

Name and Power Relation to African-American Identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between names and African-American identity in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man. Through a qualitative descriptive analysis, the study investigates how power relations influence the construction of African-American identity in the novel. This study used semiotic approach by applying Charles Sander Peirce's semiotic theory in examining the use of name, as well as sociological approach by applying Michel Foucault's concept of power relations in analyzing power relation to social identity. The findings reveal that names, while significant, are not the sole determinants of African-American identity. The study discovers that, after the Civil War, many African-American characters in the novel chose names of European origin in an attempt to avoid negative racial stigma and discrimination. Instead, the study finds that identity construction is primarily shaped by social categorization and comparison and that power relations play a crucial role in limiting positive representations of African-American identity. This study sheds new light on the relationship between names, power, and African-American identity in literature and provides insights into the ongoing discourse surrounding these important cultural and social issues.

Keywords: name and power relation; identity; African-American literature; Ralph Ellison; *Invisible Man*

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Introduction

A name has an important role in communication and a person's daily life. When a person does not possess a name, he will be considered a non-existent or a stranger. A name is a personal identity that distinguishes a person from other individuals. A person's name can also provide an overview of a

person's social and cultural background. Therefore, the name is essential to construct one's identity, be it personal or social identity.

Rymes, B. in *Journal of Linguistic and Anthropology* (1999) states that:

Names, then, while associated with an individual, are laden with social history and power, and they are easily manipulated in

the hands of others. Across societies, people carefully control the way names are used, who uses them, and in what context. A proper name, then, is not simply a useful label, but a repository of accumulated meanings, practices, and beliefs, a powerful linguistic means of asserting identity (or defining someone else) and inhabiting a social world. (Rymes, 1999)

Furthermore, he explained arbitrary labels that represent individuals or locations are called proper names. However, the proper names and their meanings cannot be separated from its social and historical context. Furthermore, she explained why proper names are important in constructing social and personal identity. One of social identity's powerful signs is proper names, because proper names rely on social history for their legitimacy (Maulucci & Mensah, 2015). The most common way that proper names can be linked to a particular social history is by giving names, such as baptismal events.

In general, power is often defined as an analogy of A having control over B. According to Robert Dahl (1957, p. 203), power is an effort that goes well from A to order B to do something that B does not even want. In relation to identity, the concept of power has a different meaning from *A having power over B*, but how power is generated through the construction of identities, both individuals and groups in the social structure, to achieve equality and freedom from discrimination and racism. This is in line with the ideas of Knights & Willmott (1985) in *Power and Identity in Theory and Practice*, which states:

Identity formation and reproduction should be seen as a struggle to come to terms with the problematical experience of world-openness within social structures that reflect individuals' socially organized and often self-defeating efforts to manage the unpredictability associated with this experience of separation. (Knights & Willmott, 1985)

Furthermore, they argue that the use of power by some groups as control or domination over

others undermines productive potential interdependence between social groups.

The concept of identity is generally defined as an image that distinguishes an individual or group from other individuals or groups that are built by the individual or group. The concept of identity is also modified continuously through interaction with other parties. Identity gives each individual a sense of belonging and social existence. In addition, identity is also intended to provide social boundaries between a person or group of people and other people or other groups. These social boundaries are the elements that distinguish us from others, and they manifest in our formal actions. Social boundaries include views on the ethics of interacting and the limits of access to resources. Identity also marks our similarity with others in the same position as well as a marker of differences with those who are not in the same position (Machsum, 2013, p. 409).

The identity crisis is a prevalent theme in African-American literature, as it reflects a significant part of African-American history. The roots of this crisis can be traced back to the era of slavery during the Civil War. William Andrews (2004) stated that over 350 years of the transatlantic slave trade, millions of Africans were forcibly transported to the Americas through more than 54,000 voyages. In the antebellum South, plantations provided the economic foundation that sustained the dominant ruling class based on male privilege and honor, deep-rooted economic power, and extraordinary power. Despite these systems, black people attempted to develop their own sense of identity, family relationships, communal values, religion, and cultural autonomy by exploiting the contradictions and opportunities within the complex structure of paternalistic relationships with slave owners. The labor system, along with the expectations and obligations between slaves and slave owners, supported a functional economic system, but it was often at the cost of the exploitation of slaves. Despite these exploitation and systems, slaves were often portrayed as actively seeking freedom through everyday speech, action, and covert and overt means of resistance in pre-war narratives.

Before the Civil War, the enslaver renamed the enslaved Africans or kept them unnamed to keep them subjugated and in enslavement. No names were given, and their owners abandoned them. According to Fitzpatrick (2012, p. 46), "their owners often changed their names when the slaves were sold." Another factor that turned enslaved Africans into nameless is there was the rule that claimed everyone had to assign their name legally, and the enslaved people did not possess the freedom or access toward legality.

The European colonizers who enslaved African people utilized naming and renaming as a means to suppress and dismantle African identity. This was because the original names held by the Africans played a significant role in shaping their identity and preserving their cultural memory (Fitzpatrick, 2012). The renaming of enslaved Africans made it difficult for them to maintain a direct connection to their cultural heritage and ancestral identity. This caused a disconnection from their community, leaving them in a powerless state and unable to form meaningful relationships.

Invisible Man is a novel that illustrates the struggle of African-Americans to fight for their identity regarding the impact of slavery in the past (Hartmann, 2023). This novel explores a variety of social and intellectual issues confronting early 20th-century African-Americans, including black nationalism, relationships between black identities, class relations, power and powerlessness, social conflict, as well as individuality and personal identity issues. These themes make *Invisible Man* an ideal research subject. This study aims to examine the relationship between power and names in the context of Ralph Ellison's novel.

This research provides a review of three previous studies regarding names and identity: Machaba (2004), Peckham (2009), and Cook et al. (2014). Machaba (2004) investigated the relationship between South Africa's changing sociopolitical structure and changes in naming practices and personal identity formation. Peckham (2009) scrutinised the power and problems of naming in African-American and Jewish-American literature and discovered that naming is a vital

speech act in reimagining identity, particularly in diaspora contexts. Cook et al. (2014) discovered that people with racially distinct names are negatively influenced and that the increase in the prevalence of African-American names following the Civil Rights Movement was not coincidental. Cook discovered a naming pattern among African-Americans and confirmed historical names' racial distinctiveness.

All studies agree that naming practices are closely related to identity formation and reveal the influence of historical, cultural, and political factors. Analysis of the relationship between name and identity formation in the black community has been a common theme in previous research in African-American literature. However, this study extends previous research by utilizing a semiotic approach to analyzing naming in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and incorporating social identity theory to investigate the power relations involved in naming and identity formation in African-American society. The method and the specific text used for the analysis set this research apart from previous studies. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore the relationship between names and African-American identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

Methodology

This research is descriptive qualitative research that aims to explore and understand the meaning of name and power in constructing the identity of the African-American community in literature. Descriptive research is aimed at describing a situation and its features. This research focused more on what happened than on how and why (Nassaji, 2015). Meanwhile, qualitative research according to Creswell and Creswell (2017, p. 43), is an approach used to examine and understand the significance of a social or human problem for individuals or groups.

This study used semiotics approach, specifically Charles Sander Peirce's semiotic theory. The theory was used to analyze the name, index occurs when the change of the symbol is affected by the object it represents (Lacković, 2020). In his definition of semiotic

theory, Charles Sanders Peirce defines a sign as anything that stands for something to somebody in some way or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, develops in the mind of that person an equivalent sign or even a more developed sign (Peirce, 1955, p. 99). That is to say, reference is a cognitive function wherein a sign (be it a name, some other word, or a figurine) evokes pre-existent images in mind.

In addition, in examining power relationship, Michel Foucault's concept of power relations was also used. Foucault argues that the analysis of power relations is seen from the form of resistance to any form of power. In other words, using forms of resistance as a way of clarifying power relations, recognizing power, and finding out where and how power is applied, or analyzing forms of power through strategic antagonism (Foucault, 2019, p. 329).

In his concept of power, Foucault highlighted the importance of meaning, particularly in terms of subjection, as he states:

There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings clearly indicate a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to. (Foucault, 2019, p. 331)

Thus, his theory possibly works with Peirce semiotic theory in understanding Name and Power Relation to African-American Identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

Invisible Man is a novel that explores a variety of social and intellectual issues confronting early twentieth-century African-Americans, including black nationalism, the relationship between black identity, class relations, power and powerlessness, and social conflict, as well as individuality and personal identity issues. Therefore, this novel is a suitable object for this research. By using the novel *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison as a data source, the researchers used a semiotic and power relation theory to analyze how names influence strength and shape African-American identity.

Results and Discussion

The novel *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison provides a vivid account of the identity struggles faced by African-Americans after slavery. This literary work explores a variety of complex social and intellectual issues that plagued the African-American community in the early 20th century, including black nationalism, the relationship between black identity, class interactions, power relations, social conflict, and individual identity. The discussion of this research is divided into two sub-chapters: African-American names in *Invisible Man* and the influence of relations on African-American identity in the novel.

1. African-American names in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

Charles Sanders Peirce (1955) proposed the concept of name as referential, which means that a name recalls the idea that exists in someone's mind about another person that the name represents. Name is a sign that refers to an object, which is a person.

Peirce's semiotic theory always consists of three features that he called triadic. The concept of proper names in Peirce's also divided into three based on his theory of sign: subject, interpretant, and representamen. Thomas Weber (2008) explicitly explained Peirce's theory of proper names. Weber argues that the description of Peirce's Theory of proper names is *rhematic indexical legisign* where name is related to three basic triadic features: subject, interpretant, and representamen.

The names of African-American characters in the novel represent their bearers with various types of behaviors in their daily societal lives. The character's behaviors gave the impression that described their personality. In order to mark and differentiate these characters, the sign is needed to determine their identity in the mind of the interpretant. Therefore, a sign that is commonly used to mark people is a Name. Name is a personal identity attribute that makes people remember and recognize each other. This process of remembering

cognitively happens in people's minds through impressions. This is consistent with Peirce's theory of signs where the name is a *rhyme*. Rhyme explained how the name is related to the *interpretant* and how people interpret that this name stands for this person (Peirce, 1955). Then, the question arises whether the African-American names in the novel represent their social identity or not.

In discussing African-American names, one cannot separate them from two well-known black figures: Malcolm X and Ralph Ellison. Both offered different opinions and perspectives on African-American names. Malcolm argues that black people should leave white men's names. On the other hand, Ellison states that there are several advantages when black people bear white people's names, especially names that are famous for their past glory.

Malcom X proposed the changing name among African-Americans as an act of re-creating power. Malcom himself changed his name twice, the first to Malcolm X, the second to El Hajj Malik El Shabazz after his pilgrimage to Mecca. His decision to change his name from Malcom Little to Malcolm X is a form of resistance toward identity destruction during slavery in the past. In 1964, Malcolm argued that black African-Americans in his era "... are wearing a white man's name" (Williams, 1992). What Malcom did, offered the perspective where naming in the African-American is a tool to reconstruct their identity and reconnect their roots.

Ralph Ellison, in his interview with John O'Brien stated, "not all of us, actually only a few, seek to deal with our names in this manner," proposing different perspectives from Black Muslims like Malcom X (Ellison, 1995). From his answer, Ellison offered a different perspective about names in African-American community. In his essay "Hidden Name and Complex fate", Ellison (1964) argues that black people named after famous figures of white people "represent a certain triumph of the spirit". It means the name can encourage the bearer to succeed like the figure he is named after. This is related to his self-experience, where he is named after a famous writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who is a white

person. Ellison suspects his father believed in the suggestive power of naming and named his son after a famous writer that his father admired. In addition, as expected, Ellison became one of the most famous writers in the history of African-American "...we take what we have and make of them what we can" (Ellison, 1995). Furthermore, Ellison (1964) also stated that the self has to have power over identity more than a name does "...for we ourselves are our *true* names not their epithets".

Ralph Ellison illustrates the situation of the main character of the novel, who wishes to be seen as an individual who is free from racial expectations. The self-awareness of the main character, as part of the African-American community, refused to be treated as a second-class society; he expected equality in social life. The novel's interesting thing is that Ellison described the main character as The Narrator. Ellison did not give him a name, or at least Ellison let The Narrator's name unknown to readers. This indicates that the black characters' names are not the main factor in constructing their identity in the novel. The other names of black characters in the novel such as: Tatlock, Dr. Bledsoe, Jim Trueblood, Homer A Barbee, Lucius Brockway, Mary Rambo, Tod Clifton, Ras The Exhorter, Rinehart also show no relation to African origin. Most of those names are European and some from Greek origin. The particular reason for this circumstance is the name changes among African-American at the time were intended to avoid the stigma of an ethnic name. This is consistent with the story plot of the novel that Ellison tried to portray, where African-Americans struggle against discrimination. If the names of African-American characters in the novel are completely different from the whites, it will lead to another form of discrimination (Bottone, 2020). The study in 2004 by Fryer and Levitt also proved a similar result. Fryer and Levitt (2004) state that Differences in name choices between Blacks and Whites were quite low in the 1960s, and indicators that predict distinctively Black names later in life (single mothers, racially separated neighborhoods, etc.) have considerably lower explanatory power in the 1960s. At the time, Blacks in severely racially separated

communities adopted names that were nearly identical to Blacks in more integrated districts and similar to Whites (Fryer Jr & Levitt, 2004).

The fact that there is the meager amount of documentation regarding African-American name patterns in the past complicates the research of African-American names. The practice of African-American naming patterns has changed over time. According to the sociological perspective of African-American names, the names are rooted in the assumption that present naming practices are an attempt to build a distinct racial identity without surnames that may convey such information (Lieberson & Mikelson, 1995). The historical perspective on African-American names, on the other hand, defies the popular understanding that the system of slavery destroyed African-American familial relations (Gutman, 1977). According to Gutman, a prevalent pattern in African-American names is linking them to the names of fathers, grandparents, or other older family members to retain familial ties. There is no confirmation of a link between a person's name and their slave occupation.

The common names used by African-American in the past that were found in Cook et al. (Cook et al., 2014), such as LaTonya, Tyrone, LaKeisha and Shemar also have no relation to any African origin, in fact those names are European origin. The short history of African-American naming practices reveals various subjective assumptions but few facts. Since naming patterns evolve over time, names can be linked to a particular group through the naming convention. In this case, African-American names can be determined based on the frequency of the names used in the African-American community. It means names are affected by the object and names are products of habit and convention. This is consistent with Peirce's theory, which states that the name is conventional and habit is categorized as a *legisign*. Thus, when the name is affected by its object, it can be categorized as an index (Peirce, 1955).

Another example where the name is an index occurs in the novel can be seen in the character named Ras The Exhorter. He is a black person who is portrayed as a radical

nationalist in the novel. His effort to get huge support from his fellow blacks through the narration and his speech made him the leader of his group. That is why he is called "The Exhorter". Later, after his provocation to raise the chaos in the city of Harlem to get rid of white people, he changed his name to Ras The Destroyer. This shows how a name is affected by its object and, therefore, it is called an index.

The previous study conducted in this research that came with similar results is Cook et al. (Cook et al., 2014) in their "Distinctively Black Names in The American Past". They stated that the names in the African-American community do not always refer to the reconstruction of the identity of the race. African-American names have several other intentions, such as political and social intentions, or names to promote pride, or as a sign of emancipation. Peckham (2009), in her "Identity Anxiety and the Power and Problem of Naming in African-American and Jewish Literature," states slightly different results but are still related to this study. Peckham argued that name is "a creative direction of life force" which means name can be a productive power since, in naming, people create (build). However, people have to be careful in handling the power, as found in some literature that shows how to keep naming from being destructive. People's effort to rename themselves in order to revise ethnic labels and to avoid racial epithets they must not become lost in the middle of the changes because it will lead into sacrificing the identity that their names try to build. Furthermore, Peckham quoted Du Bois' reply to Barton, saying that changing names alone cannot solve the identity problem experienced by African-Americans without concrete action. In other words, renaming is no substitute for action.

Different research results are shown by Machaba (2004) in *Naming, Identity and The African Renaissance in a South African Context* where African people use names as the main media to re-claim their identity and roots as African origin. It is suggested that the current name changes and adoption of African names result from South Africa's political transformations. The concept of an African renaissance, among other things, shapes African identities today. Apart from political

changes, a variety of forces influence people's identities. The concept of rebirth and rediscovery among Africans, particularly South Africans, has had an impact on the current trend of name changing. Various indigenous South Africans have resorted to adopting their African names instead of Euro-western names in an attempt to discover themselves, their roots, and their identities.

2. The Influence of Power Relations toward African-American Identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

The central theme of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* is the struggle for identity experienced by African-Americans, particularly the narrator. This struggle is largely attributed to the power relations between African-Americans and white people in society. To explore the manifestation of power within the narrative, this study utilizes Michel Foucault's concept of power relations to examine power's role in shaping African-American identity.

In his work, Michel Foucault (2019) describes how power relations take shape. According to Foucault, power relation can be analyzed by taking the resistance of power as a starting point. Foucault categorized at least three types of forms against the exercising of power, which are domination, exploitation, and subjection. These types can either be isolated or mixed with each other according to the situation where power is exercised.

a. Domination

The first type of power's form is domination. Domination, as explained by Foucault, is backed by power to impose something over others that can influence people. This is the kind of power that Foucault is concerned about because it limits people's freedom by influencing their choices and even what they consider to be the field of rational possibilities. Foucault (2002) came with three examples of domination: ethnicity, religion, and social.

In the novel, the forms of domination occur in terms of social. It can be seen on how white people treat black people as subservient to them and often marginalize them. This

dominant action of white people in the novel affected the lives of black people in behavior and social life.

When I was praised for my conduct I felt a guilt that in some way I was doing something that was really against the wishes of the white folks, that if they had understood they would have desired me to act just the opposite, that I should have been sulky and mean, and that that really would have been what they wanted, even though they were fooled and thought they wanted me to act as I did. It made me afraid that someday they would look upon me as a traitor and I would be lost. Still I was more afraid to act any other way because they didn't like that at all. (Ellison, 2016, p. 16).

The narrator's feeling about his fear of doing something opposed the wishes of the whites showed how power of white influenced his behavior or action. This phenomenon can be categorized as a form of domination, since it influenced the behavior of black people that they have to act sulky and mean to fulfill the expectation of the whites toward themselves. This situation portrayed the exercising power by white people over black people result in dominating not only in the way black people behave, but also in the way they think. For the reason that this has been happening for a long time makes black people normalize this condition, therefore, instead of arising the struggle against this domination the black people accept it as the normal social interaction. Later in the novel, the narrator grows the sense of resistance toward whites' power. The resistance of power in the novel portrayed how black people respond to the domination over them.

They wanted to hear about the gal lots of times and they gimme somethin' to eat and drink and some tobacco. Surprised me, 'cause I was scared and spectin' somethin' different. Why, I guess there ain't a colored man in the county who ever got to take so much of the white folkses' time as I did. So finally they tell me not to worry, that they was going to send word up to the school that I was to stay right where I am. Them big niggus didn't bother me, neither. It just goes to show yuh that no matter how

biggity a nigguh gits, the white folks can always cut him down. The white folks took up for me. And the white folks took to coming out here to see us and talk with us. Some of 'em was big white folks, too, from the big school way cross the State. Asked me lots 'bout what I thought 'bout things, and 'bout my folks and the kids, and wrote it all down in a book. But best of all, suh, I got more work now than I ever did have before ... (Ellison, 2016)

In the situation above, the form of social domination portrayed in the way power is used to limit the action of black people. When the black folks in the south wanted to evict Jim Trueblood for the disgrace he did and embarrassed the community, they sent some black people to use violence if Jim insisted on staying. However, their effort did not go well since the white people intervened in this situation. White people's intervention in this problem made black people back away from the problem because they realized they did not have the power to against whites. As Jim stated in the novel *"that no matter how biggity a nigguh gits, the white folks can always cut him down"*. The form of power dominating also appears in another situation where the idea proposed by the whites influence the narrator. The novel shows how the narrator is dominated by the thoughts of the whites and it influenced him and made him think that he is on the right path under the control of the whites in *The Brotherhood*.

b. Exploitation

The next form of power relations is exploitation. According to Foucault, exploitation is the form of power that separates individuals from what they produce economically or politically (Foucault, 2019). In the novel the action of exploitation is performed by the white people upon the black people. The white people take advantage of the situation faced by black people, and often white people put the black people in the situation where they must do things for the interest of the white people. As illustrated in the novel, the forms of exploitation experienced by black people were economic and political matters.

The dominance of white people in society has instilled the belief in black people that they are inferior. This has opened up the opportunity for exploitation. Black people are often uninformed about the true motives behind what they are told by white individuals and blindly follow them, perceiving a relationship with whites as a means to attain a higher social status in their community. As illustrated in the following scene;

He registers with his senses but short-circuits his brain. Nothing has meaning. He takes it in but he doesn't digest it. Already he is -- well, bless my soul! Behold! a walking zombie! Already he's learned to repress not only his emotions but his humanity. He's invisible, a walking personification of the Negative, the most perfect achievement of your dreams, sir! The mechanical man! (Ellison, 2016)

The narrator serves the white man called Mr. Norton. The narrator did not know that Mr. Norton was using him to achieve his personal purpose. Even though the veteran had told the narrator about Mr. Norton's cunning he denied to believe it since his legitimization of white's truth has been created in his mind and made him ignore the advice from his black brother. That's the reason why he is easily being exploited. The exploitation over the narrator also happened when he moved to Harlem and joined the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood used the narrator's skill and eloquence in public speaking to recruit more members. The brotherhood also manipulated the narrator to convince him that he is working for the people's interest, in fact that the brotherhood sees him only as a material to be used to achieve their political advantages. The narrator realized all his mistakes when it was too late.

The exploitation in the form of economics occurring in the novel was toward one African-American character, Lucius Brockway, the employee in the paint company owned by the whites. Lucius has been working for 25 years and has an important role in producing the paint. Yet as Lucius claimed, even though those paints will never be well produced without his work nobody has ever mentioned about his role in the company. The white people even

tried to kick him out multiple times but never succeeded since he is the only one who knows his job.

All these forms of exploitation play a major role in limiting black people and marginalizing them. These exploitations are also the factor that caused the negative values on black people's identity since it puts the black people in a state of powerlessness and if there is something good coming from black people it will continuously be exploited by white people. As Foucault (2019) says "separated people from what they produce."

c. Subjection

The concept of subjection or subjugation as a derivative of power relations is prominent in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (Corey, 2021). Throughout the novel, the African-American community is depicted as being subjected to various forms of oppression by white people. This subjugation is a major contributing factor to the identity crisis experienced by the African-American community in the novel. White characters are often depicted as using black characters as objects of ridicule and entertainment, perpetuating the notion of African-Americans as mere subjects.

Subjection is the last form of power relation in terms of strategic antagonism, as proposed by Foucault. According to Foucault (2019), subjection means the forms of power used in everyday life: categorize someone, label him through his own personality, bind him by his identity, and force him to recognize himself and others through the law of truth. This kind of authority reduces individuals to subjects or subjugates them.

As Foucault states that the word of subject has two meanings: the first meaning is subject to someone else by control and dependence which is portrayed in the novel that black people are subject to white people or white people have control on the black people also can be interpreted as subjugating them. The second meaning of the subject is "tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" which is portrayed in the novel that white people treat black people based on the negative stereotypes of their racial

identity. Moreover, for those reasons the black people in the novel arise subconscious awareness that their identity as black people only have second status socially under the whites or subservient to them.

The subjection or subjugated action of white people toward black people can be seen in the scene where it shows white people treat black people as a subject, such as making fun of them as mere spectacle and entertainment. The narrator explained how he and his friends are forced to participate in battle royale as entertainment for them. To the narrator this is not only subjection but also the action of humiliation toward black people. The narrator has no choice but to follow the order because he is afraid that he could not perform his speech at the end of the agenda. A similar action is also portrayed in another situation. First, the narrator's dialogue with Dr. Bledsoe shows how the white people love to give order to white people since they feel superior over black people and this action turns into their habit. Second is the narrator's statement that says "*I was under order*" shows how the narrator accepted the order from the white people and ignored what his heart says. This action interpreted by the researchers as a form of power "rationalization" means that black people accept and normalize the arbitrary power exercised over them.

In the novel, subjection is depicted as limiting the narrator's freedom, leading to a loss of agency. This is portrayed as a form of slavery, as the narrator is restricted in their ability to make autonomous decisions. The control exercised by the brotherhood committee serves as an example of the extreme power dynamics present in the novel, demonstrating the complete control that is demanded over one's life.

In Foucault's conception of power relation, he explained how power is exercised on people through the forms of resistance toward the power itself. This power has an influence on determining one's identity. All forms of power which are sequentially discussed such as domination, exploitation and in this session the subjection revolves around the question "who are we?" the question of identity. The question is who we

are as a group and who I am. Therefore, power is related to the creation of identity or identity is the product of discourse.

In the archeology of knowledge, a treatise about the methodology and historiography of systems thought and of knowledge, Michel Foucault (2002) developed the concept of discourse. The sociologist Iara Lessa summarizes Foucault's definition of discourse as "system of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs, and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (Lessa, 2006, p. 285). Foucault traces the role of discourse in the legitimation of society's power to construct contemporary truths, to maintain said truths, and to determine what relations of power exist among the constructed truths, therefore discourse is a communication medium through which power relations produce men and women who can speak. Because power is always present and produced as constrains the truth.

The particular reason for the statement about identity as a product of discourse is that the identity that is attached to someone is produced from interaction with others. When we talk about the people and their attributes or called *essence*, it is not their real identity but how we talk about them. Identity of a person is communicated to him by others when he interacts. Therefore, interaction with others is the discourse he has with others.

In the previous studies included in this study, the discussion of the relationship between power and identity is only found in *Identity Anxiety and The Power and Problem of Naming in African-American and Jewish Literature* by Peckham (2009). Peckham (2009) stated that his work is the fundamental information she wants to convey regarding the power of names and naming. He further states that where there is power, there are possibilities of problems that arise, especially in how identity is played out, specifically "cultural identity" in the post-slavery and post-holocaust literature that define this history. The other two previous studies only focused on discussing African-American names.

Conclusion

This research aims to examine the relationship between name and power and its influence on African-American identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. The research findings show that the name of African-Americans in the novel is not a determining factor for their social identity. These names do not represent the cultural background of African-Americans but are a means of avoiding the stigma and discrimination associated with ethnic names. This finding supports Peirce's theory that a name is a conventional sign and is influenced by the object it refers to.

Power relations, on the other hand, significantly impact the development of African-American identity in the novel. Power is exercised in forms of domination, exploitation, and subjugation, and generates discursive truths that reinforce the notion that blacks are second-class citizens, subservient to whites. This power also creates a "rationalization" effect that makes black people believe that the superiority of white people over them is a natural thing.

This study highlights the important role of power relations in shaping the identity of African-Americans, particularly in the context of the novel. The research results highlight the importance of understanding how power works in society and its impact on marginalized groups. This understanding can contribute to the development of strategies aimed at combating power imbalances and promoting equity and social justice.

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