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 AP Lit 12 Davis
 Period 6 8/08/14

Summer Reading Project: On *Invisible Man*

PASSAGE	ANALYSIS
<p>1 “My hole is warm and full of light. Yes, full of light. I doubt if there is a brighter spot in all New York than this hole of mine, and I do not exclude Broadway” (Ellison 6).</p>	<p>VISIBILITY THEME Within the book, Ellison makes references to light and darkness, as well as the perception of visibility (e.g. <i>Invisible Man</i>), showing the viewpoints through the “visibility” of the situation. This brightness shows a lighter time for the protagonist.</p>
<p>2 “I am not ashamed of my grandparents for having been slaves. I am only ashamed of myself for having at one time been ashamed. About eighty-five years ago they were told that they were free, united with others of our country in everything pertaining to the common good, and, in everything social, separate like the fingers of the hand. And they believed it. They exulted in it” (Ellison 15)</p>	<p>CHARACTERIZATION The protagonist relates to his grandparents, feeling humbled by the hardships they have faced. He also proclaims his respect for his heritage, and the struggles overcome, developing an inner identity within himself.</p>
<p>3 “Blindfolded, I could no longer control my motions. I had no dignity. I stumbled about like a baby or a drunken man. The smoke had become thicker and with each new blow it seemed to sear and further restrict my lungs” (Ellison 22).</p>	<p>VISIBILITY THEME Continuing the theme of visibility, the blindness reduces the protagonist to his primal senses without sight. In essence, he is shown stripped of his identity and humanity within the quote, counter-intuitive to his inner beliefs.</p>
<p>4 “His face was a black blank of a face, only his eyes alive -- with hate of me and aglow with a feverish terror from what had happened to us all. I became anxious. I wanted to deliver my</p>	<p>STEREOTYPES Within society at the time, racial differences were perceived as brutish or alien to the public. Through the differences in physical and mental characteristics, Tanlock is portrayed as brutish, filling society’s</p>

<p>speech and he came at me as though he meant to beat it out of me. I smashed him again and again, taking his blows as they came” (Ellison 24).</p>	<p>expectations while the protagonist is unable to reason with the public, repressed by the stereotypes he’s chained down by.</p>
<p>5 “They were all such a part of that other life that's dead that I can't remember them all. (Time was as I was, but neither that time nor that "I" are any more.)” (Ellison 37).</p>	<p>SYMBOLISM Regarding the students at the college, the protagonist refers to them as dead, lifeless in the moral values upheld by said school. They lack the expressiveness he has, as they represent his previous lack of expressivity as well.</p>
<p>6 “I saw the sun blaze upon the new blue overalls as the man appeared around the cabin. His shoes were tan and new and he moved easily over the hot earth. He was a small man and he covered the yard with a familiarity that would have allowed him to walk in the blackest darkness with the same certainty. He came and said something to the women as he fanned himself with a blue bandanna handkerchief. But they appeared to regard him sullenly, barely speaking, and hardly looking in his direction” (Ellison 50).</p>	<p>IMAGERY Ellison continues the differences between light and darkness, with the illusion of hospitality, but only as a facade to cover the darker, more somber undertones of the passage. With the other characters regarding Trueblood in a glossy manner, there’s foreshadowing in regards to previous events he has participated in. The theme of visibility can be applied as well, as they indirectly maintain contact with him, indicating a possible separation in (moral) values between both parties.</p>
<p>7 “A former soldier, sir. A vet. They're all vets, a little shellshocked” (Ellison 73).</p>	<p>DIALOGUE The protagonist bluntly states the condition of the veterans, referring to an otherwise tragic condition as another part of daily life, reflecting on the hardships he has faced, learning to accept them as reality.</p>
<p>8 “He registers with his senses but short-circuits his brain. Nothing has meaning. He takes it in but he doesn't digest it. Already he is – well, bless my soul! Behold! A walking zombie! Already he's learned to repress not only his emotions but his humanity. He's invisible, a walking personification of the Negative, the most perfect achievement of</p>	<p>METAPHOR The shellshocked vet is compared to a zombie emotionally, unphased by his surroundings. He no longer thinks, and ignores humanic traits.</p> <p>VISIBILITY THEME Ellison does continue the trend of visibility, representing physically/emotionally how the</p>

<p>your dreams, sir! The mechanical man!" (Ellison 94).</p>	<p>protagonist is viewed socially, as "dead", "lifeless", and "avoided" by the public.</p>
<p>9 "Mr. Norton was visibly angry now, a raw place showing on his forehead, and I hurried ahead of him to the car. He climbed in unaided, and I got under the wheel, smelling the heated odor of mints and cigar smoke. He was silent as I drove away" (Ellison 97).</p>	<p>FORESHADOWING As they enter the car, Mr. Norton is visibly flustered by the events at the Golden Day, leading to possible conflict and tension between the protagonist and Norton.</p>
<p>10 "Here within this quiet greenness I possessed the only identity I had ever known, and I was losing it. In this brief moment of passage I became aware of the connection between these lawns and buildings and my hopes and dreams" (Ellison 99).</p>	<p>CHARACTERIZATION As the events transpire across the protagonist, he loses his sense of identity, illustrated often throughout the book due to boundaries he cannot socially overcome. He speaks of the riches and privileges around him, how he truly agrees to the beliefs, but is limited by societal seclusion.</p>
<p>11 "You're nobody, son. You don't exist-can't you see that?" (Ellison 141).</p>	<p>VISIBILITY THEME Once more, Ellison reflects on social visibility, where Dr. Bledsoe refers to the protagonist as non-existent. His role in society is faded, almost missing, pointed out by the Doctor.</p>
<p>12 "For three years I had thought of myself as a man and here with a few words he'd made me as helpless as an infant" (Ellison 144).</p>	<p>CHARACTERIZATION Against Dr. Bledsoe's rant against the narrator, the protagonist is taken aback by the comments, feeling vulnerable and unable to defend. This state of vulnerability is often reflected throughout the novel.</p>
<p>13 "Ambition is a wonderful force," he said, "but sometimes it can be blinding . . . On the other hand, it can make you successful -- like my father. . ." (Ellison 184)</p>	<p>VISIBILITY THEME Ambitions is used as a potentially double-edged blade, able to both bolster aspirations and be the downfall of the pretentious. The blinding aspect relates to the aftermath, where those hindered by ambition are left vulnerable to the events of others.</p>

<p>14</p> <p>"The man who moved out of the shadow and looked at me sullenly was small, wiry and very natty in his dirty overalls. And as I approached him I saw his drawn face and the cottony white hair showing beneath his tight, striped engineer's cap. His manner puzzled me. I couldn't tell whether he felt guilty about something himself, or thought I had committed some crime." (Ellison 207).</p>	<p>CHARACTERIZATION/SYMBOLISM</p> <p>The man could potentially represent the protagonist as hard working, and not socially tolerated in the time period. By appearing as small, wiry, and natty, he is classified as a lower class worker, but is hard working and ambitious/determined, much like the main character.</p>
<p>15</p> <p>"The very idea annoyed me. How could you know? It involved a problem of choice. I would have to weigh many things carefully before deciding and there would be some things that would cause quite a bit of trouble, simply because I had never formed a personal attitude toward so much. I had accepted the accepted attitudes and it had made life seem simple..." (Ellison 266).</p>	<p>CHARACTERIZATION</p> <p>The protagonist refers to the decisions he has to make, previously having been easy and passive throughout life, but now having input on society decisions. He further develops himself to achieve complex processes on his future.</p>
<p>16</p> <p>"I knew that here, somewhere close by in the night, there was a zoo with its dangerous animals. The lions and tigers in heated cages, the bears asleep, the snakes coiled tightly underground" (Ellison 299).</p>	<p>METAPHOR/SYMBOLISM</p> <p>An extended metaphor is present with a zoo concept, often described as frantic and wild. The animals may represent the hidden groups, either political or social, but still powerful in society.</p>
<p>17</p> <p>"Dispossession! Dis-possession is the word!" I went on. "They've tried to dispossess us of our manhood and womanhood! Of our childhood and adolescence -- You heard the sister's statistics on our infant mortality rate. Don't you know you're lucky to be uncommonly born?" (Ellison 343).</p>	<p>DIALOGUE</p> <p>Within the protagonist's rant, he talks about dispossession from a personal viewpoint. Within his life, he has had education, occupation and liberation taken away from him, and spreads word on the civil liberties not often given to those minorities. The narrator continues to fight for the rights of others.</p>
<p>18</p> <p>"And yet they were somehow new. The new suit imparted a newness to me. It was the clothes and the new name and the</p>	<p>CHARACTERIZATION</p> <p>The protagonist talks about the inevitable loss of his heritage for the growth as a societal member in the brotherhood. The new suit</p>

<p>circumstances. It was a newness too subtle to put into thought, but there it was. I was becoming someone else” (Ellison 355).</p>	<p>represents a new lifestyle, as well as new beliefs that were previously foreign to the narrator.</p>
<p>19 “I felt suddenly empty; there was a logic in what he said which I felt compelled to accept. They were wrong, but they had the obligation to discover their mistake“ (Ellison 389).</p>	<p>CHARACTERIZATION Despite being in a more accepting order, the protagonist is still criticized for his differences. He feels alone due to their isolating viewpoints, but still respects them, allowing them the chance to correct their prior judgements.</p>
<p>20 “I left the room and went into a vacant office, boiling with anger and disgust. Wrestrum had snatched me back to the South in the midst of one of the top Brotherhood committees and I felt naked“ (Ellison 403).</p>	<p>CHARACTERIZATION Vulnerability is once more reflected in the novel. Through feelings of distrust and “nakedness”, the protagonist feels exposed and helpless, almost reverting back to childish instincts, but regains a grip on his sanity.</p>