DOI:10.52113/uj05/024-17/849-862 ISSN : 2072-6317(P) - 2572-5440(O)

جامعة المثنى / كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية
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Brotherhood as a Disillusioning Ideology in Ralph Waldo Ellison's *Invisible Man*

Aida Thamer Salloom*

AL-Muthanna University / College of Education for Human Sciences

Article Info

Date of Article

Received : 2024/05/21
Received in revised form: 2024/6/02
Accepted: 2024/6/03
Available online: 2024/6/12

Keywords:

Ralph Ellison, Invisible man, Brotherhood, the Signifyin(g) Monkey and false consciousness

Abstract

The search for identity and social recognition is an urgent pursuit that pervades the African American literary scene. The main concern of the black writers is to portray a persona, who struggles to survive and succeed in a racially separated society. Amongst those writers is the prominent literary figure Ralph Waldo Ellison who utilizes art to embody the blacks' ever-evolving protest against sociopolitical restrictions and falsified ideologies.

Relying on the power of art to regain justice and social awareness, Ellison dismantles the dichotomy between art and protest. He seeks to create a character that undergoes an intricate interplay of human experiences until realizing intellectual enlightenment. This could be explored in Ellison's thought-provoking novel, *Invisible Man* (1952). A first-point narration, the novel portrays a young college-educated black man who starts his self-discovery trip as a determined and hopeful man and ends as a disillusioned rebel. This paper aspires to examine a crucial point in the journey of the nameless narrator when he joined the Brotherhood, a deceitful narrative of justice and equality, expecting that he finally finds an anchoring point that would prove his social prominence. In an integrated qualitative method, the study based its theoretical ground on Marxist standpoints to help unravel the disillusionment of the subordinated black people in the whites' dominant ideologies. Henry Louis Gates' theory of the "Signifyin(g) Monkey" is also of profound significance to adding a folklore flavor to the experience of a black man in white America.

Introduction

This was a new phase, I realized, a new beginning, and I would have to take that part of myself that looked on with remote eyes and keep it always at the distance of the campus, the hospital machine, the battle royal-all now far behind.

— Ralph Ellison, (Invisible Man 259).

African American writers, such as Richard Wright (1908–60), James Baldwin (1924–87) and Ralph Waldo Ellison (1914-1994), touch upon African American dilemma of invisibility and ostracism as being described in terms of social, political and economic standards. Rather than merely presenting how black

*الناشر الرئيسي : E-mail : aidathamer20@mu.edu.iq

people approach life and their endeavor to prove their identity, those writers try to investigate the inner and outer norms that answer their inquiries. Yet, in representing the Black novel, those writers adopt different perspectives. Richard thought literature should serve political purposes, adopting the protest novel to trigger black people to revolt against their oppressors until they have equal chances and opportunities. Baldwin swung between two courses; he started to have political tendencies then moved to write "racially aggressive essays and propagandistic fiction as contributions to the black revolution" (Taher, 2009, p. 173). The Oklahoma-born author Ellison developed different approach, and he believed that literature should not be for propaganda and political drives; instead, it should serve social and moral purposes; representing “the triumph of the center [and] the victory of moderation.” He believes that eloquent and artful discourses are crucial to achieving one's supremacy and leadership. "One could say that Ellison prophesied the triumph of Barack Obama, who would have fascinated him" (qtd. in Bloom, 2008, p. vii).

Influenced by the 19th century American white writers whom he called "ancestors," like Herman Melville and Mark Twain, Ellison developed moral tendencies that discouraged social aggregation. He believes in a gradual shift from the stereotypical representation of black people to the full realization of their humanity and social existence. Therefore, in his fidelity to portraying the African American dilemma, Ellison utilizes the reasonable and artful approach of the classical writers and the revolutionary plea of his "relatives," namely Wright and Baldwin with whom he shares blood bondage (McSweeney, 2008, p.42). Nevertheless, from the vantage point of the black people, Wright, Baldwin and Ellison strive to present the changes in black consciousness. These black artists and thinkers attempt to establish creative intellectual spaces, celebrating a turning point in their art and culture, setting new ways for the blacks to think of themselves and promoting the possibility of peaceful coexistence with the whites (Watts, 1994, p. 65)

In writing *Invisible Man* (1952), Ellison sought to express "the human universal hidden within the plight of one… both black and American" (Fonteneau, 1990, p. 408). He is invisible not because he is "spook," as Ellison describes him, but simply because "he is a black man living in the racist atmosphere of America… unrecognized because of his skin color" (Bloom, Study Guide, *Invisible Man*, 19). Responding to questions concerning the narrator’s journey as a reflection of the black struggle for justice and equality, *Invisible Man* emulates a time period of immense discrimination against blacks, especially in the Deep South. Segregation was in full effect in many parts of America and many of its scenes were considered shocking at the time (Fonteneau, 1990, p. 409).

Utilizing the first person narration technique, *Invisible Man* simulates the narrator's loneliness in an underground place, starting to tell his long-life journey from dogmatic ignorance into spiritual illumination. In the coal cellar of a white resident's building, he listens to the jazz of Louis Armstrong (1901–71) in particular, recounting visions that travel him back into the history of slavery and social segregation just as they empower him to use

his apparent invisibility for private purposes. Music is deeply rooted in African American heritage and folklore, notably echoed in *Invisible Man.* Having experimented with musical composition, Ellison structures the novel with an intimate connection to musical genres, such as Jazz or Blues. It expresses the narrator's painful experience and social isolation. Jazz as music on improvisation and solo performance, suggesting self-reliance, independence and individuality, features already denied by the whites' domineering ideologies. Yet, the solo player, like the narrator of the *Invisible Man*, plays with and against a group of musicians, he has to adopt a harmonious attitude to acquire his song its final shape (Fonteneau, 1990, p. 408). *Invisible Man* is devised like the "blues as an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically… they at once express the agony of life and the possibility of conquering it through sheer toughness of spirit" (qtd. in Taher, 2007, p. 194).

1. Counterfeit Ideologies

According to Carl Marx, ideology is the system of ideas and representations which take over the mind of a man or a particular social group. Man's social existence determines his consciousness and, in return, the materialistic benefits of the superstructure class determine the way the subordinate classes perceive their existence; Marx argues that "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (qtd. in Venturino, 2013). Thus, ideology is conceived as an illusion, a pure dream, empty and vain. The American critic and Marxist theorist Fredric Jameson (1934-) also sees ideologies as 'strategies of containment', presenting seemingly satisfactory explanations but suppressing and suffocating contradictions (Carter, 2006, p. 68). The French Marxist and theorist Louis Althusser (1918-1990) states that ideology is the "imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence." Ideology does not "correspond to reality." It acts as a hailing process that transforms individuals into subjects" The Italian Marxist thinker, Antonio Gramsci, further asserts that ideology is a kind of cultural hegemony that works to legitimize the dominant class (Althusser, 1970).

Considering these Marxist standpoints helps configure the strategy by which Ellison's narrator is being deployed by ideology or a set of contradicting ideologies until he realizes his existence. Throughout his formative years, the invisible man is committed to and persuaded by the notion that the whites are powerful and superior. They, in one way or another, control his destiny. At this point, he realizes that his being depends on the support and endorsement of whites and that the needs and desires of others shape his personality; hence, he is invisible. (Wallace, 2017, p. 5) In doing so, he helps to disseminate the ideology of progress, imposed and supported by the white-dominated society, which he later discovers to be an illusory lie.

Aspired to be a leader of his people within a white man's world, the young Negro is disillusioned by the ambitions of both the Negroes and the whites. Yet, they both deny his existence and "see only [his] surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination" (*Ellison, 1952, p.* 3). He is first humiliated by the leading whites of his town then betrayed by

the seemingly honorable president of his college, and finally, after going to New York and becoming the spokesperson of the Harlem branch of the Brotherhood, finds his work as pointlessly sacrificed for the commands of the leading committee.

In a bildungsroman or coming-of-age style, Ellison traces the bitter journey of the narrator in his pursuit of social identity. In a neatly fabricated plot, with pieces of advice, dreams, flashbacks and resourceful people, *Invisible Man* tries to portray the disillusionment of a black young man in his movement towards self-realization and social existence. Earlier in the novel, the narrator is exposed to the advice of his dying grandfather saying: " Son, after I'm gone I want you to keep up the good fight. I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a trait or all my born days" (*Ellison, 1952, p.* 16). He is recurrently faced with the endless black struggle involving the theme of running, which is depicted in the old Negro slavery songs and the dream warning of his grandfather, “Keep this Nigger-Boy Running” (Bloom, 2008,p. 16). Setting in harmony with the terms of Henry Louis Gates' theory of the African American "Signifyin(g) Monkey" (1988) that replicates the organized system of rhetoric to signify the traditional African figures and folklore, the grandfather is the black vernacular and the trickster, whose cryptic language keeps the narrator's bond to the "ancestral matrix," protecting him from the alienated conduct expressed in the discourse of progress of the white's deceiving ideologies (Hamdoune, 2020, pp. 69-70). Gate's theory of the "Signifyin(g) Monkey" stands as the counter ideology to issues related to racism, intolerance and discrimination that African Americans continuously submit to. Utilizing Ferdinand Saussure's term "signifying," Gates reconsiders the binary opposition of the signifying system as a dialectal wordplay that helps African Americans speak both languages; the dominant class and the repressed one. According to Gate's theorizing, African Americans adopt the strategy of “double-voicedness” strategy to keep the meaning deferred. They work as tricksters to help find their living within the domineering power of their oppressors. Gates traces back the African mythology, searching for a central figure of Yoruba myth and cultural tradition is Esu-Elegbara, a “divine trickster,” whose qualities are described in the prose and poetry of West Africa (Hamdoune, 2020, p. 69-70). Significantly, the grandfather's advice direct the narrator throughout his journey into self-awareness, informing him to take on irony and indirection to express his ideas and opinions. Later on, especially when the narrator joins the Brotherhood, new characters, such as Brother Tarb, and Tod Clifton appear to keep figuring the "Signifyin(g) Monkey."

The narrator's journey continues and after failed practice to prove his identity in the South, he directs his way to the North, New York, and Harlem, carrying seven letters of recommendations underneath the hypocritical and disillusioned attitude of the college master in the South, Dr. Bledsoe. The narrator manages to distribute six of the letters without any positive response. The seventh letter happens to reach Mr. Emerson, one of the white trustees whom he has not met but occasionally the letter's contents reveal Bledsoe's bad intentions. However, the narrator is beatified and gets a job at Liberty

Paint factory; he was soon excluded after being treasured by Lucius Brockway who fabricated an explosion in the boiler room. Consequently, the narrator suffers serious fainting, is insultingly hospitalized and undergoes shock therapy. Overwhelmed by the doctors' discussion of his possible mental illness, he manages to escape from the hospital but faints in the street and fortunately enough he is saved by Mary Rambo, a black caring woman. Mary is an idealistic, motherly figure of the blacks who "appears in just a few scenes, … demonstrates her freedom and fortitude not only by supporting herself as a single woman in New York, but also by helping others navigate the vast freedom of that quintessential northern city." (Morel, 2004, p. 69) As a wise and helpful figure, Mary bids the narrator his first spark in ethics:

I don't care what you think about me but you weak and caint hardly walk and all and you look what's more like you hungry, so just come on and let me do something for you like I hope you'd do something for ole Mary in case she needed it. (*Invisible Man* 251-52)

Mary's conduct is a kind of Virgin Mary, as her name suggests, "the mother of savior." Significantly, she grants the narrator a forward zeal and "reminds him that some achievement, some act of leadership is expected of him" (Taher, 2009, p. 203). She formulates his entry into society, helping him to retrieve his Southern heritage related to kindhearted and soft tenderness.

2. Meeting the Brotherhood

Months passed without employment and it happens while the narrator is wandering aimlessly in Harlem streets, he witnesses a black woman being evicted from her house, a common act of black dispossession. Her household furnishing is being dragged out of her apartment and she lugged one chair out the door carrying an old, venerable black woman. The narrator identifies intensely with the couple and spontaneously delivers an exciting speech that incites the gathering people to resist (Seaton, 2004, p. 24). The crowd then carries the couple's properties back into their house. The police arrive and the narrator manages to escape, yet, he hears a voice behind him: "That was a masterful bit of persuasion, brother." (*Invisible Man* 257) The voice belongs to a white man, Brother Jack, a leader with a one-eyed, which figuratively refers to the narrator's psychological sightlessness (Ibrahim, 2016, p. 421). Jack, claiming a brotherly and alliance relation, advises him to "put aside [his] past" (*Invisible Man* 267) and even gives him a new name to become a salaried spokesperson for the Brotherhood political administration in the Harlem branch; their conversation dialogue sets forward what is going on:

Just call this number and ask for Brother Jack. You needn't give me your name, just mention our conversation. Should you decide tonight, give me a ring about eight".

"Okay," I said, taking the paper. "I doubt if I'll ever need it, but who knows?"

"Well, you think about it, brother. Times are grave and you seem very in."

"I only wanted to make a speech," I said again.

"But you were indignant. And sometimes the difference between individual and organized indignation is the difference between criminal and political action," he said.

I laughed, "So what? I'm neither a criminal nor a politician, brother. So you picked the wrong

DOI:10.52113/uj05/024-17/849-862

man. But thanks again for the coffee and cheese cake--brother." (*Invisible Man*, 1952, p. 365)

Presenting a name on a black person by white people echoes the old practice of slave owners who names their slaves. This suggests the narrator's role as an instrumental value to the Brotherhood. They have a use for him, but they neither care about him as a person nor about his role as a representative in the black's issue. Once more, the narrator has acclaimed a new identity away from his choice, renouncing his self-definition to others (Wallace, 2013, p. 13).

Stirred by Booker T. Washington, the master of Tuskegee-like College and his philosophy that economic opportunities lead to freedom, the narrator evokes the rebirth that he has undergone there and the subsequent change in his outlook. He undermines other blacks for their attempts to mask their low social standing, assuring that those who devote their insufficient wages to expensive clothing just to assimilate to the whites are merely enslaving themselves to "shallow consumerism" (Seaton, 2004, p. 31). Unlike them, he celebrates himself, believing in his new position:

This was a new phase, I realized, a new beginning, and I would have to take that part of myself that looked on with remote eyes and keep it always at the distance of the campus, the hospital machine, the battle royal—all now far behind. Perhaps the part of me that observed listlessly but saw all, missing nothing, was still…the dissenting voice, my grandfather part; the cynical disbelieving part—the traitor self that always threatened internal discord (*Invisible Man* 259).

This illusionary satisfaction of identity and meaning causes a depressing attack of disorientation when faced with the reality of the white standards, causing a horrifying attack of confusion and bewilderment. The French psychiatrist Frantz Fanon encapsulates Ellison's reference to ill-shaped identities and social suppression. Setting the grounds of the disillusioned black Negro in his book *Black Skin White Masks* (2008), Fanon confirms that "A normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world" (p. 111). He further assures that: "The Negro is unaware of it as long as his existence is limited to his own environment, but the first encounter with a white man oppresses him with the whole weight of his blackness" (Fanon, 2008, p. 116). Moreover, in his foreword to Fanon's book, Homi K. Bhabha, an Indian scholar and critical theorist, assures that the "familiar alignment of colonial subjects—Black/White, Self/Other—is disturbed with one brief pause and the traditional grounds of racial identity are dispersed, whenever they are found to rest in the narcissistic myths of Negritude or White cultural supremacy"(qtd. in Fanon, 2008, p. xxii).

In its idealistic state, the Brotherhood is a quasi-Communist movement that admits its responsibility to bettering the critical conditions in Harlem and the rest of the world. Its dogmatic ideology is grounded in that of American communist groups of the 1930s, representing "a sort of authoritarian socialism that relies on a Marxist theory of history, which holds that those of lower social status must submit themselves to the unavoidable class struggles on the path to equality" (Morel,

DOI:10.52113/uj05/024-17/849-862

2004, p. 31). At Jack's advice, the narrator joins the Brotherhood and speaks at gatherings to influence the black community. The Brotherhood benefits the narrator's competence at speech, using him as a mouthpiece to spread their words rather than uttering his convictions. This confirms his invisibility to the Brotherhood just as he was to the world at large. He acquires a new identity, "an identity formed by a set of assumptions that design a social role for him [hence,] his sympathy with the old couple, the former slaves who were thrown out on the street, disappears" (Taher, 2009, p. 203).

The Brotherhood's main interest is the survival of the organization and the maintenance of power. No member is treated as an individual. Everything and everyone is sacrificed for the cause of greater importance, which is the community's well-being. The narrator senses these things about the Brotherhood at an early stage of his work, but goes along with their demands to get the benefits he can. They do not want him to do anything, instructing him not to "waste [his] emotion on individuals, they do not count….. History has passed them by." (*Invisible Man*, 1952, p. 260)

For Ellison, the Brotherhood is an essential section in the narrator's journey that goes harmoniously with the novel purpose of nationalism and social recognition. However, it stands for allegorical representation of the Communist Party in the 1930s and 40s, intensifying the failure of abstract ideologies to address the long-life plight of African Americans in particular and other victims of oppression in a broader sense. (Kibin, 2024)

In this regard, a Marxist ideology is a necessity to be included within the grand narratives of equality and social rights, adding an organized political domain to prove the political education of the narrator and to depict the declining shifts in the work of the communist party. The 1960s was a hard time for communism. Richard Wright himself was a communist with whom Ellison developed an interest in Communist politics and ideologies. Wright was looked upon as a mentor of young African American writers, thus encouraging Ellison to write, supporting him financially and appointing him as an editor of The Negro Quarterly. Alan M. Wald, an expert on the American 20th - century "Literary Left," asserts that "Marxism remained the touchstone for [the] political and creative thought for years," However, he admits that *"Invisible Man*, written during the decade after Ellison and Wright broke with Communist regulars, represented a deradicalization process" (qtd. in Moral, 2004, p. 15).

Ellison was also deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement, believing in humanity, compromising with the whites and rebuking Washington's beliefs that African Americans should remain subservient to the whites. He rejected the violent separation of Marcus Garvey (1887–1940), the Jamaican immigrant and the leader of Black Nationalists who exhorted people in Harlem for black separatism, launching the “Back to Africa” movement during the 1940s. It is a radical movement aimed to stir the blacks to return to Mother Africa (Moral, 2004, p. 132).

Nevertheless, the narrator's enrollment in the Brotherhood as a spokesman in the Harlem district revives his dreams of living a life of social significance. This new position allows him to do what he truly loves - fervent public

speaking. However, this is a mere representation of false consciousness and the ideology of that dominant class disillusions the narrator. Brotherhood profoundly influences him and can easily manipulate his consciousness to maintain its power. In terms of Carl Marx's classification of the structure of every society into two levels, the superstructure and the infrastructure, the narrator represents the latter group deployed by the former. Louis Althusser upholds Marx's ordering of social structure, affirming that the political, educational, social, and even religious institutions are the superstructure that works as "State Ideological Apparatuses" to manipulate the mindset of people and keep them in order. (Bidgoli, 2019, p. 128) Thus, the narrator is hailed to internalize the ideology and standards of the Brotherhood, which is a machine-like figure that transforms social force into political power and force of law. It can succeed best when not look like a force at all; rather, it stoops smoothly until becoming thoroughly in command, facilitating collective identity while eradicating freedom and individuality.

The Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) also alludes to the role of ideology by which the dominant class maintains its rule and social supremacy. For Gramsci, instead of imposing its rule employing force and coercion, the ruling class seeks to establish the consent of other classes to their rule. Gramsci believes that hegemony points out that instead of resorting to force and coercion, the ruling class seeks to indoctrinate the proletariat with those ideas that make them consent to their subordinate position. Gramsci considers the view that hegemony is permanently established on the "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group (Bidgoli, 2019, p. 129).

Shortly after, it becomes clear that the Brotherhood members utilize the narrator for their ends. Emma, the sophisticated hostess at the Chthonian; and Brother Jack's mistress, comments to Jack that the narrator "should be a little blacker" (*Invisible Man* 271), alluding to the notion that the members of the Brotherhood sees the narrator not as an individual human being but, instead, as an abstract image of his race, as Brother Jack states: "We're not interested in his looks but in his voice. And I suggest, Emma, that you make it your interest too..." (*Invisible Man* 271)

Describing the disillusioning and misleading demeanor of the Brotherhood, Mehrdad Bidgoli states that:

… [It] is another example of one of the most vicious and outrageous methods of controlling people. It acts as a vaccine acts, serving people with a controlled amount of the Left, and directing them into another illusory reality. People in this way think that they are protesting, but paradoxically the very leader of this protestation is a functioning cog within the system! This is how Brother Jack and the others act (p. 135)

The Brotherhood casts on the narrator a new identity and calls him to give away his past, and he willingly responds to their claims without apparent resistance. Ironically enough, his regular meetings with the Brotherhood staff were held in the Chthonian hotel, a term that refers to the Greek gods of the underworld, indicating the frightening nature of the

Brotherhood's intentions. The Chthonian hotel signifies the unhealthy change in his environment, moving from the warm and safety atmosphere of Mary's house into a cold, white world of danger and violence. This movement also involves a departure from the sound world represented by Mary's singing to a world of stillness of the musical instruments at the Chthonian (Beavers, 2004, p. 21). At this hotel he meets Tod Clifton, a handsome captivating black leader who starts as a defender of the Brotherhood yet ends disillusioned and eventually drops away. At this hotel, the narrator also meets his antagonist figure, the head of the organization and the radical black separatist Ras the Exhorter who play a significant role in the narrator's journey (Nadel, 2008, p. 5).

Being at Brotherhood and knowing his mission; namely, to organize the people of Harlem and lead them into practical action, the narrator notices that a portrait of Frederick Douglas hung in his office by Brother Tarp, the black activist and the caretaker of the Harlem headquarters. Significantly, Douglas is a former enslaved person who succeeded in changing his destiny and called for the blacks' rights in freedom and equality. Brother Tarps hopes that the narrator will be another Douglas, a potential leader of the black community.

Recalling yet refusing to hear the echoes of his grandfather's voice, the narrator murmurs

The thing to do was to be prepared-- as my grandfather had been when it was demanded that he quote the entire United States Constitution as a test of his fitness to vote. He had confounded them all by passing the test, although they still refused him the ballot… Anyway, these were different (*Invisible Man*, 1952, pp 280-281).

Utilizing Douglass' ambitious escalation from "slavery to a government's ministry" through the gift of speechmaking, the very cause of enrolling him at the Brotherhood organization, the narrator realizes that this is the starting point to achieve his dream and win a scholarship to college; "I sat now facing the portrait of Frederick Douglass, feeling a sudden piety, remembering and refusing to hear the echoes of my grandfather's voice". (*Invisible Man* 306) However it is a blind misreading of Douglass' statement as the real one is "from slavery to freedom" (Wallace, 2017, p. 13)

Sometimes I sat watching… Douglass's portrait, thinking how magical was that he had talked his way from slavery to a government's ministry, and so swiftly. Perhaps, I thought, something of the kind is happening to me. Douglass came north to escape and find work in the shipyards; a big follow in a sailor's suit who, like me, had taken another name. What had his true name been? Whatever it was, it was as Douglass that he became himself, defined himself. And not as a boat wright as he'd expected, but as an orator. Perhaps the sense of magic lay in the unexpected transformations. (*Invisible Man*, 1952, p. 340)

Celebrating his new position, the narrator works hard to defend the eviction of the blacks and speaks fervently, a matter that displeased white members of the Brotherhood, who decided to send him to Brother Hambro to cultivate his natural talent under the rhetoric of the Brotherhood. Soon after, a white Brother Wrestrum, censures the narrator's self-promotion and eventually, the latter receives a

DOI:10.52113/uj05/024-17/849-862

threatening letter, warning him to mind his position as a black man in a white domineering city (Nash, 2004, p. 110).

Consequently, he seeks advice from Brother Tarp and the latter assures him that he is heartily welcome, telling him his experience of being a committed black activist who keeps opposing a white man to the extent of losing his own family and land, but not his cause. The narrator receives the enthusiastic meaning of the tale, neglecting the vast menace awaiting him, he "recognizes the paternal gesture and the link to his ancestors, [yet] he understands Tarp's words as little as he does his grandfather's" (Taher, 2009, p. 206).

The narrator acquires remarkable fame in the community, throwing himself enthusiastically into his work, and organizing marches and rallies. Yet, he continuously undergoes nightmares about Dr. Bledsoe, Lucius Brockway, and his grandfather, feeling a thoughtful split between his public and private selves. Gate's "Signifyin (g) Monkey" keeps alluding to the dire need for the black matrix to maintain close bondage to blacks' cause, utilizing secrets of the folkloric powers that enable him to survive and work his tongue-twisting magic. He can "'verse you but . ..won't curse you,' " meaning that he holds the ability to impart his artistic gifts as well as curse his enemies, as a hoodoo priest or conjurer can" (Shinn, 2002, p. 252)

Shinn also asserts that "In The Signifying Monkey, Henry Louis Gates, Jr, uses Bakhtin's definition of parody to illustrate how Signifyin(g) in African American culture enables its speaker to pose challenging and oppositional verbal self-assertions." Ellison's double-voiced narrator works under the strategy of Michael Bakhtin's parody, dialogism and carnivalization, employing the speech of another, but, in contrast to stylization, he introduces into that other speech an intention which is directly opposed to the original one (p. 244).

Adopting an enthusiastic endeavor to defend the black's cause, the narrator is accused of dictatorship, Brother Wrestrun issues complain over the narrator's conduct, which arouses an urgent meeting among Brotherhood members who vote for an investigation and order the narrator to be momentarily relegated. They send him downtown to lecture on the Woman Question and he achieves this mission attractively, yet, a more urgent problem interferes. Brother Clifton, his assistant, disappears and the narrator is ordered to return to the Harlem District (Bloom, 2008, p.15).

Meanwhile, Clifton tries to hold a rally in protest of racial eviction policies in Harlem. But he is confronted by Ras-the Exhorter, later called the destroyer, a powerful orator and Black Nationalist leader who unceasingly carries recurrent attacks for black's rights. This potential of resistance and confrontation aligns with the Marxist notion of the possibility of change through revolution and overthrowing of the ruling class (Lukacs 1971). Ras is violently opposed to the Brotherhood, believing that any attempt at integration with the whites is impossible, hence upheaval increases and a night conflict arises in an effort to put an end to social oppression. The chaotic situation is a natural result of the increasing sense of suppression cast upon marginalized people. Regarding Julia Kristeva's theorizing perspectives, the revolutionaries are the abject who rebel against their wretchedness.

Subversive conduct has direct repercussions on the relegated group, hence creating chaos. Brotherhood is the dominant power that should once face resistance for their long-life overpowering and abjection of the black people.

Within those chaotic riots and in the dimness of the night, the narrator shows difficulty in differentiating his followers from those of Ras. He eventually finds Clifton and Ras locked in an intense fight and Ras pulls a knife but his honesty to the blacks hinders him from killing his race mate, Clifton. Referring to their common skin color, Ras blames Clifton for working with the Brotherhood, accusing him of turning his back on his heritage for the sake of money and white women. Clifton collapses and Ras controls the street (Seaton, 2004, p. 31).

Ras the Exhorter rejects white supremacy and calls for black unity. His refusal to kill Tod Clifton when he has the chance shows that his actions match his words; the narrator sees Ras "draw back the knife and stop it in mid-air; draw back and stop, cursing; then draw back and stop again" (*Invisible Man* 370). Ras's speech to Tod demonstrates the seriousness of his commitment to black solidarity (Seaton, 2004, p. 28)

You six foot tall, mahn. You young and intelligent. You black and beautiful-don't let 'em tell you different! You wasn't them t'ings you be dead, mahn. Ras the Exhorter raise dup his knife and tried to do it, but he could not do it. Why don't you do it? I ask myself. I will do it now, I say; but somet'ing tell me, 'No, no! You might be killing your black king! (*Invisible Man*, p.373)

On his part, the narrator is still mocked by the ideology and false consciousness of the Brotherhood. He begins calling Harlem community leaders for support in the Brotherhood's battle against the unfair dislodgment. But they seem to change their program, leaving the community, as well as the narrator, bitterly betrayed. Deep disillusioned with the Brotherhood's hypocrite conduct, Clifton reappears in the midtown, selling Samba dolls, whose fine strings symbolize how he felt manipulated. *Invisible Man* is seen as a powerful cultural response to the perceived failure of Communism to comprehend the complexities of race and identity. In this regard, Moler states that:

Although [the narrator] ultimately failed as a leader in the Marxist Brotherhood just as the Brotherhood failed Harlem, Ellison's depiction of his Brotherhood experience suggests an alternative arena for political discourse, play an important role in housing new forms of identity and political alliances, and in critiquing the exclusionary practices of a larger public sphere (Moler, 2004, p. 5).

Awaken from his dogmatic slumber and left to his own devices by the Brotherhood Committee after Brother Clifton's murder by a New York cop in midtown, the narrator returns in shock to the Harlem district. Seeking to comfort and be comforted by the grieving brothers and sisters, he organizes a public funeral in Mount Morris Park, the down-and-out, unemployed Ralph Ellison occasionally slept during the late thirties. The crowd is enormous beyond expectations, yet, the narrator is disillusioned; he feels lost and alone.

DOI:10.52113/uj05/024-17/849-862

In this respect, Lahoussine Hamdoune asserts that "The killing of Clifton and the subsequent funeral organized in his honor is that moment of epiphany that brings about a profound change in the protagonist's worldview and his interpretive abilities" (p. 81). Realizing the malicious and power-absorbing attitude of the repressive powers, represented by the Brotherhood, he judges Clifton's tragic insane show and his subsequent death from the perspective of the ideology of "Progress" as pointless.

According to the "Signifying Monkey," the black figures that the narrator meets at Brotherhood serve as actual interpreters of grandfather's vernacular text that emancipates him from the illusory ideologies. Hamdoune clarifies that "those black characters who all master strategies of trickery or masquerading and obliquely evoke the grandfather – namely, Tarp, Clifton, and Rinehart–, rise, each at a particular stage, to guide the protagonist's understanding of and linkage with his grandfather's text viewed as metaphoric of the black vernacular (p. 66).

Conclusion

Within the grand narratives of equality and social justice, the African American quests for identity and social visibility proved to be deferred projects and unattainable plights. Utilizing such ever-evolving themes, the power play organizations, such as the Brotherhood strive to disseminate their fabricated ideology and cultural hegemony to maintain their power and social supremacy. The Brotherhood maintains an authoritarian social ideology, which is modeled after American communist administrations in the 1930s, and holds that social position must yield to inevitable class struggles on the path to equality. In doing so, it works as a surveillance power that monitors and hinders the revolutionary reaction of repressed people. Ellison's *Invisible Man* depicts a provocative issue of an intricate labyrinth that a young black man undergoes, in his search for visibility and social recognition, rendering him disillusioned and alienated. The ideology of the Brotherhood suppresses the narrator's identity with blind adherence to the collective attitude of the organization and allows no room for individuality, expression, or action, prerequisites that the narrator devotedly desires. By limiting the narrator's identity, these ideologies effectively render him invisible, forcing him to bury his authentic self underneath the roles that are predetermined to perform. The distortive apparatuses of the Brotherhood keep a multilayered look that is perpetually present and observing, imposing and transfixing an illusionary "un-visibility," aiming to keep that black Niger always running. However, a sudden and overpowering awareness is realized on the part of the narrator after witnessing the self-centered strategies of his oppressors, a matter that moves him into deft and skillful conduct. In the middle of a multitude, he skillfully attached the independence of solitude to perfect sweetness.

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الخاضعين للأيديولوجيات المهيمنة للعرق الابيض. كما أن نظرية هنري لويس جيتس "Signifyin(g) Monkey" لها أهمية كبيرة في إضفاء نكهة فولكلورية على تجربة الرجل الأسود في أمريكا البيضاء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: رالف إليسون، الرجل الخفي، مؤسسة الإخوة، Signifyin(g) Monkeyوالوعي الزائف.

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مؤسسة الاخوة كإيديولوجيا مخيبة للآمال في رواية الرجل الخفي للروائي الامريكي رالف والدو إليسون

عائده ثامر سلوم

جامعة المثنى/ كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية/ قسم اللغة الانكليزية

الخلاصة:

يعد البحث عن الهوية والاعتراف الاجتماعي مسعى ملحًا ينتشر في المشهد الأدبي الأفريقي الأمريكي. فإن تصوير شخصية تكافح من أجل البقاء والنجاح في مجتمع منفصل عنصريًا هو الشغل الشاغل للكتاب السود. ومن بين هؤلاء الكتاب الشخصية الأدبية البارزة رالف والدو إليسون الذي يستخدم الفن لتجسيد احتجاج السود المتطور باستمرار ضد القيود الاجتماعية والسياسية والأيديولوجيات الزائفة. بالاعتماد على قوة الفن لاستعادة العدالة والوعي الاجتماعي، يفكك إليسون الانقسام بين الفن والاحتجاج ساعيا إلى خلق شخصية تخضع لتفاعل معقد من التجارب الإنسانية حتى تحقيق التنوير الفكري. سيتم استكشاف هذا في رواية إليسون المثيرة للتفكير، الرجل الخفي (1952). تحكي من منظور الشخص الاول، تصور الرواية رجلاً أسود شابًا تلقى تعليمه الجامعي ويبدأ رحلة اكتشاف الذات كرجل عازم ومفعم بالأمل وينتهي كمتمرد محبط. أسست الدراسة أساسها النظري على وجهات النظر الماركسية للمساعدة في كشف خيبة أمل السود