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Option: Literature

Racism, Identity Destruction and Reconstruction in

***Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture**

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Dedication

This work first of all is dedicated to my passed away mother: though passed away but you

still live within each one of us dear mother.

To my caring and supporting father; I would not become what I am today without your support and affection,

To my little too sisters: Lyna and Sana.

To my grandmother: you are the strongest woman I have ever met and I would not imagine my life without you may Allah bless you.

And to all who contributed directly or indirectly in accomplishing this work.

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

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Introduction

The African American literature sprang from the blacks' suffer during and after slavery. At the beginning, the authors faced challenging circumstances; they had to challenge and to change the stereotypes about considering the blacks as illiterate, inferior and not able to produce an adequate work of literature. The quest for identity has always represented a central theme in the blacks' writings seeking to shape a new black identity in the white dominant American society.

Ralph Waldo Ellison belongs to the twentieth century most important writers who contributed in the shaping of the identity of the blacks in America. His masterpiece, *Invisible Man*, is still a center of interest after more than fifty years after its first publication. The novel is rich of metaphors and full of folklore and blacks' stereotypes; music, rituals and customs. The novel highly depicts racial discrimination in America which made it the most influential book after the Second World War. It became a reference to the culture and history of the African Americans.

Ralph Ellison's novel portrays the harsh reality and struggle of the blacks in the white dominant society. The narrator is a black man suffering from racism, facing a serious problem of identity loss and struggling a lot in order to find his real identity. He is being misled and exploited by blacks more than whites. Each time he thinks that he has found his real identity it turns out that he was wrong, starting from his expulsion from college then moving to Harlem, finding a job at the paint factory, being betrayed at the brotherhood and ending up with the race riot. The masterpiece is deeply tragic telling the story of that Negro who considers himself invisible and who is looking for an answer to his question: "Who am I?" and other questions concerning his past and heritage, continuing a complicated and difficult journey of self-discovery.

Invisible Man focuses on the problem of identity and the impact of racism on the narrator and the black community that was struggling at a particular period of time. The

narrator was misguided by people from his own kind who exploited, manipulated and used him for their own benefit to please the whites who were responsible for his self-loss and alienation. This research will answer the following questions: How Invisible Man is misguided? When and how does he discover his invisibility? How does it contribute to his self-discovery? And how is racism part of all this? The research will also deal with all the developments that occur in the character's personality from the very beginning till the end where he reaches his maturity and discovers his true self.

The study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is concerned with a theoretical foundation of what kind of literature the novel is derived from, how it emerged and from which circumstances. The first chapter also includes the main psychoanalytical theories used in the study of the novel. The chapter is divided into four sections; the first section introduces a general overview of slavery in the USA to portray the cruel past of the African Americans, how slavery started and how it participated in the creation of a new form of literature written by former slaves known as the "slave Narratives". It also discusses the main figures of this kind of literature and some real experiences faced by many writers.

The second section deals with the historical perspectives to the black American literature. This section explains the history of the African American literature, how it emerged, when and who were the authors who marked that period with their first writings. Then, the third section deals with how literature acts as a means of fighting racism, in which a general definition of racism was given, the section also introduces the main literary works that directly or indirectly fought racism bringing to light the struggle of the blacks' to end racism and to obtain their marginalized social rights. The fourth and the last section deals with the psychoanalysis theory, it discusses the main psychoanalytical theories used to study the major character of the novel.

The second chapter consists of three sections. The first section deals with the appearance of racism within the novel and how it influenced the major character. The second section involves the protagonist identity-loss and all the events which contributed in his self-loss. The third section is concerned with the application of the psycho-analytical theories on the protagonist of the novel including the theories of Freud of Taboo and Aggression in addition Carl Gustav and Freud theory of Dreams.

The third and the last chapter contains also three sections, and it deals with the identity-reconstruction of the protagonist. The first section deals with the symbols that contributed in his self-discovery. The second section deals with the characters who influence his self-perception, and whom he had to reject in order to be able to reach his real identity. The last section deals with the application of a psycho-analytical theory on the protagonist.

The main aim of the study is to focus on the problem of racism in the USA during a certain period of time and how it affected the weak blacks. Slavery at that time was ended, but still the whites are the dominants, and blacks were so far to be equal with them. This is the case of the protagonist of *Invisible Man* who is manipulated, exploited and misguided by the whites and even the blacks. The research will also investigate the journey of a Black man searching for his self –definition trying his best to overcome the internal and external barriers that prevent him from reaching his goal, considering and studying all the psychological aspects responsible for his loss depending on the psycho-analysis theory.

I. Chapter One: Theoretical Foundation

I.1. Slave Narratives

As Eric Williams argues in his book, *Capitalism and Slavery* that, “Slavery was not born of racism: rather racism was the consequence of slavery” (7). Slavery in America started in 1619 according to an article published in History.com entitled “slavery in America”, when twenty African slaves were brought out to Jamestown, Virginia once there black slaves worked 18 hours a day non-stop they have seen the suffer, the torture, and all kinds of mistreatments that the human kind could have seen. They were brought to what is called the new world to raise its economy and to serve the white kind.

The African blacks worked first in agriculture in tobacco and rice fields. Later, in the 18th century, the British textile industry asked for more American cotton which led to the development of the cotton gin in 1793; a machine that produced cotton 5 times faster than manual methods. As a result, more slaves were needed to pick and hold the cotton this transition from tobacco trade that exhausted the south turned into a cotton industry that exhausted the black slaves and which also asked for more slave labor and in 1641 slavery was legalized and blacks became a personal property that could be owned for life (“Slavery in America”).

Slave labor enabled the colony becomes very profitable, so in 1660 the royal African company was established to transport what was called the black gold from Africa to America. Millions of them were sold across the colonies; the survived ones of course because most of them could not make it to the American shores due to the hardships that they had faced on the way. Slavery did not only occur in the fields the owners counted on them in everything and they were harshly punished if they fail at accomplishing a task, slaves women were exploited and abused by white masters; the good looking ones were sold out specially to serve in prostitution. Slaves were

prohibited from learning, they did not have the right to marry, and they did not have the right to speak or to defend themselves. And ironically southerners even considered that slavery was even beneficial to slaves themselves since they were dressed and fed by their masters. Slaves though weak but they resisted and their resistance took on many forms; the simplest form that could cross no body's mind was that they tended to work very slowly pretending that they did not know how to do things ("Slavery in America").

Many slaves found strength to endure the suffering in spirituality and religion which was a mixture between Christianity and African beliefs. Founding families represented also a refuge and an escape from their sad reality to which they got attached and protected, and to which they narrated their folk tales in order to be transmitted from one generation to another. It was a unique culture being created on the behalf of the white masters, however, these masters recognized the strengths that blacks gained through their families so they used to separate them by selling out one of the parents to another plantation, and there the pain and suffer had augmented more than ever.

In the western hemisphere, there was another kind of resistance a more direct one it consisted of rebellions and slave revolts organizations. Perhaps, the most notable slave revolt occurred in August 1831. It was led by Nat Turner, a plantation headman, who rose up a revolt with other slaves and killed the plantation owner and his family. However, the local militia interfered and killed Turner and his men. Turner's rebellion was referred to as a barbarian and inferior act that represented the blacks and that they deserved slavery to remain disciplined. Such an act also led the south to strengthen the slavery codes and to closely watch slaves and stop any assembly of the blacks. However, the North was against slavery and a slavery opposition was raised there creating an abolitionist movement who worked hard to end slavery and who viewed

slavery as immoral and anti-humanistic. Hence, America became a country divided against itself (“Slavery in America”).

The abolitionist movement gained strength from 1830’s till 1860’s, and it was led by Frederick Douglass who escaped to the North from Maryland. He became an orator for black freedom and an agent at the Massachusetts antislavery society he also founded an abolitionist newspaper called The North Star in addition to some white supporters like: William Lord Garrison a journalist and a founder of a newspaper and Harriet Beecher Stowe a writer who published the famous antislavery book Uncle Tom's Cabin. The abolitionists made considerable efforts helping fugitive slaves via the Underground Railroad which was a network that helped slaves escaping asserting their arrival to the North. In addition, the underground rail road was also aided by northern abolitionist organization, such as, the Philadelphia vigilio saint committee, who gave supplies and aided fugitive slaves. In 1850, the fugitive slave acted under the federal law declared that any Negro accused to being a ran away would be returned to slavery and they offered big rewards for slave catchers (“Slavery in America”).

In 1857 the supreme court took a controversial decision against Dred Scott who brought a suit against his master declaring that as a black man he did not has the right to bring a suit in the federal court and ruled against him and that by entering a free state does not mean that slaves gained their liberty. Two years later, John Brown an abolitionist who involved an armed interference in order to free slaves and attack the slave owners, asked support from Douglass who refused claiming that it would fail, and indeed he was captured by the federal authority and was hanged two months later though he had seized many hostages and killed the town’s mayor (“Slavery in America”).

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected as the president of the USA. He was against and opposed slavery. In March 1861 seven states Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, South Carolina, Texas and Mississippi had seceded from the union forming the confederate states of America. The civil war started a month later Lincoln's main goal was to preserve the nation not to abolish slavery, which happened only later because of the military need where 185.000 blacks fought violently in the war defending the union's cause. President Lincoln in December 1862 issued the emancipation proclamation abolishing slavery. He stated "slaves within any state, or designated part of a State...in rebellion...shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free" ("Slavery in America").

Nearly 4 million slaves were freed in April 1865 when the war ended; they had celebrated all across the different plantations throughout the South. Later in December 1865, the congress passed the 13th amendment guaranteeing the freedom of African slaves it stated: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime where of the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction". The Civil War destroyed slavery but did not end racism of the whites, discrimination would continue like Douglass new leaders would go forward to guide the African's fight to freedom ("Slavery in America").

Slave Narratives consist of literature either oral or written by a slave or a former slave, either he was escaped or was freed. It involves their autobiographies, their diaries, and their journeys of bondage, of struggle and fights against slavery. Some of these former slaves were not able to read or to write; they were illiterate due to the fact that slaves were not allowed to learn but this did not stop them from passing their voices to the world through narrating their stories orally to those who could read and write in

order to be written in a form of stories or diaries and published so the whole world could read them. Within an article written by William L. Andrews and entitled “Slave Narrative” which was published in Britannica.com the earliest narratives included autobiographies which appeared between 1760 and 1865. The first autobiography published was that of Ukawsaw Gronniosaw also known as James Albert with his works *Narrative* which was firstly published in London in 1772; it was about regaining the lost freedom. While the best seller narrative was written in 1789 which tackled for the very first time the slave trades and ships and it was entitled: *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano; or, Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself*. It was also about Equianos capture in Africa, his sale and his journey as a slave before he eventually reached his freedom (“Slave Narrative”).

Early in the 19th century, more ex slaves got encouraged to publish their stories. Among the most popular and influential narratives was that of Frederick Douglass which was published in 1845 and which sold more than five thousand copies during its first appearance, and which was entitled *The Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, an American Slave: Written by Himself* (“Slave Narrative”).

Frederick Douglass, or Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, was born in February 1818 in Tuckahoe, Maryland, USA. In his book he tells his journey as a slave who escaped and who found a new life and a new identity. This narrative describes how slaves were severely punished and tortured by their masters, and how their existence was insignificant in the eyes of the white masters. His descriptions of the torturing scenes are very painful to be read they included how he witnessed his aunt being whipped and how slaves used to be killed for no reason, for instance; a slave was killed only because he did not reply to a call, another slave woman was killed because she did not hear her baby which was crying the thing that made the mistress angry and caused

her murder. Killing black slaves was not considered as a crime rather it was considered as a routine or a way to punish their disobediences (“Slave Narrative”).

Frederick was separated from his mother when he was still a child; he had to live with his grandmother in a plantation where he was owned by Mr. Anthony. He never knew his white father. Later he was sent to Baltimore where he had to serve Hugh Auld and his family. Auld's wife taught the child to read but that did not last since Auld claimed that teaching him how to read would make him rebel and refuse his slave nature. However, this did not stop Frederick from learning from the school boys in the street. At Baltimore also he had heard of the abolitionist movement and which he wanted to be a part of, Later he was resold to Mr. Freeland of which Douglass appreciated because he was reasonable and had a sense of humanity towards slaves. He had learned how to read and write by his own and he worked as a slave instructor, which enabled him to create strong relationships with other slaves. In 1834 and with the help of some of his friends he planned to escape but they were caught and imprisoned, till he was rescued by Mr. Auld who sent him to his brother with home he worked for a ship builder and with whom he was satisfied (“Slave Narrative”).

Later he has started another job of calking where he earned seven dollars per week and from which he saved till he eventually succeeded to escape to New York City. He did not give a single detail about people who helped him escape by fear that they would be caught and punished. He had spent a difficult period of suffer, of loss and loneliness. Douglass had to change his name in order not to be recognized and returned back to slavery but at the end he kept the Bailey name, he met a woman and they got married, he worked for the liberator and he dedicated his life to the anti-slavery movement (“Slave Narrative”).

Another work which was considered among the most hard-hitting witness stories that represented the sad and the difficult realities slaves went through was that of Solomon Northup (1853) he was born as a free black man in Minerva New York U.S and died after 1857. He used to be a musician before he was kidnaped and sold as a slave, he wrote a book in which he narrated the hardships he faced as a slave, the book was entitled: *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853, from a Cotton Plantation near the Red River in Louisiana* Solomon was an educated man, he got married to Anne Hampton in 1828 they lived in New York where he worked as a talented fiddler (“Slave Narrative”).

In March 1841 he was fooled by two men who claimed to be performers at a circus and whom offered him money to join them in order to become a fiddler in their crew. Travelling down to the south to Washington DC, Solomon woke up one morning to find himself kidnaped and imprisoned in a cell before he was sold as a slave at the slave Market in New Orleans under the name of Platt Hamilton. He had spent the upcoming 12 years as a slave at Bayou Boeuf plantation region of central Louisiana’s Red River valley (“Slave Narrative”).

His first master was William Prince Ford, he was a kind man yet he was forced to sell him due to the financial issues he faced at that time, he was sold to the brutal John M Tibaut, he used to whip and punish him severely and again in 1843 was sold to Edwin Epps where he spent the following decade, Solomon used to serve as a field hand and a, artisan slave at the same time. He tried to escape so many times but he failed until 1852 when Samuel Bass visited Epps’s plantation; that white man was a Canadian abolitionist carpenter whom helped Solomon contact his family ask them rescue him by delivering his letters to New York. His wife received the letters and asked his old

friend's help Henry B Northup who took documents that proved the freedom of Solomon Northup approved by the senator and the court justice. Henry arrived to Louisiana accompanied by a counsel, he located Solomon's place and took him back to his family ("Slave Narrative").

Solomon regained his freedom in January 4, 1853 though he had brought charges against James H. Birch the man who sold him, he could win the case since he was black and he was not permitted to testify. Twelve years a slave sold more than 30,000 copies in the first three years and it was considered as one of the most important slave narratives in America ("Slave Narrative").

I.2. Historical Perspectives to the Black American Literature

Within an article published at the African Journals Online and which was entitled: "Black American Literature and the Problem of Racism, Slavery and Oppression in the Post Slavery Era: A Reappraisal of Dunbar's *The Sport of the Gods*" MS Ogene argues that African American Literature refers to literature that purely belongs to writers of African descent. This genre gained its strength in the late of 18th century with the Harlem Renaissance and the Slave Narratives (75).

Today, Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou and Walter Moseley are considered to be the top of the African American writers. Harlem Renaissance or the New Negro Movement in 1920 was the period of transition in the African American literature from the African dialect and the imitations of the whites' writing style to a more sophisticated one introducing the Blacks culture as a racial pride. Harlem's Black Ghetto was the center of this movement it included artists either writers or musicians who gathered to share their experiences to talk about their concerns as blacks and how they should support one another. Among the issues that the African American Literature tackled was the issue of the African Americans as being a part of the large American society in addition to

slavery, racism and equality including oral narratives, poems, blues, spirituals and sermons...etc.

The Black American Literature was a subject of change during the last centuries due to the several historical events that took place. The focus before the Civil War was on Slavery and the Slave Narratives. Later this was changed by authors like Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brooks who focused on Racism and Segregation (Ogene 76). The African American Literature also focused on how it feels like to be an African American it also included their position facing the issue of freedom and equality the things they lacked in America in addition to culture, religion, nostalgia, slavery and racism.

Lucy Terry wrote “Bars Fight”, it was published in 1746 she was considered as “the author of the oldest piece of the African American Literature” (Ogene 77). Her poem was not published until 1885. In 1761, Jupiter Hammon published his poem “An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ with Penitential Cries” which was followed by Poems on Various subjects written by Phillis Wheatley and it was published in 1773. Wheatley was captured and sold as a slave at the age of seven she wrote many poems which were highly appreciated by the leaders of the African Revolution among them George Washington “personally thanked her for a poem she wrote in his honor” (Gates 214).

William Wells Brown and Victor Sejour they both were considered as the firsts who produced the African American Fiction. Victor Sejour was born in New Orleans as a free man at his nineteen he has moved to France where he published his short story “Le Mulatre” in 1837. It was the first African American fiction but written in French and published also in a French Journal. On the other hand Brown was a lecturer, a novelist, a playwright, historian and an abolitionist. He was born as a slave in South then he

escaped to the North where he was part of the abolitionist movement he wrote the first novel of an African American entitled *Clotel or The President's Daughter* (1853). The novel was taken from a rumor about Thomas Jefferson who had a daughter from his slave (Ogene 78).

After the end of the Civil War and Slavery African American writers kept on writing about their concerns as being Blacks in the superior white American community.

Among them W.E.B Du Bois with his " *The Souls of Black Folk*, Booker T Washington with his "Up from Slavery (1901)" and so many others writing non-fictional African American works.

II. I.3.Literature as a Means of Fighting Racism

An article written by Penny Koutsi entitled "Literature as a Means of Fighting Against Racism and Discrimination". The writer started her article with a general definition of racism which she has quoted from John Arthur "racism is usually a form of prejudice in just that sense: it is an attitude that is grounded in the beliefs formed on insufficient evidence, or beliefs that are held too firmly without adequate regard for other information that may call these beliefs into question" (29).

Many people may think that after Obama's election as a president of the U.S.A racism does no longer exist however, according to statistics that were made on blacks life in the American society proved that many blacks are still illiterate and suffer from racism in their daily life in different ways. Black Americans tended to fight racism and discrimination through either literature or speeches. As a literary work that fought racism, the writer took the example of Paul Laurence Dunbar *The Lynching of Jube Benson* in which he sheds lights on the African American struggle and resistance of racism, the writer considers the issue of racism exists all over the world not only in the USA and that it exists due to "the human blindness and society's inability to recognize

racial or ethnic difference as a dynamic force which enriches rather than threatens social stability “(Koutsi 1).

Also due to cultural and socio-political diversity the US became the land of opportunities it has offered the American dream; the chance to all the European people to build a new successful life, however this dream was interrupted by slavery and segregation Americans were divided by Jim Crow laws under the notion “separate but equal” which kept blacks and whites separate. Thus literature became a means of discovering the reality of the nation readers had the chance to discover the historical facts and re-evaluate their beliefs.

Dunbar highlights the whites’ vision of the blacks; the blacks were considered loyal and satisfied in the book the narrator is called Dr. Melville he referred to the notion of calling blacks other names except their real name for instance “boy” instead of his real name as a sign of white supremacy of the blacks showing the blacks' inferiority and racist thoughts. According to author of the book this also refers to the loss of identity and that their identity depends on standards the oppressors had set for them. These whites divided the blacks into two categories either demonic or angelic which the main character Jube had demonstrated he had two sides which were referred to as “gentle-demon”

In the novel, there was a crime in which the black man was accused of committing though there was no evidence the things which shows the fact that blacks were judged according to assumptions and not evidences. Dunbar’s goal according to Koutsi wanted to reformulate the whites' perspective about the blacks and these assumptions or stereotypes of blacks are transmitted to whites through education since childhood (2). Dunbar stated: “I saw his black face glooming there in the half light, and I could only think of him as a monster. It’s tradition. At first I was told that the black man would

catch me, and when I got over that, they taught me that the devil was black” (140). This refers to the assumption of being black is being a monster. Dunbar emphasized this as being a “false ideology” which had victimized both the whites and the blacks through the education that was received.

Dunbar ironically considers whites as being “illiterate” though they are educated; they are illiterate due to the fact of ignoring the blacks' true identity. In the final scene Dunbar's rebellion against the whites' perception of the blacks is revealed through the evidence that was found which refers to the murderer as being a white man due to the brown hair found in the body of the victim. This effortlessly calls the whites to change the way they see the African- Americans. The novel demonstrates the stereotypical representation of the blacks without any evidences or knowledge about who they really are. These stereotypes consider blacks as inferior keeping them under the white bondage, and the thing that Dunbar in his book tended to change he focused on restoring the sense of pride to African Americans through their resistance. Hence according to Dunbar Literature is a means to promote and to express the Blacks' struggle against the system. Dunbar seeks to shift the attention to the issues that racism and racial discrimination brought and that all the individuals must reshape the values for a better future. Through Literature the past is connected helping individuals to emphasize unity rather than division eliminating what is called “other” and adopting “Us” (4).

I.4. Psychoanalytic Literary Theory

Psychoanalysis is a discipline, which studies the psychic life; it is influenced by the tradition of psychoanalysis. It was begun by Sigmund Freud in 1897. To Freud, dreams are the “royal road” to the personal unconscious of the dreamer and have a direct relation to literature which often has the structure of a dream and which unconsciously also expresses the fears and desires of the writer; characters are all the author's psyche's

projections. Freud claimed, “The dream-thoughts which we first come across as we proceed with our analysis often strike us by the unusual form in which they are expressed; they are not clothed in the prosaic language usually employed by our thoughts, but are on the contrary represented symbolically by means of similes and metaphors, in images resembling those of poetic speech” (26). It seeks to decode the feelings of guilt, psychological conflicts, ambivalences in addition to the author's family life, sexual orientations, childhood traumas all these are manifested through the characters' behaviors in the literary work (“Psychoanalytic literary criticism” 1).

I.4.1.The Freudian Theory

The unconscious is the responsible of emotions, guilt, fears and unsolved problems that the individual does not want to remember in order not to feel hurt or overwhelmed by. The unconscious is created through repression. Defenses on the other hand are created by the contents of the unconscious that are actually kept inside the unconscious; keeping what is repressed in order to avoid the pain resulted from knowing what the individual does not want to know. This concept includes: selective perception; which is about hearing and seeing only what one wants or handles to hear or to see. Selective memory; includes forgetting undesired memories entirely and to modify one's memories accordingly, denial; pretending that the issue does not exist. Avoidance; avoiding people or situations that may call back what is being repressed, displacement; avoiding and moving toward things that are less offensive than the previous ones, and projection which is accusing other people of having the fear, guilt or problem that one has in order to create the denial (“Psychoanalytic literary criticism” 1).

Among the most difficult defenses can perhaps be regression which includes getting back a former psychological condition either painful or pleasant by purpose of avoiding a current difficult situation that's the reason it is called defense, however, sometimes a

deficiency occurs causing anxiety which can be a manifestation of: Fear of intimacy; emotionally staying away from others in order to remain safe in other words it is the emotional closeness. Fear of abandonment: either emotionally by fearing the ones the individual loves do not care about him or physically by fearing that these are going to leave him. Fear of betrayal: do not trusting others even the closest people. Low self-esteem: losing the feeling of worthiness, feeling more inferior to the others (“Psychoanalytic literary criticism” 1).

Insecure or unstable sense of self: easily influenced by others, unable to set a personal identity. Oedipal fixation: over connection with the parent from the opposite sex which leads to immaturity (“Psychoanalytic literary criticism” 2). Dreams and dream symbols: the individuals’ defenses do not work the same in dreams as in real life, the unconscious in the sleep functions with more freedom in terms of self-expression yet still other censorships protecting ones fears and repressed experiences.

Freud maintained that one’s unconscious conflicts and desires produced three areas inside the human mind that struggle for dominance from early childhood to adulthood which are: The Id; it includes meeting Basic Needs and it is the unconscious part of the psyche which responds directly to the instincts. It affected by logic and everyday life it also asks for satisfaction which will result pleasure or pain if needs are not fulfilled. (“Psychoanalytic literary criticism” 2).

The Ego which includes dealing with Reality trying to fulfill the id needs according social norms; it has to deal with the reality considering other’s needs and the Superego which is based on morals and on what is good and what is wrong; its decisions are based on the moral values it controls the impulses of the Id convincing it to move toward moralistic goals rather than realistic only seeking for perfection. Superego consists of: the conscience: brings out the feeling of guilt to ego to punish the ego e.g.:

the ego asks the id while the super ego results of it the feeling of guilt. The ideal self: how one should be how he should behave in the society. The superego can either reward or punish (“Psychoanalytic literary criticism” 3).

According to Freud literature is like dreams because it changes the repressed contexts into virtual created ones. Dreams can be very inspiring to literary works because they create the sense of fantasy and unrealistic events “dreamlike” which sometimes can refer to the author’s psychology (“Psychoanalytic literary criticism” 4).

I.4.2. The Aggression Theory

Freud's theory of Aggression sees that between the society and the individual there is a certain clash, which means that the society restrictions are sometimes against the individuals’ desires. The civilization represses the freedom which creates a certain malaise in the individual psyche. The civilization’s role is to stop the primitive desires as for example it severely punishes the murderer, the adulterer, raper...etc. By simply creating laws that punishes the individuals in case they violate them. The repressed desires according to Freud lead to the creation of the aggressive instinct as a reaction. The civilization creation goes back to the oedipal drama of the brothers who killed their father but later they acknowledged the importance of civilization and created a culture with rules. (“Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents”)

I.4.3. Freud Taboo Theory

Taboo, according to the article “Taboo in Invisible Man”, is the prohibition, the dangerous and the restrictions. Taboo according to Freud is something with no reason prevented by the society. A person can also become a taboo which means, when one violates a taboo, he becomes one and that will make people stay away from you by fear of dealing with a taboo (Shamlin, par. 3).

I.4.4. Carl Gustav Jung Rebirth Theory

According to an article written by About Luton and entitled “Rebirth” in *Frithluton.com*. Rebirth is beyond of perception; it can neither be seen nor touched. Rebirth is a theory that according to Jung has two forms; the metempsychosis it has to do with the soul, the reincarnation it has to do with the body. Jung focused more on the psychological rebirth which happens due to the personality enlargement and one may feel the transformations occurring to him (Luton et al.).

African-American literature highly depicts the shared interests and issues of the blacks through tackling themes and issues like racial segregation, sexism and loss of identity and hence, The African-American literature is born of the suffering and the struggling of the black people starting from the years of slavery and the rise of Slave Narratives continuing with post-civil war and Harlem Renaissance era creating a sense of curiosity of the psycho analysts to check and search in the complexities of the blacks and to analyze their streams of consciousness in terms of the cruel events that they have witnessed. According to Freud the bad memories are repressed in the unconscious creating conflicts and complexities the things that the blacks were experiencing due to slavery and racism and which lead to the creativity of their writings; they were creative because they wrote about real events, real experiences that they have really been through and not because of writing fictional works.

Psychoanalysis enriched many of the whites’ works which captured the blacks’ intellectuals’ attention during the Harlem Renaissance till 1950's the interest was to include the field within the black's literature representing the repressed feelings and racial and sexual prejudice. In her book entitled “Freud Upside Down: African American Literature and Psychoanalytic Culture” Badia Sahar Ahad suggests that “psychoanalysis emerged within black intellectual and literary history as stratagem to

trouble racial logic and interpret racial dialects unique to United States” (5) which means that psychoanalysis provided the authors to be aware of the psychological damages caused by racism they became also aware of their complexes and blackness and they continued using the psychoanalytic approach for decades in their writings.

II. Chapter Two: Racism Reflected in *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, Identity Loss, and a Psychoanalytic Study of the Protagonist

II.1. Racism Reflected in *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison

Racism in America was and still is a major issue that the American society suffers from; it was primarily spread from the south to the Northern states in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The ending of slavery did not stop the racial discrimination from emerging and spreading in different domains including: employment, education, voting rights, immigration and so on.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* shapes excellently the concept of racism as came within an article entitled "Racism Reflected in *Invisible Man*" which is written by Jing Jing who is a master lecturer at the School of Foreign Languages in Changchun University and Peng Ya-nan who is a bachelor public servant at Lianghe State Administration Taxation in China, in which they discussed the issue of racism reflected in *Invisible Man*. They considered the protagonist and all the blacks at that period of time as imprisoned and poisoned by the ideology of slavery and that they are still subjects to the whites. They also accused the protagonist of being responsible for his invisibility and creation of his false identity (133).

Perhaps, what may attract the reader first is the title of the book and what does it represents. Invisible Man is the protagonist of the Novel and at the same time the narrator. The novel is a sort of a diary of a black man's struggle to find his real identity going through many events which were the cause of his maturity and finding his true self. The story begins with the narrator sitting in a manhole writing his story and considering himself invisible "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach

me they see only my surroundings, themselves or figments of their imagination, indeed, everything and anything except me” (*Invisible Man* 3)

The narrator begins telling his story starting from the college he used to study where the ideology was to glorify the whites. At his years in college, invisible man submitted to the whites’ doctrine and dominance. He had to do that; otherwise, he wouldn’t be able to further his studies. He had to believe that humility and submission are the only solutions for the black American to advance as his grandfather told him:

Son, after I am 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, a spy in the enemy’s country ever since I give up my gun back in the reconstruction. Live with your head in the lion’s mouth. 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. Learn it to the young’uns. (Ellison 16)

The black man should pretend to be an obedient slave in order to please the whites, but at the same time, he should fight against them and deny the false identity, which they enforced to them. Racial discrimination severely influenced the blacks particularly, in this case the narrator since it was the cause of his transformation from being visible to being invisible, it was also the reason of him questioning himself again and again “who am I” (Jing and Ya-nan 134).

Before obtaining his scholarship to enter the prestigious black college, Invisible Man had to give a speech during his high school graduation. The speech was attended by important white men in the community. It included humiliating words to the blacks and pleased words to the whites. While delivering his speech, he has made a mistake instead of saying “social responsibility” he said “social equality” which made the whites’ very angry but as soon as he corrected it, and he was praised with a scholarship, but before,

he had to participate to the battle royal in which he had to fight with some of his school mates as part of the entertainment. That night he had a dream where he saw himself and his grandfather going together to a circus, and the grand-father refused to laugh at the clowns, he asked him to open a brief case in which he found an envelope, and in this envelope he found another envelope he opened it and found a note that said "To Whom It May Concern . . . Keep This Nigger-Boy Running" (Ellison 33).

The narrator moved to his new college where the same policy was being used, but as soon as he was expelled from due to a fight started in a pub called the Golden Day when he was taking one of the school's white trustees on a tour. He later moved to New York City wishing to have a new life a life where he would become visible. He moved there by bus. In which he as a black had to stand at the end of the row, at the bus he met the vet a man whom he met at the Golden Day he told him about the life in this society and that it was convenient for the black man because of the racial discrimination, he also gave the narrator some advice and told him that the only solution to that issue is that "they should learn to be their own masters" (Jing and Ya-nan 134).

The narrator gained a work with help of a trustee's son, Mr. Emerson, at a paint factory, the first thing he had noticed there is a big electric sign in which it was written on "Keep American Pure with Liberty Paint". He was happy with his new work, especially that it included workers from different races, the factory was making the whitest paint in America and in order to make it appear they needed ten drops to combine and that was the case of the American society. The concept of the painting was very meaningful, it showed the blacks' contribution in the American society and that the American prosperity lies in the blacks' contribution, Ellison said "Our white is so white you can paint a chunk coal and you would have to crack it open with a sledge hammer to prove it was not white clear through" (195).

The narrator worked hard in the factory till one day he fought with his old black master who humiliated him, but he had to bear all kinds of mistreatment. He kept saying that to himself. Later he got injured during working due to a boiler explosion, he was sent to a hospital where all kinds of chemical experiments were done on him. He could not escape because of his injury and the electric shocks he had to support till he recovered and left with no return to that factory. Yet it was difficult for an injured man to find a job in that huge city. Leaving the factory, the narrator carried his dreams and pain toward the unknown, his suffer was never noticed, simply he was still an invisible man, he now realized that his dreams were a pipe dream (Jing and Ya-nan 134).

Another article has tackled the same issue of racism in *Invisible Man* written by Nidhiya Annie Jacob and Mythreyi. Entitled "Visibility of Racism in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*". They believed that the narrator's experience at the brotherhood was amongst the events which represented the reality of the society. Its main focus was on the social activism, claiming that they are helping and fighting for the rights of people whose heritage has been taken off from. Possessing the advantage of public speaking the narrator became the orator of the brotherhood. However, as soon as, he later realizes that the brotherhood was fooling him and the people, and that it was only caring about its own benefit. It has used him so its goals can be achieved (217-8).

The novel shapes and memorizes the experiences of the black Americans and the attitudes of the political and social forces toward them. And this was through the creation of a black picture which shed lights on the racial discrimination and its issues through the events that the narrator went through. Ralph Ellison described the racial discrimination in America through the narrator's experiences facing this phenomenon.

II.2. *Invisible Man* and Identity Loss

The identity problem for Negroes has started long ago since they left forcedly their home Africa to become slaves in America. They have never been welcomed there, they have often felt like outsiders, being judged and referred to as primitives and inferior, which highly influenced their self-definition and the way they perceive their heritage and origins.

Before analyzing the problem of identity in *Invisible Man*, a term precised notion is needed. According to James H. Carter in his article entitled The Black Struggle for Identity, Erikson considers identity as: "Identity means a sense of continuity and social sameness which bridges what the individual was as a child and what he is about to become; and also reconciles his conception of himself and his community's recognition of him."

Identity is the interpretation of one's history while it cannot be the case for blacks since their history is full of tragedy, anxiety and suffer due to slavery, racism and segregation. James Carter thinks that the blacks should acknowledge that what they are today is the product of what happened in the past; their past experiences are what define them. Self-definition of identity starts at an early age, for instance children either whites or blacks by the age of four they start to define themselves in terms of race, they begin to be aware of their skin color and relate themselves to their race (Carter 236).

An article published at the College of Imam Al-Kadhumi (pbuh) for Islamic Sciences and was written by the instructor Zeena Alwan Nsayf under the title Loss of Identity: Journey From Illusion to Reality In Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* states that Losing identity indicates losing one's role in the society, either as a parent, as a brother, sister and so on. As a result, identity loss leads to some sort of psychological crisis which will affect the self-confidence and the self-esteem of the person. According to Erik Erikson

“Identity crisis is the condition of being uncertain of one's feelings about one's self, especially with regard to character goals and origins occurring especially in adolescence as a result of growing up under disruptive, fast-changing conditions” (115).

The narrator starts a journey of self-discovery from the South to the North, from a small town to a big city. Maybe the first reason of Invisible Man's loss of identity is him considering himself invisible “I am an invisible man...I am invisible...simply because people refuse to see me. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or fragments of their imagination indeed, everything and anything except me” (Ellison7).The narrator confirms his invisibility by considering himself as if "mirrors of distorted glass" are surrounding him so he won't be noticed by the others, and all what they may see is the surroundings, or their reflections and reflections of their desires (Nsayf 117).

The novel begins with a prologue in which the narrator is sitting in a manhole introducing himself, telling the story of his life and sharing his experiences and journey toward his self-discovery. The other chapters contain flashbacks of the narrator's life till he found his real identity.

The narrator primarily lived in the South where he was in high school, he is a talented public speaker, He loves his grandparents yet he is ashamed of them since they are former slaves, the narrator finds himself torn between the dominant culture and his African culture which he alienates himself from and assumes the new identity. He blindly follows the white rules and seeks for the white leaders' acceptance and satisfaction, he dreams of finding his real identity in that surroundings but with each experience his finds out that his falling more and more in the darkness rather than finding the light. Starting for instance in his graduation speech where he is invited to give his speech about social responsibility and humility to a group of white leaders

where he finds himself in “ a smoker, drinking party” is praised with a scholar ship to a prestigious college but only after being humiliated at the battle royal in which he is blindfolded and had to box other black men, symbolically, the blindfold symbolizes the inability of the blacks to see the good intentions masks of the whites, and while they are boxing one another an electric current shocks them which symbolizes the whites' motives and their shocking truth (Nsayf 118-9).

As he pursues his journey of self-discovery, the protagonist joins the prestigious black college which is of course financed by the whites, and in order to please his masters, he had to say yes to whatever they asked. The narrator always kept himself away of the African heritage, he hates the black people who live around; he finds their talk old fashioned and finds them of a low class. On the other hand, he finds the white folks as “our lightning and thunder” (Ellison 112) ignoring that they are actually blinding him and are part of his identity destruction (Nsayf 119).

On the Founder’s day, the narrator takes one of its trustees for a tour around the college in order to entertain him under the trustee's demand he takes him to bar where blacks gathered and a fight starts there which made the president of the college very angry and caused the expulsion of the narrator. The president gives him seven letters of recommendation to the college trustees in New York, now a new journey for self-discovery is about to occur.

Once in Harlem, he works at the Liberty Paint Factory, while working he has an accident, that accident symbolizes the rebirth process. The invisible man states “I could no more escape than I could think of my identity.... When I discover who I am, I will be free” (Ellison408). All he never wanted destruction, all he ever wants is freedomwhen he enters the brotherhood he also encounters many false identities, which

more and more because his self-destruction, the brotherhood is formed to help the blacks who suffer from oppression.

Brother Jack pointed the narrator as the spokesman of the brotherhood, but only if he moves on from his past and acquires the new identity that suits the brotherhood status, he is blindly following the brotherhood hoping that he has found his real identity. He later discovers the truth of the organization when one of the brotherhood members is killed by a policeman named Ted Clifton "A brother, a leading member shot down by a policeman. We had lost our prestige in the community"(Ellison 374). Ted Clifton's death enables him to know more about the insignificance of the brotherhood's ideologies and that he is nothing but a white's man puppet, he also discovers that he has been used by the brotherhood and brother Jack whose glass eye fell do demonstrate that he was fooling the narrator, the narrator said: "I now recognized my invisibility." (Ellison 411). He recognizes his invisibility when he takes one of the sambo dolls that Tod was selling, this doll represents the stereotypical black man who obey his masters, and he has to turn it on so it starts to dance, which shows that it needs to be pulled by strings in order to work, just as the white men are doing to the blacks, manipulating them as if they are marionettes.

The new identity is going to be Rinehart, who can escape and to turn the situations in his advantage. This character provides the narrator with power and protecting while he is running and escaping from Ras during the Harlem riot. Finally, he falls in the manhole and realizes that his invisibility is actually his real identity and that his identity lies within his acceptance of his past and ancestors heritage. He reaches the light he has been looking for after throwing his false identities which he thought they were true. He is now ready to confront the new life with new ambitions a new social role to play (Nsayf 121).

II.3. Psychoanalytical Study of *Invisible Man*

II.3.1. The Aggression Theory Applied on *Invisible Man*

A psychoanalytic study of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* had been made by Caffilene Allen from Georgia State University in the department of Literature and Psychology in which she had analyzed the epilogue and the prologue as they represent the most important parts of the novel from a Freudian perspective. More specifically, she had used the theories of aggression that Freud included in his book *Civilization and its Discontents*. The Oedipus Struggle is the first aspect of the theory of Freud to be applied; in the fourth page the narrator expresses his fears toward society: "You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you're a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you. And alas, it's seldom successful" (Ellison4).

The oedipal struggle is the reason for the creation of society as Freud said "If brothers had not needed to overthrow, be aggressive toward, or kill their father, then they would not have realized the effectiveness of communal living" (Freud 17). This quote means; the community matters more than the individuality, one cannot live without society; the narrator in this stage is still at the individuality in other words, he is still at the pre-societal level, he still prefer his instincts over the learnt behaviors. The narrator rejects the society because he sees that it limits his freedom, or according to Freud's theory it prevents him from fulfilling his desires. Freud also claimed that "Civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city (Freud18). So here according to Freud civilization beats aggression, which is still not the case of the narrator, since he said

“...and you strike out with your fists.” (Ellison 4). Thus, civilization is still absent in the narrator’s behavior (Allen, par 8).

Aggression occurs sometimes due to the frustration, as happened in the case of the narrator; being rejected by the larger community has largely helped in the development of his aggressive attitude. The narrator considers himself invisible and as an attempt to be seen he uses aggression as a way to prove his visibility as when he hit the white man in the dark:

One night I accidentally bumped into a man, and perhaps because of the near darkness he saw me and called me an insulting name. I sprang at him, seizing his coat lapels and demanded that he apologize. He was a tall blonde man, and as my face came close to his he looked insolently out of his blue eyes and cursed me, his breath hot in my face as he struggled. I pulled his chin down upon the crown of my head, butting him as I had seen the West Indians do, and I felt his flesh tear and the blood gush out, and I yelled, "Apologize! Apologize!" But he continued to curse and struggle, and I butted him again and again until he went down heavily, on his knees, profusely bleeding. (Ellison 8).

Aggression is also used to satisfy the ego, and the civilization fact prevents the ego satisfaction from getting fulfilled, and in the case of the protagonist, he thinks that satisfying his ego can help in proving his existence as he continue saying:

I kicked him repeatedly, in a frenzy because he still uttered insults though his lips were frothy with blood. Oh yes, I kicked him! And in my outrage I got out my knife and prepared to slit his throat, right there beneath the lamplight in the deserted street, holding him in the collar with one hand, and opening the knife with my teeth. (Ellison 8)

According to Freud the act of Aggression is automatically followed by the feeling of guilt, as happened the following day when the narrator expresses his feeling of guilt he says “It unnerved me. I was both disgusted and ashamed. I was like a drunken man myself, wavering about on weakened legs” (Ellison8). Thus, the narrator’s super-ego is finally awake, his superego makes him now realizes the evilness of his acts which brings out the feeling of guilt.

“I was the irresponsible one; for I should have used my knife to protect the higher interests of society” (Ellison14). This passage explains the fact that the narrator is feeling guilt, it is complicated because the narrator's instinct shift was not properly occurred which had created his frustration from society. Guilt usually arises after the act of aggression, the first time guilt appeared was when the initial act of brothers killing their fathers, the human's sense of guilt comes from the Oedipus complex, which is illustrated by the brothers killing their father thus, this act of aggression is carried out and not suppressed, while in the case of invisible man, the feeling of guilt was suppressed because it was not acquired properly (Allen, par.9)

In the prologue, the narrator feels satisfaction about himself while he is writing his own story; a pleasure that he has found by his own, without any external interference. According to Freud, invisible man’s satisfaction comes from illusion, the narrator locked himself away from society and created his enjoyment on the basis of internal factors which are according to Freud based on imagination (Allen, par.10-1).

II.3.2. Freud’s Taboo Theory Applied on *Invisible Man*

An article published on the blogspot.com entitled “Taboo in *Invisible Man*”, explains Freud’s theory of Taboo from his book *Totem and Taboo*. This theory was applied on the character of invisible man. The writer of the article believes that taboo is the reason of the narrator’s troubles. The first appearance of Totem and Taboo in the novel was

when the narrator had an interview with Mr. Emerson. Mr. Emerson is considered a taboo since he's a homo-sexual, and homosexuality during that period was not accepted, the appearance of taboos in the narrator's journey is like a curse for him, the main source of this curse is probably his grandfather (" Taboo in Invisible Man" par.4,5). Going back when his grandfather was dying, the narrator was sitting beside him who created the curse and the misfortunes from which taboos started to surround him as Freud said:

Death is commonly regarded as the gravest of all misfortunes; hence the dead are believed to be exceedingly dissatisfied with their fate. According to primitive ideas a person only dies if he is killed-by magic if not by force- and such a death naturally tends to make the soul revengeful and ill tempered. (Freud 69)

This also proves that fact that his grandfather is the source of his bad luck, is that he thinks of him whenever he experiences a bad luck throughout the novel. The narrator's grandfather appears in his dream laughing at his grandson by making him reading the note that says. "Keep this Nigger-Boy Running" (Ellison 33). This shows the devil, maleficent soul of the grandfather that is haunting the invisible man, before his grandfather's appearance,, he was quite serene, he had a peaceful life where he used to have a potential, a positive vision about himself and his future (par.6).

Another appearance of taboo in the novel, is when the narrator delivered a speech at the bottle royal, a nude blond appears the narrator wanted at the same time to caress and destroy her. His attitude toward the blond is ambivalent, and ambivalence is an extension definition to taboo. According to Freud "a symptom of the ambivalence and a compromise between two conflicting impulses" (Freud 77).

Trueblood represents a taboo with no doubt; the character must be taken care of and not left alone with his sickness, but taboos are forbidden and unspoken of. Freud claims:

It is equally clear why it is that the violation of certain taboo prohibitions constitutes a social danger which must be punished or atoned for by all the members of the community if they are not all to suffer injury. If we replace the unconscious desires by conscious impulses we shall see that danger is a real one. It lies in the risk of imitation, which would quickly lead to the dissolution of the community. If the violation were not avenged by the other members they would become aware that they wanted to act in the same way as the transgressor. (39)

The narrator is tabooed and he makes everything around him tabooed, at the brother he tabooed people with his speeches which lead to the Harlem riot, he also witnessed the death of Clifton which is also a taboo. He is followed by taboos which created his infinite dilemma of self-loss (par.10).

II.3.3. Freud's and Jung's Theories of Dreams Depicted in *Invisible Man*

Within an article entitled "Psychoanalytic Lens Invisible man" written by Dhara Patel and published at San Francisco University, a study from a Freudian and Jungian perspective was made on the novel of *Invisible Man*. It came within the article that Ralph Ellison's work is full of dreams, hallucinations, and nightmares. Sigmund Freud had made many experiments that would help to understand the human's behavior, according to Freud, dreams are the roads to the unconscious, on the other hand, Carl Jung is considered to be Freud's son for he agrees on most of Freud's theories; they both agreed on that dreams are the manifestation of our fears, defenses mechanism and troubles. Psychoanalytic theories are; thus, applied by Ralph Ellison to the dreams of the narrator. Dreams affect the individual's conscious behavior without him being aware (4).

The first dream the narrator had is when he dreamt of he and his grandfather at a circus when his grandfather refused to laugh at the clowns, he then asked him to open a

briefcase in which he found a note that says “keep this nigger-boy running” (Ellison 33). The narrator continues and says that it “was a dream he was to remember and dream again for many years after, but at the time he had no insight to its meaning” (Ellison 34). His first dream shows that the narrator wants his decisions to be taken under the light of his grandfather’s advice; the narrator’s relationship with his grandfather is struggle since his grandfather asks him to obey the whites, which the narrator’s intelligence contradicts with. Jung, on the other hand, believes that dreams can also reveal the individual’s relationship with the other, like in the case of the note that tells to keep the narrator running, the dream foreshadowed how the narrator was deceived by the brotherhood, in other words the narrator had spent most of his life running from the whites an obeying their orders. Applying Jung’s theories predicted events that would be part in the narrator’s future. In addition to foreshadowing the behavior of the character, dreams also predict the events' symbolic meaning.

Another dream that demonstrates how the narrator feels toward Dr. Bledsoe and his attitude toward him and his students: “When I stopped gasping for breath, I decided I would go back and kill Bledsoe. Yes, I thought I owe it to my race and myself to kill him... I could hardly get to sleep dreaming of revenge” (Ellison 195). The narrator seeks revenge from Bledsoe to show him the meaning of being used (Pate 13).

The narrator’s journey to New York was considered to be like a dream, since at that type New York was among the few states that allowed freedom to the blacks “New York, that’s not a place, it’s a dream. Now all the little black boys run away to New York.. you might even dance with a white girl” (Ellison 152). But at the end the invisible man considered his journey to be neither “state of dreaming nor of waking” (Ellison 568) but, “I lay the prisoner of a group consisting of Jack and old Emerson and Bledsoe and Norton and Ras... all of whom had run me, who now pressed around me as I lay

beside a river of black water, near where an armored bridge arched sharply away to where I could not see” (Ellison 569).

To conclude, Ralph Ellison in his novel describes the journey of an unknown character, who is looking throughout the novel for his real identity going through a series of events which will change his perspective toward what he believes to be identity. The writer excellently shapes the problem of racial discrimination and the common issues that blacks had experienced during a certain period of time. The novel also demonstrates how the narrator’s psychology influences the way he sees himself and how it how it influences his decision making.

III. Chapter Three: Self-Reconstruction in *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison

III.1.Symbols and Self-Discovery

In order to find his real identity, the narrator has to accept his heritage and his race. In addition to the persons who helped the narrator to discover his real identity, there are also symbols with which he came in contact according to Iva Malinová's thesis which is entitled *Invisibility and Identity: The Black Despair of Black People in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man*; the first symbol is the coin bank which is put in the corner of his rented room:

the cast-iron figure of a very black, red lipped and wide-mouthed Negro, whose white eyes stared up at [him] from the floor, his face an enormous grin, his single large black hand held palm up before his chest. It was [...] the kind of bank which, if a coin is placed in the hand and a lever pressed upon the back, will raise its arm and flip the coin into the grinning mouth. (Ellison 319)

The narrator did not notice the coin bank before, and the fact that he is noticing it now shows the change the narrator is witnessing in terms of race and heritage, now he considers the treatment of the superior blacks and whites as an insult which he is tending to fight (Malinova 14).

Mary, the flat owner and the mother like of the narrator, is considered among the factors that helped the narrator find his real identity and who made him love his black culture and heritage. Yet, she also owns the coin bank, which made the narrator break it because it is against everything that Mary believes in:

Hate charging within [him] [...] [and] enraged by the tolerance or lack of discrimination, or whatever, that allowed Mary to keep such a self-mocking image around" and with so much force caused by his severe anger he breaks it, he launches his hand forward clutching the cast iron bank, smashing it against the

pipe and breaking it into small pieces, scattering them and the coins over the floor of his room. (Ellison 319)

However, after breaking it, he realizes that he had no right to do so, and he hurried to collect the remaining pieces hoping to fix it in order to avoid Mary's questions. This also shows how he tries to throw his origins, yet it's difficult to do so more than he has expect. Trying to dispose the rest of the pieces means he is trying to dispose his heritage and origins. Yet, he simply couldn't get rid of them. Once he tried to throw them he was accused by a white man to be a criminal: "You young New York Negroes are a blip! I swear you is! I hope they catch you and put your ass under the jail" (Ellison 330). As a consequence, the invisible man realizes that he cannot throw away his past and heritage easily; keeping the last piece of the coin bank which he kept in his brief case he realizes that he will carry always his black origins with him (Malinova16). Brother Tod Clifton's Sambo doll across the novel has symbolized the black culture stereo type:

[that] grinning doll of orange-and-black tissue paper with thin flat cardboard disks forming its head and feet and which some mysterious mechanism was causing it to move up and down in a loose-jointed, shoulder-shaking, infuriatingly sensuous motion, a dance that was completely detached from the black, mask-like face [...] [that throws] itself about with the fierce defiance of someone performing a degrading act in public, dancing as though it received a perverse pleasure from its motions. (Ellison 431)

At first, the narrator considers Tod Clifton as a betrayer, but in fact he is just aware of the real intensions of the brotherhood, and he has chosen to sell these dolls rather than to be manipulated by the brotherhood. The Sambo Dolls represents the niggers who are dancing on the tunes of the white Jack just mike the Sambo dolls (Malinova 17).

Another symbol that is directly linked to the past and heritage of invisible man is a link of chain that brother Tarp gave him. This chain goes back to brother, Tarp. When he was enchained and fled, he kept it as a memory of the hard times he went through. Tarp as Mary connects the narrator with his past, yet unlike Mary he teaches the narrator to break these connections to the past if they hold patterns of oppressions that prevent him from discovering his real identity; it was “a thick, dark, oily piece of filed steel that had been twisted open and forced partly back into place, on which [the invisible man] saw marks that might have been made by the blade of a hatchet” (Ellison 389).

Another chain that also represents the imprisonment is the chain of Dr. Bledsoe which he keeps as a symbol of the black race progress while Tarp keeps it as a sign of reminiscence of something that he cannot forget. The link chain; furthermore, represents the symbol of self-confidence and inspiration. Nevertheless, it also gives him strength to fight for his goals and for what he believes in. The chain also saved his life once when he was attacked; “hit[s] [...] [the attacker] with Tarp’s leg chain and [...] [other] with [his] brief case” (Ellison 560).

The briefcase that the narrator carries during all the stages of his life and during all his journey of self-discovery, the briefcase represents a very important symbol; it was given to the narrator after the battle royal as a reward; “some day it will be filled with important papers that will help shape the destiny of [his] people” (Ellison 32). While in fact, the briefcase contains more significant stuff including all the symbols of humiliation that he has encountered during his journey such as: Tarp's link chain, the Peace left from Mary's coin bank in addition to , the paper Sambo Doll of Tod Clifton. It also contains his highschool diploma and the anonymous letters (Malinova 19).

Although the mentioned symbols remind the narrator of his suffering and slavery but they also teach him how to accept his past and assume his origins. The symbols also show him the way he should take in order to reach his true self and to not feel ashamed of who he is; as happened when he encountered an old man who sales hot yams in the street, this gave him a strong sense of nostalgia, he bought the yams and ate them in the street though, it was inappropriate to eat yams in the street and this symbolizes that he finally starts to accept who he is: “ you could cause us the greatest humiliation simply by confronting us with something we liked” (Ellison 264). Eating yams gave him an enormous sense of freedom” as he is able to rise above the prejudices” (Ellison 264).

The symbols mentioned above demonstrate the most important metaphors that the novel contains; they are viewed as symbols of oppression that the whites imposed on the blacks or, as means of assuming the blacks' heritage and past (Malinova 20).

III.2.The Contribution of Jazz in the Narrator’s Self-Discovery

According to Marriane Bolgar’s thesis which is entitled *The Identity of Ellison’s Invisible Man*, Marriane argues that Ellison in *invisible man* has used extensively the music, the Black American Music particularly. This kind of music exemplifies the blacks’ attitudes, and defines their relation-ship with the society. The Negro American music is the music that they have shaped by blending the European music and their African heritage; creating music that shaped their own life style (Bolgar 24).

The Blues, the kind of music used in the novel, deeply expressed the tragi-comic notion of life. It helped the Negroes and invisible man to overcome their suffering and to handle the cruel and unfair white world, the Blues also enabled them to look at their suffer ironically and they always kept their optimism regarding the future. Ellison considers blues singer as a priest and Blues spirit as “secular existentialism” that takes the place of religion whenever the man's faith declines (25).

The Blues in the novel helps the narrator to accept his heritage and to love his origin and bit by bit gets attached to it. The narrator relates himself to Louis Armstrong's song "But what did I do to be so black and blue" (Ellison 14). And recites it along with him, he also compares himself to the singer Louis Armstrong in terms of invisibility "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 8).

The protagonist through music sees himself no longer as white. He now sees it as "black and blue" as he repeatedly recites the sentence. The music helped him reshape his self-perception, he now accepts his black origins, and he now sees his existence through musical terms:

I've illuminated the blackness of my invisibility—and vice versa. And so I play the invisible music of my isolation. The last statement doesn't seem just right, does it? But it is; you hear this music simply because music is heard and seldom seen, except by musicians. Could this compulsion to put invisibility down in black and white be thus an urge to make music of invisibility. (Ellison13)

III.3.The Rejection of the False Models

Hoping to find his real identity and exhausted with the naivety of the south, the narrator carries his dream of self-discovery and leaves to the north wishing to find it there. The obstacles that caused the narrator's alienation and loss were generally people. The first person who played the role of a false father is the school superintendent, Dr. Bledsoe. In the novel, Dr. Bledsoe burdens the narrator with social responsibility. He uses the black Negroes for his own benefit, and his education program focuses on glorifying the whites and interiorizing the poor blacks.

At the start, the narrator did not know his reality because as mentioned earlier the misleading educational program has created the narrator's naivety. He considers Dr. Bledsoe as his father from whom he expects security. Bledsoe in fact would do anything to gain power; he would sacrifice the poor Negroes for his goals. He accepts segregation and he causes the narrator's origins denial which destroys his manhood sense. Bledsoe's arrogance makes him look down on others from his same gender since he considers them as illiterate and dumb. For instance, he does not allow his students to approach the poor neighborhoods and Jim Trueblood (Bolgar 36). Though his power is limitless over the black Negroes in his school, he cannot practice it on the southern whites. Bledsoe is the kind of the black leaders who think they are superior to the others of the same gender while in fact they are mediocre because they accept the limited freedom under the segregation (Bolgar 36).

The second false model for the narrator is Mr. Norton, who shares the same policy of Bledsoe, he appears to be benevolent and wise, while in fact this is nothing but a mask that he is wearing to cover his greedy corrupted intentions. He is corrupted because he desired his daughter whom he killed. He finances the college in order to get rid of his guilt. Mr. Norton does not believe in what is called social equality, he believes that the blacks are created to serve the whites and to be manipulated by them (Bolgar 37).

Like Trueblood, Norton too can be resembled to the figure of Oedipus; he had committed both the incest and the murder. Norton is insidious fore; his intentions are not directly revealed which makes his hatred and violence more dangerous to the narrators than the others. The narrator realizes that only after becoming his victim (Bolgar 38).

The following false model is the Vet who represents the good, intellectual southern Negroes who was deceived by Norton's false promises of giving him freedom. The vet

negatively influences the narrator by his rejection of his black heritage, he like the narrator blinded by the education they receive. The vet rejects his black identity and adopts the American one. The character of the Vet is a foreshadowing character for the narrator (Bolgar 39).

The narrator's next false model is Emerson. He represents the self-hating liberal, and he is connected to the narrator in their common past with slavery. Emerson's ancestors were rich and had great influence on the slave trade while the narrator's grandparents were nothing but slaves. Emerson badly influences the narrator since he too is an Oedipus caricature; he had violated his mother and killed his father, and he is also a homosexual (Bolgar 40).

Reaching the brotherhood, Jack can also be considered as false model to the narrator. He represents a brotherhood which its supposed aim was to grant equality and to fight racism. Jack sees men uniquely as raw materials for his goals, he sacrifices them and their identity to feed his and the brotherhood's goals and his glass eye represents his willingness and his hidden goals under the name of the brotherhood. Jack exploits and uses the narrator destroying his dream of freedom and equality. (Bolgar 42).

the naivety of the narrator made him feel a certain intellectual difference between him and Jack; this is due to jack double faced talk and hypocrite attitude. The narrator's experience with the brotherhood enabled him to create a link between him and his heritage, it also made him value his experiences though, he has discovered by the end the real intensions of the leaders, and that once again he had been used:

I learned there, aching to humiliate them, to refute them. And now all past
Humiliations became precious parts of my experience, and for the first time,
leaning against that stone wall in the sweltering night, I began to accept my past,
and

as I accepted it, I felt memories welling up within me... I was my experiences and my experiences were me². (Ellison 408-9)

Rinehart, the character is not physically apparent in the novel yet, he is present through his reputation, Rinehart is known for disguising attitude; each day with a new personage. Ellison sees Rinehart as an exploiter and a criminal though, in the novel many people seem to love him and consider him as a hero while in fact they are only his victims. Among the figures he had played; the Harlem boss crime. Rinehart represents evil and chaos (Bolgar 44).

Rinehart appears as a dehumanized character, he plays several roles and shapes, his identity is inexistent. An individual who is confused about his identity is a sick man but, his sickness is curable like in the case of the narrator, while a man who has no identity like Rinehart can never be cured. Identity problems originate in the unbalanced social order, while identity inexistence originates within the individual. In the case of Rinehart, his identity inexistence is because of his lack of morality. Rinehart in all the senses of the word is totally invisible (Bolgar 48).

Ras the exhorter is another false model to the narrator, he is a rebel, a white-hating, he believes that blacks can never achieve equality in a white's society. He considers all whites as enemies and blacks are brothers. He has self-respect and an infinite sense of manhood. Ras had contributed in the narrator's final stage of self-discovery through the events he had participated in; in Harlem he sees Ras as a violent and a nightmarish character, later when he during his fight with Clifton the narrator sees him as a manipulated and misguided character just as him. During the riot when he appears as Ras the destroyer, made the narrator realizes what kind of leader and a hero he is (Bolgar49).

The invisible man's meeting with Ras teaches him another lesson; when Ras insisted on hanging him, this made the narrator express the rebirth as he said: "So when Ras yelled 'Hang him!' I let fly the spear and it was as though for a moment I had surrendered my life and begun to live again" (Ellison 450).

The narrator by now had experienced all his false fathers. Now, the final task is still waiting to be accomplished which is going to be completed with the help of his true fathers who are going to be accepted by the narrator in order to finish his self-discovery journey (Bolgar 51).

III.4.The Acceptance of the True Models

The narrator by now had experienced all his false fathers, now the final task is still waiting to be accomplished which is going to be completed with the help of his true fathers whom are going to be accepted by the narrator in order to finish his self-discovery journey (Bolgar51).

The narrator's self-definition occurs when he accepts the true models and rejects the false models that mislead him. The most important model is missing which has created his sense of identity loss; is his father who could have played the role of the link between the narrator and his past and heritage. The narrator could not identify himself because of two reasons. He was manipulated and used by some false models. Also, he rejected past and origins (Bolgar 33).

The invisible man's self-definition started when he started to acknowledge the value of some characters that he has met during his journey of self-discovery. In her thesis entitled *The Identity of Ellison's Invisible Man* and precisely in the second chapter Marriane Bolgar has discussed the characters who positively influenced the invisible man, and who helped in the process of self- identification.

When the narrator starts to appreciate his past and heritage, he finds himself able to correctly identify himself, and by saying heritage means his ancestors. Some of the true models characters are southern, whom enhanced his acceptance of his black origins and others are urban northern who contributed in the development of his maturity. The first ancestor that he encounters is Jim Trueblood, who is referred to as the "The best of the past", he is a peasant from the south, he is known for his wisdom and he also sings blues. What Trueblood teaches the narrator that he has to accept his identity as it is in order to live in harmony with himself (53).

True blood resembles the figure of Oedipus, in two things; the incest that they both committed and the reconciliation with themselves that they have achieved without any divine interference or help. Trueblood's sin derived guilt and loneliness which later has transformed into values and the art of blues(Bolgar54). The blues for him represents his acceptance of his identity. Trueblood assumes his manhood. After his act he returns home, he tells his wife and daughter that he is sorry; but that what done happen is done happen... I'm still a man." (Ellison 64). True blood is a bluesman, he teaches the narrator how to live with his pain and transform it into a work of art which lyrics are deeply significant (Bolgar 55).

In Harlem, the protagonist meets his second true model; Mary Rambo who is a blues woman too. She has the blues spirit, and in the novel she plays the role of the mother to invisible man, North is different from the south, and Mary guides him and helps him reach his maturity and at same time helps him to reveal the truth behind the masks the northern wear. She offers her wisdom and strength to the young narrator without any hesitation. During their first conversation, when invisible man was desperate about what he went through in the hospital, she asked him that the future of the blacks depends on its youth, and they have to take the lead. Mary deeply influenced the narrators' view

toward his race, she influenced his self-perception with her modest wisdom, humor and experiences, she helps him value and recognize the folk heritage (Bolgar 59-60).

Louis Armstrong, the example of all the black American identity, represents the tradition of the tragi-comical blues; through his music he has created his identity just like Trueblood. Through his music, the invisible man gets the notion that his songs describe his situation, they both share the Blues' tragi-comical optimism. The invisible man repeatedly listens to the song of "what did i do to be so black and blue" which he sees that it represents what he is going through; it represents his alienation and desperate self-searching. Through Armstrong's songs the narrator, learns to master his pain just as Armstrong masters his music, he learns how to laugh at them and handle them (Bolgar 74-6).

The narrator accepts his heritage and discovers his identity after re-interpreting what his grandfather told him:

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, a spy in the enemy's country ever since I give up my gun back in the Reconstruction. Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, undermine 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction, let 'em swallow you till they vomit or bust wide open (Ellison 16).

His grandfather was a slave dreaming of freedom. He considers himself as a fighter. Through his grandfather's wisdom, the narrator succeeds at achieving the reconciliation with his past and ancestors, he learns from him how to appreciate and fight for the blacks heritage who even when he was a slave never underestimated his black origin (Bolgar 81).

III.5. Carl Gustav Rebirth Theory

A further psychoanalytic study of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* had been made by Caffilene Allen, using Carl Gustav theory of Rebirth. This is going to be used; more specifically, the theory of rebirth;" I have been boomeranged across my head so much that I now can see the darkness of lightness" (Ellison). Also, in the prologue invisible man explains the reason why he's living underground he says; "A hibernation is a covert preparation for a more overt action" (Ellison).

Hibernation stated in this quote and darkness stated in the previous one, they both indicate the concept of the cave, according to Jung the cave which in the case of the narrator means the manhole; In the Koran too there's a Surah in which entitled the cave and which also tackles the rebirth mystery (Allen par.15). The cave is a rebirth place in which the individual locks himself like the narrator locked himself in the manhole in order to be renewed and reborn again. The cave also exists within each individual; it lies behind the consciousness, and any individual who gets into that cave will be involved in the unconscious transformation process.

Invisible man ignores what will happen to his hibernation, yet at least he realizes the cave and the darkness he lives in, which according to Jung is quite important to his unconscious and that this indicates a coming rebirth. Another sign of rebirth is mentioned in the epilogue were the narrator said: "The hibernation is over" (Ellison). Jung claims that rebirth is a process that can neither be seen, measured nor weigh it, it is completely beyond the perception sense; in other words no external source is able to identify it (Allen, par.16).

After claiming that his hibernation is over, he then reveals that he is being renewed and reborn; "Im shaking off the old skin and Ill leave it here in the hole. Im coming out, no less invisible without it, but coming out nevertheless. And I suppose its damn well

time. Even hibernation's can be overdone, come to think of it. Perhaps that's my greatest social crime" (Ellison 468).

The narrator through rebirth became a responsible individual as he said: "I've overstayed my hibernation, since there's a possibility that even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play" (Ellison 15). With this revelation the invisible man is showing the world his beyond perception rebirth. In his essay of the four archetypes; Jung explains two sorts of rebirth, the type related to the narrator is the fourth one; which explains the renovation idea as the metaphorical expression of the " shaking off of old skin", moreover this renewal does not affect the being, but only it affects some personality parts which are getting strengthened, improved or healed (Allen, par.18).

The renewal in the novel requires a change in his nature, he said " I'm shaking off the old skin" which means that the rebirth is occurring within one life, the story ends in the present time and thus, there's no sign of the narrator's death since he's the one who is narrating the story. The narrator then reveals his coming out of the hibernation, which shows that the change occurs in the function of his nature and not in his entire nature (Allen, par.19).

By the end of the novel the narrator acknowledges that his real identity lies in his invisibility, as he said in page ten " I myself after existing some twenty years, did not become alive until I discovered my invisibility." (Ellison 10). Invisibility offers him more freedom and makes him realize his position facing the society. Through the events, he discovers that all the painful experiences that he went through aided in his self-re-identification within his black race. Invisibility turned out to be a peaceful feeling; the narrator now feels himself responsible and has a significant role to play in his society; "I'm shaking off the old skin and I'll leave it here in the hole. I'm coming out, no less invisible without it, but coming out nevertheless... I've overstayed my

hibernation, since there's a possibility that even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play" (Ellison 468). Before reaching this conclusion he had to get rid of all the false models; people who tried to bring him down and who contributed in his self-loss, in a way or in another the narrator finally manage to free himself from everyone's expectations.

Conclusion

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison discusses one of the most sensitive topics in the Africa-American literature that were derived from the racial discrimination's social conditions. It also denotes the quest for identity and alienation within the white dominant culture. He challenges the traditional and the limited perceptions of the black identity in America and he stresses on explaining that identity is universal and should not be limited to culture or race.

Ralph Ellison in his novel describes the journey of a young black man searching for his identity, in a period when blacks were inferior and whites were dominants. He describes how black people were suffering from the phenomenon of racial discrimination, how it affected their lives, how their main concern was freedom and how to get their rights. He illustrates the hardships that the blacks faced through his character, who became invisible bit by bit just because he couldn't find answers for his questions and who had a false idea about whom he really. This was due to the education he had received and which was intended to mislead the blacks so that they will always glorify the whites, and will never know their values and ask for their rights. The novel demonstrates the perfect image of what really happened during that period of time.

Although, the novel is introduced with the first-person point of view, it demonstrates the African-American conditions during the period of racial discrimination. The author gave a new perception of the blacks' identity through his main character, expressing his psychological states throughout the novel, revealing how he senses as a black man, how he thinks and how he reacts to the discrimination of the whites.

The author also focuses on the problem of the skin color which represents a burden to the blacks, how they will always feel inferior due to this. Ellison challenges the traditional ideologies that limited the definition of the black identity in America.

Through his character, he makes the black people appreciate their past and heritage; he makes them aware of the value of what their past reveals. The protagonist by the end realizes that his past and experiences are part of him and him is a part of them and as his said "the end was in the beginning" (Ellison 460).

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Résumé

Cette étude vise à discuter de tous les états psychologiques du protagoniste de Ralph Ellison chef-d'œuvre de l'homme invisible au cours de son voyage de découverte de soi. Partant de son ignorance et de sa naïveté dans le sud, jusqu'à ce qu'il atteigne sa maturité et sa découverte de soi dans le nord. Le chef-d'œuvre de Ralph Ellison montre comment les expériences traumatisantes du racisme et de l'esclavage que traversèrent les Afro-Américains avaient fortement influencé la littérature afro-américaine. A travers son personnage anonyme, il discute également de la question de l'aliénation, de l'oppression et des difficultés auxquelles les Noirs étaient confrontés pendant une certaine période de temps dans la société dominante blanche. Ralph Ellison est parmi les écrivains les plus importants du XXe siècle qui ont contribué à façonner la nouvelle identité noire, il enseigne aux lecteurs à assumer le passé et l'héritage des Noirs et à ne pas regarder la noirceur comme une infériorité, mais plutôt comme une leur identité et leur existence.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مناقشة جميع الحالات النفسية لبطل تحفة رالف إليسون الرجل الغير المرئي خلال رحلته لاكتشاف الذات. بدءا من جهله وسذاجته في الجنوب ، حتى يصل إلى مرحلة النضج والاكتشاف الذاتي في الشمال. يوضح رالف إليسون من خلال تحفته كيف أثرت التجارب الصادمة للعنصرية والعبودية التي مر بها الأمريكيون الأفارقة على الأدب الأمريكي الأفريقي. من خلال البطل، يناقش أيضا مسألة الاغتراب والاضطهاد والمصاعب التي كان يواجهها السود خلال فترة معينة من الزمن في المجتمع الأبيض المهيمن. يعتبر رالف إليسون من بين أهم الكتاب في القرن العشرين الذين ساعدوا في تشكيل الهوية السوداء الجديدة كما يدعو القراء بأن يفتخروا بتراثهم الأفريقي وان يعتبروه جزءاً من هويتهم ووجودهم.