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Quest for Black Identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Prakash Kattel has completed his thesis entitled “Quest for Black Identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* under my supervision. He carried out his research from 27 June 2008 A.D. to July 23, 2009. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis titled "Quest for Black Identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Prakash Kattel has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

The main issue in the novel *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison deals with the existential crisis about the main character called Invisible Man, which is not only the problem of the main character but this is a social and political problem. The concept of white about black has thrown the existence of black into darkness. He shows sympathy with the black people of the USA, because he finds them to be the victims of the white man's injustice and oppressive policies. Although slavery was legally abolished, the white continued to treat the negroes badly, Who were the victims of injustice, exploitation and even their existence was ignored. So search for authentic self was necessary and many blacks began to revolt against this injustice. In this novel, the protagonist emerges from his underground "hibernation" to establish his true identity and prove him as a human with certain existence. Although the so-called whites think that they are visible and the protagonist as an invisible man, but the protagonist sees visibility in him. The narrator sees life impossible in the white dominated world, so he emerges from there and starts journey for the establishment of his true identity and places himself in the contemporary American society.

CONTENTS

Letter of Recommendation	i
Letter of Approval	ii
Acknowledgment	iii
Abstract	iv
Contents	v
I. General Introduction	1
II. General Survey of Existentialism	10
III. Existential Study of the Novel <i>Invisible Man</i>	23
IV. Conclusion	44
V. Works Cited	

I. General introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the vision regarding the question of human existence. All existential theories have in common is simply the fact that an individual can attain genuine existence only in contest with this external relations with others. Existentialists answer the fundamental questions of human existence in terms of subjective idealism which Marxists do in terms of objective and socialist realism. These different but basic concepts of Marxists and the existentialists regarding human existence thus juxtapose. The Marxist premise is that humans do not create themselves from nothingness, but rather, out of the raw materials of the concrete historical epoch that has been thrown off the flywheel of the dialectic. The development of the reality through several stages and in several forms is more complex than that one the preceded is the sole source of meaning and order in human history.

Human existence is not independent of social relations of dominance and subordination which govern the social and economic order. A particular phase of human history will in some sense determine the whole cultural life of the society. Society is full of contradictions. Existence through struggle in such a society is the Marxist concept. The struggle between the exploiting class and the exploited class is a perpetual affair, because each one fights for its own existence and victory. After the final overthrow of capitalism by the proletarians, the men will be free and get real existence in a classless society. But Sartre and other existentialists broke from Marxist thought insisting that man is not the simple resultant of the material, biological and social conditions in which he finds himself and they give first place to what is actually experienced by the individual. They strongly oppose the Marxist determinism on human existence and freedom. Sartre asserts, "man is nothing else but what he makes of himself". That is the first principle of existentialism" (15).

The human being is thus neither an essential a priori, the nature of whom is always already defined, nor is he or she a more passive product of the context. What is at the very heart and center of existentialism, is the absolute character of the free commitment, by which every man realizes himself to be.

Employing the shifting, improvisational style directly based on Ellison's experience of jazz performance, *Invisible Man* ranges in tone from realism to extreme surrealism, from tragedy to vicious satire to neoplastic comedy, rich in symbolism and metaphor, virtuous in its use of multiple styles and tones, and steeped in the black experience in American and the human struggle for individuality. The novel spent sixteen weeks in the best seller list and won the national book award in 1953. Ellison has said that his task has revealed the human universals hidden within the plight of one who was both black and American, and not only as a means of conveying my personal vision of possibility, but as a way of dealing with the sheer rhetorical challenge involved in communicating across our barriers which consists of the many strategies of division that were designed, and still function, to prevent what would otherwise have been a more or less natural recognition of the reality of black and white fraternity.

Achieving one of the most sensational debuts of any novel in American history, *Invisible Man* was hailed by writers such as Saul Bellow and critics such as Irving Howe as a landmark publication. Some critics claimed that it was the most important American novel to appear after World War II. *Invisible Man* was heavily influenced by the work of the twentieth century French existentialist's Foucault power theory the novel includes prologue, epilogue, and twenty-five chapters, the unnamed narrator proclaims that he is an invisible man. White's power system has dominated the society. So he is invisible for

everyone. "I am an invisible man" (3). This is the opening sentence of the book that refers to the title. It becomes clear that the title refers to the narrator. The prologue of *Invisible Man* introduces the major themes that define the rest of the novel. The metaphor of invisibility and blindness allow for an examination of the effects of racism and whites power on the victim. Even though the narrator is conscious about the effect of white's power system upon blacks he doesn't resist against it at first. He also believes that if blacks worked hard and proved themselves, whites would grant them equality. By taking advantage of liberal mind of the narrator whites use him as a doll but in the novel some characters like Ras the exhorter who resist against whites power and even attack upon the narrator.

The present work has been divided into four chapters, the first, chapter gives a short outline of *Invisible Man* and short review and introductory outline of the present study and a short introduction to Ellison and narrator's struggle for existence. Similarly, the second chapter tries to explain theoretical modality briefly. It clarifies the term existentialism. On the basis of the theoretical modality the third chapter analyses the text, it will sort out some abstracts from the text to show the existential crisis for the narrator or to prove the hypothesis of the study. This chapter is the core of the research. The last chapter concludes the ideas put forward in the earlier chapters and it also deals about suitability of the title.

Author and the Text

Author and the text are the interrelated phenomenon. The text cannot be isolated from its author. As the literature and art are the products of the reflection of a society. The ideology of the author is conveyed through the text. The text is the mirror of the given society made by its author. Those ideas here exist in writer's mind about the narrator's existential crisis.

This relationship of author and text is vividly reflected in *Invisible Man*. This very novel *Invisible Man* made Ralph Ellison famous in semi auto biographical novel. The unnamed protagonist of *Invisible Man* represents the author himself in many ways. Like the protagonist, Ellison's life was also marked by the poverty in his early days. His grandfather Alfred Ellison was an illiterate ex-slave who had nonetheless served during reconstruction as constable, marshal and magistrate in the Ellison Clan's hometown, Abbeville, South Carolina. He was born on march 1, 1914 in Oklahoma city the older of the two sons of Lewis and Ida Ellison. Ellison's father, who ran small ice and coal business, died in an accident when Ellison was three years old. In the following years Ida supported Ralph and his brother by working as a domestic and as a stewardess of the Avery Chapel afro Methodist Episcopal church. Elision developed an early interest in music and books, fed by the discarded magazines and phonograph records, his mother brought home form the white households where she worked. He did well in school and won a scholarship to the Tuskegee Institute similar to the protagonist who has won the scholarship of a Negro college. After a year at Tuskegee institute Ellison went to New York and remained there.

In New York he started to study sculpture there he met with black writers like Laugston Hughes, Richard Wrights and the contact with these people led him to join Federal writer's project. He had earlier read the works of Ernest Hemingway, George Bernard Shaw and T.S. Eliot which impressed him deeply. Encouraged by Richard Wright he started to write essays, reviews and short stories in favour of Blacks, for various periodicals. Later he became an editor of the Negro Quarterly and started to work on his novel. In 1946 he married Fanny Mc Connell. Ellison received many awards including the Medal of Freedom (1969), Chevalier De 1 Ordre des Arteset Letters (1970).

While staying at New York Ellison became involved with the left wing political movements of the depression period. He was first drawn to left politics by his mother's involvement with the socialist party in Oklahoma. By his own experience of poverty, segregation, and hard times; and by the impact of such events as the Scattsboro and Herdon cases and the civil war in Spain. He was also influenced in it by his friends Richard Wrights and Hangston Hughes. But he didn't stay too long in the left wing politics as he could not understand the communist party. His ignorance in understanding the communist party is reflected in the ignorance of the protagonist in '*Invisible Man*' who has joined the brotherhood but left it soon because of his inability in understanding the communist party. After the rejection of the communist party the protagonist in *Invisible Man* becomes an absurdist and moves in a hole. Elisions idea were changed into absurdity which he began to express in his art and literature. He wrote *Invisible Man* after he had left the communist party. He has endeavored to satirize the communist party and satirizes it. Then, he has tried to prove his theory of absurdity in the novel which is

manifested in the ignorance of the protagonist in understanding the contradictions of the society.

In short, as he himself had changed into a reactionary, the protagonist of '*Invisible Man*' has become the spokesman in conveying his reactionary views and idea. The ideology of Ellison is conveyed in the novel through its protagonist. Ellison insisted that he wrote *Invisible Man* thinking not of its sociological insights into injustice, but strictly of the art of writing '*Invisible Man*' which tells a story of an Afro American man who is losing his sense of identity in the world of prejudice and hostility. He has an underground cellar to solve his relationship with American society. He sees darkness everywhere and to fill the space with light he burns 1369 bulbs. Before becoming free from all illusions, the nameless narrator makes a feverish, Dantesque journey through his experiences in a segregated community to the North.

Critics on the Text

Invisible Man was almost instantly recognized as a classic in American bourgeois society. The winner of several prizes when it was published including the National Book Award for 1953, *Invisible Man* has been widely praised. Different critics have taken the book differently. Critics of *Invisible Man* were approved by the concept of invisibility of the protagonist which they took as the unavoidable truth of all men in human society, Irving Howe in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* argues that *Invisible Man* is a Negro novel searching for an identity in the white dominated society:

What man could ever have written it? It is drenched in Negro life task music: it tells us how distant even that best of the whites are from the black man that pass them the streets; and it is written from a particular compound of emotions that no white man could possibly stimulate. To deny that is a engross novel is to deprive the Negroes of their own basic right; the right to cry out their difference. (120)

He claims that this novel came as result of White's treatment to blacks. How blacks are ignored and compelled to search their value in the society. If someone is not taken as human being, he struggles to get his existence, so in the novel *Invisible Man*, the protagonist comes out of White dominated society and makes a journey for his authentic self.

Considering *Invisible Man* as a great novel, Aliane Lock found the psychological realism of human being in the invisibility of the protagonist. The novel unrolls some kind of volcanic flow out of dominated desire, which expresses the lived imagery force of the protagonist, Suppressed mentality comes in the form of volcano, he says;

. . . That invisible man was a great novel although also not without it's artistic flaws said to say . . . stylistically unrolls in a volcanic flow of vivid sometimes of lived imagery a tour de force of psychological realism” .
(qtd in Graham 178)

Taking the novel from oppressor and oppressed view point, Karl Marx and Angles observed that every oppressed nationalities contain the reactionary elements who are in league with the ruling classes of the oppressors nationalities and collaborate with them in the oppression and exploitation of the working people of their own nationalists. They claimed that the exploitation of one nation by another should be put at an end and the exploitation by another too should be put at an end and only antagonism between them vanishes:

In proportion as the exploitation of are individual by another is put and end to the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to.
In proportion or the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to end. (57)

Claiming the novel, *Invisible Man* oppressed by power politics, John Heresy says that the politics of white society did not understand the human value. Without understanding human sentiment the whites motivated blacks because they have power. Here his ideas are similar to Foucault's ideas of power and discourse. Using their power whites made distinction between blacks and whites. John Heresy says:

Much of the rhetorical and political energy of white society went toward proving itself that we were not human and that we had no sense of he refinement of human values. But this in itself pressured your motivated

you to make even finer distinctions, both as to personality and value.

You had to because your life depended that you do so. You had to identify those values which were human and preserving of your life and interest as against those which were inhuman and destructive. (16-17)

The ethnic difference made blacks to struggle against whites. In the novel *Invisible Man*, Henry Gates also finds ethnic difference, which made the protagonist struggle against the prospect of splintered culture, divided or dissipated selves represent in part some of the pressures that contribute to the diffuse and fragmented life. The awareness of ethnic difference compels the African Americans go against the authority and tyranny of the whites:

The threatened obliteration of the African Americans also sharpens awareness of ethnic difference. Against to manifest authority and tyranny of the whites, ethnicity ensures a certain dignity and identity a more radical response takes the form of a proclamation of African American power. . . it has cut itself from the portent force of the African American phallus; it is divorced from the pulsing mystery and promise of human felling and being. (139-240)

The conscious knowledge of an individual tries to search freedom, freedom for existence. In this context it is very applicable to bring Robert O Meally's view, who took the invisibility of the protagonist as his conscious knowledge of his individual, cultural and national history. An individual's attempts tend stretching toward adulthood. He says:

According to the vision in Ellison's novel and indeed thought his fiction is ultimately affirmative. Virtually all of his fictions tend stretching toward

adulthood. We see in this the evolution of a central theme; in his the evolution of a central theme the more conscious person is of his individual cultural and national history the freer becomes (American Writers). 22

Thus, the critics have approached the text in many ways. But this researcher tries to study invisible man from the view point of existentialism. Because of white dominated norms and values the protagonist's existence is thrown into being. His life is meaningless and he is invisible so this novel tries to show how an individual suffers and struggles to establish his real existence.

II General Survey of Existentialism

The major question in the world after First World War was the crisis of human existence. Thrown into an incoherent, disordered and chaotic world in which individual's destinies were obstructed and turned apart by the Second World War, they couldn't believe in old concept like unity, rationality, morality and value and even in Christianity. The writers saw the world totally absurd, incoherent, disintegrated, chaotic and disordered, not governed by the laws of providence but by pure chance and contingency. This feeling of existence without justification became the main proposition of the twentieth century. The industrial revolution, the race for armaments, large scale manufacture of nuclear weapons and the indiscriminate political quarrels shook the very foundation of human existence. Dadaism, surrealism, futurism, existentialism and absurdum were all the outcome of the bitterness and despair of the restless age after the war. After the 1930, and particularly after the Second World War many writers began to oppose the doctrines that viewed human beings as the manifestation of an absolute value.

In this way, the question of existence without justification became the main proposition of twentieth century. The feeling of utter alienation was the product of the recognition of 'death of God' on the one hand and the catalism of the World War I and the II on the other. Not only God is dead as Nietzsche proclaimed, but also all the intermediary values connecting God and man declined. Man has lost even the certainties and valued of his own existence, which he had originally received from his belief in God. Out of this reverse, fragmented and alienated situation of man and the world, existential movement came into fashion as medicine. By existentialism we mean a doctrine which

makes human life possible and in addition declares that every truth and every action implies a human setting and human subjectivity.

In the background of such a fragmented and disillusioned situation, many writers and philosophers sought to reduce to present prevalent condition of modern man. The writers easily realized that life has become alarmingly insecure. The industrial revolution, the race of for armaments, large scale manufacture and the great political tycoons and stars had shaken the very foundation of human existence, as it is today. Existentialism is probably the most dynamic and appropriate philosophical movement to define and interpret the anxiety, absurdity and the uncertainties of human existence.

There are different sects of existentialism and the existential writers also differ greatly in various ways. Existentialism is a statement about the nature of man's existence. In this context it is applicable to mention Sartrean notion "existence precedes essence" (13). What is meant here by saying that existence precedes essence? Sartre clarifies. "it means that first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene and only after wards defines himself" (15). It may be noted that this statement is related to human individuality. The human distinctiveness is so vast that it can not be limited to any general rule. That is to solve the human intrigues through the means of theories would be prejudicial, a fascination of human reality. The problems of men are not theoretical but practical. Even man's own behavior can not define and limit his reality for he always endeavors to build himself by his own behaviour. In brief, in the context of human reality, man's existence is prior to his essence. Man makes his nature by his own efforts; and he thus, determines his own essence. Sartre further says, "by existentialism, we mean a doctrine which makes human lives possible and, in addition, declares that every truth

and every action implies a human setting and human subjectivity" (16). Here Sartre says Existentialism is a doctrine through which human life has been running and without it our life is impossible and the human subjectivity is created by the truth and action. Sartre highlights existence rather than essence. "Existentialism is primarily concerned with human existence, specially with man's extreme experience; the confrontation with death, anguish and anxiety, despair and guilt" (589-90)

Existentialism places its entire emphasis on the individual's existence and existence which postulates man as free from any natural or human standards in terms of which he must act and be defined. 'Existence' as such is not valued according to any external truth or to social and moral standard. Man is free of routine and conventions to make a shape of his existence. Sartre asserts, "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (15). Existentialism as a philosophical concept that has been vague only in recent years, but its origin goes far back to some classical and middle ages. Before the modern existentialists, we could find some norms of existentialism in the works of St. Augustine, Pascal, Socrates, Don Scouts and others in extent. They were followed by Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, Husser, Martin Heidegger, Camus and Simon De Behaviour. Some of them are known as Christian existentialists and some atheists.

Man is responsible for what he is and this is the first effect of existentialism that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence upon his own shoulders. Existentialism is primarily connected with human existence, especially with man's most extreme experience; the confrontation with death, anguish and anxiety, despair and guilt. An individual can overcome such anxiety and despair by participating fully in life, and experiencing existence directly, actively and

passionately. The existentialists seek for authenticity of existence. For them inauthenticity is resulted when the individual permits his life to be determined and defined by the rules and values of others. In this connection, Wesley Bavnas explains:

To live creatively and with meaning each strong man must reverse normal values. What is most important is the individual's passing his own judgments, making his own choices, and having courage enough to go beyond traditional moral absolutes, and doing so in the light of instinct of will. (51)

Before Soven Kierkegaard, existentialism was not accepted as a distinct movement in literature. After his writings existentialism dates in the field of literature and there were so many philosophers occupied in their field. Nietzsche and Heidegger developed this term in more modified form. After then this term developed and reached up to the height in the form of aesthetic existentialism in the hands of Camus and Sartre. That's why existentialism has been defined in various ways. In expand of time philosophers' mind also changed and the meanings and terms too.

According to Myth of Sisyphus by Albert Camus, the world is void, meaningless, irrational and at least absurd, he further writes about it, "for the existentialists the meaning of life is the most urgent of all those questions [.....] suicide is nothing but merley a social phenomenon" (12). Here, Camus gives priority to human life which is the most urgent of all those questions. He prefers suicide rather than meaningless life. In his Kebab, Camus evaluates the rebel's role thus:

To think is beginning to be undermined. In rebel slave says 'Yes' and 'No' at the same time. [...] Immediately the slave refuses to obey the

humiliating order of his master, he rejects the condition of slavery. [. . .]
he realized the saying "Better to die on one's feet than to live on one's
knees. [. . .]. He demands respect for himself, but only in so far as he
identifies himself with humanity in general. (12-22).

In the kebel, the existence of slave is questionable his saying of yes and no at the same
reflects this, he is in the state of confusion that which one to express whether yes or no.
He doesn't want the condition of slavery, he wants respect.

J.A. Cuddon defines that the connotation of existence is something active in
philosophy. He associates it with the Latin root ex out sister, forum 'Stave to stand', thus
the meaning of existence is to stand in the world that is incomprehensible. The term now
applies a vision of the condition and existence of man, his place and function in the
world, and his relationship, or lack of one with God. He again writes existence means to
stand out in the universe that is against us and existentialism means "Pertaining to
existence".

The negative aspects of human existence with pain, frustration, sickness and death
became for existentialists the essentials features of human realities. As the doctrine
emerged worldwide, the essentialist thinkers also different greatly in various ways.
However, it may be said that with the existentialists, the problems of individual is central
and that they stressed man's real existence, his certain nature, his personal freedom and
his responsibilities for what he does and makes him to be.

Rene Wellek, in his Twentieth Century criticisms, explains "existentialism as a
last and vital trend in this century. It dominated the French and German intellectual scene
after world war II" (82). He further clarifies the term that, " if we interpret it as a

philosophy of despair, of fear and trembling , of man's exposition to a hostile universe the reason for it's spread are not for to seek" (82). Sartre ranking himself in a group of aesthetic along with Heidegger and French existentialists includes Jasper and Gabriel Marcel the theistic group. He also insists that what they have in common is that both of them think, "existence precede essence" (13). Sartre's straightforward vision of existentialism lays emphasis upon the existence of individual.

Man exists, turns up, appears on the scene and only afterward defines himself. He again defines it as, "an attempt to make life persist by creating a system of which one realized human loneliness and human subjectivity" (existentialism 10). Man is free and in the act of choosing possibilities freely an individual shapes his existence. Similar kind of ideas can be found in S.K. Jain's book *Social and Humanist Thinker*, according him from the disappointment and frustration philosophy of existentialism came. He says: "Existentialism is an influential movement and its ideas are being read with keen interest by those who are becoming acquainted with it". (185) He defines existentialism:

The philosophy of existentialism arose from disappointments and frustration with Kant's "Thin -in-itself" and Hegel's metaphysicism because they did not satisfy the urgent needs of empirical man. If gained a widely considerable place among the French typical intellectuals (184).

From the disappointments and frustration existentialism arose, people were not satisfied with Kant's "Thing-in-itself" and Hegel's metaphysicism.

The concept of being and subjectivity in Heidegger's thought, which have influenced profoundly Sartre, who has further developed the basic ideas of existentialism into a philosophy of "existential humanism" Jain writes, "Existentialism is a philosophy

which endeavors to analyze the basic structure of human existence and makes the individuals understand their original freedom".(186)

Man's social existence determines what he is and it shows that he is not independent of social relation and human history. The relation of dominance and subordination which govern the social and economical order of a particular phase of human history will in some sense determine the whole cultural life of the society. The material interests of the dominant social class determine how people see human existence, individual and collective (selden 24). Regarding existence, Marxism takes as it's prime datum the biological and social condition of man, whose consciousness is but a 'superstructure' of the base, hence the economic structure of the society, Rene Marill writes:

Marxism starts from something external to consciousness the biological and social datum of the human collectivity and its class structure. There was therefore a rigid philosophical opposition between the Marxist system and Sartre's. (142)

Contrary to existentialists, Marxists believe that man cannot strip himself of his social relations and remain man. One can not exist escaping the contradictions of the society, and man is not what he makes of himself, but what the structure of the society makes him.

It is society and society alone, that differentiates man qualitatively from the beasts. Man, the individual can not do what he wants alone. He is unfree alone, if he denies social relations, where does he exist? Since he can not exist alone, he attains existence by cooperation with his fellows. In the nineteenth century, Karl Marx declared

that man is a product of his social environment and his existence is only possible in his or her relations with others. A human is a product of his or her environment, and can't be separated from it. Unlike existentialists, Marxists believe that an individual can attain genuine value and existence only in relations with others. Furthermore, man only has value in his or her relations with others, when he seeks to be in community from the progressive stand point. The concept of historical materialism and dialectical materialism is important here.

To the Marxists, men make their own history but do not make it as they please, but they do it under circumstances already determined for them by history and their social conditions, society is full of contradictions. Existence through struggle in such a society is a Marxist concept. Something exists because it goes under certain struggle internal and external. The human history, up to now, is a history of struggle for existence as Karl Marx points out, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle" (*Manifesto* 32). The slaves struggled against their feudal lords because they wanted their proper existence in the contemporary society. In our own epoch, proletarians have been struggling against the bourgeoisie for their respective presence, after all for an 'existence'. In the process of development, many old social barriers come to obstruct its flow. The exploiters resist the movement of proletariats. From particular fights, the exploited class is drawn in to a general fight against the exploiting class in order to change the old system. The struggle between the exploiting class and the exploited class is a perpetual affair, because each one fights for existence and victory.

Karl Jaspers is also one of the first thinkers to use the term "existentialism". He also discarded the self-sufficiency of science and the seclusion of individuals from the

communication with other being to communicate with. He was not Christian in a traditional sense, but he believed in "Transcendence". He used the term "transcend me" to designate man's personal, devoted and committed attempt to reach the encompassing. By "encompassing" he means the ultimate and indefinite limits of being as we realize it in all its fullness and richness boundaries, which surrounds, envelops and suffuses all there is. "Transcendence alone" says, Jaspers is the real "being" (878).

In their Philosophical movement Martin Buber and Marcel have contributed for its development. Unlike Jaspers, Buber repudiated the idea of separated existence of human being. He told that our existence is always attached with other men, with nature and with God. According to him, the relation should be concrete and immediate, an "I" to and "thou", and not an abstract and object, an "I" to an "it" one (870-78) "The primary world I thou", Buber writes, "can only be spoken with the whole being the primary word. It can never be spoken with whole being". (807)

Marcel tries to fill the abyss between subject and object, between what is in us and what is before us. He makes a distinction between primary reflection and mystery, the mystery of existence and mystery of being. The first is related to "concrete" philosophy and the second is related to "concrete" ontology. "we are " according to Marcel, much more important than "I am" in the first philosophy, the second tells us that only the participation in being as keen observer, we can overcome isolation, despair and tragedy. Marcel stressed upon "faith in God", when he considers, "can help man overcome anxiety and despair that characterizes prediction" (759).

Another philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche is one of the most influential figures in modern philosophy. He told that religion provides on truth because God is dead and

Christianity has become the shelter for weak and disabled people that he hated. He expresses his view on religion and God as:

The Christian conception of God-God as God of the sick. God as a spider, God as spirit is one of the most corrupt conceptions of the divine ever attained on earth. God as the declaration of war against life, against nature, against the will to live. God as a dead, and Christianity as a shelter for weak and disabled. (92)

He thinks God is antagonist like against will to power. The Superman is higher man, and is free from any restrictions imposed by the society. Even the existence of God is questionable. God is antagonist, and highlights Superman who is free from any kind of restrictions imposed by the society. God is against life, nature and against the will to live.

Another leading figure of atheistic existentialism is Martin Heidegger who is one of the founders and main exponent of German existentialism, he defined, "being' and 'beings', "the oblivion of being into the beings has made us last in unreal existence" (879). To get back the last being, Heidegger suggests us 'to return back into their ground of metaphysics and find the roots of our existence" (808). He had the belief that man should face explicitly the problem of being; he has to determine his own existence, create his own possibilities and make choices and commitment. The feeling of dread due to the awareness of death may incite us to flee away from by others instead of coming face to face with it. But it takes the dread as death as opportunity we may construct our life unique and our own. Heidegger accepts that one can not escape the historical concept because he is always bounded by conditions and outlooks inherited from the past.

In existential philosophy, the concept of existence is restricted to the kind of being exemplified in man. In the very first hand, thus existence of human being is differentiated from the existence of other entities in the world. Other entities 'stand out' there in the world, but only man exists. Thus for existentialist, trees and mountains just 'are' but they do not exist, what exists is only man. In Heidegger's words:

The being whose manner of being existence is man. Man alone exists. A rock is, but it doesn't exist. A tree is but it doesn't exist. An angle is but he doesn't exist. God is, but he doesn't exist. Rock, tree, angle, God just 'are' they do not exist, what exist is only human being (qtd. In Macquarrie 29)

The existence of all things is thrown into being except man's. Other things don't exist but man exists. Other entities stand out there in the world, what exists is only man.

Man's existence is not simply in 'standing of' there in the world like other entities in the sense that he is open to become what he is not. What counts for his existence is, thus, possibility of his going beyond himself. As an existent at any movement of time he aspires to go beyond himself towards his own possibilities. Heidegger puts further as "Dasein is always its own possibility" (74). As possibility, human existence is the anticipation, the exception and projection of the future. Existence is always stretched out towards the future. Human existence is, the, transcendence to it's own possibilities.

Human being as an existent has some fundamental characteristics that distinguish his existence from the other entities in the world. A stone or even a tiger does not exist because of the lack of those fundamental characteristics which human beings possess. Existentialists even claim that if a human being loses the fundamental characteristics, he

loses his true existence. He becomes just a stone or a hammer an instrument. He exists no more but simply 'stands out in the world'.

Man keeps on emerging from where he is at any given moment. Man is transcending in his being, he is at any moment transcending or going beyond what he is at that moment unlike other things and beings. Man is not just constituted by some given properties. He thrusts himself into possibilities of existence. He doesn't possess a fixed essence given in advance. Sartre's assertion that man is not like a manufactured thing and Nietzsche's conception of man as always moving towards superman exemplifies the same characteristic of existence. Thus, man is regarded as unfinished and incomplete.

This human characteristic of transcendence leads different existentialists' thinkers to different points. For theist thinkers like Kierkegaard and Karl Jasper it is a transcendence to God, while for Nietzsche it is to superman, and for Sartre and Camus it is nothing, for there is not God. So man is entirely abandoned to establishing his own norms, and determining his values and what he will become. At this point we come to Heidegger's claim that man is always already in the world where he finds himself as homo faber surrounded by materials, tools, opportunities etc. by the use of which he creates his identity (Greene 22).

III Existential Study of the Novel *Invisible Man*

A nameless young college educated black man is the narrator as well the main character of Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man*. The plot of the novel counters upon the adventures of the narrator. The hero is presented not as a perfect hero. He doesn't quite reach the traditional height of a hero. In his intentions he is heroic and wishes to prove it, but his actions are craven, in fact, whatever he chooses to do put him into further crisis. In the very beginning of the novel, the narrator when arrives at the hotel, is forced to participate in brutal blindfolded boxing match with nine of his classmates, an event, which he discovers, is part of the evenings entertainment for the "smoker". The entertainment also includes a sensuous dance by a naked woman and the boys are forced to watch. The boxing match is followed by a humiliating event. The boys must scramble for what to be gold coins on an electrified rug. Then, the narrator now bruised and bleeding, is finally allowed to give his speech in front of the drunken white men who largely ignore him until he accidentally uses the phrase, "social equality" instead of "social responsibility" to describe the role of blacks in America.

The narrator of the novel, *Invisible Man*, is struggling to acquire his existence, but he is not successful in this project. He starts his journey from south Carolina for scholarship arriving at New York City, the narrator is amazed by what he perceives to be unlimited by a black West Indian for blacks. He is especially intrigued by a blackest Indian man whom he first encounters addressing a group of men and women on the streets of Harlem, giving them to work together to unite their black community but the narrator's excitement soon turns to disillusionment as he discovers that the North presents barriers to black achievement as the south. Realizing that he can not return to college, the narrator

accepts a job at a paint factory, famous for its optic white paint unaware that he is one of several blacks hired to replace white workers out on strike. Nearly killed in a factory explosion the narrator subsequently undergoes a grueling ordeal at the paint factory hospital where he finds himself the object of a strange experiment by the hospital's white doctors.

As the narrator takes job at liberty paints, he does so at the suggestion of the man who informs him of the damning letters of recommendation that the president of this college has given him to aid his search for a job in the city. In this sense, the invisible man's time at the paint factory represents the last instance for this acting on the mistaken belief in a person or institution that covertly perpetuated the hegemonic ideas that limit his efforts. He has traveled to New York with a more sophisticated version of his original hope to achieve social and economic success to remake him in opposition of poverty and oppression of whites. This migration has resulted, in continual frustration, as the narrator finally encounters the catastrophe that will serve as his rebirth in the last option presented to him, the job at the factory. The protagonist and the citizen for Harlem are both participants of the black migration to the urban centers of the north during the decade from 1910-1925. Like the protagonist the citizens of Harlem find themselves confined to the cramped quarters of crowded apartment houses as they realize the same racial prejudices that oppress them in the south often served to confine them in the northern cities.

In the novel we find that the protagonist is in crisis of his existence. He does different works, goes to different places in search of his authentic self. But he is not successful either. His decision to move form one place to another shows that he wants to

live, he wants to exist. But he is not successful. So we can see the novel *Invisible Man* from the point of existential philosophy. In Heideggerian term the protagonist is like a thrown ball, he is thrown into being, he has been ignored by the people around him. He himself says:

I am a man of substance, of flesh and one fiber and liquids and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand simply because people refuse to see me like the bodiless heads you see some times in liveside shows it is though I have been surrounded by movers of hard destroying glass. When they approach me they see only my surrounding, themselves or figments, of their imagination indeed every thing and anything except me. (07)

The invisible man is puzzled by the question who am I, the undefined anonymous narrator of Ralph Ellison's acclaimed novel *Invisible Man*. Throughout the story, the narrator embarks on the mental and physical journey to seek what the narrator believes is 'true identity'. The narrator's life is filled with constant eruptions of mental traumas. The biggest psychological burden he has is his identity, or rather his miss identity. Though he takes on several different identities and none he thinks, adequately represents his true self, until his final one as an invisible man.

The narrator thinks the identity given to him by white does not reflect himself, but he fails to recognize that identity is simply a mirror that reflects the surrounding. The viewers relate the narrator's identity. The viewers are only the part of the narrator that is apparently connected to the viewer's own world. Lucius Brockway, an old operator of the paint factory, saw the narrator only as an existence threatening his job, despite that the

narrator is sent there to merely assist him. Brockway repeatedly questions the narrator about his purpose there and his mechanical credentials but never even bother to inquire his name. Because to the old fellows whom the narrator is as a person is uninterested. What is as an object, and what object and what that object's relationship is to Brockway's engine room is important. The narrator's identity is derived form this relationship and this relationship suggests to Brockway that his identity is a "threat".

At present, identity is unlike to every different viewer at every different location and situation. This points the narrator does not fully understand. During his first brotherhood meeting, he exclaimed" I am a new citizen of the country of your vision a native of your fraternal land" (328). He preaches to others the fact that identity is transitional yet he does not accept it himself. May be he thought it distressing being like not for being his true self but because of his identity. To Dr. Bledose, the principal of the black Southern University where the narrator attended, the narrator is pitty black educated fool. To Mr. Norton, a rich white trustee of the Black University, the narrator is a simple object intertwined with his fate, a mere somebody. To the organizers of the Brotherhood, Jack Tobit and others the narrator is what they designed him to be.

The protagonist always has a desire for people who could give him proper reflection of his importance. But there is not such thing as proper reflection because his importance varies among different people. Subconsciously, he craves attention. He wants recognition and status is not special if he is not essentially different; therefore he joins Brotherhood in order to distinguish himself and to identify himself. He gets what he wants, recognition and fame but it is not right he thinks for he is recognized only for his false identity. His identity positions him in the center of thousands of attentions yet he

feels he is unseen. In the brotherhood of thousands of brothers, yet he feels no one knows him. This is his feeling of having miss identity.

He sees the meaning of identity as the universal perspective of a being. He acquires fame and recognition through the influential role he played as a leading activist of the brotherhood and thinks everyone will regard him that way. Feeling full of confidence and dignity, he greeted two black fellows in a bar, thinking they would be astounded to see him. But to his surprise, they look at him oddly. To these two his fame is his notoriety because they do not like his race philosophy. The narrator works for an ideology that promotes equality among all humans whether black or white, male of female. While the two black fellows hold an opposing ideology instead of being seen as a social leader, he is seen by those two as a social disgrace for black community.

He sees himself as walking stereotype. He is right because anyone who is perceived through an identity is stereotype, identity exists externally from the person it identifies because it exists within the eye of the viewer. The narrator during his fight with a white man on the street suddenly realizes that he is fighting with a person that has not seen him. However, that white man does see him just that he is seen through an identity not too sincere in respect. The narrator is disgusted with people stereotyping him; therefore he wants to believe himself as an invisible. He doesn't want to speak of Clifton's funeral yet the people will not leave until he performs what is expected of him to give speech.

The protagonist believes him as human being as other. But what he sees of himself is not what others see of him. He cannot decide for others how to see him although we can influence the way people see him the man telling story. Invisible man

lives in a hidden underground space. But to prove that he exists, at last he himself has lit his underground room with lights.

The narrator is invisible for the then contemporary society, although he has been used for their benefit; he is used only as a tool for their success, but his visibility is ignored, in this situation he says:

I can hear you say, 'what a horrible, irresponsible bastard i. and you' responsible right. I leap to agree with you. I am one of the most irresponsible beings that ever lived. Irresponsibility is part of my invisibility; any way you face it, it is a denial. But to whom can I be responsible, and why should I be, when you refuse to see me? And wait until, I reveal how truly irresponsible I am responsibility rests upon recognition, and recognition is a form of agreement. (16)

According to the narrator, he is bound to be irresponsible because his visibility has been ignored, there are no people whom he has to be responsible and there is no meaning of being of responsible. Responsibility rests upon recognition.

The protagonist has been searching his true existence and place in society. His life is a journey to find out something he says:

[. . .] All my life I had been looking for something, and everywhere I turned someone tried to tell me what it was. I accepted their, answers too though they were often in contradiction and even self contradictory. I was naïve. I was looking for myself an asking everyone except myself, questions which I, and only I, and only, could answer it took me a long time and much painful boomeranging of my expectation to achieve a

realization everyone else appears to have been born with: That is am nobody but myself. But first I had to discover that I am an invisible man.

(17)

While struggling to arrive at a conception of his own identity he finds his effects complicated by the fact that he is a black man living in a white dominated American society. Throughout the novel, he finds himself passing through a series of communities from the liberty paints to the Brotherhood, with each microcosm endorsing different ideas of how blacks should behave in a society.

He found difficult and painful to achieve a realization, he is nobody for others but somebody for himself. First and for most he had to discover his self. Because of other's invisibility his visibility is made invisible.

The narrator has been used as tool for entertainment to whites. He is bound to make part in battle royal. The boxing match is followed by a humiliating event. In the same time he is bound to watch a sensuous dance by a naked woman.

All of the towns big shots were in their take does, nothing down time buffet foods drinking beer and whisky and smoking black lines. It was a large room with a high ceiling. Chairs were arranged in need rooms around there side of a portable boxing ring. The fourth side was clear, revealing a gleaming pace of polished floor. Had some miss giving over the battle royal, by the way. Not from a distance for fighting, but because I did not care too much for other fellow who were take part. (18)

As the hero was participating the boxing match, even if he won the match the whites did not visualize his superiority. In the same time he suspected that fighting a battle royal

might detach from the dignity of his speech which he had given earlier. In this situation he feels worthless fighting with the boys. He doesn't like being crowded with the people because they take fun of him not only that they don't like his presence there. He feels being humiliated. From here he creates feeling of disgust with white people. Although he feels superior, but his superiority is ignored.

They were tough guys who seemed to have not grandfather's curse worrying their minds. No one could mistake their toughness. And besides, I suspected that fighting a battle royal might detract from the dignity of my speech. In those responsible days I visualized myself as potential Booker to Washington. But other fellows did not care too much for me either and there were nine of them. I felt superior to them in many ways, and I did not like manner in which we were all crowded together into the servants' elevator. Nor did they like my being there. (19)

It is clear that other people are enjoying life by drinking and dancing but they don't understand the real plight of the invisible man, unintentionally he is compelled to participate with them.

The narrator is in search of job, he is getting ready for interview with Dr. Bledsoe, he is worry about his own situation if he fails interview, what should he do, how to return home, what will be my future. His mind is fluttered like the moths. He thinks that Dr. Bledsoe would be far less sympathetic to his plea.

[. . .] I might well have waited until the end of the services, for I had not gone for when I heard the dim, bright notes of the orchestra striking up a march, followed by a burst of voices as the students filed out into the night

with the feeling of dread I heard for administration building, and upon reaching it, stood in darkened doorway. My mind fluttered like the moths that viewed the street lamp which cast shadows upon the bank of grass below me. (113)

After being humiliated and ignored in every activity the narrator dares to give the final and real interview with Dr. Bledsoe who has no any sympathy towards the narrator. He stands in the dark doorway to prove his future and thinks about where to go if I am expelled. He tries to escape from there because he is only the matter of fun for the white people. By each and every activity he tries to prove his existence but they pay no attention.

[. . .] I would now have my real interview with Dr. Bledsoe, and I recalled Barbee's address with resentment. With such words free in his mind. I was rue Dr. Bledsoe would be far less sympathetic to my plea I stood in the darkened doorway trying to prove my future if I were expelled where would I go, what would I do? How could I ever return home? (114)

Arriving in New York, the narrator enters the world of the liberty paints, which achieves financial success by superheating blackness in the service of the brighter white. There he finds himself involved in a process in which white depends heavily on black both in terms of the mixing of the paint tones and in terms of the racial makeup of the workforce, yet the factory denies this dependence in the final presentation of its product, and the narrator, as a black man, ends up stifled. Later, when he joins the brotherhood, he believes that he can fight for racial equality by working within the ideology of the

organization, but he then finds that the brotherhood seeks to use him as a taken black man in its abstract project.

He felt himself insulted, he found people laughing at him, he does not want to go home to be humiliated, he has some vague notions about dignity. He is requested by some fellows to go to New York for the summer and save his pride and money.

[. . .] I want you to go to New York for the summer and save your pride and your money. You go there and earn you next year's fees, understand? I nodded, unable to speak, whirling about furiously within myself, trying to deal with him, to fit what he was saying to what he had said [. . .] 'I' ll give you letters, to some of the Scholl's friends to see that you get work, 'he said. But this time use your judgment, keep your eyes open, get in the swing of things! Then, if you make good, perhaps. . . well, perhaps. It's up to you'. (121)

Thus, when the factory authorities boast of the superiority of their white paint, their statements appear as parodies of arguments about white supremacy. With the plants that claim its trade mark "optic white" can cover up any tint or stain, Ellison makes a pointed observation about American Society's intentions to cover up black identity with white culture, to ignore difference and to treat darker skinned individuals as " Stains" upon white "purity"

He is worried because people laugh at him he asks himself how long does he stand there and let people laugh at him, at the same time he talks about his right and he is in the state of confusion that whether to use his right or leave it. In this critical situation one fighter's son consoles and suggests him to go to New York, for the summer and save

pride and money. While listening to the boy he is in confusion whether to go to New York or not.

The narrator sees his life impossible in this world, so, he is in search of new world, he is living in a dream world, he wants to be far from this unreal world, his struggle is meaningless, he says:

[. . .] for me this was not a city of realities, but of dream; perhaps because I has always thought of my life as being confined to the south. And now as I struggled through the lines of people a new world of possibility suggested itself to me faintly, like a small voice that was barely audible in the roar of city sounds. I move wide eyed, trying to take the bombardment impressions. Then, I stopped still. (132)

When the boy suggests, the narrator plans to move towards the reality, because the city where he is living is not the city of realities, only dream, he plans to move towards south where he sees his life possible. He is in search of job, he has been carrying recommendation letter, which is packed or sealed tightly, he doesn't know what is the content; he is searching for someone who could give the proper reflection of this importance. He dreams of spreading the letter upon the dresser like a hand of high trump cards. He knows that the letter is concerned to him and is addressed to some of the most important men in the whole country. He explains the situation in the following way:

I took of my packet and hat and took my packet of letters and long back upon the bed, drawing a feeling of importance from reading the important names. What was inside, and how could I open them undetected? They were tightly sealed. I had read that letters were sometimes steamed open

but I had no steam. I gave it up; I really did not need to know their contents and it would not be honorable or safe to tamper with Dr. Bledsoe, I now already that they concerned me and were addressed to some of the most important men of in the whole country. (134)

The liberty paints plant serves as a complex metaphor for American society with the regard to raise, like America, it defines itself with notions of liberty and freedom but incorporates a deeply ingrained racism in its central operation. By portraying factory that produces paints, Ellison is able to make his statements about color literal.

Taking the letter of recommendation he starts his journey, he doesn't know what is the content of the letter and he says that there is no need of opening them, from there too we know his state of confusion. He doesn't know the importance of letter and wishes someone who could give proper reflection of his importance. He can't laugh in front of his society and goes to mirror and gives a smile.

The narrator in his project tries to establish equal identity with whites, but his project gets thwarted because of the prevailing domination of the so-called white ethos, norms, and values. He tries to be near with white people, tries to act according to them, eats food with them in the same cafeterias this is all he does for the establishment of equal identity. In the following extract, how he has tried to be near to the white people is well defined:

With things going so well I distributed my letters in the moorings, and saw the city during the afternoons. Walking about streets, sitting one sub ways beside whites, eating with them in the same cafeterias gave me theerric, out of focus sensation of dream. My clothes felt ill fittings; and for all my

letters to men of power. I was unsure of how I should act. For the first time, as I swung also the street I thought consciously how I had conducted myself at home. (139)

He becomes so liberal that, he does every activity to please the whites. He tries to be as equal as whites doing the activities done by the whites. By participating with white people in every activity like, eating with them sitting in the same cafeterias gives him sensation of dream, although he is not sure how should he act these all he does for the establishment of equal identity. Those controlling the narrator's life remain invisible hidden behind masks; pulling his strings they treat him like an object rather than an individual human being. In his belief that these puppet masters are white however the veteran fails to recognize the manner in which black man like Dr. Bledsoe holds the same sort of control over other blacks.

During his journey, he protagonist faces economic problem, he is unable to pay train fare, in this critical situation at any cost he has to find a job to tide him over. He was in that miserable condition that he even dared not to talk to anyone about his problem, he says:

Something had to happen soon. I would have to do a job to tide me over. My money was almost gone and anything might happen. I had been so confident that I had failed to put aside the price of train fare home I was miserable and I dared not talk to anyone about my problem; not even the official at men's home; for since they had learned that I was to be assigned to an important job, they treated me with a certain deference; after all,

thought, I might have to ask for credit and I'll have to appear a good risk.

(141)

By asking for credit and having a good risk, he faces economic challenge. He himself says I am miserable and I dared not to talk he sees no solution from them not only that they treat him with certain deference.

The protagonist is in the state of confusion, he is confused because some people were having fun about him. But he wants to talk to people, wants to convince people that he is worth for any job it proves that he is not less than other people he wants to prove his identity. He further says he knows many things about people; he wants to trust people in the following way:

[. . .] 'But you said. . . I' stood up completely confused was he giving fun with me? 'Couldn't you let me talk to him for just five minutes? 'I plead. I'm sure I can convince him that I'm worthy of a job. And if there's someone who has tampered with my letters I'll prove my identity . . Dr. Bledsoe would-
'Identity ! my god ! Who has an identity anyone ay-way? It isn't so perfectly simple look he said with an anguished gesture. Will you trust me? (154)

His first thoughts and actions are thus critically important in the formation of his past and attempts to define the self on it's own terms. Some of his first thoughts involve a rhyme about a rabbit which carry special importance here for their immediate invocation of jazz as it fits into the Harlem Renaissance. Realizing, that he must take an active role in re-

defining himself. He ponders his options in relation to the world around him and decides that he wants to take constrictive approach towards self- realization.

His identity is questionable when he says I will prove my identity, Dr. Bledsoe questions regarding his identity, he puts counter questions like will you trust me? The narrator says I know many things about you and fellows like you.

In the project of his quest for job, he goes to people with letters of his introduction still people are not intended to see him. Although people read his letters they ignore him. In this critical situation he is angry with the people and raised the voice of resistance against the northern white men. The following abstract suggests, if anything is too much that is bad, when people always refuse to give him any job he becomes violent and realizes:

[. . .] suddenly I could not breathe. Then I was standing, griping my brief case. What have you got against me I blurred? What did I ever do to you? You never instead to let met see him. Even though, I presented my letter of introduction. Why? I'd never endanger your job” No, no, no! Of course not he cried, getting to his feet you have misunderstood me. You must o that! God there is too much misunderstanding. Please don't think, I'm trying to prevent you from seeing any form seeing Mr. Emerson out of prejudice...”. (155)

Being very angry he expresses his felling of anger towards white people. Even though he presents his letters of introduction, no one gives him any attention, people misunderstand him; to convince the people he says I am sent here by a friend of Mr. Emerson but still I am not given time to see him.

Once a man dressed in black appeared looked down upon the narrator, and consulted narrator's chart. Then he scribed something on a large card and trusted it before his eyes; the card projected series of questions like what is your name? Who are you? Who was your mother? But the narrator could not answer any of these questions. The narrator no longer new his name. In this situation he shut his eyes and shook his head with sorrow. This was the first man to communicate with him but the narrator failed. He asked himself who am I? His identity is questioned in the following way:

WHAT IS YOUR MOTHER'S NAME?

Mother, who was my mother? Mother, the one who scream when you suffer- but who? This was stupid, you always knew your mother's home. Who was it that creamed? Mother? But the scream came from the machine, my mothers?. Clearly I was out of my head, he short question at me where were born? Try to think of your name. I tried, thinking vainly of many names but none seemed to fit, and yet it was as though I was some how part of all of them, had become submerged within them and lost. You must remember, the play card read. But it was useless each time is found me back in the clinging white must and my name just beyond many fingertips [...]. (196)

This phrasing of question seems to set of a series of a weak and distant light where the other had thrown a spark that failed. While the card asked many questions he tried to think his name, he thought many names but none fitted him. He asked himself but it was like trying to identify one particular cell that cursed the torpid veins of his body.

The protagonist has been struggling himself to establish his true identity and place in society in his project of quest he is bound to work in a factory. In the factory he finds machine being circulated in that period he thought his body being circulated like that machine. He had no desire to destroy himself he wanted freedom not destruction, but it was too difficult for him to escape from the factory and be free, but another thing was that till now he had not recognized who he himself was. First he had to discover who he was and only he could be free, he expresses the situation in the following way:

[. . .] I fell to plotting ways of short-circuiting the machine. Perhaps if I shifted my body about so that the two nodes would come together- no, not only was there no room but it might electrocute me. I shuddered. Whoever else I was, I was not Samson. I had no desire to destroy myself even if it destroyed the machine; I wanted freedom, not destruction. I was exhausting, for no matter what the scheme I conceived, there was one constant foe-myself. There was no getting round it. I could not move escape then I could think of my identity. Perhaps, I thought, the two things are involved with each other. When I discover who I am, I'll be free. (198)

While working in a factory he sees things being circulating and compares himself with the things, but doesn't want to be destroyed, wants to move and escape and find new world. But escapement from the factory was not possible. The machinery world is unfit to him.

As the hero is in a journey to get a job and run his life, many people deceive him, he fails to trust people; he is unable to win the mind of people. In his critical situation he comes to an old woman who seems quite sympathetic towards him. She helps him to get

a room. While staying in a man's house, he felt a sense of alienation and hostility. The following abstract proves his difficult condition as this is important from the point of view that the unnamed hero is bound to face so many problems which are always hindrance for his success. While staying in a man's house he feels that his life is meaningless it proves that in what sort of environment he was bound to live during his stay over there he felt lonely, though there were people but they were not friendly to the protagonist those people did not feel his existence there. He explains the situation in the following way:

All right now, you looks to me like you might make thing out of yourself, so you be careful. I got up to go, watching her raise herself out of their chair and come with me to the door.

You never decide you want a room somewhere beside Men's home try me! She said the rent's reasonable, I'll remember that. I said, I was to remember sooner than I had thought. The movement I entered the bright buzzing lobby of Men's house I was overcome by a sense of alienation and hostility. My overalls were causing stance and I new that I could live there no longer, that phase of my life was past. (208)

He couldn't decide what kind of room he was searching, in this situation a woman becomes ready to help him and consoles him about the house and its reasonable rent. But whenever he entered the bright buzzing lobby of men's house he was overcome by a sense of alienation and hostility, he didn't want city life.

After long time struggle, he protagonist is brought up by black woman and she gave company to him as they were living in a rented house, the people of the surrounding

tried to discompose them. The following given abstract proves this thing, which clarifies that the narrator and the kind women were taken as goods, every thing which belonged to them was dispossessed by the white people. In this condition the narrator thought that, these are the days of dispossession, the season of homelessness, the white people ignored their visibility. This situation has been explored in this way:

‘Dispossession! Dispossession in the word! I went on. ‘They have tried to dispossess us of our manhood and womanhood! Of our childhood and adolescence you heard the sister’s static’s on our infant mortality rate. Don’t you know you’re lucky to be uncommonly born? Shy, they even tried to disposes us of our dislike of being dispossessed! And I’ll you something else-if we don’t resist, pretty soon they’ll succeed! These are the days of dispersion; the season of homelessness time to eviction. We’ll be dispossessed of the very brains in our heads. (277)

Both invisible man and black woman are taken as commodity by the white people, their presence is ignored everywhere. The whites were blind to see them. He thought that they were uncommonly born. He thought of resisting against them, if they did not resist, the white would succeed in their goal. He wondered being uncommonly blind. They have dispossessed them from the day they were born. They couldn’t see themselves from their own eye; they had to see from the white’s prospective only.

The hero has been used as puppet by white people. He was simply a material and natural resource to be used. The protagonist, in the following abstract gives a very good comment about the so-called white people that, they are blind, bat blind, moving only by the echoes sounds of their own voices. And because they are blind they would destroy

themselves and I'll help them. He means to say that the white people are blind because they don't see his existence; they failed to see his visibility. He ignores how powerful they are he doesn't care if they conquered the world. His anger is expressed in the form of commentary.

[. . .] no matter how powerful they become, even if they conquered the world, could take that, or change. One single itch tent, lavish, my, scare, rage or pain of it. They were blind, but blind, moving only by the echoes sounds of their own voices. And because they were blind they would destroy themselves and I'll help them. I laughed here I had thought they accepted me because they felt that color made no difference, when in reality it made no difference because they did not see either color or men . . . for all they were concerned, we were so many names scribbled on fake ballots, to be used at their convince and when not needed to be filled away. It was a joke, an absurd joke. (409)

In the above the hero gives comment that the white are trying to destroy but in fact they will destroy themselves because they are blind. They can't differentiate either colour or man. The invisible man sees only joke everywhere created by white norms. He is not worried how powerful they become no matter even if they conquered the world or change it. They are moving only by the echoes sounds of their own voices, other's voice doesn't get any chance to change their mentality.

When the protagonist is deceived in his every step of life, he wants to take revenge by helping them to go to hell, if he is unable to help them to see the reality of his life, he will help them to see their own reality in hell. So, here he becomes optimistic,

although I felt that somewhere between Rinehart and invisibility there are great potentialities, but still he lacks money, intelligence and communication with people, which lead his existence into further crisis. Although, he sees some possibilities but those possibilities cannot be fulfilled because of the so-called white ethos, norms and values.

This situation becomes clear when we see the following abstract:

[. . .] Although I felt that somewhere between Redraft and invisibility there were great potentialities. But we had not money, no intelligence apparatus, either in government, business or labor unions; and no communication with our people except through unsympathetic newspapers, a few Pullman porters who brought provincial news from distant cities and a group of domestics who reported the fairly uninteresting private lives of their employers. If only we had some true friends, some who saw us more than convenient tools for shaping their own desires! (411)

Though the contemporary society doesn't see any potentiality in the narrator, but he sees great potentiality, to fulfill that he lacks money and communication. He is hopeful and wants to struggle and achieve his goal, and wants to help them to go to their own reality of hell and himself wants to become a well-disciplined optimist, later on they will see his potentiality. He initially embraces his invisibility in an attempt to throw off the limiting nature of stereotype, In the end he finds this fact too passive. He determines to emerge from his underground "hibernation" to make his own contributions to society as a complete individual.

The most important motif in *Invisible Man* is that of blindness, which recurs through the novel and generally represents how people willfully avoid seeing and

confronting the truth. The narrator repeatedly notes that people's invisibility to see what they wish not to see their inability to see that which their prejudice doesn't allow them to see, has forced him into a life of effective invisibility. But prejudice against others is not the only kind of blindness in the book. Many figures also refuse to acknowledge truth about themselves or their communities and this refusal also emerges consistently in the imagery of blindness. Thus, the boys who fight in the "battle royal" were blindfolds, symbolizing their powerlessness to recognize their exploitation at the hands of the white men.

Because he has decided that the world is full of blind men and sleepwalker who can not see him for what he is, he describes himself as an "invisible man". The motif of invisibility pervades the novel, often manifesting itself hand in hand with the motif of blindness. One becomes invisible because another is blind. While the novel always portrays blindness in negative light, it treats invisibility much more ambiguously. Invisibility can bring disempowerment, but it can also bring freedom and mobility, Indeed it is the freedom the narrator derives from his anonymity that enables him to tell his story.

IV. Conclusion

The protagonist in the novel *Invisible Man* is invisible to everyone showing how the white power structure overshadowed the identity of blacks in American society. In the project of his quest, he makes journey and does different works for his existence. A mature person may come to the awareness of his identity. An individual's identity remains in crisis when he is restricted from acting according to his own will for his visibility, recognition and protection. Racism causes the crisis of personal identities. Since prejudicial and discriminatory activities are the practices of racism, an individual cannot involve in the actions to define himself according to his desire. American literature has long been noted for its outspokenness of racial issues. Many African American writers are challenged because of raising these issues. One such author is Ralph Ellison, and one such literary piece is his *Invisible Man*. This work expounds the theme that American society willfully ignores and opposes African Americans. Ellison here goes against that concept and proves invisibility of so-called visible white Americans and visibility in the invisible man.

While struggling to arrive at a conception of his own identity the narrator finds his efforts being complicated because of white norms and value as well as power structure. Throughout the novel he finds himself passing through a series of communities, from the liberty paints to the brotherhood. In the course of journey he finds different ideas about how black should act or behave in white dominated society. As the narrator attempts to define himself through the values and expectations imposed on him, the power of white limits his identity as an invisible man.

Protagonist's adventure in the company of Mr. Norton, his expulsion from the college, his journey to Harlem in New York and his attempts to find a job by Dr. Bledsoe's letters of recommendation actually turn out to be letters of discredit. These all incidents show that the protagonist is a real human being who is struggling to live before us in the pages of the novel. While working at factory called "Liberty paints" where he again undergoes some very unpleasant experience including a fight with his black boss who turns out to be a very spiteful man who causes an explosion in the factory in order to kill the protagonist. The protagonist survives the explosion and has then to spend sometime in a hospital. His stay in hospital is again a terrible experience, where he remains most of the time in a state of unconsciousness or semi-consciousness and is treated more as a normal. After coming out of hospital he witnesses an eviction scene in which he gets actively involved.

The question of existence without justification became the main proposition of the twentieth century. Out of reverse, fragmented and alienated situation of man and the world, existential movement came into fashion as medicine. By existentialism we mean a doctrine which makes human life possible and in addition declares that every truth and every activity implies a human setting and human subjectivity. The major question in the world after First World War was the crisis of human existence. Thrown into an incoherent, disordered and chaotic world in which individuals' destinies were obstructed and turned apart by the Second World War, they couldn't believe in old concepts like unity, rationality, morality, value and even in Christianity. In the background of such a fragmented and disillusioned situation many writers and philosophers sought to reduce to present prevalent condition of modern man. The writers

easily realized that life has become insecure. So existentialism is probably the most dynamic and appropriate philosophical movement to define and interpret the anxiety, absurdity and the uncertainties of human existence.

Existentialism places its entire emphasis on the individual's existence. Existence which postulates man as free from any natural or human standards in terms of which he must act and be defined.

Thus, in the novel *Indivisible Man*, the main character's true identity has been ignored by the contemporary society; for establishment of his authentic identity he struggles through the series of problems. His main goal is to exist authentically but not just as merely stand out as the other objects of the world. Although, the narrator initially embraces his invisibility in an attempt to throw off the limiting nature of stereotype. He determines to emerge from his underground "hibernation" to make his contribution to society and to prove himself as visible.

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