***Invisible Man*** Reading Assignment

For EVERY reading assignment, you must complete all assignments outlined below. As you can probably see, there is quite a lot of work involved, so reading it right before class begins will not really cut it. If you cannot turn in the assignment on turnitin bring a hardcopy to class the day it is due.

**Due Date Schedule**

Tuesday- reading assignment due/Write one open-ended Class Discussion Question, Wednesday (not modified) class activity, Thursday-reading assignment/post to Discussion Board/Open-ended question for reading, Friday- Test Prep/ Freewrite due

**Book Annotation**

**You will need to have post-its You will turn your book into me at the end of our discussion of the novel. However, in order to be prepared for discussion you need to keep up with the annotations.**

1. Notice **character descriptions**. Write the character’s name on the note and what you noticed about them.
2. Indicate specific **rhetorical devices**. Label the device on the post-it and briefly comment on its significance. This is especially important during the narrator’s four speeches.
3. Note *all* **motifs**. Use your motif chart to identify the various motifs seen throughout the book and label them appropriately when they are seen. Then briefly comment on that motif’s significance. Your commentary does not have to be in complete sentences.
4. Indicate passages dealing with the **primary themes** of the book and label the themes of ***racism, stereotyping, blindness, identity, invisibility, institutions, and isolation***. Refer to the theme group discussion board for specifics about the theme.
5. If you have a question about something in the book, write it on a separate sheet of paper when it first occurs to you and bring it to class the day we are discussing that chapter. If you have time, Google it to see if you can find an answer. When you get an idea while reading the text, note note it. You may never think of this idea again.

**Reading Logs**

I will give you a series of reading log questions that must be thoroughly answered. I will periodically give you pop quizzes on the content of these questions, and you may use your responses to assist you on the quiz. You will also discuss responses in class. I will never collect the questions, but they are considered to be your study guide for this novel.

**Freewrites**

This is a way for you to elaborate on an idea you’ve been thinking about for the assigned chapters/ overall reading and understanding of the novel. This is not a summary. This is a thinking exercise that will be due every Friday in turnitin. You will be excused from one freewrite only.

**Class Discussion**

In addition to the other assignments above, you will also have whole class, small group and discussion board components for many chapters as well as supplemental readings. To be prepared for this, you need to write **one** open-ended discussion question that is not already addressed in your reading logs. If you have a supplemental reading assignment, you should use your question to link the passage to the novel. We will follow Socratic discussion procedures for this portion of class. The rest of the reading log questions will also be discussed in your small groups and can be addressed as a whole group.

**Final Test**

You will have a final exam for this novel. The date is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Even if you are absent the day prior to this test, you are expected to complete reading on your own in order to be prepared.

**Reading Schedule**

**If we are not in class on an assigned reading day, these due dates do not change. Keep up with your reading regardless of whether or not you are in class. Remember that you only have to write discussion questions for the entire reading assignment, not individual chapters or even stories.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Due Date** | | **Assignment** |
| March 5 | Wednesday | Prologue and Allegory of the Cave and Black and Blue song |
| March 6 | Thursday | Chapter 1 and Norman Rockwell’s work |
| March 11 | Tuesday | Chapter 2 & 3 |
| March 17 | Monday | Chapters 4 & 5 |
| March 20 | Thursday | Chapters 6, 7 and Washington’s “Atlanta Exposition Address” |
| March 25 | Tuesday | Chapters 8, 9 and “African American Folktales and Songs” |
| March 31 | Spring Break | Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (chapter 10 is so loaded I want you to write two questions on it and another two questions for chapters 11/12/13/14) |
| April 10 | Thursday | Chapter 15 and “Black Men in Public Space” |
| April 15 | Tuesday | Chapters 16 |
| April 17 | Thursday | 17 & 18 and Malcolm X’s “Coming to the Awareness of Language” |
| April 24 | Thursday | Chapters 19, 20, 21 |
| May 1 | Thursday | Chapters 22,23, 24 |
| May 5 | Monday | Chapter 25 |
| May 6 | Tuesday | Epilogue and Ellison’s “Harlem is Nowhere” |
| May 7 | Wednesday | Final Test – Specifically review reading log responses, motifs, and characters |

**READING LOG QUESTIONS**

### Chapter 6

1. What shocking aspects of Bledsoe’s character are revealed to the narrator?
2. What specific statements does Bledsoe make that show his concern is for himself rather than for the school or for the advancement of other Blacks?
3. Read the last paragraph on p. 146 beginning “How did I come to this?” What do you make of the paragraph in terms of the narrator’s struggle to find his identity?

**Chapter 7**

1. Who does the narrator meet on the bus to New York? Why dos the encounter make him uncomfortable?
2. On p. 152, the narrator is told New York is “not a place, it’s a dream.” Interpret this statement.
3. How does the fate of the vet parallel the fate of the narrator? Think of how both are controlled.
4. Reread the final paragraph on p. 153 What do you make of the vet’s advice?
5. On p. 155, the vet says, “there’s always an element of crime in freedom.” What does this statement mean to you? Do you agree or disagree?
6. Describe the narrator’s encounter with Ras.

### Chapter 8

1. In the first six chapters, the narrator’s identity is defined by the scholarship. Now the letters defines it. Describe them.
2. Notice the narrator’s decision to get a watch. How does fit with his new identity. Look for other images to watches and time.
3. How does the narrator deny his Southern heritage? Why does he do this?
4. Why do you think the narrator dreams of his grandfather?

**Chapter 9**

1. How does Peter Wheatstraw (with plans) make the narrator homesick?
2. What is the symbolism of Wheatstraw’s blueprints?
3. How does the narrator continue to deny his Southern heritage?
4. Look at the details from Emerson’s office.
5. Why does Emerson keep referring to Huck Finn?
6. Walt Whitman wrote a series of homoerotic poems called the Calamus poems. Can you make any inferences about young Emerson from his reference to the Calamus Club?
7. Why might young Emerson identify with the narrator and Blacks in general?

**Chapter 10**

Ellison says that beginning with chapter 10, the novel begins to rely heavily on expressionism. In very simple terms, expressionism uses concrete objects to attempt to objectify abstract inner feelings. Therefore, objects in the novel function as complex multifaceted symbols. Remember that chapter 10 and 11 are not to be perceived as realistic, but rather as expressionistic.

1. Consider the racial connotations of Liberty Paints. Think about the company name, trademark, slogans, government contracts, and Optic White. What do you think the company symbolizes?
2. Why has the company been hiring Blacks?
3. Think about how Optic White is manufactured. What do the 10 drops of “dead black liquid” symbolize?
4. Note that Lucius Brockway works deep in the basement of the factory, hidden from view. Is this symbolic? How is Brockway like Bledsoe? How is he different?
5. How is Brockway himself like the 10 drops?
6. After the explosion on p. 230, the narrator is thrust “into a wet blast of black emptiness that is somehow a bath of whiteness. How does this immersion of a Black man into a world of whiteness continue the expressionism of the chapter?

**Chapter 11**

The expressionist images of chapter 10 are black and white. Here they are death and rebirth.

1. What images of this chapter echo the Battle Royal?
2. The doctors at the factory hospital shock the narrator until he enters a warm watery world. Look for other images of the womb and birth.
3. Afterwards, the narrator is a blank slate with no memory or identity. How do the doctor’s questions develop this image of rebirth?
4. Why has the narrator been reborn? What aspects of his old identity have died?
5. Buckeye the Rabbit is the same as Brer Rabbit. Remember the reference to the Tar Baby in chapter 10? In realizing that he is Buckeye the Rabbit, the narrator finds the wit and strength to escape from the machine. How is the machine like Trueblood’s clock? How does Buckeye the Rabbit embody the folk wisdom of the narrator’s childhood? How has he been reborn into the identity he at first denied upon arriving in New York?
6. What lesson has the narrator learned?

**Chapter 12 (**transitional bridge between the two halves of the novel)

1. In what way is the narrator childlike?
2. How does he permanently close off the link with his old aspirations and dreams?

**Chapter 13**

1. Peter Wheatstraw foreshadows the encounter with the yam seller. How do these encounters differ? What changes are revealed in the narrator’s identity? How is his change in identity linked with his desire to show Bledsoe as a fraud?
2. In the eviction scene, the narrator makes his second speech of the novel. Study it carefully. Compare it to the first speech. Take notes about the narrator’s developing identity.
3. How does the narrator meet Brother Jack? The Brotherhood is a thinly veiled version of the Communist Party. Richard Wright, Ellison’s first mentor, was an active member in the Communist Party. At Wright’s request, Ellison wrote a number of articles for leftist publications between 1937 and 1944, but never joined. He objected to the Communist Party’s limitations of individuality and personal expression.
4. What new piece of paper replaces the letters from Bledsoe as the narrator’s identity?

**Chapter 14**

1. What pushes the narrator to accept The Brotherhood’s offer?
2. Note that the building is called the Chthonia. In Greek mythology, this is another name for Hades’ realm, the underworld. What descriptions and images can you find that convey the sense of entering an underworld type of realm? Why is entering the world of The Brotherhood like entering the underworld?
3. The phone number has been replaced by a new name in an envelope? Why? Why are we never told of this new name?
4. How does the party scene remind the reader of how limited and/or hypocritical most whites are in the understanding of the treatment of Blacks?

**Chapter 15**

1. Think about the symbolism of the Sambo bank. Is it related to Clifton’s Sambo doll? What about the fact that it belonged to Mary Rambo? What about the bank’s “grinning mouth” that swallows coins? Think back to the Battle Royal in Chapter 1.

**Chapter 16**

1. List all the images of blindness in this chapter. What do you think the narrator means when he says he has become “more human?”
2. How does the narrator use the image of blindness as the central theme of his speech?
3. Be prepared to discuss the speech as a further expression of the narrator’s developing identity.
4. The rewritten quote from James Joyce is often discussed. Do you think that it is the duty of an individual to represent a particular race, gender or group? Do you believe it is more important to concentrate on developing ones individual identity?
5. What is The Brotherhood’s reaction to the speech? What is your personal reaction? What criticism of The Brotherhood is implied here?

**Chapter 17**

1. How much time has passed since the narrator’s speech?
2. Describe Brother Hambro.
3. What is Ras’ political doctrine and why is it in conflict with that of The Brotherhood?
4. Who is Tod Clifton? Why do he and the narrator become friends? Note that “tod” means death in German. Why does Ras spare Clifton’s life?
5. Ras pleads with the narrator to become a part of black unity and leave The Brotherhood. His arguments are similar to those of Black Panthers and others who came to the political forefront in the 1960’s. The Communist Party did, in effect, betray the Blacks who helped build the party in the 1930’s. What side do you believe Ellison is supporting?
6. What is significant about the portrait of Douglass that hangs in Brother Tarp’s office? How is Tarp like Douglass? Like the narrator’s grandfather?

**Chapter 18**

1. Consider the symbolism of the link of chain Tarp gives the narrator. It what ways does it link the narrator to Tarp? To his past? Is it significant that Westrum rejects that link?
2. What seems to cause the fight between Wrestrum and the narrator? What do you think is the REAL reason for this fight?
3. At the end of the chapter, the narrator is sent out of Harlem. Why would The Brotherhood remove a successful member of the party and send him off to lecture on a subject about which he knows so little either by training or personal experience?

**Chapter 19**

Note that chapter 19 is a transitional chapter like chapters 7 and 12.

This chapter details the narrator’s seduction by the nameless “woman in red.”

1. In what ways is Ellison playing with the idea that white women are drawn to Black me?
2. What reaction does the woman give when her husband comes home?
3. What is the narrator’s action?
4. Do you think this chapter is humorous, or is it serious social commentary.

**Chapter 20**

1. The narrator has been away from Harlem for several months. What “emergency” calls him back downtown?
2. What changes have taken place in the movement since he left. (Note how things have changed in the Jolly Dollar Bar.
3. What does Ellison mean when he says that returning to Harlem was “like returning to the city of the dead?”
4. What is Clifton selling?
5. How does the Sambo doll relate to the Sambo bank?
6. What do you think the doll symbolizes? Consider the fact that it is a puppet whose strings are pulled.
7. How does Tod Clifton die? What is the narrator’s reaction to his death?

# Chapter 21

1. Why does the narrator feel guilt over Clifton’s death?
2. Look at the funeral speech. How many times does the narrator use Clifton’s name? Why so many?

**Chapter 22**

1. Why is the meeting with the Brotherhood described in terms of a dream?
2. On p. 463, the members are said to have “flowed in one channel too long and too deeply.” What does this mean?
3. Why does the Brotherhood object to the phrase “personal responsibility?”
4. Contrast the reaction of the Brotherhood to the funeral speech to the audience’s reaction to the graduation speech. Has the narrator come full circle?
5. What is the significance of Brother Jack’s glass eye? How does it develop the sight image that is throughout the book?

**Chapter 23**

1. What symbolism do you find in the narrator’s purchase of dark glasses?
2. What are Rinehart’s various identities?
3. Is there any symbolism in Rinehart’s name (Rind and heart)?
4. Has Rinehart learned to play an identity game?

# Chapter 24

1. Contrast the narrator’s encounter with Sybil with that of the woman in red whose husband came home early.
2. What is the significance of the last line in the chapter?

# Chapter 25

1. What causes the riot?
2. Think about the Book of Revelations in the Bible. In what ways is Ras like one of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse?
3. What drives the narrator underground?
4. What does the narrator do with the papers in his briefcase? How is this action symbolic?

**Epilogue**

1. In what ways has the novel come full circle?
2. Is this a satisfactory ending for the novel? Why or why not?

**Chapter Analysis Sheet**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Chapters: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Symbols:**

**Explication of Themes:**

Purpose / Summary of Chapters:

**Rhetorical Devices Noted:**

**Key Characters:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Quotation from Text | Pg. | Response |
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**Socratic Discussion**

**Group Size**: 3-4

**Materials**: Chapters to Be Discussed, Annotations and Dialectical Journal for your assigned chapters

**Objectives**: To analyze specific elements of literature used in *Invisible Man*, and to use the dialectical method to reach (or at least seek) a better understanding of the novel.

**Procedure:** On the day of your group’s discussion, each student must come prepared with an example of ***one*** of the Four Elements defined below, always from the specific chapter(s) assigned that day (see the *Invisible Man* reading schedule). Each group member will share their example during class, and everyone will write down the examples on the “Chapter Analysis handout” the exact quote from the novel, the page number. Comments should explain why a given example is this or that, not merely label it, e.g. “The ‘Battle Royal’ is an example of irony because IM humiliates himself in order to give a speech on the subject of humility.” The quotes may be shown on a Powerpoint, Prezi, etc.

Once the Four Elements have been discussed and noted, which should take no more than fifteen minutes, the Group Leader will pose a Socratic question for discussion. The group will then discuss the question and seek an answer ***together*** by going through the text. Everyone in the group will write down that week’s question in the “comments” column on the right-hand side of their paper, then the corresponding answer—once the whole group has agreed upon one—underneath it. Because the answer must be text-based, students must also write down a specific quote from the text and the page number on the left-hand side as we move through the discussion.

See the instructions on the back for posing an appropriate Socratic question.

**The Four Literary Elements**

1. **Rhetoric**

* *Rhetoric* refers to the various methods that authors and their characters use to persuade or influence. This especially includes all forms of **figurative language**, such as **simile** and **metaphor**, **personification**, **anaphora**, **metonymy**, **hyperbole**, **apostrophe**, **verbal irony**, **analogy**, **paradox**, **oxymoron**, **aphorism**, **litotes**, **allusion**, **anastrophe**, and many others. Look also for words that have **connotative** or **multiple meanings**; and look also for **tone shifts**, i.e. changes in mood or feeling within the same chapter or even the same paragraph.

1. **Character**

* This refers to the distinct characteristics of each person in the story, including Invisible Man, the narrator. Analyze a particular character’s personality traits, physical traits, and patterns that distinguish him or her from the others. Also look for **flat** and **round** **characters**, **stock characters** (also called **stereotypes**), and **archetypes**. (Stereotypes are predictable in their behavior; archetypes are usually not.) Finally, you may try analyzing a character’s rhetoric by focusing on the rhetorical devices mentioned above.

1. **Conflict**

* All stories are driven by conflict, and *Invisible Man* is no exception. The five traditionally recognized kinds of conflict are as follows: ***man vs. man, man vs. nature, man vs. society, man vs. himself,*** and ***man vs. God or Fate***. However, a complex story like *Invisible Man* involves not one but all five varieties of conflict at different points. Choose at least one of the five kinds of conflict and argue as to why you believe it dominates your assigned chapter.

1. **Theme**

* *Theme* means the ideas presented in the story, either directly or indirectly. You can look for overarching themes that occur across the story, or ideas that are raised only in certain instances. Look for “isms” such as **dualism**, **individualism**, **realism**, **cynicism**, **existentialism**, etc. Look also for references to religions and particular philosophies (like Plato’s “forms”).

**The Socratic Question**

The defining characteristic of a Socratic question is that it is **open-ended**, meaning it has no right or wrong answer. The object of the Socratic Method, also known as *dialectic*, is to find truth through honest and challenging dialogue. Once the question is posed, each group member must try to formulate a truthful answer **based solely on evidence in the text**. If necessary, the group leader will then ask more questions designed to find contradictions in the answer or to refine the answer to its most essential (but still truthful) form. As in a jury deliberation, the dialectic is finished either when a consensus is reached or all attempts to reach one have failed. In the case of the latter, everyone must still write a thoughtful, text-based, individual response to the Socratic question.

**Sample Socratic Question Starters:**

**Ethics Questions:** “Is it right that…?” or “Is it fair that…?”

**Causality Questions:** “Why does/doesn’t…?” or “How does ***x*** affect ***y***?”

**Semantic Questions:** “What is the meaning of…?”

**Probability Questions:** “What if…?”

**Comparison/Contrast Questions:** “How can we compare ***x*** to ***y***?”

**Follow-Up Questions:**

**How did you reach that conclusion?**

**Can you give me an example?**

**What is your proof of that?**

**Are you saying ... or ... ?**

**Can you rephrase that?**

**Why are you assuming ... ?**

*Invisible Man* Test--------------------------------------------------------------

MATCHING:

1. Ras
2. Homer Barbee
3. Brother Jack
4. Tod Clifton
5. Sybil
6. Jim Trueblood
7. The Vet
8. Mary Rambo
9. Lucius Brockway
10. Rinehart
11. Mr. Norton
12. Emma
13. Dr. Bledsoe
14. Westrum
15. Brother Tarp

match the following characters to their descriptions. Answers are not used more   
than once.

1. Blind minister who speaks at college
2. Brotherhood member killed by police
3. Initially is admired by the narrator because he was a powerful black man
4. Sharecropper living near college
5. Physician who introduces narrator to concept of invisibility
6. Her seduction is a way of getting back at the Brotherhood
7. Landlord who cares for the narrator
8. One-eyed member of Brotherhood
9. Black militant separationist
10. Taken to the Golden Day for a drink
11. Has multiple identities, narrator is mistaken for him

match the following Quotes to their speaker. Answers are not used more than once. You may repeat answers from questions 1-11.

1. “And there’s another reason why the Old Man ain’t goin’ let nobody come down here messing with me… He knows the reason our paint is so good is because of the way [I] puts the pressure on them oils and resins before they leaves the tanks.”
2. “She’s crying, ‘Daddy, Daddy, oh Daddy’ just like that. And all at once I remember the ole lady. She right beside us snorin’ and I can’t move ‘casue I figgers if I moved it would be a sin. And I figgers to that if I don’t move it maybe ain’t no sin, ‘cause it happened when I was asleep.”
3. “The school tries to look out for its own. Only one thing more. These letters will be sealed; don’t open them if you want help. White folk are strict about such things. The letters will introduce you and request them to help you with a job. I’ll do my best for you and it isn’t necessary for you to open them, understand?”
4. “Men’s House, shucks that ain’t no place for nobody in your condition what’s weak and needs a woman to keep an eye on you awhile… I live just up the street and round the corner. You better come round and rest til you feel stronger. I’ll take care of you like I done a heap of others… I can smell that hospital smell on you son. You got enough ether in those clothes to put to sleep a dog.”
5. “Well I wasn’t always lame, and I’m not really now ‘cause the doctors can’t find anything wrong with the leg. They say it’s as sound as a piece of steel. What I mean is I got this limp from dragging a chain… It was the chain and after nineteen years I haven’t been able to stop dragging my leg.”
6. “There is a reason my destiny is connected to yours, a reason more important , more passionate and yes, even more sacred than all the others. A girl, my daughter. She was a being more rare, more beautiful, purer and more perfect and more delicate than the wildest dream of the poet. I could never believe her to be my own flesh and blood… Here, young man. You much of your good fortune in attending school here to her…The best medical science could not save her. Everything I’ve done since her passing has been a monument to her memory.”
7. “Ignore his lying tongue…Hang him up to teach the black people a lesson, and theer be no more traitors. No more Uncle Toms. Hang him up theer with them blahsted dummies!”
8. “But don’t you think he should be a little blacker?”
9. “It was an issue I can confront only by evading it… These hands so lovingly trained to master a scalpel yearn to caress a trigger. I returned to save life and I was refused. Ten men in masks drove me out of the city at midnight and beat me with whips for saving a human life. And I was forced to the utmost degradation because I possessed skilled hands and the belief that my knowledge could bring me dignity—not wealth, only dignity—and other men health!”
10. “*What makes him happy, what makes him dance, This Sambo, this jambo, this high-stepping joy boy? He’s more than a toy, ladies and gentlemen, he’s Sambo the dancing doll, a twenteith century miracle. Look at that rumba, that suzy-q, he’s Sambo-boogie, Sambo-Woogie, you don’t have to feed him, he sleeps collapsed, he’ll kill your depression And your dispossession, he lives upon the sunshine of your lordly smile And twenty-five cents, the brotherly two bits of a dollar because he wants me to eat. It gives him pleasure to see me eaat. You simply take im and shake him… and he does the rest.”*
11. “Lie back and let me look at you against that white sheet. You’re beautiful… Look at me like that; just like you want to tear me apart. I love for you to look at me like that… Did you do it boo’ful?… I don’t seem to remember.”
12. “You appear to be a man who knew his duty toward the people and performed it. Your speech was powerful and I want you to call me. Just take this number and ask for me”

match the oratory to the correct details. Answers can be used more than once.

1. Graduation
2. Eviction
3. 1st Brotherhood
4. Funeral
5. Shared in the same scene as the “Battle Royal”
6. Opinions based on the Founder’s ideology
7. Helps the Brotherhood decide to give the narrator speaking lessons
8. Helps to spark the riot at the end of the book
9. Raises the Brotherhood’s interest in the narrator
10. Embraced by powerful white community
11. Repeats the name of Tod Clifton

Multiple Choice

1. The “battle royal” where the black boys are made to fight each other symbolizes
   1. The backwardness of southern blacks as compared to northern blacks
   2. The violent stereotypes held about blacks in northern society
   3. The way whites manipulate blacks by turning them against one another
   4. The way things were in small southern towns 50 years ago
2. The narrator gets his identity in the first quarter of the novel by following the model of
   1. The Founder and Dr. Bledsoe
   2. His grandfather and Trueblood
   3. Mr. Norton and Mr. Emerson
   4. Brother Jack and Tod Clifton
3. The letters of recommendation that Dr. Bledsoe gives to the narrator really say
   1. “Keep this Nigger-Boy Running”
   2. “Blacks and Whites can Become One”
   3. “Separate but Equal is Best”
   4. “Treat Him as You Wish to be Treated”
4. The Brotherhood represents
   1. White “do-gooders”
   2. The Communist party
   3. Suffragists
   4. The brotherhood of man
5. The narrator’s experience at Liberty Paints suggests that
   1. American businesses were opposed to unionization
   2. The narrator ought to work for a company owned by black people
   3. The black man cannot trust fellow blacks
   4. Whites use blacks to enhance their own superiority
6. The turning point at the center of the novel is the narrator’s
   1. Witnessing of the eviction of two old people
   2. Decision that he has made a mistake in coming North
   3. Decision to move from Men’s House to Mary Rambo’s
   4. The narrator hearing Trueblood’s story
7. Brother Jack’s character is symbolized by his
   1. Limp
   2. Glass eye
   3. Business suit
   4. Green glasses
8. The death of Tod Clifton is
   1. Totally the fault of white society
   2. Secretly brought about by the Brotherhood
   3. In part the result of Tod’s own despair of finding answers
   4. Meaningless to the narrator
9. The narrator ends up in a deserted coal cellar where he
   1. Plans to work to alleviate racism
   2. Tries to think through the things in his life that got him there
   3. Plots revenge against Bledsoe, Norton, and the Brotherhood
   4. Hides from the people who helped to put him there
10. The narrator is expelled from college because he
    1. Behaved improperly with a white man
    2. Exposed aspects of black life Dr. Bledsoe wanted to keep hidden
    3. Was guilty of insubordination with Dr. Bledsoe
    4. Dared to take a drink when he was on duty
11. Young Mr. Emerson reveals the contents of the letter to the narrator
    1. Because he feels guilty about what the white world is doing to blacks
    2. Because he personally despised Bledsoe
    3. Because he feels betrayed by the majority, as well
    4. A and C
12. The narrator’s encounters on the street with Peter Wheatstraw and later the yam seller
    1. Suggest the importance of forgetting the past
    2. Remind him that his southern folk heritage is part of his identity
    3. Reinforce the hopelessness of the black situation in New York
    4. Serve to only reinforce his hatred of Bledsoe and the Founder
13. The member of the Brotherhood most faithful to the narrator and his work in Harlem is
    1. Brother Wrestrum
    2. Brother Tarp
    3. Brother Tobitt
    4. Brother Jack
14. The Brother hood is opposed to the narrator’s emotional and personal style of speaking because
    1. They are afraid the crowds will get out of control
    2. It makes the other speakers look bad
    3. It simply is not effective in moving the audience
    4. It does not reflect their scientific, rational philosophy
15. The identity of Rinehart
    1. Gives the narrator the opportunity to make major reforms
    2. Clouds the narrator’s vision even more
    3. Allows the narrator to undermine Ras the Exhorter
    4. Allows the narrator to survive in a world of chaos and confusion
16. The decision of the narrator to leave his cave at the end of the novel symbolizes
    1. The end of contemplation and the beginning of action
    2. His failure to learn anything from his experiences
    3. His compromises in order to survive in life
    4. His rejection of society entirely

*Invisible Man* Short Answers -----------------------------------------------------------------------

Select FIVE of the following symbols from *Invisible Man.* Give the context of the symbol (when and where we see the symbol) and the symbol’s significance (how it functions on a symbolic level).

1. the dancing doll
2. dark green glasses
3. cast iron bank
4. optic white
5. briefcase
6. link from a leg chain
7. provo freedom papers
8. white mannequins
9. Founder’s statue
10. lightbulbs

In-class essay

Chapter 11

The primary expressionistic symbolism of chapter 11 is of rebirth. After being symbolically killed in chapter 10 and entering " a blast of black emptiness that was somehow a bath of whiteness," the narrator is resurrected with a new identity. Write a brief essay (250-350 words) in which you show how Ellison uses the images of birth to create a new identity for the Invisible Man. Remember that you are not merely cataloging the images, but analyzing HOW they are used to create an new identity. You need not discuss every image, but for the sake of focus, those you chose must somehow relate to identity. The following questions may help give you focus, but they ARE NOT intended as an outline for your paper. In fact, you may not necessarily answer all of them in this paper.

1. What is symbolic about the narrator's "death" in chapter 10? How and why does he die?

2. Is the new identity fully formed? Does he just become a new person?

3. How does the narrator differ now that he has been "killed" by the experiences of the first 10 chapters? What lessons has he learned? Are there still other lessons to learn before he may become a complete person?

4. Have all traces of his former life been lost? If not, which ones are retained? Is there any significance to those that remain?

Chapter 11 Sample Essay

In chapter 11 of *Invisible Man,* the novel's protagonist experiences the "death" of his old self, and through images of birth, Ellison creates a new identity, one that is less encumbered by the limiting perceptions of society. Ellison indicates that the narrator is dealing with identity by having the factory doctors pose a series of questions. The first, "What is your name?" leaves the narrator puzzled. He tells the reader, "I realized that I no longer knew my own name." This mindless state in which the narrator's "mind is a blank slate, as though [he] had just begun to live," makes it clear that the former identity has indeed died. The question still remains what the new, emerging identity will be.

The next question "WHO…ARE…YOU?" produces another response. The narrator feels that "This phrasing of the question seemed to set of a series of weak and distant lights where the other had thrown a spark that failed." The narrator is vaguely aware that his name is merely a construction of his society, the way he is identified by others. He fails to answer the question "What is your name?" because he no longer recognizes society's authority to impose an identity upon him. The question "Who are you?" implies something deeper than one's name. It is one of individuality, of who we are in spite of society's perceptions. However, it is still a question that the narrator cannot answer.

The next question "What is your mother's name?" leads to a puzzling thought. The glass box in which the narrator is encased is clearly a type of artificial womb, a "huge iridescent bubble" that forms a "vast whiteness in which," the narrator tells us, "I myself was lost." The glass womb represents society, an overwhelming white world that refuses to recognize the narrator's true identity. And yet, this society is clearly identified as the narrator's "mother" through the imagery of the womb and the fact that the machine is expressing the pains of labor through "a distinct wail of female pain." He is baffled by the thought, saying "A machine my mother? Clearly, I was out of my head." In spite of its limiting nature, the narrator realizes that this society sustains him, much as the mother sustains the unborn fetus. He thinks of "plotting ways of short-circuiting the machine," but concludes, "I had no desire to destroy myself even if it destroyed the machine. I wanted freedom, not destruction." Finally, the narrator sees that he is dependent upon society, but yet he will have to move beyond its limits to find his true self. He says that "When I discover who I am I'll be free."

At this point, the narrator is literally born anew. He feels "a tug at [his] belly" and watches "one of the physicians pull the cord that was attached to the stomach node, jerking [him] forward." The umbilical cord is symbolically severed, and the narrator is finally freed from the machine, from the society that left him "cramped," and in "need [of] more room." The new identity is still vague and not fully formed, but from this rebirth, the narrator will continue to explore his identity is an Invisible Man.

*Invisible Man*  chapter 15 in-class writing assignment

Examine the symbol of the Sambo bank. Write an essay in which you explain what the bank symbolizes and how Ellison uses the bank to develop a larger theme in the novel.

Consider the following:

1. What stage of development is the narrator in at the beginning of chapter 15? Read the opening carefully to determine his state of mind.
2. What does the bank look like?
3. Who owns the bank?
4. Does the bank remind him of his past in any way?
5. What does he do with the pieces of the bank?
6. What happens when he tries to throw the pieces of the bank away?
7. What is Ellison trying to say in this novel about racial identity? Does the bank fit into the points he is trying to make about the complex nature of social identity and individuality?

What: the major theme developed by the Sambo bank

How: the use of symbolism