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**Black Folklore as a Psychological
Development in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible
Man* Characters**

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents Abdel Jabbar and Wassila, who supported me. To my sisters Imene and Janet, my brothers Ibrahim and Adib. To my husband Mechemache Samir, and to all my friends whom I consider as sisters and to Mr. Abdelali Tidjani.

ABSTRACT

The previous century's concern in African American literature was about the quest for identity, self-awareness and a sense of being. Identity had known as a continuing development and had tempted many artists such as Richard Wright, W. E. B. Du Bois and Ralph Ellison. During Harlem Renaissance, the Blacks were seduced by the identity construction and showed their pride of their being and belonging to African roots. The present study has an analytical nature which examines the psychological development of the Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man characters and the use of Black aesthetics as a means of expressing the self. It also explores the blacks' identity and their experience through the analysis of the novel and aims to investigate the pivotal events and the major characters as well as their progression in the novel, so that the reader can learn the issues related to the characters' life.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

The late twenties and the early thirties of the twentieth century had known a great change in terms of identity formation especially in the African American communities such as Harlem. Identity, however, was the main concern of the Blacks at that era, so they endeavored to build an African American identity with pride of belonging.

The process of building an African American identity was done in hard situations faced with race discrimination and Black stereotype. The Blacks refuged to folklore such as Jazz and Blues song to release from the feeling of oppression, submission and sorrow.

This work will employ two sources of datum; the primary source is Ralph Ellison' *Invisible Man*. The secondary source is datum collected from books, articles and websites. The approach used in the present work is psychological criticism; this approach states that psychology affects the literature and literary criticism, also the work includes some of Freudian theories.

The objective of this work is to analyze the pivotal events and the major characters and their progression in the novel. Moreover, through examining Ellison's use of Black folklore, their identity as African Americans and their existence will be ascertained and proved. The main questions to be raised and seek

to answer through the work are: how and why did Ellison integrate Black folklore to his novel? What are the main factors that led to the anonymity of the narrator to be invisible? How did the narrator escape these obstacles?? And why and how did Ellison use Blues and Jazz in *Invisible Man*??

The present work comprises a general introduction and three chapters; the general introduction offers a general overview of the work and some glimpses to the chapters, it includes also the methods and approaches used in the work, the main questions raised in the research in addition hypotheses that are suggested and proved through the study.

Chapter one, will provide the most significant points of the novel in order to give an insight to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, that is, to be able to analyze the novel and the characters as well. It also helps the readers to comprehend the issues related to the protagonist's life.

This study will tackle the author's life for the reason that there are some resemblances between his life and his protagonist. It will explore the major events so that the readers can have a broader idea about the coming chapters. All events are crucial even those painful, they serve as factors of developing the protagonist's personality. Through his experiences and incidents, the narrator adopts many identities so that he constructs a real identity that fits his position. As the novel recounts the narrator's psychological and moral growth; it narrates his life from

his childhood to the adulthood, from his naivety to his maturity, from an inexperienced young boy to an experienced adult in a racist society.

Chapter two will consider the psychological development of the characters with a special focus on the protagonist. Firstly, it will examine the narrator's grandfather's mysterious advice on his deathbed; his advice is as a curse. However, through the protagonist's incidents and experiences, one could understand it, it had a great impact on the protagonist's personality. Also, the old man's advice will be applied on some of the novel's characters.

Second section will discuss about dreams and day dreams; which reveal a side of the characters' thoughts and wishes and demonstrate what they desire, and what they are longing for, and their plans. According to Sigmund Freud people hallucinate and dream about things they do not fulfill in real life. In addition, day dreams and the effects of marijuana are taken into account too.

Third section will examine the issue of the Blacks' identity, which is the main question of the protagonist. The incidents and the difficulties he faced summed up in understanding his self, to prove his existence, to show his pride of being, and to build his personality. Through a series of events, the protagonist embrace many identities so that he can achieve an African American identity in an

environment that wanted to erase his personality, had marginalized¹ him, and ignored his existence and considered him as “invisible man”.

Chapter three will answer the question raised above. It will examine Ellison’s use of art and folklore in the novel. They served the African Americans to release from difficulties, injustice, and continuous mistreatment. These experiences pushed the Blacks to refuge to music to find relief, liberation, and consolation from grief and sorrow. The miserable characters including the protagonist considered the music as a means to assure themselves and to express their pains.

Ralph Ellison uses African American folklore as a pivotal tool to express himself through the narrator of *Invisible Man* and to release from life inequalities. Yet, African American folklore includes Blacks’ achievement of that feeling of inferiority and meaninglessness as previously acquired due to the superiority showed of the Whites.

Ellison illustrates how music such as Blues and Jazz are introduced in the *Invisible Man* to express pain, sufferance, and misery through writing and singing to feel liberation and release. This psychological relief gave the Blacks a launch to feel pride of African belonging and to hope a good future. Fusing the Black folklore in *Invisible Man* is what featured Ralph Ellison from his fellow writers; he associated past with present to show his Black heritage and prove his pride of

¹ African Americans were insignificant unimportant and had a powerless position in America.

his ancestors and to invite the other Blacks to get rid of the feeling of being ashamed of their origins and their beings.

CHAPTER I
THE NOVEL SYNOPSIS

Chapter One

The Novel Synopsis

The present chapter will provide the most significant points of the novel in order to give an insight to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, that is, to be able to analyze the novel and the characters as well.

It will tackle the major events so that the readers can have a broader idea about the present work. The events are crucial and serve to develop the protagonist's personality. He wore many identities during his journey so that he shapes a real identity that fits his position as a black man.

As the novel is a bildungsroman it follows his psychological and moral growth; it recounts his life from his childhood to the adulthood, from his naivety to his maturity.

A. Summary of the Novel

The novel is divided into three main sections. First, Ellison introduced his novel with a prologue, where he started with a monologue saying: "I am invisible man...I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people

refuse to see me” (qtd. In (Gracer)). The narrator complains that people refused to see him as a human being because of his blackness².

Then he introduced his novel with the narrator’s grandfather on his deathbed left some pieces of advice that had a great impact on the narrator’s conduct to be obedient with “yea-saying”.

The narrator lives in a house underground, he stole electricity from Light Company and imagines a scene. He hit unintentionally a white man. The white man insulted the narrator then the narrator attacked him as a reaction. The narrator often enjoys listening to Louis Armstrong’s jazz and smoking his marijuana. While he smocks his cigarettes he starts to dream about scenes that never occurred under the effect of drugs.

After that, the narrator is called to give a talk about blacks to the city chiefs. Then, they asked him to fight with a young black man; the narrator won the “Battle Royal” and was rewarded by the so-called a scholarship to a Black college. The night that follows the “Battle Royal” incident, the narrator’s grandfather came in his dreams and asked him to read scholarship letter that states: “*Keep This Nigger Boy Running*”. The narrator realizes through his experiences and incidents that he is always running.

One decisive incident of the narrator’s life was when he was expelled from his college to New York. Mr. Bledsoe handed the protagonist seven letters which

² The term blackness refers to cultural contributions of African Americans to the culture of America.

is believed to be letters of recommendation, but in fact it was not when he arrived to New York, the protagonist's pleasure of the Blacks' liberty turns to disappointment realizing that the South is as the North regarding black stereotype. Following the deception of the letters, he hardly found a job a Liberty Paint Factory where he witnessed all kinds of racism starting from the factory slogan to the hospital.

After the bitter experiment of the factory hospital, the protagonist befriended with Mary Rambo, a black woman who received the protagonist at home. He later joined the Brotherhood and became the orator of the organization.

He met Sybil, a white woman addicted to black masculinity, and had an affair with her.

One of the brothers, Tod Clifton, was shot by the police and then died immediately. His death, however, disappointed the protagonist and made him leave the organization. Then he decided to come back to Harlem where he met Ras the Exhorter again, Ras accused him of deceiving the Black community and attacked him. As a consequence of the suspicion, the protagonist disguised himself wearing a hat and glasses.

In his new look, the protagonist learns that Harlem became corrupted with the presence of violence and riots. Later, he was caught when he wanted to go back to Mary Rambo, but as he tried to flee, he jumped into a manhole.

The third section is the epilogue where he remained hidden in the manhole that is to know what he wishes. He knew that he is “invisible” to all people he met in his life.

Brother Jack caught the protagonist and castrated him; he then, consequently became sick and weak. He, lastly, gave up fighting for his rights and freedom. The protagonist decided to note all the experiences and the incidents he had lived in order to transcend his plights and to find relief.

The novel ends where it begins, in the place of hiding where the protagonist is awaiting the fitting moment to face the world again.

B. Major Characters

The narrator; is the protagonist of the novel he is unnamed. The readers’ information of the novel is restricted to what he narrates. He recounts his life steps and its troubles from his childhood to his manhood; as a student at college, as an employee at the Liberty Paints Factory, and as a member of Brotherhood. His real name is never uttered; he is given a name in the college, in the hospital, and in the Brotherhood. However, this anonymity highlights his state of invisibility as the novel is entitled.

The narrator’s grandfather doesn’t appear in the novel; the narrator mentioned that the portrait of his grandfather was on the wall but his pieces of

advice were always present and served a lot in influencing on the protagonist. His appearance in the novel is only through memories. His pieces of advice left a riddle to solve after his death.

Brother Jack; a member of the Brotherhood organization, has many good qualities such as kindness, compassion, tolerance and intelligence but still racist vis-a-vis Blacks. His position in the novel is chosen intentionally, to stress the thoughts that concern the Blacks.

Tod Clifton; a Black member of the Brotherhood organization, and later becomes a doll seller on the Harlem streets.

Ras the Exhorter; a Black nationalist and calls for making one nation uniting the Blacks and disagree with collaboration between Whites and Blacks. Later he changed his name from “Ras the Exhorter” to “Ras the Destroyer”.

Dr. Bledsoe; is a black administrator of the narrator’s college. He occupied a high degree of power and used it for his personal gains.

Mr. Norton; is the college trustee and a rich white man, he is open-minded and known by his generosity.

Jim Trueblood; is a singer and uneducated black man. He was a poor farmer near to the college. He was considered as a dishonor to his fellow blacks after committing incest with his daughter.

Sybil; a woman married with one of the Brotherhood members, she cheated on her husband and had a sexual relationship with the protagonist.

C. The Author's Life

Ralph Waldo Ellison is an American writer of the twentieth century. He was born on March 1, 1913 Oklahoma City and died on April 16, 1994 in New York. He is known by his masterpiece "*INVISIBLE MAN*". After the death of his father, he worked as a busboy, a shoeshine boy, hotel waiter, and a dentist's assistant during his early life to meet his family needs. Ellison was interested in playing music instruments such as trumpet and alto saxophone and became a jazz musician then he moved to learn music in Tuskegee Institute, later he mentioned it as a model for the black college in *Invisible Man*. He went to New York, precisely in Harlem, and worked as a member of the Federal Writers' Project where he met Hughes and Wright. Thanks to his masterpiece "*Invisible Man*", won the best seller book that won the National Book Award.

D. Important Events

In the *Battle Royal*; the protagonist was asked to give a talk, as a reward for his high school graduation, in front of the community chief and other supremacists. Although the audience didn't give much importance to him, he carried on giving his talk. He chooses to talk about "the humility" and said "social

equality” rather than “social responsibility”. This is what frustrated the Whites and prepared a battle in a boxing ring against young African Americans.

He described the battle scene as:

The smoke was agonizing and there were no rounds, no bells at three-minute intervals to relieve our exhaustion. The room spun around me, a swirl of lights, smoke, sweating bodies surrounded by tense white faces. I bled from nose to mouth, the blood spattering upon my chest. (19)

Before the battle has started, the young boys were obliged to watch a scene of naked women dancing. The narrator described the white dancers as”

We were rushed up to the front of the ballroom. ... Then we were pushed into place. I almost wet my pants. A sea of faces, some hostile, some amused, ringed around us, and in the center, facing us, stood a magnificent blonde – stark naked. . . I felt a blast of cold air chill me. I tried to back away, but they were behind me and around me. (15)

He finally won the battle and was rewarded by a briefcase containing scholarship to a black college when he received it he argued: “My fingers a-tremble, I complied, smelling the fresh leather and finding an official-looking document inside. It was a scholarship to the state college for Negroes. My eyes filled with tears and I ran awkwardly off the floor. ” (26)

Liberty Paint Factory event was a turning point in the protagonist's life. Mr. Bledsoe wrote recommendation letters so that the protagonist can find a job. But later on he found out that the letters states: "keep that nigger boy running". He miraculously found a job, thanks to Mr. Emerson out of pity, in a paint factory which is expertized in optic white paint. His superior rebukes him when doesn't mix the paint appropriately. When the protagonist arrived at the factory his noticed an electric sign "*KEEP AMERICA PURE WITH LIBERTY PAINTS*" (151). The factory slogan reflects the whites' race discrimination which symbolizes their superiority over the blacks. In addition, the workers' wages varied on the race standards; whites were well remunerated but blacks and Indians were not. The Liberty Paint Factory is a miniature of American economic system.

When the protagonist adapted the system in the Liberty paint factory, he became familiar with factory laws. One day, there happened a horrible explosion in the factory that caused in a dangerous injuring to the protagonist. The latter was evacuated to the factory hospital where he lived another sort of racism and bias. In the hospital, the protagonist witnessed abstract form of chaos and concrete form of violence. The protagonist lost his memory and was subjected to a painful series of electric shocks, which made him feel strangely disconnected from his body and yet he couldn't express his anger and indignation.

The narrator's depiction of the hospital shows that reality of Blacks in America which is totally different from that of Whites. The hospital scenes show

how the North community treats “Negro issues” it indicated how the Blacks were discriminated and mistreated. The south colleges are programmed to make the Negro accept any white decision; they will be tortured and lynched in case of any perversion or disobedience.

The invisible man's mind goes back to his previous experiences with obstacles he faced and realizes how his life as a Negro in America is difficult. He decided to never come back to Liberty Paint Factory when he is healed. He knew a woman called Mary who nourished and nursed him in her house.

Brotherhood; is an organization that is pretended to give the people’s rights back. His position in the organization was as an orator; his first speech was on “blindness”. The audience liked his speech, but the organization members preferred as it should contain their phrases and he should follow their ideology. Later, he became the spokesman for Harlem.

The protagonist learned that Ras the Exhorter is one of the opponents who showed his hatred for the whites. Later, the protagonist received a warning letter reminding him that he is still a black in a white world. He soon finds himself under attack from his own organization; one man called “Westrom” accused the protagonist of using the organization for his personal interests.

The protagonist felt angry when he knew that Brotherhood wanted to get rid of him, after that, he found Clifton became a vendor of dolls, which he is angry about too. Later the protagonist saw the police shot him. After the death of Clifton, the protagonist and other Brotherhood members decided to organize a manifestation in Clifton's name. The protagonist hoped to recuperate power by giving a talk but this caused in a riot in Harlem. This riot frustrated the Brotherhood organization and threatened him to hung.

The protagonist managed to escape and disguised; he wore glasses and a hat and was mistaken for Rinehart. He then found himself enclosed underground.

This chapter has tackled the main facts of the novel to provide the readers with the crucial information related to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and mentioned the key incidents in order to give more understanding to the following work. The events are crucial and serve to develop the protagonist's personality. He wore many identities during his journey so that he shapes a real identity that fit his position.

The novel follows the process of the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist; it recounts his life from his childhood to the adulthood, from his naivety to his maturity so the researcher in this study can analyze the characters' psychological development.

CHAPTER II

***The PSYCHOLOGICAL
DEVELOPMENT OF RAPLH
ELLISON'S INVISIBLE MAN***

Chapter Two

The Psychological Development of *Invisible Man*

The present chapter will analyze the psychological development as the novel is a bildungsroman genre. His grandfather's advice on his deathbed left a puzzle to the protagonist that through his incidents and experiences could understand it, it had a great impact on the protagonist's personality.

Dreams and day dreams have their parts of the psychological development of the characters. They reveal what they are thinking of, what they are hoping for, and their planning. Sometimes what the characters do not achieve in real life they dream it or hallucinate it under the effect of marijuana.

The quest for identity is the major concern of the protagonist. His journey and his experiences were all about the search of his self, his pride and his personality. He adopted multiple identities in order to build an African American identity.

A. The Narrator's Grandfather Advice

Through reading the first chapter of *Invisible Man*, we notice that the narrator was close to his grandfather and was categorically influenced by him. He appears in the novel only through the protagonist's memories and his pieces of

advice. The story starts by narrating what the grandfather advised the protagonist on his last breath:

*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 Re-
construction. 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.*

(ELLSON 13-14)

The protagonist thought deeply about his grandfather's last words that had a great impact on the narrator's mind and reasoning. Their family member didn't take his words into consideration and thought the old man just went crazy.

In fact, the grandfather's advice splits into two parts. The first part exposes military metaphors and holds that "*our life is a war*" (qtd. In (F. Trimmer 46)). He demonstrates that by meeting the adversary's expectation, he has deceived his own people alluding that any new strategy must be responsible to the people. The end of the first part of the grandfather's advice informs that he had mistaken when he delivered his arm in the Reconstruction. (F. Trimmer 46)

The second part of the grandfather's advice suggests a solution, "Live with your head in the lion's mouth" which resolves continuous conflicts with the adversary, the technique of conflict looks like a spy: the adversary is to be defeated and weakened with "yeah saying", not arms. (F. Trimmer 46)

The protagonist endeavored to understand his grandfather's words; he comprehended the advice literally as treating meekness and humility. Expecting to imitate Booker T. Washington, the protagonist said in his high school speech that: "humility was the secret, indeed, the very essence of progress" (14). The narrator didn't pay a great attention to his grandfather's advice, he believed in the ultimate result of humility after he took part in the Battle Royal. The defeat created an ostensible success, "a scholarship", the narrator feels: "safe from my grandfather, whose deathbed curse usually spoiled my triumphs" (26). There is a sort of ambiguity and misperception. The protagonist followed the instruction of his grandfather and had succeeded; the narrator considered his deeds as a success over his grandfather.

The protagonist regretted the fact that followed his grandfather's instruction but he still continued acting out his role expecting some eventual triumphs: he never achieved that success and found out the possibility of his own betrayal in his failure; and he believed that his grandfather was mocking at his silliness.

Some characters in the novel such as Trueblood and Bledsoe seem as they follow the narrator's grandfather advice: both advantaged from the Whites by

confirming a race stereotype: Trueblood as the role of black man as sexual beast, and Bledsoe as the role of the servile. Trueblood's sexual caprices of the Whites embarrassed the protagonist, and the cunning of Bledsoe deceived him as well. No one could fulfill the grandfather's advice since the "yes" means the rejection of humanity: Trueblood gave up his self-worth for a hundred dollar bill, and Bledsoe's love of power means that "I'll have every Negro in the country hanging on tree limbs by morning if it means staying where I am" (qtd. In (F. Trimmer 47))

When the protagonist met the veteran, the grandfather's advice was presented; the veteran has neither Trueblood's material conquest nor Bledsoe's love of power. He is weakened and impotent; regardless his knowledge is mistreated by power. ". . . Look beneath the surface . . . Play the game, but don't believe in it . . . Play the game but play it your own way. . . Learn how it operates, learn how you operate. . ." (qtd In (F. Trimmer 47)). What distinguishes Bledsoe from the veteran is that Bledsoe considers the game is a designated reality and aims to be an operator; the veteran grasps the evidence in such a game, but he attaches self-awareness: "*learn how you operate*". He should start with himself: "*Be your own father, young man*". Instead of being a stereotype of self, as Bledsoe and Trueblood have done, the protagonist should make his own description. ". . . The world is possibility if only you'll discover *it*".

Lucius Brockway got his position of power by "telling white folks how to think about the things I know about" (128). He is the man who created the slogan

“If It's Optic White, It's the Right White ” (165). Brockway's “yea-saying” resulted in the Liberty Paints’ ruin. Brother Tarp, who had been bound to for nineteen years, known by saying “no” instead of “yea saying”: “. . . *it's got a heap of signifying wrapped up in it and it might help you remember what we're really fighting against. I don't think of it in terms of but two words, yes and no, but it signifies a heap more . . .*”(qtd. In (F.Trimmer 48)). Both yes and no increased victimization: Brockway's yes resulted in damage, and Tarp's no resulted in brutalization.

The protagonist was determined to not be just a victim of a black puppetry after the death of Tod Clifton and the fiasco; he took his grandfather's advice as a weapon and said:

I was ready to test his advice.... I'd yes them till they puked and rolled in it. All they wanted from me was one belch of affirmation and I'd bellow it out loud. . . . That was all anyone wanted of us, that we should be heard . . . only in one big optimistic chorus of yassuh, yassuh, yassuh! ... I'd become a supersensitive confirmer of their misconceptions . . . (quotes. In (F.Trimmer 48)).

The protagonist's “yea” is as the Brockway's “yea” resulted in destruction. The protagonist was satisfied by Harlem’s rebellion, but this joy shifted to

desperateness as he knew that they were not acting but reacting to the operations of the Brotherhood, he argued: *“It was not suicide, but murder And I had helped, had been a tool myself responsible for . . . all the others whom now the night was making ripe for death”*.

Ras's “no” is like Tarp's “no”; he demolished Harlem but not the Whites. During the rebellion, he looks as a meaningless fool on a horse: *“shot up the street leaping like Heigho, the goddam Silver”* (426), here it appears that Ras is just an object of white manipulation.

Rinehart seems to follow his grandfather’s advice and is: “the ultimate incarnation of the grand-father's political theory”. As the protagonist examines people only by “looking through a glass darkly,” Rinehart has many identities due to his “yesses” to everyone's misunderstandings of him. Hence, he succeeded to show the technique of possibility created by the veteran. (F.Trimmer)

No one could give an appropriate meaning to the protagonist’s grandfather last words. At first, the protagonist distrusted the advice: “my grandfather had been wrong ... or else things had changed too much since his day” (426). He protests that: “. . . in order to justify them, I had to take myself by the throat I became ill of affirmation, of saying 'yes' against the nay-saying of my stomach-not to mention my brain” (432-433). But he believed that: “my mind revolved again and again back to my grandfather.... Perhaps he hid his meaning deeper than I thought. . .”

After thinking about the grandfather's advice, the protagonist found three probabilities. Each probability is as a sort of a question, but the question is not answered. Firstly, the protagonist suggested the probability that the grandfather would say:

That we were to affirm the principle on which the country was built and not the men . . . who did the violence. . . . Did he mean to affirm the principle, which they themselves had dreamed into being out of the chaos and darkness of the feudal past, and which they had violated and compromised . . . even in their own corrupt minds? (433).

This belief obviously alludes to the American democracy, and Ellison acknowledges that: "*for better or worse, whatever there is of value in Negro life is an American heritage and as such it must be preserved*" (qtd. In (F. Trimmer 49)).

Secondly, the protagonist hypothesizes that the grandfather may mean: "that we had to take responsibility for all of it . . . because we, with the given circumstances of our origin, could only thus find transcendence" (433). This means that they are able to achieve the American ideal which lies with the Negro specifically due to the sufferance and victimization he has endured.

. . . we were older than they, in the sense of what it took to live in the world with others and ... they had exhausted in us, some-not much, but some of the human greed and smallness, yes, and the fear and superstition that had kept them running (qtd. In (F. Trimmer 49)).

Although blacks were so victimized, biased, and mistreated they were compelled to live with.

Thirdly, the protagonist suggests that his grandfather may mean: “*that we should affirm the principle because we . . . were linked to all the others in the . . . world*” (434). As a final point the “*yea saying*” is a common assertion of humanity, and it is just the declaration of that belief that will keep the human race safe from the Jacks and Nortons who brutalizes people.

The protagonist ended his thoughts on the grandfather's advice arguing that he couldn't puzzle it out but he didn't realize that he answered at least part of the advice. The first probability shares out the position of the American ideal for the Negro, the second suggests the significance of the black experience, and the third one with the meaning of the life principle itself. By saying “*yea*” to these three heritages, the protagonist may: “*creating the uncreated features of his face*” (268).

The grandfather's advice summed up in one's struggle to construct himself. The protagonist has survived with his head in the lion's mouth and has found his

own heart of darkness. Later, he learned that the meaning of his grandfather's advice. The protagonist's memoir is a festivity. It rejoices, it sustains, it says yes to the awareness that ensued from determining what it means to be black, American, and human (F. Trimmer). The grandfather's pieces of advice are as a testament to his grandson on his deathbed left a puzzle to the narrator at the beginning but later, through his experiences, he became able to decipher what his ancestor sought to convey.

B. Function of Dreams in the Novel

Dreaming has always its part in one's life, same with *Invisible Man* characters. However, dreams may reveal a side of characters' personality. Ellison, was affected by Sigmund Freud, theorizes that "*the distorted images that appear in dreams . . . quiver in the . . . mind*" at least with "*hidden . . . significance,*" like "*muggers haunting a lonely hall.*" (Shadow And Act 593).

After the protagonist had won the scholarship, he dreamed that:

That night I dreamed I was at a circus with him and that he refused to laugh at the clowns no matter what they did. Then later he told me to open my brief case and read what was inside and I did, finding an official envelope stamped with the state seal; and inside the envelope I found another and another, endlessly, and I

thought I would fall of weariness. 'Them's years,' he said. 'Now open that one.' And I did and in it I found an engraved document containing a short message in letters of gold. 'Read it,' my grandfather said. 'Out loud!'" 'To Whom It May Concern,' I intoned. 'Keep This Nigger-Boy Running' (33).

The narrator's struggle lies with his relationship with his grandfather, who had a great impact on him. His dreams are associated with his grandfather's beliefs of the white's supremacy and had a power over the blacks. The dream of clowns indicates white's dominant black society, so the clowns symbolize the Whites. Then the clowns tried to amuse him, the grandfather reveals that he will not follow the whites orders.

Also day dreams are also taken into account; the narrator often enjoys listening to Louis Armstrong's jazz and smoking his marijuana. He hallucinated that he hit unintentionally a white man. The white man insulted him then the narrator attacked him as a reaction and kicked him, after that the invisible man became visible suddenly. Here the protagonist expresses through his hallucinations his invisibility and anonymity that prevented him to be as the Whites.

In the dream, the protagonist is given a letter in an envelope that states to keep him running. The letter symbolizes the idea that the protagonist really follows the Whites and that the Whites should let him continue with them.

The typically Freudian theory applied on Trueblood's dream in the novel when he dreamed about sexual relations with white women he argued: "I don't quite remember it all", he admits that parts of his dream is still hidden but there are some evoked flashes which may definite various significances. Trueblood's incest, with his daughter, deciphers his odd illusionary occupation into a womb-clock (Abrams).

Carl Jung's, a student of Sigmund Freud, tried to decipher *Invisible Man's* dreams. He claimed that: "*people used dreams as a way to communicate and introduce themselves to the unconscious. Dreams were not a place to conceal true feelings, as Freud had said, but rather they were a window to the unconscious. Their purpose was to help guide during the waking life*" (shsaplit)

Throughout the novel, Trueblood's dream gives more understandings about the Whites' interaction with the Blacks. It is alluded in the dream of Mr. Broadnax; he dreamed that he lives on a high mountain

... I was lookin's for some fat meat. I went to the white folks downtown and they said go see Mr. Broadnax, that he'd give it to me. Well, he lives up on a hill and I was climbin' up there to see him. Seems like that was the highest hill in the world. The more I climbed the farther away Mr. Broadnax's house seems to git. But finally I do reach there. And I'm so tired and restless

*to git to the man, I goes to the front door! I know it's
wrong... (57)*

The dream portrayed a white man; he is much powerful than the Black Trueblood which represents the White supremacy on the Blacks. In addition, Trueblood portrayed his entrance through Broadnax's door as a trauma, denoting that Blacks may enter Whites' houses through the backdoors. This denotes that Whites do not tolerate the Blacks to involve in the White's' affairs.

*. . .So I sees a door and goes through that door . . . I
tries to git out, but I don't find the door ... then I looks
over in a corner and sees one of them tall grandfather
clocks and I hears it strikin' and the glass door is
openin' and a white lady is steppin' out of it. She got a
nightgown of soft white silky stuff and nothin' else, and
she looks straight at me. I don't know what to do. I
wants to run, but the only door I see is the one in the
clock she's standin' in—and... I tries to tell her I'm just
lookin' for Mr. Broadnax . . . I tries to git away. (59)*

When Trueblood is in the white bedroom, he said that he'd been when he went to "the big house" with his mother. As a black man, he didn't try sumptuousness that Whites did. He also clarifies that he is anxious to touch the woman in his dream because she is white. He said: ". . . I don't know what to do

then ... and I tries to git away. ... and I'm scared to touch her 'cause she's white. Then I gits so scared that I throws her on the bed...”

Trueblood’s dream deals with erotic fantasies too; he described how she wanted to have an affair with her. As Freud’s theory argues that dreams expose one's real desires, Trueblood hid his erotic desire of her. Freud also mentioned that the scenes dreamed are generally those that do not happen in real life. Trueblood did break the blacks’ stereotype by having an affair with a white woman in his dream which can be a symbol to Trueblood’s incest with his daughter. (shsaplit)

The narrator’s dream “When I stopped, gasping for breath, I decided that I would go back and kill Bledsoe. Yes, I thought, I owe it to the race and to myself. I'll kill him... I could hardly get to sleep for dreaming of revenge” (194). His dreaming of “revenge” is a clue to what Freud did theorize of dreaming scenes that generally do not happen in real life. The narrator dreamed about revenge without describing details which is his auto-analysis. He dreamed about murdering Bledsoe because he was thinking about it before going to sleep. And according to Freud, dreaming may reveal the negative part of the individual.

When the narrator was in New York, he had an affair with a woman that he felt it as “*it was like a dream*” (416). In his real dream after having sex, the narrator imagined a bull caught him. . “*It was strange. My mind revolved. I was chased out of a chinkapin woods by a bull*” .The bull, however, symbolizes the

woman's husband. This dream involves the theory of Freud which contains sexual charge, making the bull instead of the husband is done purposefully to indicate its impact on the narrator in the future. (Freud 332)

C. The Quest for Identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

The novel's major issue focuses on the quest for identity; it is a story of an unnamed black man who is looking for his self-determination. He narrates his adventures of identity vagueness through his protagonist. The novel exemplifies that the protagonist feels unfulfilled and his desire to fulfill himself. He said in the prologue that:

*I am invisible man, 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. (3)*

The narrator introduced himself saying that he is an invisible man which refers to his anonymity. The invisible man fought against the society's bias of the

Whites against the Blacks. The latter are seen invisible which separate them from society where people do not consider them as human beings. When the protagonist moved from the south to the north it is a clue of psychological transformation referring to building his personality from naivety to maturity and from a lower student to a higher orator and representor of the Brotherhood organization.

The main issue that faced the invisible man to search for his identity is the black stereotype in his surroundings starting from the college he studied, Liberty paint factory he worked, Brotherhood where he was an orator. All incidents that the protagonist passed had affected his identity construction.

As mentioned earlier; the invisible man adopted many identities so that he can acquire a final identity that suits his position in a racist society. He trusted blindly Mr. Emerson to find a job for him despite the bad letters of Mr. Bledsoe. His trust in Mr. Emerson asserted him. He said:

“‘Couldn’t you let me talk to him for just five minutes?’ I pleaded. ‘I’m sure I can convince him that I’m worthy of a job. And if there’s someone who has tampered with my letter, I’ll prove my identity. . . .’” (qtd. In (Nadel 117)).

Mr. Emerson replied: “Identity! My God! Who has any identity any more anyway? It isn’t so perfectly simple. Look,” he said with an anguished gesture. “Will you trust me?”(qtd. In (Nadel 117)).

The mind of the invisible man is filled with dreams, however, they change through the process of the novel. The essence of all his dreams summed up in being invisible in the obstacles along his path, so that invisibility brings him freedom and can easily manipulate process of building his identity.

Being deprived of his own freedom is related to the protagonist's identity which he is looking for: "Perhaps, I thought, the two things are involved with each other. When I discover who I am, I'll be free."(212).The protagonist was endeavoring to know who he is in order to be visible to Whites and to voice his visions and to be equal to them.

After the factory accident, the protagonist was hospitalized in the factory hospital he lost his memory for a moment, he suffered a lot. The doctors asked him questions related to his identity, his mother name and about Buckeye the Rabbit: "What is your name? A tremor shook me; it was as though he had suddenly given a name to, had organized the vagueness that drifted through my head, and I was overcome with swift shame. I realized that I no longer knew my own name."(qtd. In (Cook and James Tatum 191)).The protagonist felt discriminated even in public places especially when the doctors asked him about his name and the rabbit song referring to his origins which is from the ancient African culture.

The protagonist didn't know his name and consequently his position in the world, he tried to think about his names several times but in vain: "I tried, thinking

vainly of many names, but none seemed to fit, and yet it was as though I was somehow a part of all of them, had become submerged within them and lost.” (210). The protagonist created a new identity in the factory hospital.

Ellison showed his pride of being and belonging by the invisible man in the hospital when they asked him about his name. In fact, he forgot his name but didn't reveal it because it symbolizes his heritage. (Cook and James Tatum 191)

During his entrance to the Brotherhood organization as an orator, the protagonist adopted a new name and a new identity as well. He described the audience has received him: “Everyone smiled and seemed eager to meet me as though they all knew the role I was to play. All grasped me warmly by the hand” (241). The protagonist felt himself as very important element in the organization. It was believed an organization of peace and justice, but he found out that is only a source of power of white people for their self-interest. His entrance in the organization destructed his identity even more than before he became a member; he couldn't see his real individual.

This chapter focused on the process of psychological development of the invisible man through his journey. His experiences, however, contributed in analyzing his character and attitudes starting from his hallucinations, dreams, and his grandfathers' pieces of advice.

The protagonist is someone invisible to his society and his surroundings. His invisibility enables him to adopt multiple identities in order to build his real African American identity. His task was not that easy for many causes such as black stereotype and race-discrimination.

As the novel is a bildungsroman, the present study exposes the psychological development of the novel's protagonist. It analyses his personality from his childhood to his manhood from a naïve boy to a mature man full with experiences.

CHAPTER III
FOLKLORE AS A RELIEF

Chapter Three

Folklore as a Relief

After hard experiences that faced the protagonist and the other characters in the novel such as race discrimination, injustice, and continuous mistreatment. Invisible Man characters refuged to art and music to free them from grief and to find relief and consolation. They consider it as a device to assure themselves.

Ralph Ellison considered African American folklore as a vital mean for expressing one's self and relieving life injustices. However, African American folklore encompasses Blacks' achievement of that feeling of inferiority and meaninglessness.

The present chapter will discuss how art and aesthetics are used in the novel to express pain, sufferance, and misery through writing and singing to feel liberation and release. This psychological relief pushed the Blacks to hope for a good future for them.

A. Harlem Renaissance

The American South was renowned for its agricultural nature with the presence of oppression, lynching, and injustice. Yet, many moved to the North; life conditions there were better than the South thanks to the manufactories that were at a large scale. Furthermore, the North was not merely a place of economic

opportunities but also cultural tolerance. Thus, the migration of the Blacks towards the Industrial American Northern lived an extreme growth principally to Harlem. The latter was the favorite to be the Blacks' cultural capital where they could build an appropriate Black image. Therefore, the crucial events of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* took place in Harlem district.

Harlem is a city of celebrations and cultures; it has It has mixed social classes. The cultural explosion of 1920 showed how Blacks are fond of their African American culture referred as "Harlem Renaissance". The American society is known by its multiculturalism in which many cultures and experiences are welded. Ralph Ellison views cultural mixture in America as a wealth to his identity and a treasure to its heritage. He regards America an exclusive country where several cultures have mixed together forming the modeling of American identity as one united body.

Invisible Man is a response to Harlem Renaissance; Ralph Ellison integrated Black Folklore in his texts referring to jazz and blues to alleviate their pains, sorrows, and plights. The Harlem Renaissance is a revival of African American culture, that is, to awaken cultural consciousness within the Black society. Ellison, through his use of folklore, attempted to show his proud of Blackness and he insisted on the point that African American heritage contributed in the diversity and amelioration of the American culture.

The cultural explosion of the 1920s is a cultural movement that showed the exact creation of the blacks' cultural pride of belonging. The Harlem artists released from that feeling of being ashamed of their African American origins; instead, the Black artists reconsidered their past through self-esteem. So, he became persuaded that the past could be passed and making of it a source of muse by which the Black could reunite his past with his present to build his future, so the Harlem Black artist released from oppression and started to adopt the method of self-healing³.

Harlem attracted an important number of Blacks thanks to its status of liberty of expression and artistry environment. As a consequent of the cultural explosion of the twenties, Blacks became more autonomous of and receptive to challenging thoughts, however, this change in the Black mind affected greatly on the Black's quest to build a new image and live suitably with others.

At that time, civilization and human evolution art was featured by art and music. Yet, the Harlem Renaissance was a refuge where the Negro could support himself and build his identity as an African American citizen.

When the narrator moved to New York looking for a job to pay for his college, not only because the fact Dr. Bledsoe sent him the city, but he is also aware of the fact it is the place where he could make more money than anywhere

³ Due to the hard circumstances, the Blacks were healing themselves by smoking weed and listening to Blues

else; the narrator meets a stranger at the bus station where he is waiting for the bus and they started to talk. After the stranger finds out the narrator is leading the way to New York he says:

New York! That's not a place, it's a dream. When I was your age it was Chicago. Now all the little black boys run to New York. Out of the fire into melting pot. I can see you after you've lived in Harlem for three months. Your speech will change . . . you might even meet a few white folks (qtd. In (Jongh 93)).

The stranger was as a clairvoyant he foretold about the protagonist's future. Young, black boys go to New York not only to gain money but also to find relief and to feel freedom he always heard about. (Jongh 93)

The stranger was right when he said within three months he will change the way he speaks and he will meet white people. The narrator certainly wished to experience famous restaurants and white woman that he could not ever meet in the south. Before the stranger left the bus, he gave to the protagonist a piece of advice. "But for God's sake, learn to look beneath the surface . . . you don't have to be completely fool in order to succeed. Play the game, but don't believe it" (p 151). The protagonist didn't take his advice into consideration hence he did not comment on his advice. The stranger also forewarned him against white people.

When he arrived to Harlem, he was astonished by its buildings and he noticed that it's more energetic, he unexpectedly realized he could accomplish it.

Invisible Man is the incarnation of Ralph Ellison's culture. It imitates Ellison different views of the African American life and culture in America, furthermore, it follows the literary mode of the Harlem Renaissance based on black aesthetics.

Harlem Renaissance performers such as Ralph Ellison made use of the African American inheritance as a way for associating the past and the present so the Americans wanted to distinguish the exclusivity of Black inheritance. Furthermore, Ellison considers the use of folklore and Afro-American past in his work as vital and indispensable to endure Black aesthetics as elements of Black identity.

B. Welding Black Folklore in the Novel

African Americans consider the Black folklore as a fundamental means for expressing the soul and relieving life difficulties, for this regard, Ellison motivates the Black artists to expose their glory of their beings as African Americans which reveal their past and impose their existences. Ralph endeavored to make his readers familiar with the African American culture to learn about his ancestors' past which could support him to strengthen his sense of humanity and associating.

Introducing folklore in the literary texts of a people evokes some feelings of comfort, he argued: “Everybody wants to tell us what a Negro is ... But, if you would tell me who I am, at least, take the trouble to discover what I have been.” (Ellison, Shadow and Act) Thus, introducing art, Jazz and Blues in the novel will portray the African American culture and their pride of being.

Ellison aimed through his integration of culture in the novel to fuse the African American culture with the American one and to show his pride of Black being. As stated:

For Ellison, the most meaningful symbolic forms of black life were found in folklore, and he believes these forms also represent an essential part of American culture. The varied expressions and images comprising black folklore embody both the black and white history of the nation, and Ellison insists that minority artists must integrate these forms into art helping define American identity. (Hill and Lena M. Hill)

The main concern showed by Ellison was to impose their culture, to invite others to be proud of their ancestors' deeds, and to build an American Identity, furthermore, he considered Black folklore in his texts as a fundamental point to assert their rights of Americanness.

Black folklore such as Jazz and Blues are not considered as sign of evolution but rather a sort of evasion to express the self and to assure self-confidence to preserve their African American culture and to make their culture as “a central great theme of American literature” (Tracy).

After the Battle Royal incident, the narrator believed that he has won a scholarship as a reward for his victory, but in fact, he did not.

Some passages of the novel echo as music; such as the rhythm of the pipe increases and the protagonist’s disgust of the stereotype addressed to his neighbors: “get rid of your cottonpatch ways! Act civilized!” (320). Also when Mary complains to her son’s music: “just listen to ‘em! just listen to ‘em!... Why don’t folks act according to what they know?” the musical themes continue: “The knocking had gone beyond mere protest over heatlessness now”:

Knock!

Knock- Knock!

Knock-Knock!

Knock!

Knock- Knock!

Knock- Knock! (320)

Blues music is considered as a particular dialect of the Blacks, imbedded in the experiences of the reconstruction despairs, and the Northern great migration. The content of the Blues music does not concern only the Afro-Americans. Undeniably, Blues descriptions seldom reveal racism. More frequently, Blues music talks about problems with love, alienation, and solitude. They are, more precisely, about the grief of love, life with despair and disillusionment.

When the protagonist is alone and struggling with his inner feeling, he refuges to Blues such in the basement scene he steals electricity to switch on his phonograph and listen to Armstrong's "*What Did I Do to Be so Black and Blue*". Music affects greatly on him; therefore, he wants five phonographs that is to feel the vibration of the music within his body. Listening to Armstrong's blues helps him "*to discover unrecognizable compulsion of being even though could not answer 'yes' to their prompting*" and change his state of mind.

One of the fateful incidents happened when Bledsoe has handed the protagonist a letter that contains: "*To Whom It May Concern, Keep This Nigger-Boy Running*" (qtd . In (Callahan)). The protagonist felt despair and hopeless of the unjust life.

After the protagonist's deception of Bledsoe, he listened to music on his way from Emerson's office and felt relieved. He is hypnotized and fascinated by the blues song vibrating from the street corner:

O well they picked poor Robin clean

O well they picked poor Robin clean

Well they tied poor Robin to a stump

Lawd, they picked all the feathers round from Robin's rump

Well they picked poor Robin clean (qtd. In (Callahan)).

The blues music is full of life, love, and identity. This song teaches to the protagonist that each one should continuously die in order to grow. The music words state that violent experiences “pick us clean” meaning that make us innocent.

Then, he understood its meaning that enabled him to transcend his plight such as: “*poor Robin*” he has been: “*pickedclean*”. He is picked up and selected in his surroundings even with his goodness and kindness.

Throughout the reading of *Invisible Man*, one's notices the characters' allusion to jazz, blues and Black past as way express themselves such as Trueblood he is typical music creator; he feels relief when singing blues after he commits incest with his daughter whom he gets pregnant. Blues comes to be the only alternative to ease his pain.

After the horrific unconscious act of incest, he recounted the incident to Mr. Norton; he felt an immediate necessity to make his own music of blues to transcend his fault. Trueblood states:

I don't know what it was, some kinda church song, I guess. All I know is I ends up singin' the blues. I sings me some blues that night ain't never been sang before, and while I'm singin' them blues I makes up my mind that I ain't nobody but myself and ain't nothin' I can do but let whatever is gonna appen, happen. I made up my mind that I was goin' back home and face Kate; yeah, and face Matty Lou too. (58)

He feels determined to revive his manhood when singing, keep his family safe from any future harm. Music such as Blues eases his depressed soul and provides him with a new energy to assume his responsibility as the father of his family. Actually, Black music has positive effect on Trueblood and reveals that Black music is “*therapy*” which helps the Blacks to overcome their predicaments.

Trueblood comforts himself and by inventing Blues music. Basically, the black music supports him to master his world and resist his reality of humiliating rape. The Blues music has a great influence on The Trueblood’s personality and stresses the fact that the Black folklore helps the Black to relieve their griefs.

Oral folklore is also used in the novel which is parts of oral traditions transmitted from generation to generation. The protagonist reiterated a Black proverb when Mr. Brockway taught him importance of whiteness in the making of the Liberty Paint Factory's logo, Optic White as he sarcastically states "*If you're white you're right*" (177) referring to a Black proverb: "*If you're black, stay back; if you're brown, stick around; if you're white, you're right*" (Callahan 41).

Ellison incorporated Black dialect in the novel purposely to show the Black daily interactions which reflects the richness of American culture. This feature of integrating Black dialect in the American writings is that of Ellison which makes him diverged from the other novelists.

The invisible man decided to look for a job, but early on he runs into a bluesman. However, his music celebrates the influential emotional release attained through his love to a lady, his music words are:

She's got feet like a monkey

Legs like a frog- Lawd, Lawd!

But when she starts to loving me

I holler Whoooo, God-dog!

Cause I loves my baby,

Better than I do myself. (qtd. In (Callahan))

This blues music praises the sex life of the bluesman. Her woman's beauty is uncertain vis-a-vis the measurement of the beauty; he insists that he loves her much than himself. The bluesman asserted his identity and his sexuality, he told the protagonist violently to be what he is and not to disguise himself. (Callahan)

There is a passages in the text in which Trueblood talks with Mr. Norton about mistreatment of the American society, Trueblood states:

We ain't doing so bad, suh. "Fore they heard" bout what happen to us out here I couldn't git no help from nobody. Now lotta folks is curious and goes outta they way to help. Even the biggity school folks up on the hill, only there was a catch to it! They offered to send us clean outta the county, pay our way and everything and give me a hundred dollars to git settled with. But we likes it here so I told 'em No. (47)

By fusing the Black dialect, Ralph Ellison wanted to show that the Negro has a culture and an identity and a heritage. In doing so, Ellison puts the Blacks in touch with the Black heritage so as to be familiar with their ancestors' past which enable them to reinforce their pride of being and association.

Ellison's integration of Black folklore in "Invisible Man" makes his novel distinguished from the other writers and helps him to emphasize the exceptionality

of his work. Moreover, in doing so, Ellison shows his sense of his Blackness and his African origins in addition to his ancestors' heritage.

Black folklore such as Blues and jazz had appeared in the African American society, precisely in Harlem, after they suffered from life burdens in a America where race discrimination, injustice, and continuing mistreatment touched every part. Invisible Man characters, including the protagonist, had shifted to sing and listen to music such as Blues and Jazz so they could be released of that feeling of oppression and grief. They consider Black folklore as a device to assure themselves and to find relief and consolation.

As the issue of Whites' superiority submitted the African Americans, the Black folklore covers Blacks' triumph of relieving of that feeling of inferiority and meaninglessness. Ralph Ellison considered African American folklore as a vital mean for expressing one's self and relieving life injustices.

Ralph Ellison in his "Invisible Man" proved how art and aesthetics are used in his texts to express pain, sufferance, and misery through writing and singing to feel deliverance, freedom, autonomy, release, and self-determination. This psychological relief pushed the Blacks to hope a good future for them.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

The last century knew a great change in the African American world; Blacks wanted to appear as equal as the other races. They achieved that change of being insignificant and minor through literature by making their own folklore and culture then annexed it to the American culture.

It is important to tackle the main facts of the novel that is to provide the readers with the crucial information related to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* as done previously. There will be mentioned the key incidents in order to give more understanding to the following work. The events are crucial and serve to develop the protagonist's personality. He adopted many identities during his journey so that he shapes a real identity that fit his position as a black man in a white society.

The second chapter focuses on the process of psychological development of the invisible man through his journey. His experiences, however, contributed in understanding his attitudes and behaviors starting from his hallucinations, dreams, and his grandfathers' pieces of advice.

The protagonist is someone invisible to his society and his surroundings. His invisibility enables him to adopt multiple identities in order to build his real African American identity. His task was not that easy for many causes such as black stereotype and race-discrimination.

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As the issue of Whites' superiority submitted the African Americans, the Black folklore covers Blacks' triumph of relieving of that feeling of inferiority and meaninglessness. Ralph Ellison considered African American folklore as a vital means for expressing one's self and relieving life injustices.

Ralph Ellison in his "Invisible Man" proved how art and aesthetics are used in his texts to express pain, sufferance, and misery through writing and singing to feel deliverance, freedom, autonomy, release, and self-determination. He expressed his pride of belonging and association to his African roots.

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Abstract

The previous century's concern in African American literature was about the quest for identity, self-awareness and a sense of being. Identity had known as a continuing development and had tempted many artists such as Richard Wright, W. E. B. Du Bois and Ralph Ellison. During Harlem Renaissance, the Blacks were seduced by the identity construction and showed their pride of their being and belonging to African roots. The present study has an analytical nature which examines the psychological development of the Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man characters and the use of Black aesthetics as a means of expressing the self. It also explores the blacks' identity and their experience through the analysis of the novel and aims to investigate the pivotal events and the major characters as well as their progression in the novel, so that the reader can learn the issues related to the characters' life.

Key Words: identity, folklore, Black heritage.

Résumé

Le siècle dernier a connu des grands débats concernant l'identité en littérature Afro-Américaine, aussi l'autonomie, et fierté de l'être. L'identité était en progression et a attiré beaucoup d'artistes. Elle a attiré surtout les Nègres durant la Renaissance d'Harlem. Cette étude investit le développement moral et psychologique des personnages du roman incluant l'héro et aussi l'intégration du folklore des Nègres qui a but pour démontrer leur fierté de l'être et aussi pour s'exprimer. Cette fusion est faite volontairement pour montrer la culture et l'art des négres qui étaient marginalisés et qui ont souffert de la discrimination.

Mots Clefs : identité, folklore, origines.

ملخص

اهتم ادباء القرن السابق بالهوية في الادب الافروامريكي حيث عرفت الهوية تطور مستمر وجذبت الكثير من الفنانين وخاصة السود في "نهضة هارلم". تهدف هذه الدراسة لمناقشة التطور النفسي للرجل الخفي للكاتب رالف اليسون واستعماله لل فولكلور للتعبير عن النفس. تكشف ايضا عن هوية الافروامركان و تجاربهم والاحداث ذات اهمية كبيرة والشخصيات البارزة عبر تحليل القصة ذلك لكي يفهم القارئ فهم المشكلات و العوائق المرتبطة بالقصة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهوية, الفولكلور, الاصول الافريقية