid of them. He

put the package of coins in his briefcase and decided to throw them away in the first ash can along his walk.

As the narrator throws the coins in one of the ash cans, a woman yells saying, “Oh, no you don't, oh, no you don't! Just come right back here and get it! I mean you, she called. Come on back an' get your trash. An' don't ever put your trash in my can again! We keep our place clean and respectable, and we don't want you field niggers coming up here from the South and ruining things, she shouted with blazing hate. I'm sick and tired of having you southern Negroes mess up things for the rest of us!” (Ellison, 254).

Following, the narrator replies “what does it matter, Miss? I called up to her. When the collectors come, garbage is garbage. I just didn't want to throw it into the street. I didn't know that some kinds of garbage were better than others” (Ellison, 254). Despite this, after collecting the package from the ash can, the narrator decided to drop the package into the snow, but a white racist man becomes suspicious and picks up the package accusing the narrator “this here feels like money or a gun or something and I know damn well I seen you drop it. I know what kind of garbage it is. You young New York Negroes is a blip. I swear you is! I hope they catch you and put your ass under the jail!” (Ellison, 256).

Ellison elaborates how acts of suspicion can cause signs on racism. To clarify, Taoutaou (2016) explains that

“The term “people of color” is another justification for racist divisions. People of color is not a term that refers to a real biological or scientific distinction between people. People of color in the U.S. share the common experience of being targeted and oppressed by racism. Unfortunately, one of the ways racism operates is to keep

people of color divided. Consequently, black people pay for their biological distinction and all they get back is oppression, discrimination, racism as well as inferiority and otherness” (Taoutaou, 7).

Widyana (2006) discusses that segregation and racism were built in America in the 1930s which still exists now at this present time. Ellison criticizes the cruel injustice of white people to black people after the Civil War and wants readers to see an individual black man in the novel as a complex human being. In his novel, Ellison explains that through his writing, white people dismiss black people as American citizens due to their skin color and are treated differently. The racialism, and pressure still exist in America establishing a rejection to accept black citizens for who they are. For example, black citizens did not get the same opportunity for working, and getting the proper education as others and their self-esteem is very low because of the bad treatment they receive from white people.

Moreover, Murphy (2003) explains that Ellison’s novel is a successful novel because *The Invisible Man* turned out to be compelling resembling an everyday reality of life establishing a meaningful message to the world. In the early Civil Rights Era, black citizens faced unequal social conditions by the whites enabling black authors to speak their minds without fear of social restraint. Sarah notes that Ellison has mentioned his individual struggles into the public eye to speak for other black citizens and through his anonymous protagonist and Ellison was able to portray the misery of African Americans that have been suffering.

In addition, Zulfikar (2019) discusses that Ralph Ellison’s *The Invisible Man* is a masterful effective piece of writing that shows the extreme racial tension of the brutal

realities of racism and touches upon the conflict of identity and blindness. Thus, Ellison's novel shaped the history of African American literature and is a distinguished novel of the century. To add, Zulfikar notes that Ellison uses irony to describe the cruel harsh conditions that black people encounter in a racist society.

Ellison presents the realistic narrative about how African Americans suffer with inequality, injustice, exploitation, and invisibility that the protagonist faces throughout his journey demonstrating the reasons that cause the narrator to be invisible. Thus, Ellison justifies that the novel *The Invisible Man* is a representation of African American history, and the protagonist is physically visible, yet most characters refuse to see him. Therefore, the narrator doubts his existence making it a problem for him to fit in society.

Due to the presence of whiteness in society, it has caused an issue for the nonwhite. Whiteness has brought terror, and supremacy to African Americans. Ellison's goal is to narrate the novel through his voice, and actions since he lived in a white dominated society who encountered racism and discrimination. To add, Zulfikar (2019) emphasizes that whiteness controls aspects in society such as visibility, and invisibility controlling "the other" making it an issue for "the others" to act as they like. Despite this, Zulfikar states, "whiteness functions as a framing position that makes White able to define the identity of the nonwhite" (Zulfikar, 13).

Amari (2015) notes that the key to understanding the novel is through a glimpse of events that occurred in the novel. Ellison's novel offers the readers about the harsh conditions that the protagonist dealt with in a racist society. Besides this, Amari highlights that *The Invisible Man* is a literary work that reflects the author's time growing up in the South and then moving to the North. Thus, Amari mentions how Ellison includes his

political interests reflected in his writing. The narrator has joined the Brotherhood but realized that it is a communist party which betrays black people. Therefore, Amari clarifies that writers like Ellison use their writing as a weapon to convey their message to the world and defend the rights of their people to be heard and fight oppression.

To proceed, in *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera, Priem (2019) concludes that Herrera's novel can give voice to the multiplicity of lives, identities, and many stories that are formed through the border, and spaces of struggle. Herrera explains that the protagonist Makina is the viewpoint the novel offers and is presented as a survivor and allows for the construction of an identity through her journey of life and death. Makina's journey focuses on the ideology that a Mexican immigrant may survive or die while crossing the border since the crossing of the U.S is perceived dangerous.

The novel allows readers to explore how language plays a crucial role in the process of becoming, explore new possibilities, and new ways of interacting with others while crossing the border. By travelling from one destination to another, and encountering others who speak different languages, Herrera elaborates that survivors of their journey by crossing the border can form new ways of thinking, engage with the world and can go further than many. By speaking with others, Mexican immigrants are forced to interact with these people.

To elaborate, Priem (2019) argues that the U.S Mexican Border "can be an imaginative gateway into the future yet is set up to differentiate 'us' from 'them' and authorize who belongs and who non-belongs" (Priem,19). In other words, Priem notes that the border can divide people and their culture and is strengthened to protect a community against dangerous outsiders or migrants. According to Herrera, he presents Makina as an

unwanted immigrant. As Priem explains, Mexicans are differentiated from the Americans meaning that employment is an issue for Mexicans causing them to work in an insufficient environment and highlights that the border is represented through its territorial existence and a wall separating two distinct geographical areas, yet the border opens a new space for immigrants between reality and myth.

5.2. Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research

Based on this study, the researcher recommends that:

1. Teachers should use more stylistics devices as an approach to the teaching of literature in university or school level.
2. Teachers should provide learners with sufficient awareness of the themes in the novels.
3. Schools also should dedicate a special course to students to observe the stylistic devices on other works of both authors Ralph Ellison and Yuri Herrera to uncover other themes and compare them to *The Invisible Man* and *Signs Preceding the End of the World* to have an adequate view of the novelists.
4. Teachers can use both novels in teaching English for Palestine and in universities to educate students on the oppression African American, and the Mexican immigrants have suffered to reach their destination.

However, considering this study, further research is suggested to be done. While this study sheds light on the stylistic devices and themes in both novels, further research can be done by investigating what other African American and Mexican authors have been through about the theme of racism and invisibility to compare the differences such as in what ways did these authors encounter?

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