

I. Introduction

Black writers in America are on search of a black literary tradition where they can create their own cultural space so that they can talk about the experience of black people in American society. The major struggles of black people in America are focused about their human and social rights and their writings reflect the effect of white American racial prejudice on the minds of blacks. Blacks have long history of slavery, discrimination and oppression. They have the layers of Black anger heaved on the innermost part of their heart. They were given the words and hopes but such promises simply withered without materialisation. American dream is deferred. Langston Hughes expresses his feeling of anger and asks question what really happen when the dreams are deferred. In his poem Harlem:

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore

And then run?

[...]

Or does it explode? (365)

As long as the black experience in America remains different from other Americans, there will be probability of new explosion in the days to come. Twentieth century marks the revolution in the field of literary tastes and writings. One of the most important themes in twentieth century American history is the struggle of black American for their humane and social rights.

Ralph waldo Ellison one of the dominant writers is also directing his attention in the same path by placing black culture at the center while dealing with the issue like racism and identity of minority group.

Ralph Ellison as a Minority Novelist

Ralph Waldo Ellison who grew up in Oklahoma City, born at on March 1, 1914 is a novelist and critic. His father died when he was three, and he was raised by his mother. So he was influenced by his mother's socialist politics in the fierce atmosphere of South West, he interacted freely with whites and blacks. Early in his childhood his interest was inclined toward music and literature. So in 1933 he began to study music at the Tuskegee institution in Alabama for three years and moved to New York City in 1936, where he spent much of the rest of his life. In New York City, he came into contact with black writers like Richard Wright and Langston Hughes and under the supervision of them he began his literary career. Among his contemporaries, he was very much influenced by writers like T.S Elliot, and James Joyce. The influence of Hemingway is very much noteworthy in his writing career.

He has been a freelance photographer, a Jazz musician, Vice President of national institution of Arts and Letters, a member of American Academy of Arts, a trustee of the John. F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and a Professor at New York University. He prepared his conversations, lectures and wrote anecdotes that revealed his humble origins, professional relationship with celebrated cultural diverse artists and strong sense of biculturality rather than black cultural nationalist identity as an American writer of African descent.

Ellison has written many short stories as well as novels. From 1939 onwards Ellison's short stories, essays and reviews began to appear in several periodicals. In early short stories Ellison focused on the radical politics of the 1930s, but he gradually developed an ironic and to some extent conservative view on race relations in American society. *King of Bingo Game*, his collection of short stories, examines the specific alienation felt by black in the United States of America and at the same time it provides the pictures of those

ignored working class blacks of the day specifically those blacks who were new to urban life.

Shadow and Act and *Going to the Territory* are his two collections of essays and interviews that range from African-American experience and black cultural ethos to the Jazz musicians and Blue singers. *Going to the Territory* captures the myth legends and culture of the Negroes. Ellison's primary concern is the aesthetics rather than the social purpose. He says, " I can only ask that my fiction be judged as part if it fails aesthetically, not because I did or did not fight some ideological battle"(136-7).

Ellison accepts his role on both level as an artist and as a Negro. That's why he has transmuted himself and his experience almost entirely into his art. He takes art, as a celebration of life, does not believe only to the values produced by the sociological conditions which have brought misery in the life of Negro. Ellison expresses "it seems to me that one of the obligation I took on when I committed myself to the art and from the novel was that of striving for the broadest range, the discovery and articulation of the most squeeze this from the life which I know best"(165).

Ralph Ellison along with short stories and essays has written novels too. *Invisible Man*, and *Juneteenth* are his best-known novels. As a novelist Ellison's major focus is on subjectivity, transcendence of determinism and insistence of existential freedom. Ellison treats human and universal condition of an individual under the crotches of social system. In other words, Ellison's novels are characterized by the mingling of 'social realism' and surrealism. About the characters in Ellison novels, the dominant roles are played by whites, though they are about black people. Ellison in his novel treats the black person as an invisible in white's society and ultimately extends this very invisibility as common human existence. Art becomes the social action in the sense that the vision of artist and the vision of oppressed class are treated in same level. Ellison's novels have eschewed gender in favor of race as separate and distinct issues. In his novels we find the artistic blend of realistic

and surrealistic modes of writing of American life that is purely the 'American experience'. There is lack of integration in his writing because African-American experience is characterized by sense of fragmentation. Pastoral nostalgia is another recurring element of his novels.

Invisible Man is his autobiographical masterpiece. Though Ellison has written short fiction, critical essays and novels, his single book made him immortal in the history of black literature. The unnamed protagonist of this novel represents in many ways. His education and street experience in New York City culminated in this novel. The winner of several prizes when it was published including the National Book Award for 1953, *Invisible Man* has been widely praised. It was selected as the "most distinguished" work published in the United States between 1945 and 1965. In *Invisible Man* the contradiction between black and whites of America is tried to depict. Most of the black characters in the novel realize the domination of the whites upon them. Some cruelty of the whites upon the blacks has been portrayed. But the blacks are not only oppressed by the whites but also oppressed by the black fellow. Ellison's protagonist is unnamed and black. An unnamed black narrator narrates his bitter experience at a repressive black college, his devastating and life threatening experiences in radical politics of Harlem and his determination to take refuge at underground and create a new identity for himself. He has tried the way of "humility" of being a good Negro: he has tried room for himself in American industry, to become a good cog in the technological machine. He has tried all those things by means of which it would seem that a Negro might achieve visibility in American life. So he has chosen to become an underground man:

Now aware of my invisibility, I live rent-free in a building rented strictly to whites, in a section of the basement that was shut off and forgotten during the nineteenth century, which I discovered when I trying to escape in the

beginning and lies far ahead. The point now is that I found a home- or a hole in the ground, as you will. (6)

This masterpiece brims with great characters and analyses of culture as Ellison portrays the realities of American life. The religion, politics, and music of African-American continuity and obtunds of white receive shrewd treatments. The modern humor and literary sophistication of the novel brought African-American literature to a new peak. Indeed, one of our keenest satisfactions in reading *Invisible Man* comes from the sense it gives us of being immersed in all the concrete materialialities of Black experience: one hears the very buzz and hum of Harlem.

The novel deals with various themes like racism, identity crisis of minority group, and struggle for survival. The story is narrated by a black protagonist; at first motives of other. He is dismissed from a southern black college for disillusioning, one of the founders by showing him the world in which blacks really live. In New York City he is picked by communist leaders of Brotherhood for political role. Ultimately he realized that communists are merely using him as a symbol of African community.

By this novel Ellison has shown corrupt society of America. Even so-called high class people are immoral and go to brothel house. He has shown the sexual harassment faced by women in America through a naked dancer. In the novel Ellison has tried to depict some instances of violence in America. Prostitution is one of the cruelest forms of violence and the spectators are most important men of society such as lawyers, judges, doctors, teachers, pastors etc:

And she began to dance, a slow sensuous movement; the smoke of a hundred of cigars clinging to her like thinnest of veils. On my right I saw one boy faint. And now a man grabbed a silver pitcher from a table and stepped close as he dashed ice water upon him and stood him upon. I

noticed a certain merchant who followed her angrily his lips loose and drooling. (20)

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* uses invisibility as a metaphor for marginality, the oppression, effacement and dehumanization of black people in the United States. Visibility and invisibility work as metaphors for the social, political and economic effacement and consequent oppression of blacks in the United States. The man is invisible because he cannot escape the preoccupation. These preconceptions are produced by a perception of his skin color. Ellison's narrator is invisible because, white people think that they are blinded by metaphor. Ellison's novel suggests that such habitual blindness may be challenged and in turn transformed by an act of language.

It is the quest of an unnamed young black man for personal identity and racial community as he travels from south to north, from innocence to experience from self-deception to knowledge from a spurious visibility to an existential invisibility. The book is full of acutest observation of the manners, idioms, and human styles that constitute the ethos of Black life in America.

Invisible Man not only draws from the respective authors personal experience, but also thematically encompasses the experience of large portion of race. We can say *Invisible man* as a picaresque novel. The typical hero in picaresque literature is founding, an orphan, a bastard, or an outcast and this characteristic is especially applicable to the protagonist of this novel. Ellison's invisible man becomes an outcast and is forced make his way in New York, where, because he is black he remains outcast from mainstream society. He breaks all ties with his family once he leaves the South and in effect becomes an orphan in the city; even semblance of a family, which he finds with Mary Rambo, is short-lived. Like the picaro, Ellison's invisible man is outcast from the dominant culture and in that is representative of the position of Blacks in America.

Invisible man is spiritual and cultural orphan cut off from his past, undergoes a physical journey that historically parallels the migration of Blacks from the South in search of 'promised land' of the North. In this novel the protagonist's physical journey evolves into a spiritual quest, but he finds that this physical freedom is symbolic or superficial, that it negates too much of their affinity for things blacks and southern. Folk arts become the luring powers of southern blacks life. New world symphony in *Invisible Man* underscores the idea and indicates how difficult it is for those who estrange themselves from the southern black past to sever completely their psychological and spiritualities.

Treatment of Northern characters is usually sympathetic as far as their relations with Blacks are concerned. Quite often, southern black writers emphasize the shortcoming of wealthy white Northern. Northern White on the surface depicted relatively favorable in their relation with blacks .The member of this class is often a threat to those black fellows whom they supposed to be friend; Sybil's attitude toward invisible man is best example. Mr. Norton brother Jack and others members of brotherhood belong to this class of Northern whites whose life –style is ridiculed.

The *Invisible Man* is to some extent influenced by mask device. It is the one that uses most fully the mask devices as the technique of the novel and it has evolved from black American folk culture in the south.

What Invisible Man learns by the end of the novel in his movement from innocence to experience is exactly what his grand father, Dr. Bledsoe, the veteran and others have fold him and what wrong black learn if he must survive by his wits. Thematic uses of mask device in the novel is in the factory hospital episode where the white doctors consider a perform lobotomy to curb the potentially violent nature of the protagonist whose sense of self is a threat to the survival.

Critics on Ellison's *Invisible Man*

As already noted *Invisible Man* deals with various themes. Besides various themes, it deals with the theme of feminism and identity crisis of women in terms of race and sex. Since its second publication in 1952, various critics have commented upon this novel from different perspectives. Different periodicals hailed it as a most impressive work of fiction considering it as the best novel since the Second World War. Dealing with the metaphor of invisible man, Ellison provides the complexity and diversity of American experience. Ellison comes with idea that recognition in a racialized society is almost impossible to attain. Ellison's genius and his artistic excellence make the work ever fresh and pregnant with diverse ideas. It gracefully blends diverse literary genius and tradition: from Marxists notion of class struggle to Freudian Psychoanalysis; from race, humour and suspense of Mark Twain to dramatic ideas of William Faulkner; from slave narrative and folklore to surrealistic Kafkaesque parable.

Though critics have interpreted the work from various points of view, the main focus of this review section is to point out the diverse views that are centered on feminist issue, identity crisis etc. Michael Hardin says:

The duel tension physical desire and hatred expressed toward white women, for whatever reason, represents the only physical interaction or for women within the novel. At no point he does have sex with African-American women. Women in the novel exists only symbolically, the narrator thinks "Between us and everything we wanted to change in the world; they placed a women socially, politically, economically. (5)

Female characters of this novel are presented only symbolically. Only few female characters are presented there and they are passive. Even protagonist wants them physically.

Female characters of this novel are presented as meek, docile and sensuous. They are presented as symbol of sex and object of sexual pleasure. They are not given tough work in the novel. Ellison could remain exceptional in depicting the female character and he has presented them stereotypically. Just like female characters, black males are depicted as meek. Most of the time they are used as sexual object by white male. Danial Kim argues:

The Battle Royale, Mr. Norton and young Emerson represent the white male desire for the black male body; these actions and white men attempt to 'feminize' the narrator by defining him as the objects of male gaze and desire; a broad range of white male types... align black men with femininity (32).

The narrator of *Invisible Man* is often invisible because he is seen only as a black Man and not as an individual; it is from this constructed space that he takes on the role of taboo acting out against white women. Early in the novel, during the fight he sees, a magnificent blonde stark naked dancer and wants to caresses her and to destroy her. The desire to have sex with the white female is joined with the desire to kill. This shows the narrator's strong hatred towards women. On the one hand he wants to achieve that dancer and to have sex and at the same time he sees no importance of her and wants to kill her. He thinks women as an object of sexual pleasure and nothing more than that.

Marjorie Pryse is of the opinion that Invisible man is Ellison's attempt to turn the literary mark onto social password. Ellison has dealt with the issue of identity structuring the novel in the form of realism. Pryse says:

In *Invisible man* where identity is a problem, to take control of the creation of realism would be to alter reality in the process, and the novel is implicitly because the narrator's choice of allegory has been socially determined: the escaping slave is an archetype; an *Invisible Man* is a new creation, or at least a new a new reconstruction. (14)

Most of the white bourgeoisie 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 the human society. Robert Meally took the invisibility of the protagonist as his freedom gained by his conscious knowledge of his individual cultural and national history. He says:

Accordingly, the vision in novel and indeed throughout his fiction is ultimately affirmative. Virtually all of his fictions- ten stories before the novel, eleven after- features a young black man stretching toward adulthood. We see in this work the evolution of a central theme: the more conscious a person is of his individual cultural and national history the freer he becomes.

(22)

Invisible Man is aesthetically whole, a specific story of the human condition. Even in the darkness, the author sees the hope of light, which he expresses through his narrator. Here the narrator decides to start his literary career from the dark underground.

II. feminism and Afro-American women

Feminism is the ideology of women's liberation, beliefs, suffering and injustice is because of our sex. Feminism represents one of the most important social, economic and aesthetic revolutions of modern times. Feminism is concerned with the marginalization of all women. The term feminism first emerged in the language in the 1890s, a significant historical moment when there was an urgent need to name the activities of women's movement. Some are of opinion that feminism is the operation through which a woman desires to be like man, like a dogmatic philosopher demanding truth, science and objectivity.

Adrienne Rich describes feminism as "the place where in the most natural, organic way subjectivity and politics are to come together"(317). Feminists examine the experiences of women from all races and classes and cultures. Feminism, like most broad-based philosophical perspective accommodates several species' under its genus; like liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, psychoanalytical feminism, existentialist feminism, etc. Radical feminists believed that it is a patriarchal system that oppresses women, a system characterized by power, dominance and hierarchy and competition. Most radical feminist came to view women's biology is potential sources of liberating power for women. Female biology is not oppressive but rather men have controlled women as child bearers thus if women are to be liberated, each woman must determine herself.

Liberal feminism is evolved from liberalisms, the school of political thought. It simply claims that people have right to practice their own brand, which we generally identified as fundamental right. Liberal feminists also focus how industrial capitalism began to draw women labor out of private and into the public work place. Women through the work place were first to find themselves left at home with little productivity. Married to relatively wealthy professional and entrepreneurial men; women had no incentive to work productivity outside the home. Wollstonecraft compares these privileged women to

members of the feathered race," birds confined to cage that have nothing to do"(32). Psychoanalytic feminists find the root of women's suppression embedded deep in her psyche. Because Oedipus complex is the root of male rule.

Marxist feminism is the synthesis of Marxism and feminism. It is the combined study of class with that of gender. Marxist feminists believe that synthesis of Marxism and feminism can emancipate women. Marxist feminism aims to describe the material basis of women's subjugation and relationship between the mode of production and women's suppression and women's status. They argue how the separation of work (production) from leisure is a separation, which exists for men only. The social concept of housework creates sexual division of labor. It mystifies women's work in the home obscuring the fact that domestic labor helps reproduce capitalist and patriarchal society. Marxist feminism deals with the relation between the construction of woman's inner experience and her social experience. Marxist feminists also believe that class ultimately better accounts for woman's status and functions under capitalism. To the degree that Marxist feminists believe that women's work shapes women's thought and then female nature. Capitalism is viewed as a system of exchange relations in which every labor power has power has a price. As Rosemarie Tong says:

When capitalism viewed as a system of exchange relations, it is described as a commodity or market society in which everything, including one's labor power has a price and all transactions are fundamentally exchange transactions. When capitalism is viewed as power relations such as a society in which every kind of transactional relation is exploitative. (41-42)

So though they agree that it is the system of power relation capitalist ideology defend quasicontractual relations such as prostitution and surrogate motherhood as a exercise of free choice. They argue when a woman chooses to sell her sexuality and reproductive services only because she has nothing else of comparable value to sell in the

market place. So that Marxist feminists have tended to focus on women's work related concerns. Women's domestic work is trivialized as not a real work. So they are generally given the most boring and low paying jobs. Modes of production determine the lives of women within the households by locating their position in the social system. Unlike Marxism they grouped women as a class. According to Marxism human beings are fragmented because of this class. All societies are characterized by various rankings and gradations. The society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camp; Working class and capitalist. R.A. Sydie says, " It is from the labor of working class that the capitalists profit or surplus value is extracted. The working class are forced to sell their labor, however, the return obtained for their labor is always less than its worth" (92).

Women's alienation is profoundly disturbing because women experience shelves only as the fulfillment of other people's need. They have no sense of self. So one of primary goals of Marxism is to create the kind of world in which women will experience themselves as a whole person, as integrated rather than fragmented, or splintered beings.

Marxist feminists are in a position first to develop workingwomen's revolutionary consciousness and then to lead them to revolutionary action. They hold out the hopes that if women's status and function truly change in the working place, her status and the function of the household also change.

Marxist feminists think that it is impossible for women to obtain genuine, equal opportunity in a class society where the wealth produced by powerless many ends up in the hand of powerful few. Private ownership in the means of production by relatively few persons, originally all male, inaugurated a class system whose contemporary manifestations are corporate capitalism and imperialism.

Female and Society

Women hold up half of the sky that considered unequal and subordinated to men in many ways. Women are facing discrimination from womb to tomb. Man is in the right in

being a man; it is the woman who is in the wrong. There is an absolute human type, the masculine. Woman has ovaries, a uterus: these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity. Man thinks that woman as imperfect man, incidental being.

Humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him. Simone De Beauvoir says in her book, "woman is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her. He is subject, he is the absolute—she is the Other" (4-5).

She is the other in totality of which the two components are necessary to one another. Now woman has always been man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality. And even today women are heavily handicapped, though their situation is in the process of change towards equality. Almost nowhere is her legal status the same as men.

Significantly this society is patriarchal insofar as women were barred from the realm of freedom or intellectual discourse and confined to the realm of necessity or physical labor. But still if we see the history of human civilization women played an important role in the realm of necessity, a role that was essentially the same as male co-workers. In the Stone Age there was equal division of labor. Engel retraces the history of women and says that, "the land belonged in common to all members of the clan women's strength was adequate for gardening. In this primitive division of labor, the two sexes constituted in a way two classes and there was equality between these two sexes"(156).

With the emergence of industrialization women are domesticised. In Stone Age women played a large part in economic life by productive labor-making property like weaving, gardening etc. With the emergence of Copper, Bronze and Iron Age men became proprietor of women as well as owner of the property. Women were restricted to domestic duty, which seemed insignificant in comparison with men's productive labor. Then maternal

authority gave place to paternal authority. Due to this economic oppression that gave rise to the social oppression, she is subjected. Equality cannot be reestablished until the two sexes enjoy equal right in law. Woman can be emancipated only when she can take part on a large scale in production. Still today some are of opinion that women are biologically weak and passive. Many people think that men and women are essentially different physically and intellectually, and that women are inferior, passive and weak counterpart of men, whose pleasure and comfort they should study and aimed to prove.

Some critics are of opinion that women are facing discrimination because of language. The very language that we use is then; according to Cixous based on gender inequality. Since the feminine half of the binary is always negative or impotent quality, "Social language depends on gendered binary oppositions. The feminine is always the other or the negative in any hierarchies which society constitute"(39). She believes that women's difference from man is both social and linguistic difference.

It is still assumed, mainly in the case of middle class that marriage is the ideal career, and husbands and father would provide the material needs of women. Still it is considered that women need to be protected from the harsh worlds of trade, commerce and politics; and they need education only to extent that makes it possible for them to make them decent mothers and wives. Because of these facts women are bound to be dependent to the male in different form as father, husband and son.

Woman is supposed to work in the domestic sphere, protected from painful reality outside as they are supposed to be weak biologically. But in fact they are economically weak rather than biologically. Woman is a weak because our society describes her as weak creature. Simone De Beauvoir in writes, "one is not born a woman, one becomes one". She further says "she is a cultural construction, rather than a biological one"(5-6).

In this way woman's role is to act as the enabler of culture, who made culture possible; but she is not finally participant in culture. In society, the symbolic significance of

femininity or female is double; as the bearers, nurses, rearers of children, women are often inscribed as being closer to nature. Here women's role described by society seems quite ambivalent. On the one hand women appear to be closer to nature, more animalistic less cultured than man. At the same time they are also nurturers of children. She changes her animalistic baby into a civilized and a cultured human being. So woman is at one time manifestation of nature and of culture and she provides a civilized refuge from the world outside the home where makes his living. Now though the concept of traditional concept of gender is gradually changing, the condition of women in general is not satisfactory. Only few women have achieved high position as their male co-workers in business, media, and other field except traditional concept of female job like nursing, teaching, clerking etc. Patriarchal society thinks women are incapable of other tasks such as ruling, preaching, investing, and engaging in business activities.

Some Marxists compare these two sexes as two distinctive classes that are bourgeoisie and proletariat. Engel is of opinion that the root cause of women's oppression is the lack of ownership in the private property. As he says:

Husband is a bourgeoisie and the wife represents the proletariat class. He also believed that man's control of woman is rooted in fact that he, not she controls the property. Division of labor in the family had regulated the distribution of private property. This division of labor forced the woman to be in the second place. Woman is confined to domestic work. The woman's housework lost its significance compared with man's work in obtaining a livelihood. And the oppression of women will cease only with the dissolution of the institution of private property. (158)

If we see our history we can find that man rules by virtue of power. If women are to be emancipated from their husbands or other males they must become economically independent to men.

It is usually said that, women of proletariat class suffer less. In most of the bourgeoisie class family wife appear simply as an object, a commodity of sex and in return she gets support from her husband. Marxist feminists compare this situation with prostitution. The difference is that, in the case of wife she surrender herself in her domestic and nurturing services only for economic livelihood and social security, and a prostitute hires her body to other male in order to survive herself and to some extent her children economically. In contrary, because of lack of enough property proletariat women as workers outside the home leads to a measure of equality between husband and wife.

Even today the concept has not changed, and women are bound to live in house. For workingwomen, they have to carry double load. She has to manage both jobs, as it is believed that household work is the responsibility of women. Especially married women with children, who work outside are only allowed if they continue to fulfill their responsibility in the home. In this situation equal access to job outside the home will not be sufficient to give equality for women as long as work in the home remains only the responsibility of women.

In most of the societies men elaborate system of norms, ideas, and standards of evaluation that permit them to order relationship among themselves, 'becoming a man', is an achievement, a social groups elaborate the criteria for that achievement and create the hierarchies and institution. Womanhood, by contrast is more of a given for female, and in most societies we find relatively few ways of expressing the differences among women. We find in most of the societies, relatively few institutionalized roles for women, and relatively few contexts in which women are given a social role and definition by virtue either of their age or of their relationship to men. Because cultures provide no fine social classification for women and their interests, women are seen and come to see themselves as irrational.

In many patrilineal ideologies, women are taken as unnecessary, at the same time vitally important to men: they are needed as wives, as sisters and as a procreators who

produce workers and heirs for the group. A woman may be the mediator between her own group and that of the man she has married. In most high Brahmin caste of Hindu religion of Nepal India and in Muslim community, women are more suppressed. It is often believed that parents will find safe place in heaven: only when their daughter get married before their first menstruation. So that in most places of India and Nepal young girls are compelled to marry in their childhood. They are often taught that their husbands are the gods; they should pray to die before her husband. Widows are mostly excluded from any social works and some powerful women who dare to speak against this social injustice are tagged as witches.

Women and race

Race refers to one of the groups of population constituting linearity. It is socially constructed concept that divides humankind in major division in terms of distinctive characteristics hereditary transmission of physical characteristics became the authentic base for the definition of race. Racism is the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance. Though the concept of race became much more poignant during the colonial period there are many racial group on the basis of color like Caucasian or white Mongolian or yellow Ethiopian American of red and Malayan of brown. But in general by race we mean two groups: the black and white During the Elizabethan period Negro was defined as black, ugly cruel sexual rasp out and barely human. Blacks are inferior because of their color, eye, hair, lips etc and even the shape and size of the skull. Both in the past and present blacks are discriminated and declared as an inferior race on the basis of color. Even since the pre-Christian era to the present the very black color is associated with ugliness, despair, evil and death whereas the whiteness is associated with beauty, goodness, virtue, and innocence. People try to justify racism in the name of religion by saying that Jesus Christ is white therefore whites are naturally superior in society and nearer to God.

Women from black society are suppressed in double ways. As black they are not treated as human being and dominated by whites, and as female they are dominated by the male within their own community. Black women have suffered cruelly in this society from living the phenomenon of being black and female. Mariam Schneir says, "we live in a patriarchy. We have allowed a premium to put on the male suffering. History, past or present, rarely deals with the malicious abuse put upon the black women. Black women experience sexism in different ways white women and racism in different from blacks"(173). Most black feminists recognize the need to address the double oppression of class, race and gender. Black feminists like 'male black' political thought tend to assert the priority and autonomy of racial oppression.

Black feminists argue that radical feminism and other forms of feminism dealt with the family, motherhood reproduction and sexuality on the basis of white women's experience and betray the interest of black women. Faith Robertson Elliot claims, "Blacks women have the history and historical experience of enslavement, indentured labor, enforced migration, imperial conquest and sexual abuse which are almost unknown to white women" (65).

Black feminist and many more Black women have all experience sexual oppression as a constant factor in day-to-day existence. Black feminists often talk about their feelings of craziness as they think real politics still does not allow most black women, to look more deeply in their own experiences, to build a politics that will change their lives and end oppression. There is very low value placed upon black women's psyches in the society, which is both racist and sexist, Mariam schneir in states her colleague's quotation that, "we are all damaged people by virtue of being Black women. We are dispossessed psychologically and are every other level" (183). The material conditions of most black women would hardly lead them to upset both economic and sexual arrangements that seem to represent some stability in their lives. Many black women have a good understanding of

both sexism and racism, but because of everyday constraints of their lives, they cannot risk struggling against them both.

Sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in black women's lives as are the politics of class and race. It is difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in their lives they are most often experienced simultaneously. Black feminists argue that, Black women are generally marginal in the labor force. The reaction of Black men to feminists has been valuable and that of allies in their struggles but they might also be forced to change their habitually sexist ways of interacting and oppressing Black women.

bell hooks argues that "racial oppression that creates differences between black and white, that take precedence over the common experiences women might share. Racial power relations are more oppressive than their gender hierarchy"(89). Black women's oppression is more real, and more relational to political thinking. History of Black women forms the female slave experience to the continued devaluation of black womanhood. But now they are fighting with courage and resolution to gain personal and political freedom. Now instead of being located at the margins of social system black women are occupying at its center. Black women have 'no institutionalized other' that they can exploit or oppress. They have no rewards from the status quo and hence a lesser attachment to it. They are avoided indifferently in term of racism and feminism. Both black men and white men seem indifferent to black women.

Many black feminists are separated from white feminists. They accused that double marginalized black women of 1970s and 80s were, in general, invisible in black radical thought so the feminist notion of universal sisterhood is rejected in favor of the argument that women are divided by racial distinctions, ethnicity and nationality and power relation. White feminists are betraying the black women's interest. Like white women struggle is for the right to abortion whereas black women struggle against the use of abortion, sterilization

and contraception to limit the reproduction of black people. White feminists debate about such issues as abortion, female circumcision, purdah conventions, the superiority of individuality, chosen marriages over arranged marriage and the oppressiveness of the family. The family as the primary site of women's oppression is insensitive to the differences between black and white families. And white feminists and fail to recognize that for black women family is a source of support.

Usually feminism is defined as white feminism and labeled racist. This argument rests on the assertion that notions of universal womanhood are in reality grounded in the specific experience of white middle class women. It is argued that black women may be made invisible, the specificity of their culture denied and the oppressive force of racism ignored. Black feminism has put the oppression of black women on political and theoretical agendas and shown that racism alters the form and significance of sexism.

Black women are also surrounded by the myth of religion. At every religion women are excluded. Black women are extremely avoided and taken as species from another planet. One reason may be the founder of most the religion like Islam, Christian Buddhism are male and coincidence is that all of them Mohammed, Jesus Christ, Buddha are not from black community.

Many critics related to marginalized women displaces a singular emphasis on the notion of differences between men and women with a focus on differences on women. Jonnae Hollow is of the opinion that:

Black women are often loath to define the selves as feminist because feminism is identified as a white women's movement. Feminism Insistence on 'sisterhood' and a sexual politics as the fundamental form of politics, fails to take account of the realities of racism which link black women to black men once the cultural differences between women are taken into account, it becomes even more problematic to take about an authentic female voice

many women belong to white feminist generalized from their own experience to the experience of all women who don't see gender as the central side of their oppression. (105)

It is clear that all women don't share the same experience and are subject to different forms of oppression. They claimed that white sisters are at the end of the day, simply fighting for equality with their men. Within the very system they claimed to criticize furthermore by fighting for equality with middle class men, middle class women often strengthened classiness by pushing lower class or minority group. In some basic principles of feminist politics there are established cultural differences white and black women which feminism has ignored; for example, for many feminist, child bearing is a sign of oppression and restriction yet women from black community view motherhood as an honor necessary for the continuation of their tribe. In other words, there are very concrete differences in the experiences of black and white which western (whites) have ignored.

Various research studies indicate that there are more significant differences among women than there are between men and women: that is sex and gender differences are far less significant than differences based on race, ethnicity, national origin and so on. Differences among women are especially evident with respect to categories of race, socioeconomic class and sexual orientation. Women of different color and poor women experience of discrimination and subordination is based on these characteristics as well as the gender. Though all these aspects cannot be separated, in some situation, differences based on the category of race are more significant or important than other aspects. For example, Lucinda Joy Peach in claims:

In the civil rights and black power movements of 1960s and 70s, blacks women were expected to take supportive, secondary roles, and were refused positions of leadership. At the same time, black women active in the struggle for racial equality were discriminated against because of their

gender, and remained in their place in positions and roles subordinate to those of men. (56)

Even today black women are expected to put solidarity to their race ahead of resisting sexism, racism and patriarchy. The prescribed social roles for black women and white women have been constructed such as workers versus housewives, strong versus weak, sexual versus asexual. The second wave of the women's movement generally ignored the needs of working class and black women.

Early feminists analysis of oppression tended to assume that all women are similar. Some critics say that even Simone de Beauvoir, a well-known feminist failed to understand the black women's problem. Beauvoir's references to women are plainly only intended to refer to women not subject to racism, Behavior fails to acknowledge the implication of her own analysis that women are constructed differently in different social circumstances, including race and class.

Women have been stereotyped in ways that allow ignoring the reality significant differences among them. When certain differences among women are recognized, such as race, other stereotypes may emerge to suggest that all the European societies are all black, lazy and uneducated. White women focus upon their oppression of women and ignore differences of race, sexual preferences, class and age. There is a pretense to homogeneity of experience covered by the word sisterhood that does not in fact exist.

As white women ignore their built in privilege of whiteness and define woman in terms of their own experience alone, then women of color become the Other, the outsider whose experience and tradition is too alien to comprehend. The literature of women of color is seldom included in women's literature courses and almost never is in other literature courses, or in women studies as a whole. White women often find difficulties on reading black women's work because of their reluctance to see black women as women and different from themselves.

Beverly Guy-Shiftall discussed certain premises what came to be labeled black feminism:

1) Black women experience a special kind of oppression and suffering, which is both racist and sexist because of their dual racial and gender identity; 2) This double jeopardy has meant that the problems, concerns and needs of black women are different in many ways and distinct from those of both white and black liberation: 4) There is no inherent contradiction in the struggle to eradicate sexism and racism as well as the other "isms" which plague the human community such as classicism and heterosexism; 5) black women's unique struggles with respect to racial and sexual politics , their poverty and marginalized status have given them a special view of the world. (294)

Women's experiences are global in a historical and a contemporary sense. It has its roots deep in history and everywhere. Today the awareness of the universally oppressive condition of women and the need for change is growing internationally. The most powerful voices come from third world women and black women themselves bringing about a further change in feminist awareness. They decry the denial of differences and the inherent racism found in part of white feminist movement. Some writers have described all women as a fourth world; the most oppressed section of the poor and oppressed everywhere, but nowhere is this more true than black women.

Afro-American Women

Afro-American feminist, whose work generally focused upon the ignored black women, and also to the relationship between gender to racial oppression and assert a positive and empowering identity for black women. At its simplest level black literary feminism is interested in the history and experiences of Afro-American women and examines their representatives in literary and critical texts. Toni Morrison is closely

associated with the project of recovering black women's history and experience. Alice Walker is primarily known for introducing a female perspective, on black history and experience has proved the more controversial.

White women don't suffer even today under the same restrictions and the same chauvinism as black women, who were brought to American bound slavery and considered chattel and breeders. Although some white women stepped forward to speak against slavery, most white women did not. Many American women did not react to the injustices of slavery because they enjoyed their status in society. Afro-American women are viewed typically as sexual creatures that lured white men from their wives and families.

Often white men and white women alike placed the blame for the abuse and rape of Afro-American on the victims themselves. Black slave women were bound to lead their lives controlled by white planters. Their lives were most often filled with hard labor, violence and sexual exploitation by white men. In Southern part of America, where slavery was most, white society regarded the black women as incapable of filing the role of true womanhood because she lacks the white women's outward sign of purity, her white flesh.

bell hooks, one of the leading figure of feminism, increasingly outlines a more broad post modern interest in acknowledging differences within race that is African American identity as well as within gender identities: the double action of invocation and deconstruction of identity by stressing both race identity commonality as well as its diversity.

A well-known feminist Sojour Truth begins her writings from her marginalized position. As a black woman her sense of invisibility of Afro-American women's experience reflects in her writings:

I am a black and also a human and woman is not thing, not just white. They include me. I have suffered a I too deserve rights. Ii speak of my difference from you (my suffering as a black woman) and also of my commonality

(human and woman). You cannot exclude me. I and the Truth. My identity is the truth. You can not deny. (79)

There is no single image or set of images of Afro-American women in American culture, usually women of different color are often stereotyped as whores. This has begun to change in recent years as African-American including other is employed as public figure, but this is not satisfactory. Even today, those public figures including other women of color are the lowest paid wage earners in America. In America most of the black women still refuse to recognize that they are oppressed as women, and that discrimination against Afro-American women is practical not only by the white society but implemented within black community. They are primary targets of abortion and sterilization abuse in African community in America. In most part, small girls are still being sewed shut between their legs to keep them docile and for men's pleasure, known as circumcision, which is not a cultural affair but a crime against black women; most Afro-American female writers' writing is full of pain of frequent assault not only by a white patriarchy but also by a black men like Toni Morrison creates a black female character in her well known novel who is deceived by white teacher and she has to kill her own daughter for her sake. This shows the cruelties of white society towards black women in America.

Maureen Stone shows her sympathies for both white and black woman. The social and economic factors affected the relationship between black and white women in America. In each and every walk of life there is competition between black and white women and almost always the black women comes off the loser. Maureen studied two black and white maids in America and concluded that these two women were competing at the lowest end of the social job scales, there was no room for sisterhood, as it was merely a question of survival. Maureen Stone in *Black Woman Walking* writes her own experience of racial discrimination during her walking different places. During her walking she writes a letter to American sister that she was rejected in Mexico as a guest of white people, as black women

were accused of being destroyer of whites house. She says, "I was refused entry by a young women, who barred my way. I push her aside and walk in. I wondered how many women there were in Mexico City breaking into peoples house. It was to me that this woman could not accept that someone like a black woman, could be a guest in her house" (45).

The argument that African-American women confront both a "woman question and a race problem", captures the essence of black feminist though a persistent and important component of African-American literary and intellectual tradition since slavery, scholars until fairly recently have focused primarily on the racial perspectives of blacks. This tendency to ignore long years of political struggle aimed at eradicating the multiple oppressions which black women experience resulted in erroneous notions about the relevance of feminism to the black community during the second wave of the women's movement. Revisiting black history with a gender analysis, however, should render obsolete the notion that feminist thinking is alien to African-Americans or that they have been misguided imitators of white women.

A historical perspective on the evolution of feminist consciousness and African-American women are usually thought to have begun with abolition since the catalyst for the emergence of women's rights movement in the mid – 19th century helped the movement to abolish slavery. However for 200 years enslaved Afro-American females struggled for their freedom and protested bringing slave children into the world, beatings, involuntary breeding, sexual exploitation by white masters, family separation, debilitating work schedules, sub-standard living conditions and demeaning stereotypes.

In a patriarchal power system where white skin privilege is a major pop, the entrapments used to neutralize black women and white women are the same. For example, it is very easy for black women to be used by the power structure against black men, not because they are men but because they are black. For white women there is a wider range of pretended choices and rewards for identifying with patriarchal power and its tools.

The women's movement fails to integrate the experience of poor and non white women in America much of what it means by the female experience is in fact class bound restrictions to the experience of a fairly typically group of white usually childless women who are blocked in their efforts to break into the bastions of white male, upper class privilege. Whilst a considerable amount of feminist writings and activities may only reflect the experience of a particular group of women, one must nonetheless recognize that more and more woman from other, less privileged groups are coming forward to speak out about their own experience and perspective on life.

Afro-American women have long been privy to some of the most intimate secrets of white society. Countless numbers of Black women have ridden buses to their families; where they not only cooked, cleaned and executed other domestic duties but where they also nurtured their other children shrewdly offered guidance to their employees, and frequently become harmony members of their white families. These women have seen white elites both actual and aspiring from perspectives largely obscured from their black spouses.

Many of the attitudes of black men to black women were formed in Africa, in spite of the fact that some women did enjoy positions of power in pre colonial times, and it was these attitudes that were taken to Caribbean and elsewhere, albeit having been diluted by slavery, Some people have argued, however. That the sexism of black men in America is different from the sexism of white men in those societies. Gemma Tang Nain in argues that, "The oppressive white men and oppressed black men may both exhibit sexist behavior, but the former does so former does so from position of power, the latter from a position if powerlessness"(118). White women are better off than black women due to their access to the higher earnings of white men. While this is no doubt true, it simply reinforces white female dependency and subordination. In fact, the existence of patriarchy ensures that white women have an interest in the retention of racism and the higher incomes it offers to

white men. It is obvious that women within particular group would be subordinated, economically, to the men of that group, the evidence for the United States contradicts this implication since white women as well as black women, earn less than black men.

When white feminists produce generations, about women, Black feminists routinely ask, about Afro-American women felt invisibility, and repeatedly struck by their own invisibility, both as full human subjects included in sociological facts and observations, and as practitioners in the discipline itself. It should come as no surprise that much of Black feminist thought aims to encounter this invisibility by presenting sociological analyses of black women. The growing research describing black women's historical and contemporary behavior as mothers, community workers, church leaders, teachers and employed workers, and black women's ideas about themselves and their opportunities, reflects an effort to respond to the omission of facts about Afro-American women. Afro-American in academia is frequently struck by the differences between their own experiences and sociological description of the same phenomena. For those black women who confront racial and sexual discrimination and know that their mothers and grand mothers certainly did, explanations of Black women's poverty that stress low achievements motivation and the lack of black female human capital.

Black women are outsiders within sociology. This outsider within status has provided a special standpoint on self, family and society for Afro-American women. Afro-American women may face legal socialization process. It may also be more difficult for Afro-American women to experience conversion and begin totally to think in an act according to a sociological worldview. Indeed, since past generations of white male insiderism have shaped a sociological worldview reflecting these groups concern. More importantly, Black women would have to act in accordance with their place in a white male worldview. It may be extremely difficult for black women to accept a worldview predicated upon black female inferiority.

As an extreme case of outsiders moving into a community that is historically excluded, black women's experiences highlight the tension experienced by any group of less powerful outsiders encountering the paradigmatic thought of a more powerful insider community. Yasmin Tahera in this connection says:

Everyone, including women themselves believe that women's work is not a real work. Yet it is the women who take care of household chores, post harvest work and livestock. However, these works do not directly bring cash income. Cash directly means a power. The areas where cash transactions take place are in men's realm, which remains out of bounds for women. (49)

In households where women are the producers of molasses, vegetables, fishing nets, their labor is unpaid, never valued because it is the men who sell these products and thus become the 'owners' of the products and of the income derived. Bridget Walker writes a poem; "Through Western Eyes 1: Invisible Women, Invisible Work":

In the compounds the women
 Were pounding grain
 Spreading the coffee berries to dry
 Keeping a watchful eyes
 On children scuffing in the dust
 At the tap in the market place
 Young girls filled buckets to the brim,
 Joined hands to lift
 The loads with care not a drop to be spoiled
 Invisible women
 Invisible work
 As essential as the foundations
 Which hold up the house as dependable, as unseen. (56)

Black women's development is tied to the contemporary economic and political position. Their economic position is still at the very bottom of the American capitalistic economy. Only handful of them have been able to gain certain tools as a result of tokenism in education and employment, which potentially enable them to move effectively, fight their oppression.

III. Suppression of Women in *Invisible Man*

Everywhere women are subordinated and suppressed in comparison to male. They are not given proper place in any society. Even in America they are subordinated in many ways, in many degrees. Though condition of both black and white women is not satisfactory, condition of black women is more miserable. They are never heard in political and social mainstream. As Marxist feminists believe that there are two major classes in the world. One is male that is oppressor or Bourgeoisie other is female that is oppressed or proletariat. They are divided into two hostile camps the oppressor and oppressed. The oppressors always exploit the oppressed group in terms of color, caste, gender etc. The oppressor group always holds the power and rule over the oppressed group. The economic status of oppressed group is poor as they are exploited by oppressor group. American blacks as a whole are oppressed nationalities. They are minority group. They are the good example of racial discrimination where the blacks are degenerated by the whites. American women as a class are suppressed by male machismo. As a whole Blacks have to face different kinds of discrimination by whites simply because they are different in color. Ellison has tried to depict such type of racial-discrimination prevailing in American society by creating an unnamed black protagonist. But Ellison has failed to address women especially those black women who are really suppressed by the male of their own community. All the black characters, though there are only few numbers of female characters, realize the difference between the blacks and whites.

Ellison's novel asserts that white men perceive and treat men in roughly the same way that men characteristically perceive and treat women under patriarchy; as objects of erotic pleasure. It deals with the theme of society's perception towards women. The women characters in the *Invisible Man* of this novel are marginalized, either as maternal or sexual figures. The various female characters are portrayed in the traditional view of women in society at that time, as defined largely by their relationship with men. Women are generally

viewed in negative way. They are mainly used as sex object, prostitute, and caregivers. Women of both races are inferiorized throughout the book because they are presented as forms of entertainment for other's enjoyment. There are rare occurrences of women in a positive light. Ellison's portrayal of women in *Invisible Man* for the vast majority is negative way; they are mainly viewed in a degrading manner, which shows it was worse to be a woman in these times.

First woman character we encounter in the very first part of the novel's prologue is an old black old woman who is mourning at the death of her husband. She loves her husband at the same time she hates him. She loves him just because he has given her several sons. Actually she loves her son's father. At the same time she is laughing because she has got freedom from the slave master. Though she loves freedom, she does not know the actual meaning of freedom. This shows that how much women are suffocated with their life:

I darely loved my master son,' she said. He gave me several sons; and because I loved my sons I learned to love their father though I hated him too. I laughs too, but I moans too. But I loved something even more, freedom, I loved him and gim him the poison and he withered away frost-bit apple. (11)

As noted earlier that women are exploited in various ways in this novel. Prostitution is one of the cruelest forms of violence faced by women, which usually takes place in entirely bourgeoisie society. In the novel not only white bourgeoisie male are involved but also narrator and his friends, who are racially minority group are also involved in such act. In the first chapter, a naked blonde dancer dances among white smokers. The spectators are some of the most important men of the town like bankers, lawyers, judges, doctors, fire chiefs, teachers, merchants, fashionable pastors, school superintendent etc. She is degraded there completely from human being and is made an instrument of enjoyment of spectators.

She has become merely a tool for sexual enjoyments. The narrator expresses his hatred toward white women. Early in the novel during the fight in ' Battle Royale', he sees a magnificent blonde stark naked and wants to caresses her and to destroy her, to love her and to murder her. The dual tension of physical desire and hatred expressed toward white women for whatever reason represents the only physical interaction or physical desire of the prostitute for the women. At no point he does have sex with Afro-American women, and they are described not more than 'thin brown girl'. Though narrator hates white women he enjoys their company, He has not talked a single word about the feelings of Afro-American women:

And all the white blonde continued dancing, smiling faintly at the big shots who watched her with fascination, and faintly smiling at our fear. I noticed a certain merchant, who followed her hungrily, his lips loose and drooling. He was a large man who wore diamond studs in a shirtfront which swelled with the ample paunch underneath, and each time the blonde swayed her undulating hips he ran his hands through the thin hair of his bald head and, with his arms upheld, his posture clumsy like that of an intoxicated panda, wound his belly in a slow and obscure grind. This creature was completely hypnotized. The music had quickened. As the dancer flung herself about with a detached expression of her face, the man began to move around the floor in graceful circles, as they gave chase, slipping and sliding over the polished floor. It was mad. Chairs went crashing; drinks were spilt, as they ran laughing and howling her. They caught her just as she reached a door, raised her from the floor, and tossed at a hazing, and above her red, fixed smiling lips I saw the terror and disgust in her eyes, almost like my own terror and that which I saw in some of the other boys. As I watched, they tossed her twice and her soft breasts seemed to flatten against the air and her

legs flung widely as she spun. Some of the more sober ones helped her to escape. (20-21)

The Golden day is legalized as brothel house where doctors, lawyers, teachers, civil service workers, preachers, politicians, artists, are allowed to visit the girls for their sexual pleasure. Even the protagonist cannot be exceptional. He has gone there with some of his friends:

I seldom went there myself except with some of the fellows when word got out that a new bunch of girls had arrived from New Orleans. The school had tried to make the Golden day respectable, but the local white folks had a hand in it somehow and they got nowhere. The best the school could do was to make it hot for any student caught going there. (73)

Further we find the cruelest form of sexual harassment in this novel. Most obvious examples of this sexual identification of women are seen in the character of Hester and Edna. They are two prostitute of Golden Day. Hester hates white men, while Edna is convinced that white men make better sexual partners. In either case, both of these are defined through sexual relationship with male characters in the novel. The most shameful thing is that Mr. Trueblood rapes his own daughter and makes her pregnant. This shows that how much black community is corrupted. Black women are not safe from their own community, even from their father. Mr. Trueblood used to be a tenor singer and sometimes, was the victim of white society. The relationship between the blacks and whites is shaped by the power politics and the economics status. The poor economic condition and the practice of white racism led to the disintegration in the lives of blacks. Trueblood's argument behind his incestuous relationship with his daughter is very much noteworthy: "you see, suh, it was cold and us did not have much fire. Nothin' but wood, no coal. I tried to git help out but wouldn't nobody help us and I couldn't find no work or nothing. It was so

cold all of us had to sleep together; me, the ole lady and the gal. That's how it started, suh" (53).

The major issue of Trueblood, though, lies in treatment that he got by the white community. Before his sin, his life was in miserable condition. After this incident, he says white men came running for his rescue. He gets the white police to ward off the black people who were trying to drive him off his land. Also white people offered him more money. Mr. Norton, white trustee gives Trueblood \$100 to buy present to his children. Trueblood says, " I done the worse thing a man could even do in his family and instead of chasin' me out of the country, they gimme more help then they ever give more help than ever give any other colored man" (67). Thus the white community's treatment with Trueblood is ironic the, white men are rewarding what they would deem morally reprehensible if committed by another white man.

Ellison through the Negro narrator deconstructs the myth of white purity, by illustrating that since the founding of the nation white men have been violating black women and fathering children by them. Ellison deeply presents how not only white violates the moral ground even blacks have forget their moral ground. Mr. Norton, a white Trustee though attempts to navigate moral high ground by looking those people, the novel simultaneously subverts his class, racial, geographic and moral boundaries. Mr. Norton is shaken by the story to his core because he is unable to distinguish between himself and Trueblood. Mr. Trueblood does not find guilty himself and easily begs pardon to his daughter and wife. "I'm a man and a man doesn't leave his family; I'm still man" (66). Due to the guilty conscience about his love for his daughter Mr. Norton gets faint just after listening to Mr. Truebloods' incest narrative. He expresses his secret incestuous urge to his own daughter and desires she should not have his daughter. He says:

Yes, even more sacred than all the others. A girl, my daughter, she was a being more rare, more beautiful, purer, more perfect and more delicate than

the wildest dream of a poet. I could never believe her to be my own flesh and blood. Her beauty was a well-spring of purest water of life, and to look upon her was to drink and drink and drink again [....] she was rare, a perfect creation, a work of purest art. A delicate flower that bloomed in the liquid light of the moon. A nature not of this world, a personality like that of some biblical maiden, gracious and queenly. I found it difficult to believe her my own [...].(42)

Due to this recollection he is taken to the Golden Day colored roadhouse. This very scene again focuses on another aspect of black and white relationship. In Golden Day house several black addresses Norton either as their father or as grandfather," gentlemen this man is my grandfather! But he's white, his name's Norton. I would know my grandfather!"(76). Likewise, another fellow at once counters the former's claim and refer him as his father, "No, no. that was my father"(77). It shows that whites like Mr. Norton sexually exploit the helpless black women and abandon them after the completion of their purpose. This very reference clearly hints at the fact how black women were forced to continue their life bearing the burden of sexual exploitation, humiliation and both physical and mental agony throughout their lives.

Another female character is Susie Gresham, a black singer, that ' relic of slavery' represents for the protagonists that warm, vital, and all enduring quality of the blacks soul, though at the time his desires to deny his past prevent from embracing what she represents. A 'thin brown girl' who sings in the chapel and whose "voice seemed to become a disembodied force that sought to enter her, to violate her, shaking her, rocking rhythmically, as though it had become the source of her being"(150).

After his suspension from the college, the narrator goes to North because North America is supposed to be more free than southern one. His other folks teased him that in Northern part he can get absolute freedom that he might even dance with white girl. Here

the meaning of freedom is wrongly described. The veteran from the Golden Day asks, "What will be his or man's most accessible symbol of freedom? Why, a woman of course. In twenty minutes he can inflate that symbol with all the freedom, which he'll be too busy working to enjoy the rest of the time" (153). The meaning of freedom described here by his friend is so ridiculous. To achieve freedom means to get woman easily only for sexual pleasure. The narrator thinks that between them or everything that they wanted to change in the world, woman comes second socially, politically, and economically.

In the North he happens to meet a man who calls himself a devil's son-in-law that's man's singing makes him a homesick. Protagonist has heard this song so many times but new strangeness hits his heart now.

"She's got feet like a monkee

legs; legs like a maad.

Bulldog [...]. (176)

This song is about a woman. But it seems that man is describing some sphinx like animal. Protagonist could not understand. There may be no woman in the world that fits with this description. The words used for the description of women are quite contradictory. Is his wife really sphinx or human being. Though it seems he is merely singing a song, we can easily find out his opinion towards women as he says I am the devil's son-in-law.

Brotherhood in the novel appears as American communist party and its main aim is to uplift blacks life as well as women, but this organization is also ruled by pretty interest of white. The woman's question is ridiculed in this novel. Freedom is ridiculed even by the members of brotherhood. There are very few number of women member in brotherhood. Most of them are presented as the assistant, caregiver, and secretary of seniors of brotherhood. Emma, a sophisticated woman calls herself as a girlfriend of member of brotherhood. Invisible man is assigned as a leader of brotherhood and he is given a task to lecture on women question in the Harlem district. He is completely unknown on this topic.

Though he is unknown on this issue, because of his speech about women and their place in the society, many women believe that they shared a kind of connection with him and that he would understand them and their needs.

An unnamed woman is a feminist in this novel. She is even unaware about what is feminism. She thinks that Brotherhood provides the full opportunity for self-expression, which is very important. She is of the opinion that women should be absolutely free as man. But her idea of absolute freedom is associated with only sexual freedom. She mocks women's rights by explaining freedom of women, as it is the sexual freedom. To her women's question is only the question of free sex:

Oh you poor darling it isn't a game, really you have no cause to worry, we're free. He's in Chicago, seeking his lost youth; no doubt, she said bursting into laughter of self-surprise. He's not at all interested in uplifting things freedom and necessity, woman's rights and all that you know, the sickness of our class. Brother darling. (415)

Sybil is another feminist of brotherhood. She is the one who assumes protagonist's lecture of the women's question. She is married and unhappy with her husband George. Though she is a feminist, she is more interested in drinks rather than her organization Brotherhood. She calls herself nymphomaniac. She is a woman who believes that women have to develop an iron discipline. She thinks that men have repressed women too much. Women always expected to pass up too many human things. But she has misinterpreted feminism. She is worried that her husband cannot fulfill her intense sexual thirst. She says that her husband talks a lot about women's right but she question "but what does he know about what a woman needs?"(521). She believes that sex is the only one of the major problem of women, which a man cannot understand, "I get tired of living the way I do, beautiful. Soon I'll be old and nothing would've happened to me" (521). Protagonist wants

to be a gentleman by entertaining her sexually, as he thinks himself as expert on women's question.

The women question is the oppression of women arising with the division of primitive society into classes. But the protagonist lacks the knowledge of women question, sees it only in the problem of intense sexual desires of bourgeoisie feminist:

I looked at her, thinking just wait until George sees that- if George ever gets around to seeing that. He'll read a lecture on an aspect of the woman question he's never thought about. She lay anonymous beneath my eyes until I saw her face, shaped by her emotion, which I could fulfill, and I thought, poor Sybil, she picked a boy for man's job and nothing was as it was supposed to be. Even the black bruiser fell down on the job. She'd lost control of her liquor now and suddenly I bent and kissed her upon the lips. (523)

The narrator's position as spokesman on the women question in the Brotherhood is quite ironical. As a spokesman his job is to focus on woman's right issues such as economic equality, social equality. But, because he himself has not achieved this equality, this situation is filled with irony. Thus he lectures on the women's equality and equity at every field, he wonders why women are placed as equal to them. He wonders they are placed in all human motives. As he says:

Why did they have to mix their women into everything? Between us and everything we wanted to change in the world they placed a woman; socially, politically, economically. Why, goddamit, why did they insist upon confusing the struggle with the ass struggle, debasing both us and them-all human motives? (418)

When he is in the factory hospital, a doctor attempts to communicate by holding up a card that reads, "What is your name?" Though the electro shock machine momentarily disables invisible man's linguistic capacity, the doctor's reference to "mother" sparks in him

an argumentative energy that enables him to reverse the threat of his impending dematerialization through shock treatment. Here the mother is a favorite though not an invariable target. The use of word 'mother' repeatedly used to insult the invisible man. Invisible man takes this question as a form of ritual insult. Here mother is used in order to weaken the protagonist and to insult him. To the protagonist the mother is one who screams when you suffer. But protagonist thinks machine as his mother because the scream comes from the machine. Here the image of mother is ridiculed by calling machine a mother. Is mother a machine of giving birth to a human being? Or the protagonist has not mothered, or he has come from another world. He has also come from mother's womb. But he has forgotten her even name, or Is he birthed by the machine? The doctor asks his mother's name in order to make him feel humiliate. And Invisible Man does not want to recall even her name, even her image.

Likewise women are scolded throughout the pages of the novel. Ras accused the protagonist of betraying the organization. He thinks that women drag men. To Ras, the destroyer women are the barrier of their freedom and scolds protagonist and other by calling such a filthy name, which is not expected in civilized society, "To hell with that son of bitch..... the black man's freedom lie between her skinny legs" (373). Here the mother is scolded with such a filthy word 'bitch'. Mother gives birth to a baby from her own flesh. Mother is the supreme and pure world in this world. By using such a word to a mother, Ellison has done injustice to whole mother of this world.

Invisible women in *invisible man*

Women characters of this novel are invisible and victimized. Protagonist of this novel is becoming aware of his invisibility; he is growing more and more conscious of victimization. This topic focuses on the roles of women in the story and how they had a very large effect on the life of protagonist. It also focuses how through his contact with the girls, he comes to understand that he is a victim, growing evermore conscious of his

victimization. Because he is growing more and more conscious of this victimization, he is becoming aware of his invisibility, but not all at once. It is through all women that he meets that he receives a 'lesson ' on how to become invisible, thus gaining the ability to abandon his polarized, black or white version of the world. In a sense he is able to set free himself. Women are one-dimensional figures as assisting the 'Invisible' Man along his course of freedom. These women usher the Invisible Man to free in the literal sense of the word that ends up in the hole.

The first women we see with him is the old slave woman in the prologue, who serves the purpose of giving him the motivation to tell his story, by sharing her feelings about her "slave master-lover" who promise her to set her and her family free which he never did "he promised to set us free but he never could bring hisself to do it" (ii). The old woman explains that she loved her freedom more than the man, and when she tries to define freedom it reminds the invisible man of his second encounter with a white woman.

The magnificent blonde dancer at the battle royale is the one who gives him his second lesson of invisibility. Even though the two of them are from completely different genders and races, they are still in similar positions because they are both being exploited and displayed in front of an audience. Awareness in the narrator begins to emerge here, in other words that he and women are both being made to play a similarly debasing role. Both of them have been made to offer up their bodies for the visual enjoyment of white men. The difference between them is that the woman has painted her face like a doll, masking innermost thoughts from the crowd thus making her in a sense of invisible:

The hair was yellow like that of a circus kewpie oil, the face heavily powdered and rouged, as though to form an abstract mask, the eyes hollow and smeared a cool blue, the color of a baboon's butt. She seemed like a fair bird girl girdled in veils calling me to from the angry surface of some gray and threatening sea. (19)

The narrator's awareness of his identification with the nude white woman also produces a more disturbing response. He thus seems to recognize in her body his own experience of humiliation of being deprived of control over his body. The lack of control he experiences here seems to find an apt and influential emblem in the lack that is conventionally ascribed to women- an anatomical "lack" whose usual referent is initiated by the capital "v" he glimpses between the dancer's thighs.

His encounter with the blonde dancer suggests how he gradually learns his predicament. He becomes aware of his own vision. With her spectacularised body sporting an American flag on her white skin, the naked blonde woman emblemizes the psychic and social projection. She stands for their own cultural fantasies as conquerors, performing their sexual desires symbolically on stage as they possess her in their mind's eye.

This blonde lady foretells the protagonist's meeting with other women in his life, who all help him to realize that freedom is man's individual choice. The next life lesson comes from Mary Rambo. She is mother figure of the protagonist. She is the only Afro-American woman whom the protagonist really appreciates and describes in a positive way. Mary Rambo is a woman who sort of cares for him after his accident in the hospital. She assumes the role as his surrogate mother, and nurtures his faltering vision of himself by renaming him Jack the bear. She nurtures the protagonist because he needs to be nurtured when he was discharged from the hospital, in a way that helps him to be more confident. She is only the female character who assumes self-confidence. Despite being an Afro-American woman she is living in New York with pride. She encourages him to live in this world, "It's you young folks what's going to make the changes" (258). At last he leaves Mary without any information, though she was his friend, well-wisher.

Women come and go in the Invisible man's life without ever expressing their struggles. Kate is a female character who can name the source of her violation-"I done you Jim" (61). She is the typical character of all women in the novel. Kate is the southern

agrarian wife who maintains some of the traditional shared power in community. Kate recalls for him childhood memories of his mother hanging her hand for the wash.

Another woman is a white young girl, a secretary of Mr. Bates office. At first he hesitates to have conversation with her. She looks from her desk at a glance swiftly. She greets him in a respectful way, opposite of his opinion, " Good morning, she said betraying none of the antagonism I had expected" (168). Still he hesitates calling her maam simply because she is a young white woman, after all it is North. But despite his thought she presented herself as a kind hearted white woman. It is she who made him comfortable with his appointments. His fears become groundless because of her kindness and politeness.

The other few women he meets that are blonde help him to realize more of his personal freedom. The woman's name that gives him his next lesson is Emma, who meets in another situation with the Brotherhood. Instead of just being taken aback by her he tries not to be unsettled, but ends up making it worse because he tries really hard to act as a non black man. Even though he fails, he is now aware of his desire to be free of restrictions and to be invisible to them.

His final lesson comes from an older woman named Sybil. Through this woman he identified himself not as a black man who is trying to prove his equality but as a man who has been sexually aroused by a woman. In this instant he finally realizes that he has been under the control of the white man for selfish reason. He finally begins to understand that the Brotherhood was controlling and exploiting him for their own benefit, and not for him. Sybil represents the 'carnival muse', the female victim and symbol of the modern metropolis in the Harlem store window, with the shades of the ritual sacrifice. Ellison combines lynching and ritual sacrifice in relation to the modern social roles women must play and the minsterlike performance of black men in the novel. Sybil becomes the symbol and ritual of America: the ritual of violence that her fantasy rape recalls, the southern ritual of lynching and the birth of a nation, and replay of the rape scene and invisible man muses

upon and mutters about under his breath. She takes the place of the invisible man's lynching by Ras, and by her sacrifice she mirrors the invisible man's symbolic destruction. These scenes provide a critical link to the invisible man's entry into the underworld. In the novel, following his encounter with Sybil, the Invisible Man significantly enters into his own underground.

Sybil in Ellison's *Invisible Man*, although suggesting these mythological and magical elements of folklore, hardly lives up to her divine reputation. Mary Rambo, The old slave woman, the naked blonde dancer of the Battle Royal, the wealthy and sophisticated Emma, and the anonymous seductress are some female characters in this novel. All of these women, however, help guide the invisible man in his quest toward freedom.

Invisible Mother in *Invisible Man*

The word mother itself sounds spiritual which gives us the meaning of our existence however actual image of mother is not visible in this novel. Though mother of Invisible man is not presented in the novel, but most of the time image of mother helps him to struggle in his life.

The very second image of mother is the wife of slave-master. Every rhetorical and metaphorical emblem of this novel is associated with mother regression and recreation of the self. The prologue of invisible man foregrounds the battle ground, where the colonial past against the background of military trumpet is paired with mother's voice. As a female preacher she reverses the troop and tries to impart understandings to the seeking of protagonist. The black mother has survived the gaze of the auction block, the sexual desire of the slave master and his empty promise of freedom. She recalls "poisoning her master to keep their sons from castrating, from tearing him to pieces with their homemade knives" (11). The female preacher testifies, "freedom lies in loving". She fulfills the traditional role

of mother, creatively using the doctrine of Christian love to justify murdering the master and saving her children.

Mary Rambo is the most important character in this novel, though she is as other female characters, not given much place. She is the true mother figure of the invisible man. Mary is the stereotypical strong black woman who fulfills her assigned role of making something out of nothing, supporting an out-of-workman, without any selfishness. She is the representation of true mother of whole black race. She encourages the Invisible Man to do something for the whole black race. She is the culmination of the woman in the prologue whom protagonist meets during his journey to the Harlem. She is the echo of the West Indian woman who announces, "Black men, I'm proud of you"(275).

The next woman, invisible man encounters is an old woman. Invisible Man recalls his mother by seeing her. Though she is nothing for him, but her lovely and sympathetic look have a strange effect upon him. He feels crying while looking at her. He speaks for her to the white folks who are insisting her to leave her house, " She like a vision of my mother hanging wash on a cold windy day, so cold that the warm cloths froze even the vapor thinned, and hung stiff on the line, and her hands white and raw in the skirt-swirling wind and her gray head bare to the darkened sky" (273). He wants pray for her. Sudden encounter with her, leads him to the Brotherhood for his new career thereafter.

When he is in Factory hospital, he is asked about his mother's name. He thinks machine as his mother. Because mother screams in her children's suffering. At that moment, machine screams in his pain. The doctor's question, "Who was your mother?" forces him to ground himself against the impending shock from the machine by trying to recall his mother's voice. His remembrance of his mother's voice mixes up with the scream of the machine. The electric machine's cord is metaphoric of an umbilical cord. Electric machine gives him a new life that is rebirth after shock treatment.

In this way all women are silently struggling against poverty and dispossession that prompt the Invisible Man to see them far beyond their intrinsic value as object. He has missed opportunities to see the black women's true identity as hidden.

IV. Conclusion

Feminists always raise the question about women's equality that means the gender equality as well gender equity. Women that hold half of the sky are subordinated in many ways. Feminists argue that women should have equal status as men as they had in primitive society. To Marxist feminists there are two different classes in the world that is man as oppressor or bourgeoisie and female as oppressed or proletariat. As a bourgeoisie a man always oppresses the woman.

The origin of private property and classes, the formation and the development of new class state and class struggle strengthened the patriarchal society. Women's responsibility remains as bearer and rearer of children and to work as a housewife. The society does not value their domestic labor. They are confined to the domestic slavery and cannot take part in the large scale of social production. Women are confronted with variants of patriarchy and male chauvinism. Women's political oppression is rooted in patriarchal economic and social relations. We can say that woman's oppression is deeply rooted in the economic, social and political life in existing society. Marxist feminist argue that woman's question is not independent one. Man's supremacy in the house was confirmed by the introduction of father right by overthrowing the oppression of women is deeply rooted to their domestic slavery. And the emancipation of women becomes possible only when they can take part in socially productive labor. To emancipate woman and make her the equal of the man is remains an impossibility so long as the woman is shut out from social productive labor and restricted to private domestic labor. The emancipation of woman becomes possible only when they can take part in production on a large, social scale and domestic work no longer claims anything but are insignificant account.

Socially, women face discrimination from womb to tomb. The caste system makes women, belonging to the scheduled caste even more vulnerable economically, socially and sexually. Throughout the world women are confronted with variants of discrimination, as

well as the backward ideas and practices that accompany them. In addition to this, the masses of laboring women also bear the burden of male domination and stifling social and religious practices and institution, which falls on women of the more privileged sections as well.

Ellison in *Invisible Man*, through an unnamed Negro narrator it has been tried to depict the condition of whole minority group of this world that are really marginalized. Here Invisible Man is the representation of whole human being. But we must say that Ellison has been failed to trace the real problem of women. Women are really ignored and marginalized in this novel. Like in real life they are exploited with male chauvinism. Prostitution and rape are some cruelest form of violence against women in this so-called civilized society, which are depicted in this novel. In general both black and white women are exploited in this novel. But blacks are more exploited rather than whites. In comparison to the black white women are financially secure to some extent. But naked blonde dancer of battle royal, a prostitute is the product of this society. She has become mere tools of sexual pleasure of civilized people of white society. Doctors, lawyers, professors, pastors are her audience. Though she is white, she has to sell her body in order to survive her life. The Golden Day is legalized as brothel house. Naked blonde dancer spotting as American flag on her white skin emblemizes the psychic and social projection of her white male audience. She towers over the spectators as the white goddess; through which they achieve their own sense of male divinity.

The condition of black women is more miserable than white. They are not safe even from their father. They are not safe from their kin. Mr. Trueblood rapes his own daughter and makes her pregnant but he does not have any guilt for this shameful deed. He feels proud of being man of this corrupt society. He is living with the view that a man does not leave his family, as he is a man. His name Trueblood itself seems quite ironical because his blood is no longer true. It has been contaminated by a grave sin. His deed has directly

benefited him as he finds more work from white community. He gets more sympathy from whites.

In the novel most of the time the relationship of men and women is described only in terms of physical relationship but nothing more than that. Most of the women characters are of no importance. Mary Rambo is only the female character that is described with some importance, as a mother figure of Invisible Man. She is an Afro-American woman who nurtures invisible man as his own mother and encourages invisible man to do something for black community. She is the only female character, whom Ellison describes in positive way.

Except Mary Rambo other women are given the position of caregiver, entertainer, girlfriend, and assistant to male character. Feminism is wrongly described in the novel. An unnamed woman and Sybil are two feminists of this novel. Both feminists think that to be free means free to achieve sexual pleasure. They explain that women's freedom lies on sexual freedom. Protagonist has incestuous relation with both of them. While raping Sybil he creates white myth that "you are raped by Santa Claus". He thinks himself as Santa Claus, a myth of white god. Sybil partakes of the founding myth of her own white female victimization, sexually titillated at the thought of being raped by a black brute. Here Invisible man thinks of getting some important information about Brotherhood but fails- for Sybil becomes drunk to relay the information.

Brotherhood is the name of communist party in the novel. Invisible Man is hired as a leader of Brotherhood. As a leader of Brotherhood he has to lecture on the issue of woman's question on the Harlem district. But he is unaware on this topic. But because of his speech many women think some connection with him and think that he would really understand them and their problems. But protagonist sees woman question only in terms of the intense sexual desire of the bourgeoisie feminists.

The Brotherhood's treatment of women outlines a glaring separation. The equality' for all people' does not include women, apparently, as invisible man is assigned to 'the woman question'. The Brotherhood is only asking what to do with women in order to keep them statusquo. They don't have or propose any solution for woman question. Even the name brotherhood emphasizes men over women. The woman with whom Invisible Man has an affair thinks that Brotherhood is a vast philosophy to grasp immediately. The Brotherhood is a hypocritical organization controlled by white myth. It runs under the façade of working for the equality of all people, but infact only keeps blacks oppressed. Women are given less of a chance, not even considered as a part of organization's doctrine. The Brotherhood suppress individuality, destroys race interactions and perpetuates the inequality of women.

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