

**The Psychological Journey of Black American :
from “*Invisible Man*” to “*The Hate U Give*”**

"versão corrigida e melhorada após defesa pública"

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DECLARAÇÕES

Declaro que esta dissertação de Mestrado é o resultado da minha investigação pessoal e independente. O seu conteúdo é original e todas as fontes consultadas estão devidamente mencionadas no texto, nas notas e na bibliografia.

A candidata,

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Lisboa, 29 de Junho de 2022

Declaro que este Trabalho de Projeto de Mestrado se encontra em condições de ser apreciado pelo júri a designar.

O(A) orientador(a),

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Lisboa, 29 de Junho de 2022

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**The Psychological Journey of Black American:
from “*Invisible Man*” to “*The Hate U Give*”**

PALAVRAS CHAVE: Literatura afro-americana, dilema, espaço físico, espaço social, espaço mental.

RESUMO: A questão da auto-identidade psicológica tem sido o principal tema de pesquisa na literatura afro-americana há muito tempo. A pesquisa existente alcançou ricos resultados de perspectivas culturais, pós-coloniais e de gênero. Mas as discussões da literatura afro-americana de uma perspectiva espacial são raras. A teoria espacial que surgiu na década de 1970 defendia a significação cultural e política do espaço e absorveu recursos teóricos de diversas disciplinas, que forneceram muitas interpretações para os estudos da literatura afro-americana. Esta dissertação primeiramente faz uma breve revisão da literatura afro-americana e da teoria espacial, e discute a racionalidade da combinação da teoria espacial e da auto-identidade. *Invisible Man* (1952) e *The Hate U Give* (2017) são os romances selecionados para esta análise. Com base na teoria de Lefebvre de dividir o espaço em espaço físico, espaço social e espaço mental, esta dissertação analisa as dificuldades enfrentadas pelos protagonistas afro-americanos nos dois romances no processo de crescimento e despertar de sua auto-identidade. O espaço existe em vários níveis na literatura afro-americana em diversas formas, e o espaço individual reflete o processo psicológico do protagonista em obras literárias de diferentes ângulos. Além disso, também reflete a tendência de auto-identidade dos escritores afro-americanos.

KEY-WORDS: African-American literature, dilemma, physical space, social space, mental space.

ABSTRACT: The issue of psychological self-identity has been the main subject of research in African-American literature for a long time. Existing research has achieved rich results from cultural, post-colonial period and gender perspectives. But discussions of African-American literature from a spatial perspective are rare. The spatial theory that emerged in the 1970s advocated the cultural and political significance of space and absorbed theoretical resources from a variety of disciplines, which provided many interpretations for the studies of African-American literary. This dissertation firstly makes a brief review of African-American literature and spatial theory, and discusses the rationality of the combination of spatial theory and self-identity. *Invisible Man* (1952) and *The Hate U Give* (2017) are the novels selected for this analysis. Based on Lefebvre's theory of dividing space into physical space, social space and mental space, this dissertation analyzes the difficulties faced by the African-American protagonists in the two novels in the process of growing up and the awakening of their self-identity. Space exists at various levels in African-American literature in diverse forms, and individual space reflect the psychological process of the protagonist in literary works from different angles. In addition, it also reflects the self-identity tendency of African-American writers.

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Introduction

African-American fiction has always been an integral part of American literature since the emergence of slave narratives, which described life under slavery and the path towards justice and freedom before the American Civil War. It begins with the novel *CLOTEL; Or, The President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States*¹ (William Wells Brown, 1853), which is considered to be the first work of fiction published by an African American. In the nineteenth century, the authors of African descent mainly focused on the status of African Americans within the American society, on cultural representation, racism, slavery and social equality. While until the turn of the twentieth century, non-fiction publications such as *The Negro in the South*(1907) by Booker T. Washington² and W.E.B. Du Bois³ *The Souls of Black Folk*(1903) debated how to confront racism in the United States. Within the books, the authors followed the chronological order, treating narrations in a historical dimension in order to map the evolution and development of self-representation through a strategy of historicization.⁴ Ernst Cassirer argued that “space and time are the framework in which all reality is concerned. We cannot conceive any real thing

¹ The novel explores the destructive effects of slavery on African-American families, the tough lives of American mulattoes or mixed-race people, and the “*degraded and immoral condition of the relation of master and slave in the United States of America.*”(Brown, 1853:82)

² Booker Taliaferro Washington(1856-1915), was an American educator, author, and adviser to several presidents of the United States of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He had a major influence on southern race relations and he was the dominant figure in black public affairs from 1895 until his death. He believes hard working, economic progress and merit would prove to whites the value of blacks to the American economy. Ralph Ellison uses many characters and scenes related to Washington to show his disagreement with his backward ideals, and the narrator he wrote in *Invisible Man* was impacted greatly by Washington.

³ William Edward Burghardt Du Bois(1868-1963), was an American sociologist, socialist, historian and Pan-Africanist civil rights activist in the United States during the first half of the 20th century. He shared in the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People(NAACP). His most famous book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, defines the term “double-consciousness” and remains a cornerstone of African American literature. He was a pioneering advocate of black nationalism and Pan-Africanism, and he also urged his readers to see “Beauty in Black.”

⁴ Presenting an event as a product of history.

except under the conditions of space and time”(Cassirer, 1994). However, timeline based on history became the prevailing cognitive approach in western literature, including African-American works. Until at the end of the 20th century, the western intellectuals were specially impacted by what came to be described as spatial theory.

Before addressing the spatial motive in African-American literature, it is important to discuss the concept of the “spatial turn⁵” and the impact of spatial theory in literary criticism. This is not only the premise of this dissertation but also provides the theoretical background and framework of this analysis it proposes. At the end of the 20th century, a spatial theory emerged in Western academic circles. Following a series of changes in academic trends, such as the “linguistic turn” academic circles began to be influenced by the “spatial turn.” This turn is considered one of the most important influences in developing politics and knowledge in the late 20th century. Therefore, scholars of architecture, culture, and politics have gradually shifted their attention from time to space.

As Lefebvre⁶ published *The Production Of Space*(1991), putting forward the theories of space production and initiating the “spatial turn” in the cultural field, the author presents space no longer as a static physical concept but as a complex social notion. Space becomes a fluid process, full of dynamic changes and contradictions that have an impact on construction and social relations. Lefebvre divided space into

⁵ The “Spatial Turn” began at the end of the 20th century, and with the spatial turn in the cultural field, the theoretical vision of literary researchers gradually extended to the spatial field. It has had a profound impact on contemporary philosophy, history, geography, literature and other disciplines, providing a new theoretical perspective for contemporary humanities and social sciences research.

⁶ Henri Lefebvre(1901-1991), French Marxist philosopher, sociologist and urban theorist in the 20th century. The books which he published are on topics such as social space, dialectical materialism, everyday life, modernity, existentialism, social struggles, etc.

three elements, namely physical space, social space, and mental space. These laid an important foundation for the development of spatial theory, as will be discussed later on.

This dissertation aims to analyze the impact of this new awareness of space in African-American literature, specifically in two different novels, *Invisible Man*(1952) and *The Hate U Give*(2015), discussing how two different African-American characters' psychological processes are based on the three concepts of space -- physical space, social space, and mental space identified in *The Production of Space*(1991)⁷ by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Many of the philosophical papers of Lefebvre were devoted to elucidating the significance of space in what he termed the replication of social relations of production.

The main reason for choosing the two novels is that the characters in *Invisible Man* and *The Hate U Give* struggle to find their identities due to racial tension. They are very similar in that they are both written by authors with African-American identities, and the main characters struggle with the issues they face. The struggle to overcome these issues is shown in both novels and explored deeply in their works. Besides, these two novels are written in different period and the two stories take place in different era. *Invisible Man* is published in 1952, which describes a college-educated black man struggling to survive in a racially divided society in 20th century United States. However, the contemporary fiction *The Hate U Give* is created in 2017, which explores a black teenage girl moves between two worlds: the ghetto

⁷ *La Production de L'espace*(1974) translated by Donald Nicholson Smith in 1991.

where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends, then struggle for justice in 21st century. Finally, these two novels are selected from the respective works of authors of different genders. This dissertation explores the similarities and differences that arise when male and female writers portray African-American protagonists and themes through the lens of gender differences and different background of the period.

Consequently, several questions are put forward when analyzing these authors and topics: what dilemmas did the characters experience in American society from three space perspectives? How did their awakening processes develop when they were confused about their self-identities? What are the similarities between the two characters of different genders and eras? How did they resist bias and ignorance in the white-dominated world and manage to find their self-identities eventually?

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, the development process of spatial theory from Joseph Frank to Henri Lefebvre's is presented and applied to the analysis of the residence and living dilemmas of the two African-American narrators and their awakenings in physical spaces, focusing on the strategies of survival, adaptation and resistance. Even though it is difficult for the African-American characters to survive in a society dominated by white Americans, the narrators' awakenings of consciousness eventually lead to their own spaces.

The second chapter will analyze the two African-American narrators' interpersonal dilemmas and awakening processes in social space, focusing on the characters' approaches to racial and gender-based discriminatory practices.

In the third chapter, the dilemmas and awakenings of the African-American narrators will focus on the mental space, which mainly refers to the inner space of the characters. If the physical and social space can be deemed as the external world, then mental space can be categorized as the internal world, where external changes are processed.

In the last chapter, the resistance of the two narrators after experiencing the dilemmas and awakenings will be analyzed. The “invisibility” of the African-American characters, which means being ignored and marginalized, will be discussed in this chapter. This chapter also examines how racial rights are constructed through vision by analyzing two representative visual scenes in the novel *Invisible Man* and *The Hate U Give*, where the gaze of white people is not only an actor but also a kind of visual violence. At the same time, only when the African-American characters no longer act submissively and start to fight for the right to resist can they create the possibility of self-identity construction.

The conclusion of the dissertation establishes a comparison between the two novels, examining the similarities and differences between the two different African-American characters’ processes of finding themselves and the consequences on their quest for self-identity.

I. African-American Identities' Dilemmas and Awakenings in Physical Space

Introduction

The foundation of the spatial theory is the idea of distance, which might take the shape of an economic or ideological distance. Numerous academic fields, including economics, urban studies, and political science, have contributed to the foundations of spatial analysis (Meyfroidt, et al., 2018).

According to the definitions of sociologists, spatial analysis is an interdisciplinary science that examines the social processes of space. In this sense, spatial analysis studies the significance of place on human life and behavior.

Researchers often claim that spatial analysis can not only help social scientists to solve practical problems in their field of study, but also help them understand globalization, migration, and economic development holistically and analyze physical concepts at a deeper level. "Space and place are key ideas in humanistic geography" (Meyfroidt, et al., 2018). Concepts that don't signify the same things under this methodology space is an ethereal concept with no real significance. Place contrasts with how people are aware of or drawn to a particular space area. A place can be thought of as a space with a purpose.

In literature, the study of the representation of space enables academics to consider how the authors' models of the world are portrayed, whether in the real world, in fictional universes, or in those hybrid spaces where imagination and realism collide. This chapter deals with the rise and development of spatial theory and how one of its elements, the physical space, is discussing in these two novels.

In this chapter of this dissertation, the first objective is to describe the spatial

theory articulated by different academics, from Joseph Frank to more influential scholars in the late 20th century, such as Juri Lotman and Henri Lefebvre. Secondly, this chapter discusses the dilemmas of the protagonists in the two novels and their self-identity awakenings in physical space based on Lefebvre's spatial theory. Different from traditional novels, which narrate according to time sequence, there is no explicit time in the novels *Invisible Man* and *The Hate U Give*, and it is the change of different spaces that promotes the development of the story, making the readers better understand the African-American characters' tough dilemmas. This kind of dilemma refers to how to face the situations between the black invisibility and racial visibility in physical space. For instance, the choices made by the protagonists in the face of different life circumstances. Therefore, the spatial interpretation of *Invisible Man* and *The Hate U Give* offers a new perspective of understanding the African-American characters' dilemmas in the white-dominated society.

1.1 The Rise and Development in Spatial Theory

Time and space are two important dimensions of our understanding of the world. In the development history of human thought, the awareness of time is relatively strong, while space is often ignored. Disciplines are inseparable from historical narratives that take time as an implicit frame of thinking. On the contrary, the theoretical study of space was less important, reflected in the absence of spatial theory and understanding of space. It has been said that space is static, fixed, lifeless, and dialectical. "Contrarily, time meant richness, fecundity, life, and dialectic"

(Foucault,1995:264). In literary criticism, there is also a tendency to attach importance to the temporal dimension and neglect the spatial viewpoint. This mode of thinking is reflected in each aspect of literary research. Before the beginning of the 20th century, narrative time, plot structure, and story logic were repeatedly mentioned in literary criticism.

what the story does is to narrate the life in time...in the novel, the allegiance to time is imperative: no novel could be written without it... it is never possible for a novelist to deny time inside the fabric of his novel: he must cling however lightly to the thread of his story, he must touch the interminable tapeworm, otherwise, he becomes unintelligible, which, in his case, is a blunder (Foster, 1927:23).

Space was reduced to a performance stage for characters and story development. E.M. Foster discusses the importance of time in his book *Aspects of Novel*(1927), but there is no overview of the function of space. In the theory and practice of literary criticism, space is in a state of being obscured all the time.

A fictional universe encompasses the tale, time, and ideology together with the locations and environments of events, characters, and objects in literary storytelling. This outlook changed when space began to be considered a component of several literary domains in the early 20th century, including the narrative context. Joseph Frank published *Spatial Form in Modern Literature* in 1945, where he discussed spatial forms in modern literature from three perspectives: a spatial form of language, the physical space of the story, and the mental space of the reader. He stated in *The Idea of Spatial Form* that “because language processes in time, the sensory

simultaneousness⁸ cannot be got unless the time order is broken” (Frank, 1991:2). Joseph Frank was the first to put forward the spatial factors in literary works laying a foundation for the later study of space in literature. Other scholars began to turn their interest to the study of space, influenced by his spatial form theory. Juri Lotman was the first scholar to conceptualize the issue of literary space from the philosophical theory point of view. In his studies, he argued the relationship between space in the text and space in the real world. According to Lotman, cultural preconceptions and traditions act as a “mediator” between space organizations and their members (Lotman, 1977:220-221).

the author of a literary work creates their vision of the world and they do it through the use of description. Limited just like the description...Literary space represents an author's model of the world, expressed in the language of spatial representation. In a literary work, space models different relations of the world picture: temporary, social, ethical and others... (Lotman, 1977:218).

It is *The Production of Space* by Henri Lefebvre, first published in French in 1974, which initiated a remarkable “spatial turn” in the field of cultural theory. In this book, Lefebvre pioneered the idea that space is a production. “Space is at once the result and cause, product, and producer” (Lefebvre, 1991:142). After innovating the concept of space, Lefebvre divided space into different angles. He divides his spatial theory into three parts in *The Production of Space* (1974), namely “first, the physical nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the mental, including logical and formal abstractions; and thirdly, the social” (Lefebvre, 1991:11). The three types are physical space, social

⁸ Simultaneousness means something is happening or existing at the same time.

space and mental space. Starting from the social attributes of space, Lefebvre proposes a new model of spatial interpretation. He believed any space is a dialectical mixture of three interrelated spaces: spatial practices,⁹ representation of space¹⁰ and representational space¹¹. Based on Marx's theory, Lefebvre highlighted the sociological significance of space, laying the foundation for the further expansion and research of spatial theory.

Based on spatial theory, the space in the text is no longer just the background and environment in which the story takes place. In traditional literature research, the linear relationship between literature and spatial environment is often emphasized, and the true meaning of literature space and connotation have never been involved. However, from the perspective of contemporary spatial theory, political culture and ideology occupy an important part in the production of space, which makes the literary space a place with profound historical and cultural significance, and space in literary works has become a construction with cultural representational significance. For example, space in *Jane Eyre* and *1984* goes beyond the mere geographical significance to serve as the site of ethical conflict or power struggles. Therefore, space in literary works as a cultural representation is closely related to the spiritual theme of the text.

Through the framework of spatial theory, literature is fundamentally a production of space. Literary works describe geographical landscapes and provide methods for understanding and interpreting the world. It is not only the product of society but also

⁹ Spatial practices is the sense of perceived space. It refers to daily life. Everyday routines and experiences from their own social space.

¹⁰ Representation of space refers to conceived space. It is most dominant in the production of space and is central to the production of abstract space.

¹¹ Representational space is equal to lived space. In this element, its inhabitants give a place a symbolic value.

reacts to it and affects the process of social development. This provides a different perspective for studying literary works: combining literary studies and spatial theory.

Physical space is a type of concrete place that people can perceive. Cities, towns, houses, and natural landscapes belong to physical space. Lefebvre argues that “physical natural space is disappearing” as “mental and social activity impose their meshwork upon nature’s space” (Lefebvre, 1991:170), which means it is not just the background of the story or the residential space but possesses other implicit meanings. As physical space is where people live and participate in activities, different places imply different meanings and affect the character’s personality, even their behavior, as people will act differently in different physical spaces.

According to Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*, he argues that “social space is a social product”(Lefebvre, 1991:30). “It subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelations in their coexistence and simultaneity -- their (relative) and disorder” (Lefebvre, 1991:72). In another word, social space is the product of complex social relations, an important concept in exploring the various oppositions and conflicts in society. Lefebvre puts forward his spatial triads in *The Production of Space*, which contains spatial practice, the representation of space, and symbolic space. Spatial practice refers to the activity in the social space; it means how the social space is used through the contact between the “subjects and their space and surroundings” (Lefebvre, 1991:18). Created by the daily routines and experiences that construct their own social space. The daily activities that create a social space constantly coordinate between the two forms of social space. It works within the

scope of abstract space envisaged by planners and architects. Social practices also shape personal perceptions of where you are and how you should use them. According to Lefebvre's spatial practice theory, social space can be studied from the character's behavior and interaction with others. The representation of space relates to the conceived space, which planners imagine. It holds the dominant position in society, which is "tied to order which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to sign, to codes, and frontal relations" (Lefebvre, 1991:33).

According to Lefebvre, mental space is a conceived space, it includes the mental space of the writers' creation, mental space of the reader when reading the book, and the mental space of the characters. The construction of mental space is achieved by a dream, monologue, stream of consciousness, reminiscence, etc. Although mental space is abstract, it can still be expressed through physical and social space. Lefebvre regards physical, social, and mental space as an integral whole. "each of these two kinds of spaces involves, underpins and presupposes the other" (Lefebvre, 1991:14). Space in many examples of African-American literature, the texts focus on interpersonal and cultural spaces. Whether it is people of the same race or communication between different races, the dilemmas and self-identities faced by the characters are important factors and manifest in physical, social and mental spaces. "All subjects are situated in a space where they must either recognize themselves or lose themselves, a space which they both enjoy and modify" (Lefebvre, 1991:35). Therefore, complex dimensions of space exist in many examples of African-American literature in various forms, and it has become an essential way to construct characters'

selfhood. As one of the most representative of African-American literature in the 20th century, Ralph Ellison constructed three types of spatial images in his novel *The Invisible Man*, confirming Lefebvre's space theory.

1.2 Types of Spaces

In analyzing the two novels, it will use the three concepts of space identified in *The Production of Space* (1991), which deal with physical, social and mental space. The first aspect is physical space, which is concerned with exploring physical bodies and objects. In *Invisible man*, Ellison uses the spatial frameworks of the South and of New York City to build a narrative that illustrates how racism is woven throughout the city's neighborhoods. The city is separated into different zones: Harlem, downtown Manhattan, south Manhattan, Brooklyn and Long Island. In *The Hate U Give*, the main character Starr lives in a neighborhood called Garden Heights. It is not only a physical place, but also has a racial boundary that separates black and white residents from each other. "The physical boundaries of Garden Heights represent the social boundaries that separate black and white residents from each other" (Merrifield, 1993).

Social space is concerned with the space created by social relations. It is created through social behavior. For example, friendship is a social relation often based on the social interactions between friends. Therefore, in *The Hate U Give*, Starr endures trials and tribulations of her friendships with members of her all-black neighborhood. In *Invisible Man*, the character of Ellison is forced to bear with his problem of "race

identity.” Having to struggle with this racial identity problem caused him to live in a social space that separates black and white people from each other.

Emotional space is concerned with the space that is created in the mind. For example, “Emotions are space-like phenomena: they are mental Spatio-temporal structures” (Fauconnier, 1994). Emotional space is created when psychological states are experienced as a particular kind of space. In *Invisible Man* and *The Hate U Give*, Ellison’s and Starr’s mental space is being threatened by the social space of discrimination. For example, in *The Hate U Give*, Starr’s best friend Khalil has a tough childhood. He is poor, and he attended a school far from his home. He also has to face several racial barriers, like the poverty of his family and police brutality. His experience with discrimination in his social space ultimately led to him being murdered by a racist police officer. In *Invisible Man*, Ellison’s character faces the problems of slavery and racial discrimination. This emotional space leads to the emergence of a psychological space that separates him from other people.

1.3 Social Implications in Physical Space of Residence

Under the unconstitutional racial segregation after the reconstruction, African Americans in the South had unequal opportunities in their lives, signified by laws that enforced the spatial separation of the races confirming Ryan’s view that “the living space is not a mere signifier of objective reality but belongs to structure of power and discourse of identity” (Ryan, 2017:40). It is easy to find the difference between the residence of white-American characters and the African-American protagonists in

Invisible Man and *The Hate U Give*. These differences in physical space can be seen and reflected in the insurmountable gap of their invisible social status.

In the novel *Invisible Man*, the unnamed narrator traces his life experience from the South to New York City. The novel begins with the description of the living condition of the narrator. He lives in the basement of a building, free of charge, which was limited for rent to white only. Differently, the basement is a secret place to him, “a place forgotten about and shut off during the nineteenth century” (Ellison, 2005:6). His residence is a reminder to him of his complications with his social invisibility of trying to be an invisible black man in a white empowered society. In chapter one of the novel, the narrator is a student who receives a scholarship at a black collage in South. In order to impress Mr. Norton, a visiting white trustee, the narrator drives him and passes by the old slave quarters on the outskirts of the campus. Mr. Norton orders him to stop the car when they passed by Jim Trueblood’s cabin because he is surprised that the building has not be destroyed before, which only appears during the slavery period. Trueblood’s family lives in an old log cabin that has been “bleached white and warped by the weather” (Ellison, 2005:37). The appearance of the house inspires Mr. Norton’s curiosity about the owner of cabin, the sharecropper Trueblood. During the communication with Trueblood, Mr. Norton feels fascinated and horrified when he knew the sharecropper’s incestuous encounter with his daughter. The reason why Trueblood’s daughter shared a bed with his wife and him was because the family was trying to survive the cold winter by huddling together. The living conditions of the Truebloods survive are evident from the sharecropper’s reflections as the family

sleeps. The uneducated black man impregnated his own daughter while he was dreaming, because he mistook her for another woman. Confirming what Moeketsi said, “the social environment, characters, and events are interrelated, and none operates in isolation” (Moeketsi, 2014:23). The story of Trueblood is more than an indictment of the living conditions more than it is about a black male’s sexual behavior.

After leaving the cabin of the Truebloods, the narrator drives Mr. Norton to the Golden Day¹² in order to fulfill his request for whiskey. The chaotic atmosphere of the Golden Day shocks them--the bartender refuses to let the narrator take the whiskey outside to Norton. Inside the Golden Day, Mr. Norton is propositioned by a prostitute and insulted by a veteran. The narrator manages to make Norton out of control after they witness the chaotic events there. On Mr. Norton’s recommendation, the headmaster of the campus, Bledsoe, dismisses the narrator. In order to gain enough money and go back to the college, the unnamed black man is suggested by Bledsoe to go to New York with seven recommendation letters. After he knows the devastating contents of the letters, he feels shocked and out of rage. When he comes to New York with a vision of a bright future¹³, his funds were relatively generous. The conditions of the man’s boarding room where he lived were decent, but the noise of the streets was still audible. “From the street below came the sound of traffic, the larger sound of the subway, the smaller, more varied sounds of voices” (Ellison,

¹² The Golden Day is a disreputable pub on the outskirts of the college community, which gathered a group of unstable war veterans. People in that twisted place have no future to look forward to, as they have been traumatized by the war experiences and can only find release in drinking, fighting and sex.

¹³ The narrator thinks the life in the North would be hopeful, because the thing that sustains him is the thought of going back to the college as soon as he earns enough money to continue his education in South and gained Dr. Bledsoe’s forgiveness. “The bright future” is the narrator’s illusion.

2005:162). The narrator decides to work in a place called "Paint Factory" to start his new life. The confrontation between the narrator and Brockway, a black man who maintains the factory's boilers in the basement, escalates into a physical fight due to the protagonist knocking out the old man's false teeth. Brockway rigs the boilers to explode the factory in order to revenge, then sends the narrator to the hospital. In chapter twelve, the narrator finds his way back to Harlem, where he is taken good care of by a black woman named Mary Rambo. Although Mary never asks him for rent and takes good care of him in all aspects of his life, the house she used to rent was no different from the slums in New York. The narrator spends the last morning in Mary's house shivering with cold, and at the same time, the poor neighbor nearby pounds on the steam pipe to show his discontent. The silver painting falls off the pipe at a stroke, and the black and rusted iron also shows the age of the house. The coffee filters don't work very well, but Mary is still unable to replace them. What's more terrible is that when they are talking: "a small drove of roaches trooping frantically down the steam line from the floor above, plummeting to the floor as the vibration of the pipe shook them off." "Some folks just live in filth" (Ellison, 2005:252). From these examples, it can be seen that the living conditions of Mary's house are also rudimentary.

While walking in the streets of Harlem one day, the narrator encountered an old African-American couple who were being evicted from their house. During the eviction, two white men rudely threw the furniture out of the apartment while a group of black men and women stand silently by. A house has great power, which can

maintain people “through the storms of the heavens and those of life” (Bachelard, 1994:7). Although the house was crude, and what the two white policemen in attendance took for junk was the worn household furnishings of the old couples, the eviction from the house was a huge damage to dignity. Those meager belongings, which also represent a whole lifetime of struggle, and they had great psychological value for the old couple. Although there were “free papers¹⁴” related to the property of the old couple, the fact was that they were ruthlessly evicted from their home outside on snowy day, which could be seen that the so-called “freedom” was just empty, and the African Americans such as the old couples in Harlem were still in dire straits, even the most basic life could not be satisfied.

The portrait in the novel of the living condition of the African-American characters shows that their life was still difficult after the liberation of slavery, and they did not have the same social status as the whites. As for them, most of the white man’s living conditions could be called “paradise.” In *Invisible Man*, the white man Emerson owned a residence that is a symbol of the elite of “white life.” The wall displayed various paintings and artworks and exquisite sculptures. The narrator had never seen so many antiques, even in his college museum, what he saw was only an iron pot, an ancient bell, a set of ankle-irons, links of chain, and a primitive loom, which the narrator did not want to see as they were the symbols of their a traumatic past. The narrator’s economic conditions got better after joining the Brotherhood, he could get 60 dollars a week, and the house was provided for him by the white man

¹⁴ Freedom papers and documents declare the free status of Blacks.

Jack. The narrator would never have had the opportunity to live in a big house and take a hot bath without the help of Jack, which made him feel privileged and unaccustomed. However, Jack didn't care about him, he was too naive to use the protagonist in the future to remove the boundary between the white and the black to build a white society. The Brotherhood he joined was only using him for its purposes, so after a fierce racial commotion on the streets of Harlem, his illusions were completely shattered.

In the novel *The Hate U Give*, which narrates the life of a young African American teenager who grapples with racism and activism after witnessing her black friend murdered by the police. In this novel, narrated by Starr, her family lives in the rough and lower-income neighborhood of Garden Heights, which is described as a ghetto and as notorious for gang violence. A lack of choices always defined ghettos where inhabitants were forced to live. Starr's parents can afford to send their three children to Williamson Prep, a predominantly white school away from the "bad influences" in Garden Heights. In this case, Starr has a double life, divided between white and black communities. By reading the interview of the author Angie Thomas, who lived in a mostly black neighborhood in Jackson, she went to a mostly white upper-class private school close to her home: "It was like going into an entirely different world. So I overcompensated by doing what's called code-switching. I would make myself more presentable. I was careful of how I spoke and how much emotion I showed" (Thomas, 2018). It is precisely because of her story that the author created Starr with a similar experience. Starr feels torn between her two physical spaces -- the

poverty and violence of Garden Heights and the wealth and respectability of Williamson Prep. Her black identity is split between how she sees herself, how black individuals comprehend themselves, and how they know the white world will view them, creating a sense of internal conflict in different physical spaces. From the time she steps into the party at the novel's beginning, Starr makes it clear that she feels there are two “versions” of herself. The “white world” and “ghetto” are two different spaces for her: “Williamson is one world and Garden Heights is another, and I have to keep them separate” (Thomas, 2017:21).

In short, the novels show that a huge gap between the living conditions in white and black spaces. Most African-American characters live in degraded conditions, and some do not even have the freedom of residence in the novels. In *Invisible Man*, white people could even make African Americans homeless by claiming their property. This dichotomy means that a house equipped with decorations is seen as a “museum” from the point of view of the African American narrator. In *The Hate U Give*, the protagonist’s ghetto living makes her sensitive to the gaze from the outside, even if it comes from friends in the white school: “I’m always afraid of one of them¹⁵ will call it the ghetto” (Thomas, 2017:65). This kind of residential disparity makes both narrators are deeply aware of the social and emotional consequences of the division in physical spaces.

¹⁵ Maya and Hailey Starr’s best friends in Williamson Prep.

1.4 Living Dilemmas

Many African Americans thought that as long as they followed the rules of the society established by the white majority, they could also have chances to chase the “American dream.” Unfortunately, African Americans have never gotten the freedom and equality they hoped for. Ellison argued when discussing the narrator of *Invisible Man* that “the major flaw in the hero’s character is his unquestioning willingness to do what is required of him by others as a way to success” (Ellison, 1964:177). When he traveled from the South to the North to realize the American dream, he suffered instead different kinds of problems. The narrator considered that he could become a successful man in college if he believed in the values of white people. But he didn’t realize that the African-American college was shaped by such an idea of success in the white space. No matter what he did, the white man suppressed his spatial practice and symbolic space. He seemed free in college, but the white world shaped his thoughts. He was profoundly influenced by Booker T. Washington, whose emphasis on self-help dominated his college. In the narrator’s view, he is the future Washington, who is different from other black men he knows. In episode one in *Invisible Man*, the narrator participates in the Battle Royal which has been mentioned before. When he sees the elevator, he thought: “I felt superior to them in my way, and I didn’t like the manner in which we were all crowded together into the servants’ elevator. Nor did they like my being there” (Ellison, 1952:18). The self pride leads him can be documented by the fact that he refuses to take the servant elevator. The statement depicts how alienated the narrator actually is, and he is not even ignorant to the fact

that he is hated by his own color. He deems the college president Bledsoe as the model of the successful, self-made African American, hoping he could also have a good salary and a good-looking wife just like him. But the young narrator is ignorant of Bledsoe's means to reach and maintain his position.

In addition, the narrator was unwilling to get along with the African-American characters who lived freely. Everyone in the college, including the narrator, hated Jim Trueblood. The white people in that town who knew him discriminated against him, and the African American characters thought he humiliated them by having impregnated his daughter. However, Jim Trueblood lived a much better life than other African Americans in the town because he chose to be his real self and lived a kind of lifestyle that given some the white in town wanted to have but they are not to. He didn't need to cater to others, cared about others' opinions, and was not afraid of telling his life to other people. In that way, he was even better off after the humiliating incident. The white people were more willing to help him, gave him food, drink, cigarettes, and even paid him to move to a better house. Unlike the narrator and other African Americans who always catered to the white, Jim Trueblood chose to become his real self and created a free black emotional space.

Another example of self-assertion autonomy is the Golden Day, which is "a kind of sporting-and-gambling house" (Ellison, 2005:80). It was considered to be a place favored by people who were others considered to be lunatics. Supercargo was a black man who helped the white owner maintain order in this place. But when he took off his uniform, which symbolized the white authority, his orders were no longer

respected. Some veterans beat Supercargo furiously to protest against his previous attempts to control them. A veteran said: “Sometimes I get so afraid of him I feel that he's inside my head!” (Ellison, 2005:86), which meant that these veterans were not crazy men, but just victims of the control of the white power, and they just wanted to pursue freedom in this way. Trueblood’s cabin and the Golden Day were regarded as spaces of shame for the African Americans who were unwilling to go there and didn’t want to let the white people see them, and the narrator was no exception. He despised these African Americans and didn't want Mr. Norton to see these shameful places. However, the truth is that Trueblood lived more freely. He could do anything that people dared not do. The veterans in the Golden Day dared pursue freedom through violence, while the narrator and other college fellows, who were considered free, had been acting according to others’ rules, which was their living tragedy.

With the help of the recommendation letters written by president Bledsoe, the narrator who looked down on African Americans’ lives hoped to succeed in the big city. However, he didn't get what he wanted. To his shock, these recommendation letters did not get him a job but brought endless despair. Bledsoe described the narrator in those letters as someone:

one of the rare, delicate instances in which one for whom we held great expectations has gone grievously astray, and who in his fall threatens to upset certain delicate relationships between certain interested individuals and the school. Thus, while the bearer is no longer a member of our scholastic family, it is highly important that his severance with the college be executed as painlessly as possible (Ellison, 2005:191).

Although the narrator “always tried to do the right thing,” he was abandoned by

Bledsoe whom he had always trusted. When he was at the end of his rope, he met a kind black woman Mary who took him in and promised to take care of him until he was fully recovered. Although her house was humble, it gave the narrator a lot of warmth. Mary's care made him live without worrying about eviction or social elitism that was so common in the hotel Men's House. In other words, it was a real space that felt like home. As for the relationship with her, the narrator stated that "other than Mary I had no friends and desired none. Not did I think of Mary as a 'friend'; she was something more-- a force, a stable, familiar force like something out of my past which kept me from whirling off into some unknown which I dared not face" (Ellison, 2005:258). It is obvious that Mary who opened the door to this man who could be considered as a total "stranger" represented a familiar southern culture. Later, even if Mary was short for money, she didn't complain or refuse to provide food for the young man. But the narrator finally accepted the new job offered by the Brotherhood¹⁶ in order not to add to Mary's financial burden, moved away from her house and left her one hundred dollars as an act of gratitude.

After the narrator moved from Harlem to a new house downtown, the different physical space made him jump into another abyss. This part of the city symbolized for the narrator a physical space which is consisted of oppression and exploitation since it was a wealthy section in habitat mostly by white man in there. In the beginning, the narrator was enthusiastic about going there and having the opportunity to become a public speaker for the Harlem district after he made the speech for the old

¹⁶ The Brotherhood in the novel is a place where the narrator has a sense of unity with people of his own race as they all pursuit equality in a white world. Ralph Ellison uses the Brotherhood to reveal the failure of abstract political ideologies of Communism to address the actual difficulties of African Americans of oppression.

African-American couple who were evicted. But later, he found that the part of downtown in New York is not a welcomed home because it is a very expensive place with lots of wealthy white men, and also because many members of the Brotherhood didn't like him as his career was on the fast track, which made others envy him. When he left Harlem, he also left the space of community and friendship at the same time. Mary in Harlem represents an important familiarity to the unnamed narrator. The place in downtown is not only an familiar space, but also the people who interact with the narrator there do not have the same familiarity as Mary in Harlem. The exhorter Ras, an extreme black nationalist, also repeatedly obstructed their actions in Harlem. Then investigate women's issues. His brother Clifton disappeared when he returned to Harlem. Later Clifton was found selling Sambo dolls¹⁷ near New York City, and the narrator witnessed him being chased and shot by the police. Although the narrator deeply conflicted about Clifton's motivations on the street, the narrator honors him with a public funeral because he regards Clifton as an attractive and intelligent friend.

In his discussion of urban spaces, Lefebvre argues that:

“The town has a two-sided relationship to the country: first as an entity which draws off the surplus products of the rural society, and secondly as an entity endowed with the administrative and military capacity to supply protection. Sometimes one of these roles predominates, sometimes the other”(Lefebvre, 1991:235).

There is no doubt that downtown in New York fulfills the second function. The

¹⁷ Sambo dolls are the puppets controlled by transparent strings, and they represent a kind of damaging stereotype of Black slaves as servile and delighted to “dance” for their white masters. In the novel, it is not clear whether Tod Clifton means to mock the stereotype.

white people who owns this space had a high status and absolute power and could manipulate others, while the African Americans who don't belong to this place, like the narrator and Clifton, could not integrate into it and had no influence on it. They had no choice but to follow the rules.

It is obvious that in the South, Trueblood and veterans of the Golden Day lived more freely, but they were disdained by the African Americans who were willing to live in college without free ideas and act by the values of others. There was no suitable place for the narrator in the big New York City. He chose to move downtown, where the white people lived after leaving Mary's house. Brother Clifton was also shot downtown. The ideology of white superiority and black inferiority implied that the narrator would not have room to survive in the white space, let alone make a successful career. Undoubtedly, his survival was always difficult, whether in the black area in the South or the North.

In *The Hate U Give*, the author emphasizes Starr's predicament by having her dramatically switch between two settings: her home neighborhood of African American Garden Heights and the school she attends, Williamson Prep, which is predominantly white. Starr frequently speaks in slang and other ghetto dialects with her Garden Heights pals, but she always uses appropriate English and is aware of her tone so that no one can mistake her for an "angry black girl." She struggles to maintain two distinct personas as she tries to host a sleepover with both groups of friends. Starr experiences an identity crisis due to trying to fit in with both worlds, which stops her from being herself and interacting with other people. The truth about

Starr's friend Khalil is also at the forefront of her thoughts, which makes it one of the main themes of Thomas's story. Through Khalil's life and death, the book explores the crippling poverty cycle, how it restricts some African-American characters' options, and how some of their actions justify white people's continued denigration and oppression of them. His drug peddling and living situation were caused by their town's lack of economic possibilities.

1.5 The Awakening of Blackness in Physical Space

In addition to the background of the story and the place of residence, physical space also has other implications in these two novels. The space change promoted the two novels' plot development and show the narrators' awakening processes of blackness. In *Invisible Man*, the narrator thought that with the help of seven letters from President Bledsoe, he could make a great fortune like Booker T. Washington after arriving in New York. After realizing the truth of the matter, he first recognizes the reality to some extent. Returning to the Men's House, he dumped a "brown and transparent" spittoon on a preacher's head, whom he mistook for Bledsoe. He told himself, "I thought, I owe it to the race and myself. I'll kill him" (Ellison, 2005:194), which suggested the end of his worship of Bledsoe and the disgust he felt for him at that time. Then when the narrator was walking on the street, he noticed the episode already mentioned of old couple being expelled from their house. The old woman yelled, "It's all the white folks, not just one. They all against us. Every stinking low-down one of them" (Ellison, 2005:270). The narrator delivered a speech to

appease the crowd and pointed out that the old couple “are our people and mine, your parents and mine. What happened to them?” (Ellison, 2005:278) He didn’t want to reject the black culture, unlike Bledsoe, and instead, he gladly accepted it and preached to the crowd excepting his true belongings. It was a gesture that symbolized his further awakening.

Another evidence of his reconciliation with his blackness was an episode in Mary’s house. When the narrator broke a coin box which was “the cast-iron figure of a very black, red-lipped and wide-mouthed Negro...his face an enormous grin...filled to the throat with coins” (Ellison, 2005:319). According to Gerald Early in *Ralph Ellison: Invisible Man* (2009:125), before the end of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, toys, and objects that were made alarmingly exaggerated and funny stereotypes of African Americans were common in the United States. The act of smashing the bank meant that he admitted his black identity and was angry at the mockery of the African Americans, which was also a manifestation of the narrator’s awakening.

Later after the narrator joined the Brotherhood, he lost himself again, believing that his talent for speech could give him another opportunity to become a success. Brother Jack told the narrator that the mission of the Brotherhood is simple, “we are working for a better world for all people... too many have been dispossessed of their heritage, and we have banded together in brotherhood to do something about it” (Ellison, 2005:304) and he also told the narrator could be the new Booker T.

Washington¹⁸. Therefore, he abandoned his former name and identity in the South once more; instead, the Brotherhood gave him a new name. However, after brother Tod Clifton died, the narrator finally realized the essence of the organization. The Brotherhood regarded brother Clifton as a black traitor and argued that it was wrong to give him a public funeral since he sold humiliating commodities, which made the narrator very disappointed. When he told brother Jack that they must be aware of the current complexities of African-American life, brother Jack insisted that the crowd were only some raw materials that could be made use of, and he replied, “our job is not to ask them what they think but to tell them” (Ellison, 2005:473). In the beginning, the narrator joined the Brotherhood and wanted to create an acceptable identity for African-American people, but he finally realized that its target was not to fight for the living of its people, as originally stated, but to control them for its use. The young narrator understood how foolish and naive he was and that he was always “invisible” to the white people. The experience of the Brotherhood made the narrator change again and contributed to his further awakening.

“Where there is oppression, there is resistance. The peasants, the students, the women, the workers, and the whole proletariat, who have lost their land, should fight for their rights and the city's rights and control daily life” (Xianying, 2012:26). After experiencing those events, the narrator finally woke up from his illusion and started building his own differential space underground. He chose to live in the underground

¹⁸ Booker T. Washington advised black Americans to give up the dreams of political power and civil rights and instead focus working hard and achieving acceptance in the eyes of the white man. “could be the new Booker T. Washington” has the meaning of ironic, and not all Washington’s beliefs were beneficial to the African American race.

of an apartment building and lit it with 1369 unregulated light bulbs to make the underground like a “home” for himself. The electric company Monoplat Light&Power declared that “a lot of free currents is disappearing somewhere into the jungle of Harlem” (Ellison, 2005:6). It was a company created by the white whose main goal was to serve its interests without considering the interests of the black community. The company soon blamed the current loss on the African-American community without any basis. However, what was ironic was that the narrator did not “live in Harlem but in a border area” (Ellison, 2005:6). Anzaldúa states, “Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant transition” (Anadúa, 1987:3). There is a strict distinction between Harlem and the white community in the United States. According to Lotman, “in fairy tales, the jungle is a space where danger is created” (Lotman, 1977:230). In the same way, the underground in which the narrator lived could be regarded as a transitional space between the “jungle” representing the African-American community and the “white city” representing civilization, and he also resisted the authority of these boundaries with practical action.

Conclusion

Overall, the spatial turn has a deep influence on literary criticism. There have been many scholars to study the spatial theory in modern literature since the late 20th

century, starting with Joseph Frank to Henri Lefebvre. Based on Lefebvre's spatial theory, this chapter analyzes the living dilemma faced by the protagonists in physical space by comparing the residential conditions and living environment. Residence refers to the housing environment, and living signifies the progress of surviving between black world and white world. In *Invisible Man*, Ellison provides a panorama of black life in the United States by following the unnamed narrator through experiences in both the South and North. The stark contrast between the lives led by Southern black Jim Trueblood and the house of the white elite Emerson makes the narrator face the internalized shame. After moving to Harlem, Mary's house provides a shelter to the unnamed narrator when he becomes unfocused and evolves into the only home he was in the New York City. Although the living condition is still poor, the narrator decides to grow up and take responsibility for himself and make something of the African-American race in Harlem after witnessing the eviction on the street. The transformation of geographical space contributes to the growth of the narrator and the awakening of his sense of black selfhood. By listing the narrator's experiences of moving from the South to the North to make a living, his self-identity gradually becomes clear. From refusing to take the servant elevator with other black people to accepting the traditional food of his hometown, it shows the changes the narrator makes when facing the transformation of living environment.

In *The Hate U Give*, Starr, the protagonist, transforms from a hesitant adolescent to a vocal advocate for change in her two distinct physical locations: the Garden Heights and Williamson Prep. The frequent shifts of these two different

physical spaces make the teenager Starr walking between two worlds. The life that her white friends in school take for granted is not one she can expect as a black girl who goes home to a poor neighborhood. Both of the novels reflect the impact of the physical environment on people, and the choices made by the protagonists are different. In *Invisible Man*, the narrator gradually finds and accepts a sense of self-identity as he moves into the white world thus get closer to the culture of the South. In *The Hate U Give*, Starr, who navigates between Williamson Prep. and Garden Heights, gradually turns from confusion as the beginning to finding balance in both worlds.

II. African-American Identities' Dilemmas and Awakenings in Social Space

Introduction

Social space refers to the identity of a physical region that is situated in its time and place. It is a virtual space or physical space where people gather and interact. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre states that “space is not a place independent of human beings; instead, it is a social product”(Lefebvre, 1991:30). Besides, people in social relations need to produce corresponding space to maintain its development and evolution. Space is full of social relations, and it has been endowed with human significance. Therefore, it is inevitably filled with political, economic, and ideological contradictions and struggles. It becomes a battlefield where various contradictory social forces are entangled. In *Invisible Man* and *The Hate U Give*, many conflicts exist between different races and genders. By listing the scenes in which the protagonists enter the white world, this chapter analyzes their interpersonal dilemmas and awakening process in social space.

2.1 The Interpersonal Dilemmas of African-American characters

In social space, racism is an ideology that is socially constructed to distinguish between groups of people who have similar characteristics. It is the act of dividing people into different social classes based on their race and thus treating them differently, which is constructed in social space. The white people around the

protagonists always attempt to physically and mentally control the African-American characters. In the first chapter of *Invisible Man*, the narrator remembers being invited to give a graduation speech at a gathering of the town's leading white citizens. He discovered that he was to provide part of the entertainment for a roomful of drunken white men as a contestant when he arrived there. Before giving his speech, he was forced to join the blindfolded boxing match with nine of his classmates. He naively assumed that he had some choices in whether to take part in the Battle Royal, but when he recalling on the incident, he realizes that he had no choice. He experienced a sense of betrayal in this social space. The entertainment also included an erotic dance by a naked blonde woman, which he and his classmates are forced to watch. The black men in front of the naked woman were not excited and pleased but anxious and depressed. It was a kind of scene they wanted to watch but were afraid to. The narrator said: "Some threatened us if we look and others if we did not" (Ellison, 2005:16). The scene made him suddenly have a strange sense of guilt and fear, with his teeth chattering and his knees shaking.

Some of the boys stood with lowered heads, trembling. I felt a wave of irrational guilt and fear. My teeth chattered, my skin turned to goose flesh, my knees knocked. Yet I was strongly attracted and looked in spite of myself. Had the price of looking been blindness, I would have looked (Ellison, 2005:19).

He is ashamed of his physical attraction to the naked woman, and he doesn't want his sexuality to be a source of entertainment for the white men. However, the naked woman's body delights the narrator, even though he realizes that she is being objectified in a room full of men.

The taboo of seeing white naked women is an abstract representation of unreachable space, and the fact is the boys were forced to go across to the other space. The contradiction of the narrator is that he wanted to see the naked woman but dared not to. It was evident that the white people's repression of African Americans' spirits resulted from their submission to spatial representation, whether or not they were aware of this.

The white men objectify the naked blonde woman and the black men by taking advantage of gender and racial inequalities. In addition, this vital scene also represents a distorted value system. As the description in the novel suggests: "the small American flag tattooed upon her belly" (Ellison, 2005:19), which represents the American dream of freedom, liberty and equality has been replaced by the pursuit of money, sex and lasting power.

The influence of on African Americans of the white's representation of space has been deeply ingrained for a long time. During the battle royal: "A brutal rite, a chaotic world where the rules that govern society do not apply. The white blindfolds symbolize the narrator's being "blinded by the white", "no longer seeing the truth", "Everyone fought hysterically" (Ellison, 2005:23). They were like animals performing in the circus. The white people were excited when the fight got heavier. It's even more brutal as the African-American boys are asked to collect the prize money from a pile of cash scattered on the carpet. Still, they found that there was electric wire under the rug. Then they scrambled to grab coins, were pushed by a drunken audience and constantly suffered from severe voltage shock. During this

battle, the representation of the enforced presents of the African-American boys in the white space is a discourse of power and order. The black boys were entirely controlled by it and reduced to the playthings of the white people. However, the narrator is aware that life is a struggle for survival at this time. In the speech, the narrator addressed, urging black Americans to be patient and accept “social responsibility” instead of “social equality.” The speech he made indicates the idea of Booker T. Washington's belief¹⁹ that black people may succeed via industry and education. Just as the narrator used the term “social equality” in his speech, the white men in the ballroom were furious. They forced him to change into “social responsibility.” And warned him that “we mean to do right by you, but you’ve got to know your place at all times” (Ellison, 2005:26). The white community of the town wanted to use their representation of space to completely control the African-American characters and prevent them from establishing their own private and concrete space. They didn’t give African Americans a chance to live as social equals but instead instilled in them the thought that there was only social responsibility for them, that they should know what to do and what not to do, and that they could do nothing of their own volition.

Another particular scene was the Golden Day, which was considered a gathering place of madmen. In the Golden Day, the roles of the key players have been reversed compared with the situation of Battle Royal, the black men drink whiskey and brutally beat Supercargo. The narrator wants to buy whiskey for Mr. Norton, but is drawn into the lives of the drunk veterans and forced to witness the attack on Supercargo. In the

¹⁹ In Washington’s most famous speech, the “Atlanta Compromise,” he states that, “In all things purely social we can be as separate as the five fingers, and yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress”(Singleton 159).

episode which had been mentioned before, the narrator and other black boys were forced to fight while blindfolded in the Battle Royal. He expected to give his speech, but is forced to take part in the cruel boxing match instead. In these two scenes, the narrator's behavior was due to his eagerness to please the white characters. He thought if he plays his own role in a right way, he would get rewards from the white community in the town.

There is another scene which related to the relations in the social space-- the paint factory, the symbolic space of the narrator was also swallowed up by the representation of the space of others. His job was to put ten drops of pure black liquid into a white paint called "Optic White" to make it whiter. His boss asked him to do as he was told without thinking about the final result, which reflected his control over the narrator's thoughts. In terms of "social responsibility," the narrator was deprived of the right to think, he resented being treated like a machine. Meanwhile, the boss was satisfied with his work and congratulated him: "White! It's the purest white that can be found. Nobody makes a paint any whiter. This batch is heading for a national monument" (Ellison, 2005:156). These ten drops of black liquid symbolize ten percent of African Americans, and the white paint represents the white Americans. The narrator took the black mixture into the white color and made it disappear without believing any trace. Therefore, the white color was the whitewash of American culture, which covered the African Americans and made them invisible, showing the dilemma of the African Americans.

This process of erosion of blackness is further shown when after the explosion in

the paint factory, the narrator woke up and found himself lying on the operating table of a hospital and overheard the dialogue between the two doctors. One of the doctors thought it would be an opportunity to surgically castrate him. To this doctor, the black men had superior sexual power and uncontrolled desire impulse, representing harm²⁰. The best choice to control African Americans was through physical castration. However, another doctor proposed a different way of therapy, which could “produce the results of a prefrontal lobotomy” (Ellison, 2005:183). It could reduce the rate of irritability and violent tendencies, which made people be tamed. The narrator and other African-Americans were represented as being psychopaths just some psychopaths, even criminals in the doctor’s eyes. As George Yancy argues in *Black Gazes, White Gazes*: “a black body, though defenseless, is still perceived as a ‘violent’ body” (Yancy, 2017:16). These examples from the novel show the power of the stereotypes of white society against black Americans. In these medical spaces, the narrator’s impulse to resist was not successful and he ended up under the complete control of the doctors.

Evident in his experience with Brotherhood, when the narrator first met the members at a party, a drunken white man asked him to sing a black spiritual and regarded him as a tool for fun, confirming that even with good intentions, black man was born to sing and dance represented another stereotype of African Americans. Then the narrator learned that the Brotherhood was not an organization to defend all

²⁰ Medical castration took place in 32 states throughout the 20th century in the United States. It used as a methods of controlling immigrants and people of color, etc. The castration is not only a harm to them, but also an idea let make sure they do not have children in order to eliminate the whole community.

people, and for them he was only a machine as he had been.

The sense of being the resource that could be used was clearly expressed by Brother Jack told him: “you were not hired to think, but a human being to talk” (Ellison, 2005:363). The narrator finally was deprived of the right to think in Brotherhood and became a machine controlled by the organization. There was no doubt that the white people in the novel not only tortured the African-American characters physically but also restrained them from thinking, which was more terrible. African-American characters were struggling to survive, and it was difficult for them to establish their own space within the space of the white Americans.

The two novels do not simplify the concept of African-American identity, showing that there were contradictions among the groups of the characters they portrayed in the novels. For example, as “a leader of his people,” Bledsoe had a good salary and a beautiful white wife. Meanwhile, he also had admirers like the narrator. In addition, he was more influential than most white people in that part of South society. People respect him a lot because of the status and power he has. Bledsoe was not only the school president but also a political leader who let the white people know about their trouble. He did so for mainstream authorities could hear their voices. Therefore, he became a father figure revered by his fellow countrymen.

However, Bledsoe didn't gain any benefit and help for African-American characters and even treated them more cruelly than the white people. To the narrator's disappointment, Bledsoe had been assimilated by the white people and became a “hypocritical man with two-faced nature.” He told the narrator: “I've made my place

in it, and I'll have every Negro in the country hanging on tree limbs by morning if it means staying where I am" (Ellison,2005:79).

When the narrator lets Norton see Trueblood and understand his story, Bledsoe argues that it dishonors African-American characters and might even affect his status, so he relentlessly expelled the young man from the campus. In addition, he wrote seven letters of recommendation for the narrator to help him find jobs in New York, but these letters were the ones that drove him to a dead end. Bledsoe was also a pathetic character, he had to submit to the white order to maintain his status, looked at all challenges from the perspective of the white and obeyed their orders. To a certain extent, he was also controlled by the white's representation and lost his true self without ever constructing his own symbolic space. Still, he was more adept at pretending than the narrator, so he could better adapt to society.

The conflict among the African-American characters was also reflected in the fight of the Battle Royal in *Invisible Man*. When the town's leading white citizens ordered ten African-American boys to cover their eyes and fight each other, the boys did not realize that they should be allies and not enemies. They fought hard, and one boy even wanted to tear another boy "limb from limb" (Ellison, 2005:14). At last, the narrator decided to discuss a strategy with another strong man and made him pretend to be knocked out by the narrator, and the final bonus belonged to him. However, the strong man didn't appreciate it and decided to break his spine. Therefore, the disunity among the African-American characters was also a cause of their dilemma.

The evidence of access to the social environment of whites can be found in *The*

Hate U Give, being in a classy school of white people, Starr has experienced different unfair treatments in her social relations with the classmates because of her background. This sense of separation makes her become “code-switching” and moving between multiple social identities in two different social spaces: The identity who openly loves her community, and another identity who avoids hip-hop slang to lay low at her predominantly white private school. “At school, she tends to speak and act differently from her actual self at Garden Heights” (Thomas, 2017:45).

Being two different people is so exhausting I’ve taught myself to speak with two different voices and only say certain things around certain people. I’ve mastered it. As much as I say I don’t have to choose which Starr I am with Chris, maybe without realizing it, I have to an extent. Part of me feels like I can’t exist around people like him.(Thomas, 2017:301)

Compared with the racial discrimination in *Invisible Man*, it also can be found in the novel *The Hate U Give*, According to Vaught: “Institutional racism refers to the system, political outset, practices, policies and behaviors that specifically disadvantage a particular racial group” (Vaught, 2014:87). Both of the police and media play the roles of oppressors. The black male teenager, Khalil, was pulled over by a white police officer and shot dead in the street. However, the media has turn against Khalil describing him as a “threatening black man”, “a drug dealer.” That’s how they see him. It doesn’t matter that he’s suspected of doing it. “ ‘Drug dealer’ is louder than ‘suspected’ ever will be” (Thomas, 2017:113).

In addition to the racial problems in social relations in *The Hate U Give*, Starr has an identity conflict with her father figures: Her father Maverick and the police

Uncle Carlos. They have different perspectives on “authentic blackness.” Maverick runs a small grocery store in Garden Heights to serve the community, he was a member of the King Lords gang and had a dark past. After coming out of jail, he devotes himself entirely to his family and neighborhood. Maverick always teaches Starr by inspiring her on Black Power philosophy to let her be proud of being black. He organizes the neighbors to mediate the response to the grand jury to protect themselves instead of lying to the police. According to the story he tells, Maverick refused to take his family to a safer neighborhood when the Black Power Movement begins. This is because he believes they could change their black community from the inside through his devotion to his ideals. In contrast, Uncle Carlos is a police officer who assimilates into the white community. He serves as a father figure in Starr’s life while Maverick is in prison, which is one reason why Maverick is always jealous of Carlos. The difference between Carlos and Maverick is that he still believes he can support black communities by using white organizations like the police force to fight against gang violence. The argument between Maverick and Carlos makes it challenging for Starr to reconcile her two different worlds and find her self-identity.

2.2 The Oppression and Self-Awakening in Social Relations

Ras played a crucial part and was frequently featured in *Invisible Man*. He was a preacher who said, “He is the crazy man who proclaims himself a black nationalist” (Ellison,2005:227). Ras never believed that the white would provide them with a

bright road and never rely on them. Although the white occupied the dominant status of American society, he never intended to give up his dignity to please white people. Instead of that, he always chooses to fight against them and wants to create a new kind of “space” that consists of African Americans. In some people’s eyes, he “goes wild” when he sees African-American characters and white people together. To some extent, he was a clear-minded representative who did not believe the white people initially. But there were some African-American characters who lived in the white people’s space, and they did not abandon their black identities. The representative character in the novel was Brother Tarp, he was also a member of the Brotherhood. After the narrator discovered the talent to give a speech and joined the Brotherhood, he got a rapid promotion in the organization. Unlike Brother Tobitt and Brother Wrestrum, not only did Brother Tarp have no hatred but also no jealousy. Instead, when the narrator received an unstamped threatening letter and was distressed, Brother Tarp enlightened and encouraged the narrator like an elder. He told the narrator about his experience in the past.

He suggested the young black boy does not have to worry, regardless of what others say, to fight for freedom. Tarp said “no” to a white man who wanted to take something from him. As a result, he was imprisoned for nineteen years, six months, and two days, and finally, he lost his land and family. But in prison, Tarp never gave up his determination to pursue freedom. Therefore, Tarp’s foot chain not only symbolized the deprivation of liberty but also became a sign of his resistance. When Brother Tarp gives the chain to the narrator, the narrator realizes that this is not just a

simple object but a heritage of black culture.

I neither wanted it nor knew what to do with it, although there was no question of keeping it for no reason other than that. I felt that Brother Tarp's gesture in offering it was of some deeply felt significance which I was compelled to respect. Like a man passing on to his son his own father's watch, the man is passing on to his son his own father's watch, which the son accepted not because he wanted the old-fashioned timepiece for itself. This because of overtones of unstated seriousness and solemnity of the paternal gesture which once joined him with ancestors...(Ellison, 2005:390)

From reading this quotation, the narrator thinks that the chain is as meaningful as the father passing the inherited watch from the ancestor to the son, that is, to connect himself with the ancestor's past. The chain allowed the narrator to remember the history of the humiliation of enslaved Black people. It also serves as a symbol that all blacks are uniting in pursuit of freedom. However, Brother Tarp lived in the white people's circle and repressed the white people's representation of space. He was not assimilated by the white people acting by their values, he had his own rules of behavior.

In contrast, Brother Clifton is another example of a black man in the novel. He believed in white people in that part of the North at the beginning, was loyal to the Brotherhood, and thought that they could get a big success with them. Although Ras repeatedly persuaded him to leave the Brotherhood and join their black group, Brother Clifton was unmoved. After Clifton dropped out of the Brotherhood, he began selling Sambo dolls on the street. The Sambo doll dates back to the time of American slavery. It represents a docile, loyal and lazy black slave. These "empty-headed" Sambo dolls can dance automatically because an "invisible string" is behind them. As long as

Clifton holds that string tightly, it can dance automatically. By describing Sambo dolls, Ellison reveals that the narrator and all African-American characters' lives like Sambo dolls are manipulated, controlled, and used by white people and their thoughts.

In the environment where racial discrimination was deeply rooted at that time, even if the black had a strong force. They could not resist the pressure from society, politics, and customary bias. The control of these prejudices is usually invisible and ubiquitous, just like manipulating the string behind the Sambo dolls they can't get rid of no matter how hard they struggle. The narrator did not understand why Clifton withdrew from the Brotherhood. But Clifton's behavior meant that he was just like the Sambo doll, which was at the mercy of the white people. Now, he became awakened and did not want to be controlled by the white people anymore.

The veteran in the Golden Day is another clear-headed black man in the novel. He was devoted to saving lives and injuries with medical knowledge. Still, because he saved a life, ten masked people ruthlessly whipped him. From beginning to end, he could discover the relationship between the narrator and the Mr. Norton. When the narrator brought Mr. Norton to the Golden Day, the veteran gave him a medical treatment for his injury, his insight could be seen in their dialogue. He said to Mr. Norton: "to you he is a mark on the score-card of your achievement, a thing and not a man; a child, or even less- a black amorphous thing. And you, for all your power, are not a man to him, but a God, a force-" (Ellison, 2005:90).

In *Invisible Man*, Hospitals and schools were the product of the white people's representation of space. In a white man's space, the black should act by the white

people's order and be respectful to them. However, the help to the black was just a big lie, the "savior" like Mr. Norton. It was just an illusion as the white's patronage to the black was just another means of oppression and control of them. When the narrator was on the bus to find a job in New York, the veteran met him again and said to him, "New York! That's not a place, it's a dream. When I was your age, it was Chicago. Now all the little black boys run away to New York. Out of the fire into the melting pot" (Ellison, 2005:152).

When the veteran was a young black boy, he also dreamed of making some achievements in the big cities and believed in African Americans. However, his experience proved that the so-called big city did not have a place or chance for the black. The white and the black were two different groups, so the differential space between them existed objectively. The veteran understood the irreconcilable contradiction between them, so what he wanted to do was not affected by the white people's representation of space, and he tried to construct his own representational and different space.

Mr. Trueblood was also a black man who was willing to be himself. He made his daughter pregnant, which caused the African-American people in that town to discriminate against him and keep him away from him. The African-American characters thought that the thing he had done degraded the image of the black. However, Mr. Trueblood was not ruined by the representation of space of others' depreciation. He refused to "hide behind the cowardly deceptions that cloak sin; he faces the truth within himself" (Frailberg, 1961:659). He did not deliberately rape his

daughter but made a dream and mistook her for a white woman. He accepted and tolerated his wife's anger and beating after the scandal. He finally agreed to leave home at first but returned in the face of his wife's ouster because he had to take responsibility for his family. The African-American characters did not forgive his sense of responsibility and courage to speak for himself. Still, he got the respect of the white.

The white people tried to help him as much as possible and were willing to pay for their family to move to a better place whenever needed. In that situation, people are easy to lose themselves. Still, Mr. Trueblood was not influenced and controlled by others' ideologies, nor did he deliberately cater to others to please them. He said to himself: "I ain't nobody but myself" (Ellison, 2005:63). His belief in self-discrimination had won respect and help of the white people. This is also a typical representative of the awakening of black self-consciousness.

There is a generally accepted view that men are superior to women and that women should obey men's orders in the patriarchal society. In addition, not all women are willing to be at the bottom status of society. Some of them do not want to be oppressed and controlled by the white mainstream society. In that situation, they have to resist the absolute dominance of men. In the novel's prologue, the narrator encounters an older woman singing the spiritual in his illusion. She told the narrator that the master promised to give her and her children freedom, but he never fulfilled his promise. The pursue and desire for space made her determined to kill her husband and resist the authority of the patriarchal ideology. The older woman took practical

actions for her freedom and got rid of her husband's oppression and control.

As a representative of a strong black woman who survives in a violent city by relying on her inner energies, Mary Rambo was a survivor of the courage and dignity of a black woman. She did everything she can for the narrator to be his guide. Mary never asked the narrator for money, although she was short for money, and she even did not rely on any man and seldom asked others for help. When the narrator proposed to pay her money for the rent, her first reaction is to reject. It also showed her financial independence on the other and her kindness to him. Even if Mary lived in New York, the city was controlled by the white representation of space. She still has an independent personality and thought and has not betrayed her race. Mary told the narrator, "Don't let this Harlem git you. I'm in New York, but New York ain't in me, understand what I mean? Don't git corrupted" (Ellison, 139).

In addition, not all white people discriminated against African-American characters in the novel. Some awakening white people were willing to help the black. For example, Young Mr. Emerson was a typical awakening white man. When he noticed the narrator's recommendation letter, which Mr. Bledsoe wrote. He then realized that Bledsoe want to drive the young black man into a desperate situation and did not let him go back to the campus. However, the narrator was still in the dark about Bledsoe's lies and seemed very grateful to Bledsoe for his "help ." Emerson did not follow Bledsoe's advice, he didn't have any prejudice against the narrator and asked him if he was willing to study in another school.

At last, Emerson had to tell him the whole truth and said, "to help you, I must

disillusion you...” (Ellison, 2005:187). After reading the letter, the narrator had to give up the false image and ideas so that he could see how cruel the reality was. Emerson suggested he stay here “because there is so much you could do here where there is more freedom” (Ellison, 2005:188). When the narrator got a massive attack on the recommendation letter, Emerson invited him to be his valet to go to the party, but the narrator refused. Then Emerson recommended he go to work in a paint factory. Judging from his series of actions toward the narrator, young Emerson did not impose the inherent representation of white superiority and black inferiority on the narrator. Still, he patiently enlightened him to recognize the cruelty of the world. It is worth comparing Bledsoe and Emerson, the first tried to ruin the narrator’s future for the benefit of the school. Emerson helped him find another way to live for the narrator as a white man and gave him hope when he was in a desperate situation.

Conclusion

Social space includes the relations and communications between the people in communities. This chapter analyzed the interactions among African-American protagonists and white characters in the two novels by giving examples of the specific scenes. In *Invisible Man*, the narrator had been suffering from the oppression brought by multiple social relationships. In the town of the South, he suffered the insult in the Battle Royal and the violence which forced to get involved in of the Golden Day. After moving to the North, he experienced the oppression of the boss of the paint

factory and the risk of being castration. Until he joined in the Brotherhood, which was the place made he feel a sense of belonging, he found that he was be used as a tool for the people in the group. Despite these social experiences that cause the narrator to feel pain and betrayal, this chapter simultaneously listed several characters, including African-American characters in the South and the North, Mr. Emerson and female characters who have positively contributed to his awakening of self-awareness.

In *The Hate U Give*, the confusing transformation in two different social spaces reflects the social dilemma to the protagonist, Starr. The constant switching of personality in social relationships makes her keep searching for her self-identity. In this case, Chris, Starr's white boyfriend, acted as a bridge between her two separate identities. To behave more freely, the narrator and Starr had to insist on establishing their own spaces without being assimilated by white world.

III. African-American Identities' Dilemmas and Awakenings in Mental Space

Introduction

Mental space refers to the inner space of characters. If space combines the external and internal worlds, physical and social space can be regarded as the outer world. In contrast, mental space is categorized as the inner world. The changes in physical and social space can drive changes in the mental space of characters. As Lefebvre said, "space is not only a platform for the steady development of social relations but also a dynamic process of practice" (Lefebvre, 1991:225). Therefore, mental space is interlinked with physical and social space, which is particularly significant for constructing narrative and social space in novels. The construction of mental space is realized using monologue, dream, memory, stream of consciousness, etc. In *Invisible Man*, it can be observed that the narrator's mental reconstruction is guided by his grandfather's advice and his questioning of the basis of his recommendations. As for the novel *The Hate U Give*, the traumatic mental feelings of the protagonist Starr can be summarized.

3.1 The Influence of the Grandfather's Advice

The narrator's grandfather appears in the novel only through his memories, and he signifies the ghosts of slavery, assuming the role of spiritual guide. In *Invisible Man*, the narrator's grandfather had been a person who "stayed in their place and worked hard" (Ellison, 2005:11). He compared life to war. He called the young black

man's father to his side and said he had been a traitor all his born days, a spy in the enemy's country before his death.

He asked him to tell the children to “live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yeses. undermine with grins, agree on 'em to death and destruction, let 'em swollen you till they vomit or bust wide open” (Ellison, 2005:13). The narrator didn't know the meaning of his grandfather's deathbed revelation. In his mind, his grandfather had always been a silent old man, but before his death, he described that he had described himself. These words had always played an essential part in the narrator's mental aspect for a long time.

According to Welwood, mental space “is a field of energy that we create around ourselves, constantly changing and rearranging itself around us in ever different forms” (Welwood, 1977:102). The narrator's attitude towards his grandfather's last words changed from misconstruction to suspicion and deep comprehension in the end. In the beginning, he only understood the literal meaning of the words. He constructed a mental space where he was meek and always followed the “yea-saying” strategy in the face of the white people.

On the other hand, Booker T. Washington was the man he admired. In his first speech in the battle royal which took place in the beginning of the novel, he said that he wanted to be as good as Washington or better than him, thinking that “humility was the secret, indeed, the very essence of progress” (Ellison, 1952:12). In other words, he says that humility was the way to progress and success. The grandfather epitomized

the kind of humble, subservient black man often referred to as an “Uncle Tom²¹.” Although he did not believe in this statement, he thought it would work. Therefore, he participated in the battle royal with this “humble” attitude. When the narrator thought that he would lose the battle, he took the initiative to surrender. He was still full of blood during the speech, but that did not prevent him from completing it. After addressing the speech, he used his humility to earn a scholarship certificate and a calfskin briefcase. When he had some achievements, his grandfather’s words were like a curse and always let him down. “The old man's words were like a curse” (Ellison, 2005:14). “I even felt safe from grandfather, whose deathbed curse usually spoiled my triumphs” (Ellison, 2005:26). His Grandfather’s dull and swarthy peasant face had always attracted him so much. The narrator felt that his grandfather’s eyes always followed him throughout his painful and arduous journey, which constantly influenced his mental space.

The narrator dreamed that his grandfather took him to the circus one night, and he was puzzled about why the older man refused to laugh no matter what the clown did. The clown’s action was associated with his grandfather’s last words. Just like clowns needed exaggerated makeup when they performed to the audience, grandfather’s yea-saying strategy also needed a mask to perform in front of the white. As Ellison said, “masking is a play upon possibility...and the motives behind the mask are as numerous as the ambiguities the mask conceals” (Ellison, 1964:68).

At that time, the narrator believed in the mask and didn’t understand what was

²¹ The title character of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, is a derogatory epithet for an exceedingly subservient person or house black man, particularly one aware of their lower-class racial status.

hidden behind it. He saw neither the ambiguity of the mask nor its possibility. Also, after he won the briefcase from the battle, he dreamed that the grandfather asked him to open the briefcase and read the letters inside. The narrator opened one of the letters in the bag and he read: "Keep This Nigger-Boy Running." The theme of "running-man" is an essential motif in African-American literature, tracing its roots to the slave narrative. But unlike enslaved African characters, often forced to run for their lives, the narrator begins running and is kept running by someone who seems to impact his own life significantly. The action of "running" goes through the narrator's entire life. The envelopes were like a "mask." On the surface, the narrator won the scholarship and a calfskin briefcase, bringing him to the white world's gate. However, behind the "mask" was the white man taking advantage of him.

Meanwhile, the calfskin also highlights the emphasis on skin. It underscores the relationship between the calf's fate and the narrator's potential ending as one who is about to be sacrificed on the altar of racism. The briefcase travels with the narrator throughout the novel, accumulating the signs of his past. At the end of the novel, the narrator is forced to burn the content of the briefcase to light a fire in the darkness. It means that the narrator must be reckoned with the past to move forward into the future. Unfortunately, the narrator hadn't realize initially the potential significance of the dream about his grandfather as he was immersed in the vision of college life. At that time the narrator was attending college and meeting different people always remembering with his grandfather's confusing words. Bledsoe and Trueblood, for example, were two people who acted according to his grandfather's advice and always

agreed with the white characters. Bledsoe always played the role of an excellent black flatterer in front of the white people without considering the benefits of his compatriots. He also possessed power. He had a high status among African Americans, and even some white people had to respect him. As for Bledsoe, he was not wholly obedient to the white and lost himself. As he told the narrator, “The only ones I even pretend to please are big white folk, and even those I control more than they control me. This is a robust set-up, son, and I’m at the controls” (Ellison, 2005:111). Bledsoe’s ideas were shaped by the power of white society. He had been once an idealistic young man like the narrator who believed in the Founder’s dream. His experiences as a black man in a racist white society so distorted his vision of what his life could be that he can no longer see the dream. He could not reconcile things as they were with how they were supposed to be. Bledsoe learned how to play the game at the expense of killing his soul and betraying his people to survive. According to Lefebvre, “an absolute knowledge can construct a mental space for itself, the connections between signs, words, things, and concepts not differing from each other in any fundamental manner” (Lefebvre, 1991:33).

The space of discourse constructed the mental space. Language can reflect the way people describe the world, but it also has an impact on shaping the world. African-American characters in the novel knew that the white people’s absolute power over speech made them unable to fight directly. Hence, the mask was the best disguise. In other words, Bledsoe thought he was not controlled by the white people. In a sense, he owned and use them.

Trueblood's image also catered to the stereotype of the white towards the black who were "sexual monsters." Before becoming the subject of vicious gossip, he was known as a hard worker and blues singer. His singing enables him to survive his ordeal by accepting responsibility for his behavior and praying for forgiveness. After Trueblood returns to his family, he tries to seek their forgiveness. He works to make the best of the tragic situation. He also refuses to allow his wife and daughter to obtain abortions to relieve his guilt. His priority is taking care of the family, not seeking the approval of a judgmental community. Trueblood is a wise man who understands the workings of the white power structure, manipulating it to his advantage. After receiving his eviction notice from the college, he refuses to leave his home.

Trueblood knows he has no chance of openly challenging Bledsoe. He asks his boss, Mr. Buchanan, to write a letter to Sheriff Barbour to describe his living situation. Sheriff reward Trueblood with food, drink, and tobacco after knowing his story. Therefore, Trueblood realizes he can use his experience to his advantage and get others' sympathy. In other words, the pain and suffering of Trueblood is a source of entertainment for the white men. By telling his story to others, Trueblood learns to profit from his pain to improve his family's living conditions. It shows Bledsoe and Trueblood got some benefits in the end due to their obedience to the white men. But the narrator only saw the appearance and had always acted in terms of his grandfather's yea-saying strategy.

Then the narrator met an old veteran at the Golden Day. It also reminded him of

his grandfather many times. The veteran was a weak, powerless person who influential people had persecuted. Because of his candid speech, brutal honesty, and refusal to act subserviently toward whites, he is considered dangerous and is transferred to St. Elizabeth's Hospital, a mental institution in Washington, D.C. He told the narrator:

Look beneath the surface. Come out of the fog, young man. And remember, you don't have to be a fool to succeed. Play the game, but don't believe in it; that much you owe yourself. Even if it lands you in a strait jacket or a padded cell, learn how it operates, learn how you operate (Ellison, 2005:119).

Just like the mask that the grandfather indicated, the old vet asked the narrator to learn to observe things beneath the surface, then he would discover that "the world is a possibility," but only if others did not control him could he be his "own father" (Ellison, 2005:121). The veteran confessed that he was a clown more than a fool because he did not lose himself and was good at observing what was behind the mask. As for the narrator, he could not become a clown at that time but a fool. This is because he neither understood his grandfather's words nor the meaning of the old vet's advice about surviving in New York, and he only paid attention to the surface of things. He still believed that as long as he catered to the white and obeyed them, he would achieve something after going to New York. However, his mental space began to be reconstructed when he arrived in New York and experienced some particular incidents.

One of the mental reconstructions happened when the narrator decided to leave Mary's house and join the Brotherhood. He occasionally discovered Mary's

coin-filled, cast-iron bank in the shape of “a very black, red-lipped, and wide-mouthed Negro.” He found out they were obscene and repulsive. If one put a coin in the black man’s hand and pressed the lever on his back, he would raise his arm and pop the cash into his laughing mouth. Mary’s bank is like a grossly distorted caricature of the narrator because he lacks a positive self-image. The act of banging the bank means the narrator attempted to get rid of himself of his old identity in preparation for his induction into the Brotherhood. Although the young narrator followed his grandfather’s yea-saying strategy and always obeyed the orders of the Brotherhood, he did not realize that he was just like the bank, being manipulated at will. At last, Tod Clifton, assigned as Harlem’s Youth Leader, made the narrator realize how foolish he was to always say yes to the Brotherhood.

Like the veteran, Clifton was also a wise man who could observe the essence of things through superficial phenomena. The narrator considers Clifton a competitor at the beginning. Still, then he realizes that Clifton is not interested in political power. The real objection of Clifton is to help the youth of Harlem break out of their limited reality and discover their unlimited potential. However, the truth is always cruel. Tod Clifton is devastated by the violence and hatred surrounding him and is pushed over the edge. When Ras accuses him of selling his people, he realizes he has sold out to the Brotherhood. Unable to reconcile the romantic vision with his reality and unable to compromise his ideals, he gives up. He peddles racist Sambo dolls on the street without permission, implying that his situation in the Brotherhood was as pathetic as the Sambo doll he was selling. Clifton chose suicide rather than life without hope and

dignity. The dolls' writhing act is a grotesque play on the stereotype of African sensuality. The Sambo doll also represents the servility of black entertainers for white masters.

The death of Clifton and the narrator's experience holding a funeral for Clifton made him realize something. He decided that he was no longer willing to be a doll to be played with. Although the narrator did not yet understand the deep meaning of his grandfather's last words before death, he decided to regard them as a weapon and put them into practice.

I didn't know what my grandfather had meant, but I was ready to test his advice. I'd overcome them with yeses, undermine them with grins, I'd agree them to death and destruction. Yes, and I'd let them swallow me until they vomited or burst wide open. I'd yes them till they puked and rolled in it (Ellison, 2005:394).

Before, the narrator was utterly obedient to white people, he had lost his identity. However, now he began to understand his grandfather's words. He learned to act with a "mask" and slowly found himself.

The established 'culture' reaps a double benefit from this manoeuvre: in the first place, the impression is given that the truth is tolerated, or even promoted, by that 'culture'; secondly, a multitude of small events occur within this mental space which can be exploited for useful or polemical ends (Lefebvre, 1991:6).

According to Lefebvre, many events changed the narrator's mental space. He began to use the new strategy to his advantage. In the beginning, the narrator was very satisfied with the effect of this new strategy. He made up all kinds of fake news that the white people wanted to know, which made them quite happy and excited. And he

was pleased with the riots initiated by his people in the Harlem area. Unfortunately, the narrator soon discovered this was a conspiracy planned by the Brotherhood. “It was not suicide, but murder. The committee had planned it. And I had helped, had been a tool. A tool just at the very moment I had thought myself free” (Ellison, 2005:429). The narrator thought he had cheated the Brotherhood, but he did not expect that they still used him. He unconsciously became an accomplice in this murder.

A particular riot further changed the narrator’s mental space since during it, he runs into a character who wears dark-lensed glasses named Rinehart, who is “the trickster.” He represents a new survival strategy for the future. Like his grandfather’s last words, Rinehart’s identity was also elusive. According to Ellison, “Rinehart’s role is a means of applying, in yet another form, his grandfather’s cryptic advice” (Ellison, 2005:71). Rinehart had many identities with multiple masks, and no one knew his real identity. He can be a gambler, a numbers man, a pimp, or a preacher and easily shift among all of his roles. William Goede believes Rinehart is “the ultimate incarnation of the grandfather’s political theory” (Goede, 1969:499). Each of Rinehart’s identities says yes to others. He is at ease in all aspects of society, making it easy for him to realize the infinite possibility theory that the veteran mentioned.

However, Rinehart is Ellison’s “name for the personification of chaos” (Ellison, 2005:181). Rinehart represents the fluidity and charlatanism of the black community in Harlem. He is a reminder of the open possibilities outside strictly prescribed visions of the world, he shifts among a gambler, a numbers man and even a preacher with

ease. So Rinehart's example could not be considered the best answer to the grandfather's last words.

The narrator's mental space had therefore changed. He realized that his problem was that he had been trying to follow the path of others after experiencing living with many experiences and meeting different people. In the same way, people called him by all kinds of names, he got a new name and a new identity after he joined the Brotherhood, but no one listened to how he called himself. In addition, over the years, he had regarded the opinions of others as his own but had no ideas. In other words, he has always been controlled by white people's thoughts, whether on campus or in society. He even began to doubt what his grandfather said: "my grandfather had been wrong about yessing them to death and destruction or else things had changed too much since his day" (Ellison, 2005:438).

Because he discovered that his grandfather's words -- "yea-saying" didn't help him achieve something but became a tool for others. He had to follow their path to please them. He became "ill of affirmation, of saying 'yes' against the nay-saying of my stomach - not to mention my brain" (Ellison, 2005:444). In the underground as he admitted: "my mind revolved again and again back to my grandfather" (Ellison, 2005:445). By that time he believed that his grandfather's words may hide a deep meaning that he had not yet discovered.

The underground is the place where his mental space was finally constructed. Because he transferred from the external space to the internal and private space, he could re-identify himself without being influenced by others in the outside world. He

decided to rethink his grandfather's advice. Finally, he realized that the yea-saying strategy that his grandfather mentioned was to continue fighting against the white man, not by direct confrontation, but by living in close contact with them, and getting accepted as members by masking and acting meek, and then undermine it gradually. The black ancestors experienced white people's oppression but also had much cultural wealth.

According to Ellison, "for better or worse, whatever there is of value in Negro life is an American heritage, and as such, it must be preserved" (Ellison, 2005:305). The most important thing for the African Americans was that they needed to recognize, accept, and pass it on no matter their ancestors' heritage. The ancestors' experience was of great value "it conditions him to deal with his life and himself. "He must live it and try consciously to grasp its complexity until he can change it" (Ellison, 2005:40).

In the beginning, the narrator felt ashamed of his black identity. He wanted to eliminate his association with his race so that he lost himself, but he also couldn't integrate into the white circle. Therefore, if a black man wants to remain himself, he should not abandon his cultural customs but face his black identity bravely. He needs to confirm the ideal of social democracy, African-American characters should not escape but unite so that there would be hope to eliminate social injustice and gain more rights for their own life. It is vital that fighting for the rights of their race does not mean hostility toward other races, because they "were linked to all the others in the loud, clamoring semi-visible world" (Ellison, 2005:68). They weren't apart from

them. Finally, he had a new interpretation of his grandfather's last words.

As he no longer obeys the white people and works hard, he hopes to achieve something. He also realized that a man shouldn't accept any other view of life. A man must be himself rather than others, and the real victory was making themselves individuals. Determined to get rid of his past, he is nevertheless compelled to come to terms with his past before he can handle his present and future.

3.2 The Relationship between the Narrator and Southern Culture

In the novel *Invisible Man*, the narrator always wants to keep a distance from everything related to black identity. He felt he was superior to the others and did not want to be with other black men. After arriving in New York, he tried to keep himself from thinking about everything related to his hometown. Still, after the experience in the city, his attitude to Southern culture gradually changed.

When Strachan discussing the relationship between objects and movement, he argues that "the moving objects, including the characters, acquire new sharps as a result of the movement" (Strachan, 1991:97). The narrator's mental space got reconstructed as he moved. He did not like the original African-American characters and aimed to abandon black culture while worshiping everything related to the white. He was ordered to join in the fight with nine other black boys. Still, he was repulsive in his heart because he asserted that these black boys were rude and that participating with them could undermine his dignity. On the bus to New York, the narrator met the veteran of the Golden Day. The veteran tried to make the young man recognize the

cruel reality. "...the white folks, authority, the gods, fate, circumstances- the force that pulls your strings until you refuse to be pulled anymore" (Ellison, 2005:154). But these words do not affect the narrator's mental space. The conversation with the veteran on the bus illustrates his continuing blindness to events around him. At the same time, the veteran recalls his adventures in Chicago and the exciting things the narrator has to look forward to.

The narrator never stops to ask the veteran why he returned to the South, nor does he make any conscious connections between the vet's transfer to Washington. Instead, he worries that the veteran may become violent. He disdains to sit with him and Crenshaw, but there were no other spare places because the African-American characters were only allowed to sit in the last row of the bus. At that time, he was unwilling to admit his black identity because he thought African Americans were inferior and often did something shameful. He recalled Tim Trueblood's scandalous story all the time. The narrator felt it was a humiliation for his African-American identity, so he did not want Mr. Norton to hear Trueblood tell his story. After he returns to Men's House, he concludes that Harlem is a fictional city of American dreams where none of the old rules seem to apply. The first instinct is to pick up the Gideon Bible on his nightstand. Still, he rejects that notion because religion reminds him of his hometown. To leave the sense of homesickness, he finally decides to read letters.

In addition, the narrator changes himself in various aspects to cater to the white characters. He even tried to abandon the southern accent when he arrived in New York.

He believed that the vulgar tone of the South did not appeal to the white people. And what he had to do was to make the white people satisfied, so he tried to speak with a gentle northern accent instead of using a native accent. "Of course, you couldn't speak that way in the South, the white folks wouldn't like it, and the Negroes would say that you were putting on" (Ellison, 2005:164). When the narrator enters a grocery store, he is deeply attracted by the smell of the smoked pork because the taste is similar to his hometown food, and he adores it. But he doesn't order the food he liked to avoid his southern identity.

Instead of the hometown food, he chose the northern foods of orange juice, toast and coffee. It is obvious that the narrator was ashamed of his southern culture and customs and was also proud that he did not choose pork chop and cereal, thinking that such a restrained behavior would help him become more sophisticated. "it was an act of discipline, a sign of the change that was coming over me and which would return me to college a more experienced man" (Ellison, 2005:178). He also told himself that he had to be careful, not to speak too much like a Southern black man. "The vaguer you told things, the better" (Ellison, 2005:178). His rejection and aversion to his black identity at that time can be seen.

When the narrator is walking on the road, he compares how his different feelings about his hometown and New York for the first time. In his perspective, people in the South are others from here. People in New York were used to wearing masks; even though they were very disdainful in heart, they could still behave kindly on the surface. "The thing to do, I thought with a smile, was to give them hints that whatever

you did or said was weighed with broad and mysterious meanings that lay just beneath the surface. They'd loved that" (Ellison, 2005:178). Although their behavior made the narrator uncomfortable, he didn't find the white people's masks, and his mental space didn't change. However, the contact with the white world reconstructed the narrator's mental space, and he began to change his attitude toward his hometown. When he found the truth about the seven recommendation letters, he finally realized the ugly face under Bledsoe's surface when it became obvious how Bledsoe had lied about his appreciation for him.

After the narrator experiences life in the painting factory and hospital, he begins to doubt his identity. "Who was I? How had I come to be" (Ellison, 2005:286)? He gradually realizes that chasing his dream and achieving something here was difficult. However, the narrator almost used up his money; winter began to come, and a feeling of homesickness overcame him. He screamed in his heart, "I longed for home." His inner emotion changed, and he no longer excessively rejected black culture but even began to miss his hometown. Later, the taste of his hometown food further enrich his mental space and evoke pleasant memories of his hometown.

When the narrator is walking on the street, the smell of baking yams comes to him from afar and he feels a deep nostalgia. He was suddenly invaded by the memory of eating this in school and was "suddenly overcome by an intense feeling of freedom" while dining on the road. That feeling made him exhilarated. "I no longer had to worry about who saw me or what was proper" (Ellison, 2005:267) Before, he never

dared to face the black food he liked. But now, he changed his mind. Instead of suppressing himself, he felt that the baking yam tasted sweeter. This shift indicated that his attitude towards southern culture was gradually changing. The narrator no longer blindly worshiped others and degraded himself in addition to recognizing hometown food. Pondering the link between food and the back identity, he imagines exposing Bledsoe as “a shameless chitterling²² Eater,” then runs back to the vendor and buys two more yams but finds that the last one is frostbitten. He remembered that Mr. Bledsoe liked to eat chitterlings, but he could only eat them secretly when no one was around him. The narrator imagined that if he told this hobby of Bledsoe to the public, Bledsoe’s social status would be lost, and the weekly newspaper would attack him accordingly. It means the quality of African Americans at that time was related to whether he successfully got rid of the traditional habits of them. But for now, he no longer regarded Bledsoe as a model and would not be ashamed of enjoying the traditional American Southern food. He said: “I am what I am!” and “I yam what I am” (Ellison,2005:266)! The narrator’s exclamation represents the wordplay of Ellison based on Popeye²³, which is a part of the narrator’s Southern culture. He also regarded yams as his birthmark. When he ate the yams, although he had not entirely accepted it, he asked himself: “What and how much had I lost trying to do only what was expected of me instead of what I wished to do” (Ellison,2005:266)? He finally realized how “stupid” he was before, and he had been suppressing himself and

²² Chitterlings, which are the small intestines of domestic animals. They may also be filled with a forcemeat to make sausage that is the traditional American Southern food.

²³ Popeye the Sailor Man is an American cartoon character created by Elzie Crisler. It first appeared in 1929. The character in the comic can get superpower after eating vegetable spinach. In *Invisible man*, the unnamed narrator makes the exclamation of Popeye: “I yam what I am” as a way of proclaiming his true Southern Black American identity.

avoiding the things with black Southern culture. Compared with the refusal to order the exceptional pork chops, grits, eggs, and coffee, the change of the attitude to Southern food means that the narrator has overcome his shame on being identified as a Southern black man, which marks a huge turning point in his quest for identity. In addition to this, the phrase also implies René Descartes'²⁴ famous statement: "I think, therefore, I am." It highlights rational thought as the definitive attribute of the individual.

The narrator's mental space transformation was also reflected in his attitude toward several African-American characters. Like the female role Mary, she is also a representative image of the black Southern culture. In *Invisible Man*, Mary Rambo is a motherly woman. The narrator stays in her house after leaving the paint factory. When the narrator just came out of the hospital weakly and first met Mary, he described her as a "huge woman with spoiled-cream complexion", "the big dark woman" (Ellison, 2005:251). Mary kindly helped him and invited him to her home. Because of his health condition, he had to accept Mary's help and move to her place. In the beginning, he had a slight resistance to her but was gradually driven by her behavior. His encounter with Mary and Mary's considerate care changed his terrible situation. In such an unfamiliar city, New York, Mary's care made him feel the warmth and security he had not experienced for a long time. "Seeing her worn brown fingers holding the bright glass and a feeling of old, almost forgotten relief coming over me and thinking in an echo of her words. 'If I don't think I'm sinking, look what

²⁴ René Descartes(1596-1650) was a French mathematician and philosopher, credited as a foundational thinker in the development of Western notions of reason and science. The Latin cogito, ergo sum, translated in English as "I think, therefore, I am", which is the "first principle" of René Descartes' philosophy.

a hole I'm in” (Ellison, 2005:253). In addition to Mary's physical care for the narrator, she also gave him a lot of psychological comfort as spiritual support.

When he meets any kind of problem and is in deep depression, Mary encourages him that he will make something of himself and is a credit to his race. “ ‘Well, whatever it is, I hope it's something that's a credit to the race.’ ‘I hope so,’ I said. Don't hope, make it that way. I looked at her thinking of what I'd tried to do and of where it had gotten me, seeing her heavy, composed figure before me” (Ellison, 2005:255). When he has a difficult period, Mary sings a song named “Troubled Song” in a calm voice to comfort him. The song reminds the narrator of his identity and responsibility as a black man. Besides, he realizes the duty to relieve his race's suffering. She uses the song to make the young narrator face up to his black traditions. The process of his gradual acceptance of Mary is a sign of approval of the black culture. Mary's appearance plays a vital role in promoting the narrator's awakening of self-consciousness.

After Brotherhood invited him to join in, he imagined Mary's reaction when he paid her all his back rent. “But money could never repay her generosity...She had asked for nothing in return” (Ellison, 2005:316). When he found Mary was short of money, but she never urged him to pay his rent, the care from Mary made him feel guilty. Finally, to ease his guilt, he accepted the job of the Brotherhood and left a one hundred dollar bill to Mary. However, he already saw Mary through different eyes after joining the Brotherhood. Mary became a source of shame and embarrassment for him, prompting him to try to shatter her image, as symbolized by his futile attempt to

discard the cast-iron bank. The bank and Mary represented a part of his “heritage” he wanted to forget. In the beginning, the narrator sees Mary’s home as a sanctuary. Still, later, he notices the noise, poverty, and filth surrounding her.

The narrator moved out of Mary’s house and decided to escape from the past life. At the same time, the brainwashing of the Brotherhood made the narrator want to abandon the past again, and start a new life with a new identity, even with a new name. “Even if I met Mary on the street, I’d have to pass her by unrecognized” (Ellison,2005:336). However, when the narrator is driven to a corner by Ras the exhorter, his first eaction is to think of Mary. “I would go now to Mary’s in the only way that I could. I moved off over the black water, floating, sighing...sleeping secretly” (Ellison, 2005:567), which indicated his recognition of black culture. He felt that only black culture could save him at the critical moment.

In the underground, his mental space was constructed, and his behavior showed his thorough recognition of the black culture and customs. To make a torch in the basement, he burned his high-school diploma. The diploma was significant initially because he believed that only knowledge and academic qualifications distinguished him from other African Americans. It helped him achieve something in his career. But then, he realized that he was a tool and test product for white people like Norton, and the diploma was useless.

No matter how hard he tried, he would not be recognized as an equal by white society. Burning the certificate implied his disillusionment and awakening of illusion. Then he burned Clifton’s doll, an anonymous letter threatening him, and Jack’s not for

him to get a new name. He found that the writing of the name note was the same as that of the anonymous letter, which meant that the person who wrote to threaten him was brother Jack. Then the narrator hallucinated, and he became a prisoner of a group of people who pushed him into an enslaved person driven. Still, now he began to resist, unwilling to serve them anymore. The things he burned indicated that he was neither willing to be manipulated like a puppet nor was he keen to retain the false identity that Jack had given him.

In the end, his briefcase was left with some symbols of black cultures, such as Tarp's shackles, representing the past historical experiences. In addition, he left the broken pieces of a black bank, representing that the narrator did not want to face the humiliating history. He had tried to throw them away many times. Still, he was unable to do it, which meant that a black man could not get rid of his distorted representations of his black identity. But only by daring to face the past could he better prepare for the future. According to Lefebvre, "Every detail, every natural object is valued even more as it takes on symbolic weight" (Lefebvre, 1991:30). Therefore, the high-school diploma, chain, and bank all had some symbolic meanings, which indirectly indicated the narrator's transformation.

3.3 The Mental Space of Psychological Trauma

Psychological trauma happens when people feel threatened with severe harm, whether it is physical, mental, or emotional. It is an emotional response to terrible

events, such as accidents or natural disasters. The mental traumatic symptoms and signs include overwhelming fear, flashbacks, frequent traumatic nightmares, and intense psychological distress triggered by reminders. Some people will develop post-traumatic stress disorder(PTSD) after exposure to a significant traumatic event. In the novel *The Hate U Give*, the protagonist Starr's mental space is marked by this type of psychological trauma.

The shocking experience of Khalil's death leaves a substantial psychological trauma in Starr-- the brutal shooting scene frequently recurring in her nightmares. In addition, the mental trauma also affects her regular interaction with other people, especially with her white boyfriend, Chris, a wealthy white boy from Williamson Prep who she is dated. It makes Starr the object of the "why is he dating her stare" (Thomas, 2015:40) that usually comes from white girls. Chris adores Starr and attempts to make her feel comfortable being her entire self around him. For example, he raps her favorite song all the time to make her smile and let her forget about those looks. Despite this, Starr still feels uncomfortable when she faces Chris after the killing of Khalil. She has a flashback to Khalil's murder and cringes as she reminds herself that both one-fifteen²⁵ and Chris are white.

He (Chris) grabs my hands. One-Fifteen follows Khalil's hands with the flashlight. He orders Khalil to get out with his hands up. He barks at me to put my hands on the dashboard. I kneel beside my dead friend in the middle of the street with my hands raised. A cop as white as Chris points a gun at me. As white as Chris (Thomas, 2015:40).

Starr's reaction towards Chris can be defined as PTSD. This particular scene in

²⁵ One-fifteen is the white policeman Brian's badge number. In the novel *The Hate U Give*, Star keep calling him one-fifteen before knowing his name.

The Hate U Give symbolizes the long-term effects of violence on the emotional well-being of black children. Chris easily triggers intrusive thoughts and memories about the shooting in her environment. In addition to this discomfort of being emotionally connected with Chris, Starr's condition which is frequently associated with war suggests that police and gang violence frequently turn like neighborhoods into war-like zones. The PTSD was exacerbated by witnessing Natasha, Starr's childhood friend who was shot by accident at the age of ten during a gang-related shootout in Garden Height. PTSD also affects children in terms of "Survivor's guilt"²⁶. After witnessing the death of her friend Natasha and Khalil, Starr irrevocably changed by the shooting and its survivor's guilt. In her case, her sense of guilt was exacerbated by what led Khalil to his death; It was the fact that his grandmother was fired from the hospital, She knew that he had to help his mother financially by selling drugs. Therefore, she blames herself for not giving Khalil enough attention and care before his death.

Recovering from psychological trauma can be a painful journey and may take time. In the case of Starr, she has the burden of both knowing that she should have helped Khalil and the shame of not being bold enough to talk about the shooting event in public. This was especially serious for her because the media had been more eager to rouse sympathy for the police officer rather than standing up for the injustice faced by Khalil. "The drug dealer" is louder than "suspected" ever will be (Thomas, 2017:113). "What is the point of having a voice if you're gonna be silent in those

²⁶ Survivor's guilt was first identified during the 1960s. Several therapists recognized similar if not identical conditions among holocaust survivors.

moments you shouldn't be" (Thomas, 2017:252)? She is hesitant to tell people about what she has witnessed and is terrified of the possibility of the revenge against her family. Finally, after a complicated struggle, Starr begins to consider her voice as the most productive instrument she possesses. In order to speak up for Khalil, she starts a blog. She decides to give a television interview to denounce to the world what happened to Khalil. The decision not only means confronting the psychological trauma in mental space but also speaks to Starr's defiance against racism.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the changes occurred in the narrator's mental space in *Invisible Man*. In the beginning, he had no idea about his grandfather's words. Still, then he attempted to consider it until he understood. Initially, he only understood those words superficially. He acted accordingly but found that the effect was not good and gradually began to question whether his grandfather's words were realistic. After he moved underground, he recalled all the events that had happened and had a new understanding of these words. In addition, his attitude to southern culture and customs went through a remarkable transformation. If once he had been ashamed of his black identity and wanted to eliminate all the habits and culture related to blackness. When he came to the North, he couldn't help thinking about his hometown food, his family, and the black woman Mary. Facing the betrayal of the Brotherhood, he eventually burned down everything that represented his deny of blackness. He kept the symbols

of the black culture. As for the protagonist Starr in *The Hate U Give*, her attitude towards her psychological trauma changes completely. Starr went from paralysis and fear in the beginning to bravery in the face of psychological trauma, which also means the transformation from a dual personality to the acceptance of her real black identity.

IV. The Resistance of African-American characters in visually control space

Introduction

Judith Butler said: “The visual field is not neutral to the question of race; itself a racial formation, an knowledge, leadership and forceful” (Butler, 1993:17). This view summarizes the visual power relationship between seeing and being seen between blacks and whites perception of each other. Therefore, the expected act of seeings has completely different meanings in the perspective of African-American characters and white-American characters. For white people, it is just a matter of “seeing” or “not seeing,” but for African Americans, it is a question of “being seen” and “being unseen.” On the one hand, African Americans living under segregation suffered from the “surveillance” of white society all the time, and they were “others” in the space of whiteness. The African Americans were never seen but only appeared as “imaginary things” projected by white people. This kind of “visibility” meant having a specific subject identity affirmed; “invisibility” meant being ignored and marginalized.

As the title of *Invisible Man* foreshadows, visual space occupies a critical position in this novel. Because of this is more obviously happening in *Invisible Man*, this chapter will only discuss the visually control scenes in *Invisible Man*. Two specific scenes in this novel illustrate this interpretation. The first scene is the experience of the protagonist being played by a group of white people in the ballroom. The second scene is the protagonist’s experience receiving treatment in the hospital after being injured in the paint factory.

4.1 Onlookers in the Ballroom Fighting Arena

In the first scene, when the protagonist delivered a speech in Booker T. Washington's style at the high school graduation ceremony, he summarized in this terms: "On my graduation day, I delivered an oration. I showed that humility was the secret, indeed, the very essence of progress" (Ellison, 2005:17). He was invited to give the speech at a gathering of the town's leading white citizens, which was seen as a triumph for their whole community and therefore, he won praise from the people in the town.

So he had prepared carefully for that experience, but he hadn't expected this to be an experience of being teased. Before the speech, he was forced to watch and stand before a naked blond woman with a few black youths. Although these young black men are in the bystander position like the white men at the same place, also they are the same as the naked woman being watched. To the protagonist, the naked woman in front of him is a kind of visual temptation; it is also a prohibition for African Americans. "I felt a wave of irrational guilt and fear. My teeth chattered, my skin turned to goose flesh, m knees knocked" (Ellison, 2005:19). The white men can force the black characters to obey the authority and accept shame and indignity. "Then I became aware of the clarinet playing and the big shots yelling at us. Some threatened us if we looked and others if we did not" (Ellison, 2005:19).

It can be seen that the white are the controllers of gaze, the owners and defenders of the "forbidden fruit." However, the young black man became as much the objects of onlookers as the naked blonde woman. They were the carriers of "sinful

desires” that can be executed privately at any time. These African-American characters also yearn for the “forbidden fruit,” but facing the gaze of the white men, they can only be discouraged to suppress their desire. Whether this group of young black boys under white surveillance look at it or not, they are all obedient to the rules of whites.

Being forced to watch a naked blonde woman is nothing more than a “warm-up play” for white people to humiliate them: “There was nothing to do but what we were told. All ten of us climbed under the ropes and allowed ourselves to be blindfolded with broad bands of white cloth. Everyone fought hysterically” (Ellison,2005:23). They were deprived of the ability of vision because they were blindfolded and became objects of white onlookers. As a result, they could only feel the surrounding environment through hearing and physical sensations. Their ears are filled with the laughter and racist insults of the white audience and various insults from racists: “big nigger”, “ginger-colored nigger”, and “black bastard” (Ellison, 2005:21).

They suffer from physical pain and endure the blurred vision of being blindfolded. The natural source of trouble for them is not the blindfolded sight but the blackness of the body. In the visual world constructed by white power, having black skin is their original sin. They can't see their body but are more sensitive to its existence -- the black skin that brings them endless pain and trouble. Black skin not only makes white people feel disgusted but also makes African-American characters in the room feel anxious.

They will always unconsciously think that the black color of their body imposes

on them a sense of “high visibility.” This is why African Americans often have a variety of “hypersensitivity” to their bodies in front of white people, and the “invisible man” always feels the trouble of this consciousness. The word “high visibility” and “hypersensitivity” appear in the introduction of *Invisible Man*. Studies have shown that black boys are aware of their bodies project on the white gaze. (Sigelman&Welch, 1991:26) A black student studying in a predominantly white university used “a fly in the buttermilk” to describe his uncomfortable feeling:

I am continuously made aware of how different I am, especially when I am the only black student in a class. Life is full of opposites: I feel as if I am seen as the same as other blacks by many whites, yet I often feel different from other black students. Perhaps the most common experience I have is one of extremes: Either I am invisible or I am its opposite -- I am super visible(Davis, 2004:436).

In the novel *Invisible Man*, the protagonist can often be troubled by this kind of consciousness. For instance, when the protagonist was told to drive Mr. Norton and accompany him to visit the campus, he thought: “Now, riding here in the powerful car with this white man who was so pleased with what he called his fate, I felt a sense of dread” (Ellison, 2005:40). And then he repeated “He was the kind of white man I feared” (Ellison, 2005:41).

In the Golden Day, men pushed Mr. Norton down the stairs, and his white face scared the protagonist a lot: “I had never been so close to a white person before. I struggled to get away. With his eyes closed he seemed more threatening than with them open. He was like a formless white death, suddenly appeared before me, a death which had been there all the time. And which had now revealed itself in the madness

of the Golden Day” (Ellison, 2005:86).

He can always feel “super visible” when walking on the street where many white people are walking:

Perhaps it was guarded, as I had been told post offices were guarded, by men. They looked down at you through peepholes in the ceiling and walls, watching you constantly, silently waiting for a wrong move. Perhaps even now an eye had picked me up and watched my every movement (Ellison, 2005:165).

Even after the protagonist joined Brotherhood, which claimed “racial equality,” his fear and anxiety still surrounded him. When he Brother Jack took him to “Chthonian”, the expensive private club for the first time, where there were many beautiful white women, this is how he reacted: “Here and there, I saw several attractive young women but carefully avoided giving them more than a glance. I felt extremely uncomfortable, although no one paid any special attention after glances. It was as though they hadn’t seen me, as though I were here, and yet not here” (Ellison, 2005:301). When a beautiful white woman eyes brushed slowly over his face, he thought:

My face was warm, but I returned her glance as steadily as I dared. It was not the harsh uninterested-in-you-as-a-human-being stare that I’d known in the South, the kind that swept over a black man as though he were a horse or an insect. It was a direct, what-type-of-mere-man-have-we-here kind of look that seemed to go beneath my skin...Somewhere in my leg, a muscle twitched violently(Ellison, 2005:302).

There are many similar descriptions in the novel; they all reflect the strong sense of self-estrangement that blacks have internalized from the gaze of whites. The

black characters are always surrounded by white people, with countless pairs of eyes staring at them, reminding them not to forget their “disgusting bodies.” Although the black formally free, the segregated American society was just another enlarged version of the plantation, where blacks has to be tamed under the gaze of the white and stay submissively in the designated space as Ellison suggests: “I had kept unswervingly to the path placed before me, had tried to be exactly what I was expected to be, had done exactly what I was expected to do” (Ellison, 2005:146). The protagonist has been doing things carefully according to his plan.

4.2 Medical Gaze in the Paint Factory Hospital

After the protagonist's “accident” in the paint factory, he was sent to the hospital for examination and treatment. In a semi-comatose state, he found himself in a “another white world”, “I had on new overalls, strange white ones”; he was sitting in a cold, white rigid chair; There was “a long white corridor with rows of chairs” out of the room; He found himself back in the “clinging white mist”; “...the bright eye still burning into mine...” (Ellison, 2005:245,241,231).

Lying in such a space dominated by white, the black skin of the protagonist contrasts strongly with the brightness of the environment. He is also the center of visual focus in the entire room, like a biological specimen “lying in a kind of glass and nickel box” (Ellison, 2005:233). The transparent box is much like a small prison cell with a panoramic view. In contrast to the traditional closed, dark, sheltered cell, this “new type of cell” is given ample light. Every move of the prisoner is completely

exposed to the eyes of the watcher in the central watchtower. The protagonist lying in the transparent box is like a prisoner; he has nothing to hide, and he can only be forced to accept this “visibility.”

The protagonist repeatedly mentioned the sharp look he felt from the white people, these are what he saw: “seeing two indefinite young women in white, looking down at me, noticing that a face was now level with mine, looking closely and saying something without meaning” (Ellison, 2005:232), and that: “A pair of eyes peered down through lenses as thick as the bottom of a Coca-cola bottle, eyes protruding, luminous and veined, like an old biology specimen preserved in alcohol” (Ellison, 2005:235). When the protagonist lay on the table and was stared at by a group of white people with sharp eyes, his final dignity and privacy were also taken away. He completely became a complete captive of the white people’s eyes. He also wanted to look back at them with his own eyes, but it was in vain. Either he was blinded by the “bright light,” or the mirror reflected him on the doctor's head, but all he could see was his helpless appearance. He wanted to close his eyes and give up the right to see. Still, he was awakened by other people again because he not only had to obey the status of being watched but also had to cooperate with the white.

Lee thinks that the doctors “who seem to stand for the whole power-bureaucracy of the government, the company, the optic white power cliques” (Lee, 1970:26). Instead of being a patient injured in an accident. The protagonist becomes a problem to be analyzed, solved, controlled, and an object of power to be used as an experiment. Visual observation is not enough to solve this problem completely, but an X-ray

examination is also needed.

Caroline de la Peña has studied the relationship between medical technology and racism, especially in “The History of Technology, the Resistance of Archives, and the Whiteness of Race.” She pointed out that in the 20th century when X-ray technology came out was the era when racism was rampant: “white professionals using new X-ray technology had recruited willing African-American patients who were having their skin pigment permanently lightened even as the story was being written” (De la Peña, 2010:928). Many still believed that dark skin symbolized evil and that black bodies carries particular viruses. On the one hand, people speculated that this technology could help reveal the secrets hidden under black skins. On the other hand, there were even rumors that X-ray can turn black skin into white, thereby transforming black skin. This is not so much out of superstition in technology as it is out of white racists’ fear of black skin as visual and moral pollution.

While the protagonist is undergoing medical examination, these white doctors intend to treat and reform him in a “racial sense.” In front of them, he was no longer an ordinary patient being examined but a “disgusting alien,” which would be best to be completely wiped out. Although white doctors still use caring doctor-patient language, they gently call the protagonist “boy” and “my boy” (Ellison, 2005:235). Still, their tone is “hollow with profound detachment” (Ellison, 2005:233). The doctors and nurses used almost cruel methods to torture this problematic black body, entirely beyond the scope of ordinary medical examination and treatment. “Two forces tore savagely at my stomach and back. A flash of cold-edged heat enclosed me.

I was pounded between crushing electrical pressures; pumped between live electrodes like an accordion between a player's hands" (Ellison, 2005:232).

In the interval between receiving "treatment," the protagonist also heard the two doctors arguing about the methods of operation. One of the doctors insists on "surgery," which meant castration. In the imagination of white men, the desires of black men could harm white women at any time. The "white paranoia" makes them anxious (Butler, 1993:19). It seems that it was not enough to rely on the "symbolic castration" of blacks as in the arena of the ballroom before. Therefore, the best way to ensure control was to implement physical castration on their body. Another doctor proposed a new treatment: "My little gadget will solve everything" (Ellison, 2005:235), which meant that: "the machine will produce the results of a prefrontal lobotomy without the negative effects of the knife" (Ellison, 2005:236). As the prefrontal lobe controls people's emotional regulation. Its removal would significantly reduce impatience, irritability, and violent tendencies. It makes people meek and submissive.

However, because the operation had significant risk and could not guarantee the effect of the process, it is not suitable for general application. However, the new treatment proposed by this doctor could avoid the adverse effects of surgery.

We apply pressure in the proper degrees to the major centers of nerve control and the result is as complete a change of personality as you'll find in your famous fairy-tale cases of criminals transformed into amiable fellows. and what's more, the patient is both physically and neurally whole (Ellison, 2005:236).

Under the racial system dominated by whites, blacks have been "convicted" just

because of the visual trouble and imaginary fear that the black skin on their bodies brought to whites.

4.3 Fighting Against the Imagination of Others

Wherever there is power, there will be resistance. In practice, the patient being gazed at is not always a docile body for the agent of the gaze. As Johanna Shapiro argues, when she says: “the patient not as a passive, acted-upon object but rather as fully participatory in a relational process of mutuality and reciprocity” (Shapiro, 2002:15). The patient can also respond with despair, anger or rejection.

The white doctors in front of the operating table think they have the power to gaze at other people. They firmly put the protagonist in the position of being stared at. The protagonist, in front of the doctors, is like: “an old biology specimen preserved in alcohol” (Ellison, 2005:235), and in the eyes of the protagonist, they are nothing but disgusting “white gnats.” (Ellison, 2005:234) Even if the protagonist’s body is bound and tortured, this fact cannot stop him from imagining his resistance against mental violence. “They appeared utterly stupid, and I didn’t like it” (Ellison, 2005:239). From his perspective of this young black boy, it is even possible to create a visual image of himself.

The protagonist gets up from the operating table after the medical operation. Although the doctor watches him “with a calm, scientific gaze” (Ellison, 2005:245), The relationship of gaze between the white doctor and him has changed a lot. “seeing

him looking up at me with his steady scientific gaze...I looked down, he was there somewhere behind the lined face and outstretched hand” (Ellison, 2005:249). Unlike the previous situation when he was lying on the operation table and was gazed at by the white doctors, both sides had an apparent visual position exchange at this time. It also shows the protagonist's resistance and the active position he gained for himself.

I had the feeling that I had been talking beyond myself..., that I was in the grip of some alien personality lodged deep within me...Or perhaps I was catching up with myself and had put into words feelings which I had hitherto suppressed...I was no longer afraid(Ellison, 2005:249).

In the novel's first half, the protagonist's self-cognition is limited by race. For a long time, he has always pursued a sense of presence in the white world, obeyed the arrangement of whites, and imagined that he would be as successful as Bledsoe until he realized the horrible truth and finally understood the illusion of this “visibility.” After the protagonist left the paint factory, he no longer aimed at the acceptance by whites. After joining the Brotherhood, he was no longer willing to be the obedient black example that the whites overlooked but fantasized about becoming the leader of the black nation that people looked up to.

However, he was constantly put under pressure by nationalists and communists in the Brotherhood. Ultimately, he realized that any black man with an independent personality was invisible, whether it was against white racism or black nationalism. The protagonist finally chose to fight for himself. “knowing now who I was and where I was and knowing too that I had no longer to run for or from the Jacks and the Emersons and Bledsoes and Nortons. But only from their confusion, impatience, and

refusal to recognize the beautiful absurdity of their American identity and mine” (Ellison, 2005:559).

The underground chosen by the protagonist as a refuge is a very symbolic place. It was dark, but he uses stolen wires and light bulbs to transform it into “a warm hole.” If the outside world was a prison controlled by white people, then the underground is a safe place “full of light” (Ellison, 2005:6) and suitable to be invisible. No one knew he was hiding here. “I doubt if there is a brighter spot in all New York than this hole of mine” (Ellison, 2005:6). The young black man became the owner of his visual relationships and a bystander of the outside world. He had returned to a state of complete invisibility at this moment, but this was not the negative invisibility like before, but instead was the result of his active choice, a kind of invisibility with a resistance outlook.

The protagonist finally avoids the white gaze and the black nationalists in the underground. By creating a comfortable place with bright light, he finally saw his true self through his own eyes for the first time in his life. “I, after existing some twenty years, did not become alive until I discovered my invisibility”(Ellison, 2005:7). The way he chose to fight against white people was through using Monopolated Light&Power’s service without their knowledge to light the basement and pay them nothing at all as he thought: “Nothing, storm, and flood, must get in the way of our need for light and ever more and brighter light. The truth is the light, and the light is the truth” (Ellison, 2005:7). The yearn of light and truth also includes the black American’s pursuit of the meaning of life and the cognition of self-identity.

Conclusion

This chapter mainly revolved around the visual space in *Invisible Man*. African Americans have always been the ones to be gazed at. This kind of gaze is not ordinary seeing because it is charged with powerful but violence. It dominates the imagination and identity construction of African-American otherization. In the white-constructed space, the African-American body is, on the one hand, visible, savage, vicious, lustful, and aggressive; on the other hand, it is invisible because white Americans see in them are always pre-implanted aspects. This chapter was analyzed through the discussion of two main scenes in the novel that create visual sites that make African-American characters become otherization and concludes that only by fighting for the right to anti-gazing can African-Americans create possibilities for the construction of self-identity and ultimately establish the space and identity of their own.

Conclusion

This dissertation had the objective of analyzing the new awareness of space in African-American literature, specifically in two different novels, *Invisible Man*(1952) and *The Hate U Give*(2015), discussing how two different African-American characters' psychological process are based on the three concepts of space-- physical space, social space and mental space identified in *The Production of Space*(1991) by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Besides, the dissertation also analyzes the gaze and anti-gaze of the white characters' visually control space.

The spatial theory is one of the essential theoretical foundations of this dissertation. It observes space from a new perspective; it gets rid of stereotypes and becomes vivid, which inspires spatial thinking in literary criticism. This shows that space in literary works can be reinterpreted from a new perspective. There is no specific time in the novel *Invisible Man*, and the change of place promotes the story's development. This dissertation uses "Spatial theory" in the late 20th century to analyze the dilemmas and the process of the awakenings in self-hood of the African-American characters in different kinds of space by listing various scenes in these two novels.

Firstly, physical space is divided into two parts: the residential conditions and the living environments. A strong contrast can be seen by listing the descriptions of living conditions of several African-American characters and white characters in the novels. Faced with two different worlds, the protagonists in the novels make different choices separately. The narrator in *Invisible Man* chose to accept his self-identity and

stop pleasing the white characters around him. Different choices happens to the protagonist Starr in *The Hate U Give*. Faced with two different worlds of Garden Heights and Williamson Prep., she gradually searches for a balance in order to link them instead of changing her identities all the time.

Secondly, Social space is related to social relations, which contains many contradictions and conflicts, like different races and class conflicts among blacks. Chapter two analyzes the interactions among African-American protagonists and white characters in the two novels by giving examples of the specific scenes. It shows the importance of social relations to the protagonists when they are making choices. The examples of police brutality and the unfair reports of media in *The Hate U Give* reveal the oppression made by governmental system also have many influences on the black American characters.

Thirdly, the white characters not only control the African-American characters physically but also oppress them mentally in the novels. By analyzing the fight among the young black boys, it is evident that the black characters in that fight are like playthings and bets in the eyes of the white characters who hold the Battle Royal. They even like to control the thoughts of them in there. Mental space is connected with physical and social space so that the location changes can reconstruct the protagonist's mental space. Through the two aspects in *Invisible Man*: the grandfather's last words and his attitude towards the culture of the Southern area make the narrator gradually realize that white power is not worth relying on; he can build his own space by accepting his own culture.

After experiencing difficulties, African-American characters gradually became “invisible” in the “white-dominated” world. They endured “visual violence” and “absolute gaze” under oppression. The last chapter analyzed the resistance of the narrator in visually control space. The action of seeing can also be recognized as a type of violence when it was related to the race. From the protagonist’s point of view, if he is in the position of “being gazed” all the time, that means he also participate in the compromise of the unfair racial order under the white power in the novel. There are many awakening African-American characters and white characters in the novels who are not standing for others’ space but are bold to be themselves to create their own space. In conclusion, only when “invisible men” are no longer the object of “being gazed at” and oppressed by the white power, just like the basement scene at the end of the story in *Invisible Man* and Starr’s lead for justice in *The Hate U Give*, who is fighting for their rights in the novels, they can truly know themselves and build their own identities in physical spaces, social space and mental space.

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