



Chapter ③

Contrastive Analysis of *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Invisible Man*

3.1 Searching for Self-identity in *The Catcher in the Rye*

The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger had been acknowledged as the great wonder he has created in literary history. When the novel was published, it immediately became the best seller and aroused more than two hundred commentary articles about it. After that, the novel was published in many countries in such a great number that the novel had exerted great influence in the fields of literature and society of the realistic aspects and the psychology of the contemporary adolescents. In the story, the protagonist Holden dissatisfied with his teachers and classmates in school and his parents as well as the society. Although he was intelligent and sensitive, Holden narrated the story in a cynical voice since he found the hypocrisy and ugliness of the world around him almost unbearable and through his cynicism he tried to protect himself from the pain and disappointment of the adult world. He was born with a golden key in the mouth, however, he detested the hypocrites and the phonies in school so that he played truant to shun the teachers and examinations. After failing the examinations, he was dismissed from the school and trying to avoid the blame from his parents, he chose to wonder around in New York for few days where he encountered several adventures and perils. He was confronted with the intrigue and assault from the adult society therefore he felt deprived and desolate, as a result, with

disappointment about the adult life and society, he was determined to become a catcher in the rye to protect the children from falling off the cliff. However, his criticisms which aimed at people around him were also aimed at himself. He was uncomfortable with his own weakness, and at times displayed the exact phoniness, meanness and superficiality as the people did around him.

Holden was always searching for his identity. He was supposed to be a hard-working student and to be a lawyer or businessman so as to be rich and to live the luxurious lives as his father did. This was Holden's projective self but he found that others in the society were so mean and phony so his ideal self was to be a catcher in the rye. The division between real self and the ideal self brought confusion and contradiction since at most times the ideal self is above the real self and if the proper gap/distance between them, it will become the great drive to help the adolescents to grow up but if the gap/distance is too large then the adolescents will be absorbed into the great pain. Therefore Holden was always at a loss since he realized that his ideal self could never be achieved since it was too impractical to realize due to the evils in the real world.

3.1.1 The Four-Fold Concept of Identity Status

The most significant changes in identity status occur in the late or early twenties. Studies have shown that about half the students change their identity during college, while the other half remains stable in their identity status. College provides a socially acceptable atmosphere for the exploration of ideas, social roles, career goals and values. According to the psychologist James Marcia, there are four-fold concept of identity status, that is, the identity achievements status, the identity foreclosure status, the identity moratorium status and the identity confusion^[3].

Accordingly, attending college often promotes a temporary moratorium as well as the eventual attainment of a satisfying personal identity. Students in the foreclosure status tend to move into the moratorium status and those in the moratorium and confusion status tend to move out of those categories during college. The identity confusion status means the flip side of the development task of determining a self-chosen identity. Individuals in this category exhibit high levels of anxiety, rigid or

stereotyped behavior, and a strong sense of inadequacy. Some may lose themselves in the endless absorption with social life, sex and drugs. Or they may become loners and drifters, unable to hold down a job or sustain a steady relationship. What is worse, others who suffering from profound emotional disturbances as well as attempted suicide need professional help.

Holden suffered from the identity confusion since neither did he want to study hard, nor did he spend years learning how to write English, get along with girls, or be liked by his associates, his only answer comes from an inherited ideal of it and he does not to live as other ordinaries and has no other wishes but to be a catcher in the rye, therefore the most profound aspect of Holden's character is his innocent wish to protect children for he hoped to be capable of preventing the children from the pollution of the adult society and the cliff is a symbol which separates childhood (symbolic of innocence and bliss) from adulthood (symbolic of corruption and adulteration). His inability to successfully negotiate the chasm leveled him on the verge of nervous breakdown and emotional collapse. Holden feels surrounded by dishonest and false pretenses and throughout the book. One major theme Holden concerned was called "phoniness". He felt surrounded by dishonesty and false pretenses, therefore he attempted to get rid of all the phoniness around him. However, he also put on pretenses, lies and made irrational and contradictory assumptions to mask his feelings and actions, which further alienated him from society. Nevertheless, many critics believed that this was misinterpretations of Holden's use of "phoniness", since while he lied and exhibited other flaws, he did not fall into his own category. Possibly, the "phoniness" was about not being honest with oneself and with his or her inner feelings including pain and disappointment. Holden's "phoniness" might referred to the fact that the adults stuck to the dogma, and this could be what he had in mind when he labeled the adults as such. In contrast, though Holden labeled other people as "phoniness", he revealed much of his own carnality, showing himself to the readers as being honest with himself throughout the book. But why did others who lived in the same world live happily? Why was Holden confused and losing his identity? Though the world was somehow hypocritical and ugly and he was more sensitive than others to search for the true emotions and innocence as well as the love in the

society, as Hans Bungert, the German critic, said that the true reason why only Holden was confused lied in that he was young and he had stepped out of the children's ordered world and he was still in the transitory stage to gradually before stepping into the adult world^[2].

Therefore, Holden could not accept the world as it is but imagined the world which is created according to his own needs and therefore as long as he found the world was quite different from his imagination, he became anxious, disappointed, frightened and even mad. This is a typical example of conflict of realistic self and the ideal self. He smoke, drunk, dropped out of the school in order to lose himself but his ideal self, to be a catcher in the rye, is too impractical to realize. He hoped to protect the children from the adult world and imagined that they would never grow up so as to keep their innocence, however, this was against the nature rule. He also hoped to go to the west, to be a deaf mute and far away from the society, to be alienated from others but undoubtedly this was only a fantasy. His ideal illustrated how he wished to wipe out corruption as well as many "phoniness". The fact that he hated adults, which was clearly illustrated by Holden's attack on Stradlater after the date with Jane Gallagher. The fact that Jane always kept her king in the back row during a game of checkers was significant to Holden because he wanted her to protect her virginity. However, Holden found it impossible to maintain innocence. After witnessing some vulgar graffiti on the walls in Phone's elementary school and the museum, he realized that neither could he be able to erase it all and nor he could protect children from the world indefinitely. Holden was dangling between the childhood and adulthood since he was reluctant and feared to enter the adult world, where was filled with the phoniness, pretense and indifference from his perspective. He lamented the innocent and unspoiled life, but there was no going back to the past for the society denies going back.

One who has the identity confusion would always withdraw and isolate themselves from peers and family, or they immense themselves in the world of peers and lose their identities in the crowd. Since Holden did not wish to grow up the same as others did, he chose to isolate himself from peers and family after he failed to successfully communicate with them. According to the social psychology, the childhood

socialization means the ways in which individuals learn skills, knowledge, values, motives, and roles appropriate to their position in a group or society while the socialization has four components, it always involves someone who serves as a source of what is being learned, a learning process, a person who is being socialized as well as something that is being learned. They are always be referred as agent, process, target and outcome. They are three important agents in the childhood socialization, that is, the family, peers and school. Parents, peers and non-parental adults can offer social support to early adolescents.

In this novel, Mr. Antolini served as a source of who should be followed. He was his English teacher at Elkton Hills, another school he attended before who Holden sought for guidance and a place to stay for night. As Mr. Spence did, his history teacher at Pency also tried to make Holden understand maturity . Perhaps since in the beginning Holden always took him as an example and accepted his advices since he once believed that he was his best teacher but the visit to his apartment disappointed him since Mr. Antolini defined the mature like that, *“The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly. for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that, he wants to live humbly for one.”*^[4] His definition of maturation contradicted with Holden's ideal, self and what's more, Holden caught him patting his head while he was sleeping. He feared that Mr. Antolini may be making homosexual advances, and he fled his apartment immediately.

3.1.2 Family's Influence on the Confirming of the Self-identity.

Family's supporting and supervisions functions have become more vital in the adolescent period when compared with the function of protection and upbringing. Parents who guide and direct, set limits and appropriately, discipline their teenage children play a positive part in the development of their adolescents. Boas proposed a model of parenting with a strong theoretical foundation linking parenting and adolescent identity formation^[5]. He identified three aspects of socialization that are necessary for healthy development: a sense of connectedness, also referred to as warmth relationship with significant others; parental regulation of behavior and facilitation of psychological autonomy; responsiveness to the need to separate from par-

ents. The sense of security found in the connectedness and warmth in regard to significant others is crucial for exploration in identity formation^[2]. It may be hypothesized that parental support and monitoring would be associated with higher identity achievement in adolescents. Leslie Fiddler found that parental support and monitoring of social and school activities were significant predictors of identity achievement^[6]. They describe how parental encouragement and support are vital in the individuation process as adolescents are not leaving behind their parents as they develop their identity...but rather, a qualitative change that permits distancing occurs^[7]. The parental role in the individuation of their adolescence children and in their adolescents' ongoing identity formation is usually positive and vitally important.

Psychologist Sartor and Thompson described adolescent not as a time of detachment from parents, but as a time for parents to consciously nourish the individuation process by ongoing, persistent support and encouragement of their adolescent children^[8]. Leonard Unger (1998:105) found that adolescent identity formation is an endeavor that leads to a restructuring of parent-adolescent relationships rather than a process of breaking ties with the family of origin^[9]. In the early adolescent period parents still offer a significant influence as young people independence at this stage have not developed as a strong need to seek and work toward independence from the family unit. The influence that parents exerted on their adolescent children has been found to be domain specific, pertaining specifically to school, future plans and career goals^[8].

There is a close relationship between the way of parenting and children's characteristics. Family is the source of power and the place where children can absorb the strength and affection to meet the need of the body and spirit. That is to say, the warmth and close relationship coming from family will bring them the sense of security and belonging and when parents make full use of the advantages of family, their children will confirm their self-identities easily. Harmonious family ties will lead to youth's stable self-esteem and effective social function. On the contrary, unhealthy family ties will result in the disorders and bad social relations of the adolescents. Therefore, the specific character of the offspring will be affected by their family and family members since family experience is the outcome of the function between

every family members, so each of them plays his or her special role. Everybody helps others in the same family to confirm their roles and vice versa therefore parents need constant understanding their children and may model the kids' behaviors. Parents' influences on their offspring are multifarious among which the most important one perhaps is the source of affection. With the aid of the Oedipus complex theory, teenagers' attachment to their parents can be explained as natural. When the adolescents felt frustrated in society, they could count on their parents for support. The frustration the adolescents suffered shows how important parents' support is and when the adolescents realized that no matter what happened to them, their parents would support them, which makes them confident and brave. Then how is Holden's family? His father occupied himself with the business while his mother immersed herself in the pain after Allie Caulfield, two years Holden's junior, died of leukemia when Holden was thirteen. In the beginning of the book, Holden told the readers, "In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They are nice and all—I'm not saying that—but they're also touchy as hell."^[4] The opening remarks indicated that he did not have much affection for his parents. His father was a successful lawyer who brings him great fortune. His career was so successful that he took it for granted that Holden should follow his steps to be a lawyer in the future. He was an autocratic father in Holden's eyes. For instance, he send Holden to quite good schools at any cost without any discussion with Holden before since he believed that his decision must be right and Holden could learn enough to be smart enough to be able to buy a Cadillac someday. However, Holden wasn't interested in the plan at all. If parents only stressed the importance of study and depreciate other aspects, the adolescents must feel that they are not valued and depreciated. Consequently, the disagreement between Holden and his father resulted in his expel from the school. What is worse, his father would blame Holden rather than reflect his decision without taking his son's idea into consideration. Apart from parents, other family members would exert influence on adolescents. D.B. Caulfield, the elder brother of Holden, had a great gift of writing who used to be example for Holden to

follow, however, D.B. Caulfield changed since he wrote things for the sake of money, which was hated by Holden. “*Now he’s out in Hollywood, D.B., being prostitute. If there’s one thing I hate, it’s the movie. Don’t even mention them to me.*”^[4]²¹⁷ These sentences proved how innocent and pure Holden was, for from his perspective as long as people work for money, they were not noble. There was another example to indicate his immaturity. Holden was aware that D.B. Caulfield hated war, but confused why did his brother recommend him the book *A Farewell to Arms*. Obviously, D.B. Caulfield was concerned about war and attracted by the books related to war such as *The Great Gatsby* and *A Farewell to Arms*, however, D.B. Caulfield thought Holden was too young to comprehend those books, therefore he never gave any guidance to Holden. Although Holden enjoyed his brother’s books and stories, he regarded him as the same as other adults in the phony world. Family member’s death definitely would exert great impact on adolescents. Sibling’s death absolutely has an enduring effect upon the surviving children and at the same time, sibling’s death may provide teenagers the impetus for psychological growth. In a research about half of the thirty-three interviewed adolescents reported moments when they thought they had seen or heard the dead news of their sibling. Twenty-three of the teenagers reported that their study habits changed after the death, and for most of these twenty-three their study habits became worse. Nineteen said their grades changed, with sixteen reporting lower grades after the death. Nine reported their academic work continued to be less productive than before^[10]. Allie, who was two years older than Holden, died of leukemia. Holden always missed Allie since her stand for the innocent childhood and his death symbolized the end of childhood. Allie was mild, considerate and intelligent and he was very close with Holden, and Holden smashed all windows in the garage of the family’s summer home with his fist the night he died, permanently damaging his hand. When Holden was afraid, Allie would pop up in his mind. “*Anyway, I kept walking and walking up Fifth Avenue, without any tie on or anything. Then all of a sudden, something very spooky started happening. Every time I came to the end of a block and stepped off the goddam curb, I had this feeling that I’d never get to the other side of the street. I thought I’d just go down, down, down, and nobody’d ever see me again. Boy, did it scare me. You can’t*

imagine. I started sweating like a bastard—my whole shirt and underwear and everything. Then I started doing something else. Every time I'd get to the end of a block I'd make believe I was talking to my brother Allie. I'd say to him, 'Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Please, Allie.' And then when I'd reach the other side of the street without disappearing. I'd thank him."^[4] During this process, Holden was so frightened for he thought as long as he grows up, he would not be himself any more. He could not get guidance or help from his parents or family members to release his anxiety and worry, so he had to seek help from his dead brother Allie whose death indicated the hope of keeping the childhood failed finally. Phoebe was Holden's younger sister, whom Holden preferred. Holden considered her as a paragon of innocence, and got furious at the sight of graffiti in her school, for fear that she would find out what it meant. In some ways, she can be even more mature than him, even criticizing him for childishness. Both Allie and Phoebe represented the pure and innocent world Holden loved and he missed them so much, for Phone gave great spiritual support to him and helped him gradually adapt to the society and finally give up the idea of being a catcher in the rye. In a word, except for Phoebe, Holden's family members failed to communicate with him effectively and timely.

3.1.3 Peer's Influence on the Confirming of the Self-identity

The social needs for the adolescents consist in the needs to be respected, the needs for friendship as well as the needs for the association. Compared with the former period of life, in the period of adolescence, the influences of peers are profound since the adolescents may get social support, the security as well as the intimacy from friends when they are achieving the task of "individualization" and get rid of the anxiety and the inferiority. They will turn to their friends, for support and self-clarification, including their friends' opinions in their emerging self-definitions. As one researcher on self-development commented, adolescents' friends are often the main source of reflected self-appraisals as well as the social mirror into which adolescents anxiously stare^[11].

Ward Stradlater, Holden's handsome and popular roommate, was a conceit and

arrogant person as well as one of the few sexually active boys at that school. He was simply a roommate rather than a good friend since he was always used to commanding others to follow his words, just like the author wrote, “*He was always asking you to do him a favor. You take a very handsome guy, or a guy that thinks he’s areal hot-shot, and they’re always asking you to do them a big favor. Just because they’re crazy about themselves’, too, and that you’re just dying to do them a favor.*”^[4] Holden was infuriated by his date with Jane Gallagher since he knew clearly that Ward was not serious falling in love with Jean Gallagher, not mention to his real appreciation of her beauty, therefore Holden provoked a violent encounter with him. Jean, in Holden eyes, was a pure and innocent girl. Holden did utmost to keep her purity and innocence since when they were playing checkers, Holden said, “*she’d get a king, she wouldn’t move it. She’d just leave it in the back row and she’d get them all lined up in the back row. Then she’d never use them. She just liked the way they looked when they were all in the, back row.*”^[4] Holden’s friendship with this roommate failed to help Holden ascertain his own identity.

Robert Ackley occupied the room adjacent to Holden’s at Pencey Prep. He was described by Holden as one of these very, very tall, round-shouldered guys. He was a “pimple-faced” social outcast with poor personal hygiene and an annoying personality. although Holden said Robert was irritating, Holden did feel occasional pangs of sympathy for him because he, like Holden, hanged out in the dorm a lot and did not go out very often. Carl Luce was a student at Columbia University whom Holden knew from Whooton, a school Holden once attended. Holden met up with him at a bar and was eager to discuss sex, as they had done many times before. But Holden’s personal questions about Luce’s own sex-life caused him to leave. In Holden’s eyes, both Ackley, Stradlater and Luce as well as other students were selfish, phony, indifferent and not interested in the mutual emotional exchange and conversation at all, and they only confined themselves to their own small field, therefore all of them are the victims of the “phony” education system. Since Holden pursued the innocence and the true love, he detested all the phoniness and as a consequence, he cannot turn to them for help to confirm the self-identity.

3.1.4 School's Influence on the Confirming of the Self-identity

School plays a vital part in the development of adolescents and as we mentioned above, the schools Holden once stayed in disappointed him by all the “phony” things and teachers. The task the teachers shouldering is to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. They therefore are supposed to stimulate students’ spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals. But the teachers in the novel all disappointed Holden, since all of them were immersed in the adult and phony world and directed Holden with their hypocritical views and disciplines.

“It’s frill of phonies, and all you do is study so that you can learn enough to be smart enough to be able to buy a goddam Cadillac some day.”^[4]

“It was one of the worst schools I ever went to. It was full of phonies. I mean they’re all right if they go around saving innocent guys’ lives all the time, and like that, but you don’t do that kind of stuff if you’re a lawyer. ...How would you know you weren’t being a phony? The trouble is, you wouldn’t.”^[4]

Holden rarely gain any support from his parents as well as his siblings and he could not get help from classmates and school teachers, therefore it is no wonder he lost into the loneliness and depression. Mr. Spenser was Holden’s history teacher at Pencey School. Before Holden left school, he run to Spencer’s house to bid farewell. However, this visit was not pleasant as it supposed to be. When Holden arrived at his house, Spenser immediately gave him a dull lecture beginning with asking how many subjects he had failed and then Spenser repeated the wrong part in Holden’s history examination even though Holden gave him a hint that he did not like that. What was worse, when Holden told him something, to which Spenser paid little attention. What Mr. Spenser did and said made Holden regret this visit, “*He put my goddam paper down and then looked at me like he’d just beaten hell out of me in ping-pong or something. I don’t think I’ll ever forgive him for reading me that crap out loud. I wouldn’t read it loud to him if he’d written it—I really wouldn’t. In the first place, I’d only written that damn not so that he wouldn’t feel too bad about flunking me.*”^[4] The reason why Holden made this visit is that he had intended to get understanding of his

failure in examinations from this respected teacher, on the contrary, Mr. Spenser never felt the sympathy for him, but read aloud the worst part of the paper, which shamed Holden. Neither did Mr. Spenser comfort him, nor Mr. Spenser was conscious that as a teacher, he was supposed to help students move on rather than laugh at them. Apart from Mr. Spenser, Mr. Antolini was Holden's English teacher at Elkton Hills School and he was as young as Holden's brother D.B. Caulfield, which brings him more closer to Holden. On one hand, Mr. Antolini was so friendly that Holden viewed him as a friend and wanted to share happiness and sorrow with him. On the other hand, Mr. Antolini behaved like a gay when Holden slept in his living room, which frightened Holden. Therefore, Holden's last attempt to seek for help failed.

According to the developmental psychology, loneliness in adolescence can reach a peak. During this period the adolescents began to separate from our parents, seek close relationships outside of the home, and begin to assume personal responsibility for their actions. Usually the adolescents suffer a feeling of loneliness and alienation from parents, teachers, and others. Adolescents who are most lonely possess poor social skills and lack interest in other people. These same characteristics are typical of college students who are chronically lonely. According to several surveys on high school and college students, late adolescence is one of the loneliest times in the life span. Many young people reported a steep decline in their satisfaction with their high school friendships over the course of the transition into college^[9]. And unfortunately, many students in their first year of college could not immediately find replacement for this loss of intimacy. Therefore, actually other adolescents also experience the loneliness, just like Holden, since in this transitional period, the loneliness is somehow unavoidable.

Holden's several unsuccessful attempts to make a phone call symbolized the failure of communication between him and the outside world. Being a frustrated and confused youth, what he needs most is a heart-to-heart talk as well as the guidance from a reasonable adult. Being too cynical in his judgment, Holden could not make an impartial and unprejudiced comment on others and his understandings of the outside world only confined to his immature and limited world outlook. Just as he mourned,

“I felt so lonesome, all of a sudden, I almost wished I was dead”.^[4] “It made me feel sad as hell—I don’t know why exactly.”^[4] Therefore he was partially responsible for the failure of his identity confusion.

3.1.5 Quest for the True Self-identity

According to Rui Yuping(2004:126), the author of *A Study of American Initiation Stories*, in most initiation stories there are always an ideal guider who leads or points out the direction the young protagonist should follow when they are at a loss^[12]. They are divided into the positive director and the negative director while the positive director who always is morally perfect and has profound experience, showing great concern on the protagonist’s growth and is willing to teach him/her his own lessons and help him/her to overcome the identity crisis. While the vice deeds and consequence of the negative director help the adolescents differentiate the good and evil.

But as an exception, no guider had appeared in *The Catcher in the Rye*, therefore, as most youths in the real world, Holden had to search for his self-identity on the road of growth with loneliness since he failed to find anyone who can be trusted in the school or in the family. His pain can be alleviated only when he was mature enough to realize that his wishes were impractical. Just as in the end of the novel wrote, “About all I know is, I sort of miss everybody I told about.”^[4] It involves both a recognition that there can be no self-monopoly of innocence and a discovery that there can be no shield from complicity. As his journey was re-created for us by the Holden on the psychiatrist’s couch, we could recognize that the journey is more than movement through space—it is a movement, also, from innocence to knowledge, from self-ignorance to self-awareness, from isolation to involvement.

Holden’s quest, in one sense, was a quest to preserve an innocence of childhood, as well as the spotless innocence of a self horrified at contamination in the ordinary and inevitable involvement of life. In another sense, the quest was a quest for an ideal but un-human love that will meet all demands but make none; a relationship so sensitively attuned that all means of communication. His quest was a quest for identity, a search for the self by going through a number of guises, such as when he

talked with his classmate's mother, he named himself Rudolf Schmidt or when he was visited by the prostitute Sunny, he pretended to be Jim Steele. But he remained to be Holden, no matter how much he desired to be someone else. The self he was supposed to discover is Holden Caulfield and that the self he discovered was human self and an involved self that cannot finally break what Hawthorne once called the "magnetic chain of humanity", for he could not deny the love within him for others, therefore in the end of the story he began to miss all people.

Throughout the novel Holden was involved between the imperative of involvement and revulsion at involvement and the result was a dual series of compelling images that act as magnets that both attract and repel.

Holden became mature gradually. Firstly Holden's running from the Antolini's apartment represented his growing-up, because he began to realize that he misjudged Mr. Antolini. Then at Phoebe's school, he rubbed out one obscenity only to be confronted with another scratched deeply into the wall. He believed that even one had a million years to do it, it was impossible for one to rub out even half the filthy sings in the world. Holden was so close to realize the futility of the attempt to be a catcher in the rye for the kids cannot, in the world as it is, be always shielded from the cliff. Thirdly, Phoebe's willingness to run away with him confirmed his decision to stay, to become involved and to rejoin the human race. He became worried that when she grasped for the gold ring, she will fall, but he restrained himself from preventing her from running since whether in the fields of rye, or on the circular carrousel, children must eventually fall, as he had fallen. At that time he became so happy, because he became aware that the state (circling) was momentary and the music will stop.

As a whole, the image of Holden impressed the readers deeply with his round characteristics for he was not only rebellious, coward, pessimistic but also considerate and kindhearted. Although he was born in a rich family, he was neither proud of his family nor attached to his parents closely, and on the contrary, he rarely communicated with his parents, therefore when he was kicked out of the school, the first thought in his mind was to avoid his parents' blames. He also felt disappointment about his teachers and classmates in school since in his eyes, all of them were too realistic and treated others differently according to people's social status and wealth

they possessed in society. One of his teachers always remind the students that life was a game that one played according to the rules, which impressed Holden that the society was full of hypocritical rules. What was worse, Holden could not make a true friends since most of students were considered as crooks. Due to his failure to communicate with teachers, classmates and parents effectively, he was always suffered the physical or mental assault in school. Each time when he was confronted with difficulties, he chose to escape rather than resolve them directly and due to his choices and behaviors, he gradually became an alien who could not be understood and accordingly, he disdained all most everything around him and then he wished he could retreat in a village and lived a secluded life in the west. When he encountered frustration, the idea of committing suicide attracted him for more than once. Holden could not accumulate enough courage to face the frustrations in life and in school and consequently he was sent to the mental hospital where he might receive psychological guidance and help to overcome the mental crisis. However, no matter how rebellious and pessimistic Holden was, he was still an innocent and passionate teenage. Even if he fed up with the hypocrisy of the adult world, he never stopped helping others thanks to his good nature. For instance, although he disliked his roommates, he voluntarily pulled his suitcase down and placed it together with his roommate's under the bed to avoid the inferiority complex of his roommate. He felt sympathy for the nuns when he was enjoying bacon and eggs while they could only afford toast and coffee, therefore he donated ten dollars to them and after that, he even felt sorry for his small contribution. When the idea of suicide occurred to him, Phoebe was the only family member he loved in the world and he realized that he had the responsibility to protect her and when Holden realized how cruel and complex the adult world was, he intended to protect the innocent children including his sister Phoebe from falling in the rye since he could communicate and be understood by his younger sister. Even if he was pessimistic and inactive, he did attempt to keep his personal integrity. To begin with, he retold his experiences during the forty-eight hours' vagabondage after he was driven out of the school to many listeners as well as the psychoanalyst in the hospital. Through the retelling of the story, not only could he felt relaxed, calm but also he could shift his attentions by revealing all the nega-

tive emotions inside, therefore unconsciously he paved the way for his mental recovery later since researches showed that if the negative feelings are kept or suppressed in the heart, it would be much more difficult for them to walk out of the predicaments than those who choose to express their emotions to others. In the psychological therapeutic system of Sigmund Freud, the outpouring of the suppressed emotion, which is called as catharsis, is regarded as the most useful therapy for the traumatized because Freud has the idea that the trauma that people are suffering is like a serious infection in their bodies which has swollen up disproportionately and the therapy of outpouring the negative sentiment is like the medicine which can drain the harmful substances out of the infection in the bodies^[13]. Freud thinks that it is a very helpful and effective means to burst out the pain and the depression for the traumatized people because the traumatic experience would lead to self-destruction sometimes if the trauma is so violent and unmanageable^[14]. Holden had been greatly frustrated by what he had experienced in New York, he maintained his ideal of protecting the children. Through his recollecting and retelling of the past experiences could he gain his confidence and confirm the self-identity. In the beginning of the novel, readers could identify that the story was told by Holden himself, *"If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth"*.^[4] In the end of the story, he said, *"That's all I'm going to tell about. I could probably tell you what I did after I went home, and how I got sick and all, and what school I'm supposed to go to next fall, after I get out here, but I don't feel like it. I really don't. That stuff doesn't interest me too much right now."*^[4] Apart from retelling his story, Holden learned to compromise with the real world. Rui Yuping once pointed out that in the American initiation stories the popular idea is that the youth have to learn to compromise, if not, they can not be a normal adults^[12]. Just like the old saying goes, do what I say, not what I do. It seems to adolescents that it is the proof of the phony of the adults, since the old sayings demands others to achieve the task which they cannot do actually from the perspective of evolutionism, the social development just lies in the drive that the posterity

should be beyond the predecessor. Holden refused to accept the sinful things in society and no man in his view is good, therefore he was isolated and had to receive mental treatment in hospital. The experiences of growing-up can help the adolescents to comprehend the problems from several perspectives rather than from the single angle. On one hand, he was fed up with the hypocritical adult world and wished to be a catcher in the rye or be a mute and deaf in the west, on the other hand, he gradually learned to reflect his previous life for a second time. For instance, at first, he was shocked and frightened to find that Mr. Antolini, one of few teachers Holden respected, was a homosexual. However, Holden tried to impress himself that Mr. Antolini was kind no matter whether he is a homosexual or not. Therefore Holden learned to rectify his previous views of his respectful teacher, which signified that he changed to be sensible rather than passionate. Through reasonable consideration, Holden would gradually adapt to the society, which explained the reason why he finally gave up the idea of living in the west. Since when he decided to go to the west, his younger sister was determined to go with him. Holden was shocked to realize that he should take his family member's interests and future into consideration rather than do everything according to his own will, so he stayed to comfort Phoebe. “*‘Go ahead, then I’ll be on this bench right over here. I’ll watch ya.’ I went over and sat down on this bench, and she went and got on the carousel. She walked all around it. I mean she walked once all the way around it. Then she sat down on this big, brown, beat-up-looking old horse. Then the carousel started, and I watched her go around and around...All the kids trying to grab for the goddam horse, but I didn’t say anything or do anything. The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, but it’s bad if you say anything to them.*”^[4] The monologue was suffice to prove that Holden had realized that he could not and would not be the catcher in the rye since all the children will experience the dark side of the society as he did, which was an inevitable and necessary part of growing up since all the children have to face everything happening to them and try to deal with the difficulties and frustration by themselves. However, it is indispensable for the children to experience every aspects of life so that life could be complete. Only when Holden was conscious that he should not interrupt the

life of Phoebe, could he confirm his self-identity, and could he be brave and down to earth to face up all the hardships during his future and accept the imperfections in real life.

3.2 Searching for Self-identity in *Invisible Man*

Defining one's own identity is a very important developmental task for any adolescent. From a psychosocial point of view, striving for a unified and integrated sense of self may facilitate the definition of personal goals and the sense of direction. The individual's self-identity has been demonstrated in the literature to be highly influential on one's behavior and thus to be directly related to the personality and state of mental health. Those people who are able to have a clear self-identity tend to act accordingly. Those who have a highly deviant self-identity tend to behave in deviant ways. *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison's National Book Award-winning novel, is written in the traditional style for the young, black narrator moved from a state of innocence to maturity as he searched for his self-identity.

The *Invisible Man* told a story about a nameless African American adolescent who was born in the south and lived carefully and used to cater for the whites and hoped that he can find his life position in the society. But after many experiences in the north, he realized that he was invisible to men and therefore he was determined to change his way of living to search for his own identity and his value in the society. As the protagonist struggled to arrive at a conception of his own identity, he found his efforts complicated by the fact that he was a black man living in a American.

3.2.1 The Four Stages of Minority Identity Development

First of all, the first stage is the pre-encounter stage. In this stage, minority individuals prefer dominant cultural values to those of their own culture. Their role models, lifestyles, and values systems are adopted from the dominant group, while the psychical and/or cultural characteristics that single them out as ethnic minority individuals are a source of pain and stress. Just like the nameless black narrator in the novel, in the beginning he endeavored to cater to them while discarded all the values and moral standards of the blacks, therefore at that time he thought that he was to

become someone who can meet all the white's standards. He treasured his education since he once believed that he could raise his social status above the other blacks through higher education and did his utmost to win the scholarship even at the cost of losing self-esteem while it was the difference (he accepted the education) that literally separated him from his slave ancestors, as well as the multitude of uneducated black men at that time. His education first brought him a calfskin briefcase, when the superintendent rewarded him for his success, saying "*Take this prize and keep it well. Consider it a badge of Office. Prize it. Keep developing as you are and some day it will be filled with important papers that will help shape the destiny of your people.*"^[15] He treasured the briefcase so much because it symbolized his education and he was overjoyed at what he found inside the briefcase: "*It was a scholarship to the state college for Negroes. My eyes filled with tears and I ran awkwardly on the floor.*"^[15]

The second stage is the encounter stage. Although moving to encounter stage is usually a gradual process, adolescent who reaches this stage may due to an event that makes individuals realize that they will never be members of mainstream in a society. Minority individuals became aware during the encounter stage that not all cultural values of the dominant group are beneficial to them. Conflicting attitudes about the self, minority group culture, and the dominant culture are characteristic of the encounter stage. In the end, minority individuals want to identity with the minority group but do not know how to develop the identity.

Upon arriving in New York, the narrator entered the Liberty Paints plant, which achieved financial success by subverting blackness in the service of a brighter white. There, the narrator found himself involved in a process in which white depended heavily on black. Yet the factory denied this dependence in the final presentation of its product, and the narrator, as a black man, ended up stifled. The factory hospital was a metaphor for the modern industrialized city that fractured black folk's consciousness. There the white doctors, with shrieks and electric shocks, endeavored to force the young fellow to know his place, to forget his history and identity, and to yield to the power of the cold, steely machine. Actually the fact that he was discharged after being seriously injured in the paint factory just forced him to become a

person with self-awareness and courage. Later, when the narrator joined the Brotherhood, he believed that he can fight for racial equality by working within the ideology of the organization, but he then found that the Brotherhood used him as a token black in its abstract project. Gradually he realized that the world was full of blind men and sleepwalkers who cannot see him, for whom he was an “invisible man”. People around him had lost the ability to see what they wish not to see due to the social and cultural prejudice. Just as he said, *“And my problem was that I always tried to go in everyone’s way but my own. I have also been called one. thing and then another. while no one really wished’ to hear what I called myself. So after years of trying to adopt the opinions of others I finally rebelled. I am an invisible man.”*^[15] “Invisibility” here means that the white and other black men did not realize that the narrator was a discrete individual who had characteristics which distinguished him from all others. But unfortunately, initially the narrator depended entirely on external definitions to define himself.

Career development is related to identity development in adolescence. Career decidedness and planning are positively related to identity achievement, whereas career planning and decidedness are negatively related to identity moratorium and identity diffusion status^[2]. Adolescents farther along in the process of identity formation are better able to articulate their occupational choices and their next steps in obtaining short-term and long-term goals^[16]. By contrast, adolescents in the moratorium and diffusion statuses of identity are more likely to struggle with making occupational plans and decisions. In line with the developmental tasks outlined in Erikson’s theory, vocational identity development plays a leading role in identity development. Therefore, the invisible man’s identity confusion affected his career development and vice versa. It is an indispensable stage that knowing oneself through others’ eyes or judges in the process of confirming one’s self-identity but it is immature indeed if one totally relies on others. It is obvious that the nameless black youth depended entirely on external definitions to define his own existence. He attempted to act to the values and expectations of the social group, but he found himself continuously unable to reconcile his socially imposed role as a black man with his inner concept of identity. Finding himself invisible, he was finally aware that he was in no

better position in the end of the novel than he was in the beginning. He was nobody because in the end of the novel he had cut off any possibility of social identification, and unless identity is conceived as metaphysical in character, it cannot exist apart from a social context. Actually for all men, unless their identities correspond completely to someone else's images in reality, are invisible.

The next stage is the immersion/emersion stage. In the stage of immersion, minority individuals completely endorse minority views and reject the dominant society. Individuals become strongly motivated to eliminate the oppression of the minority group. Movement into the stage likely occurs partly because individuals begin to resolve some conflicts from the previous stage and develop a better understanding of such societal forces as racism, oppression, and discrimination and partly because individuals begin to ask themselves the question why should I feel ashamed of who I am? After many experiences in the north, the invisible man realized that his past behaviors of pleasing and making use of the big white folk failed finally since actually he had already been fooled and controlled by the white folk time and again. The narrator's decision to renounce his whole-hearted support for the Brotherhood was based on his discovery that the organization was racist. The Brotherhood sacrifices Harlem's interests for the sake of "international" goals and tried to mold the invisible man into their conception of a good black: one passively uses his energy and his art (which is his oratory) exactly as the Party commanded.

In the second phase of this stage-emersion-they no longer find it necessary to reject everything outside their own culture. They now have the antimony to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their culture, and to decide which part of the culture will become part of their identity. Therefore the invisible man can eat the yarn at ease in the street which implied that he was willing to be regarded as a southerner or identified with country tastes. Buying the yarns and eating them publicly indicated he was increasingly willing to accept his self and enjoying the freedom:

I walked along, munching the yarn, just as suddenly overcome by an intense feeling of freedom—simply because I was eating, while walking along the street. It was. exhilarating. I no longer had to worry about who saw me or about. what: was proper To hell with all that, and as sweet as the yarn actually was, it became like

nectar with the thought. If only someone who had known me at school or at home would come along and see me now. How shocked they'd be! I'd push them into a side street and smear their faces with the peel.^[15]

The last stage is the internalization/commitment stage and the main theme of this stage of minority identity development is that individuals experience a sense of fulfillment regarding the integration of their personal and cultural identities. They have resolved the conflicts and discomforts of the immersion/emersion stage and attained self-control and flexibility. They also more objectively examine the cultural values of other minority individuals and groups, as well as those of the dominant group. At this stage, individuals want to eliminate all forms of oppression. The commitment in this stage refers to the behavioral enactment of the newly realized identity. Individuals take action—whether large, such as engaging in large-scale social activities, or small, such as performing everyday activities that are consistent with their identity—to eliminate oppression. Ultimately, the narrator concluded that he was invisible for the world was filled with blind people who cannot or will not see his real nature. Correspondingly, he remained unable to act according to his own personality and literally unable to be himself. Although the narrator initially embraced his invisibility in an attempt to throw off the limiting nature of stereotype, in the end he found this tactic too passive. However he determined to emerge from his underground to end his “hibernation”, to make his own contributions to society as a mature individual. He would attempt to exert his influence on the world outside of society's system of prescribed roles. By making proactive contributions to society, he will win acknowledgements from others.

3.2.2 Some Important Characters' Influences on Searching for the Self-identity

As mentioned above, the family members play a vital role in the adolescent's development, though the narrator's parents did not appear directly, the narrator's grandparent had great impact on him. One study investigated the role of grandparents in the lives of African American at-risk adolescents and work on resilience in young people had found that non-parental adults may have a positive effect on at-risk ado-

lescents^[17]. A piece of retrospective research highlights grandparents as the most important non-parental significant adults recalled by college aged students from their adolescence. His grandfather once said, “ *Son, after I’m gone I want you to keep up the good fight...live with your head in the lion’s mouth. I want you to overcom’me with yeses, undermine with grins, agree’em to death and destruction, let’em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open.*”^[15] His understanding of the advice of his grandfather gradually deepened and finally he accepted his suggestion. At first he had no clue about his grandfather’s words and confused why his grandfather always named himself as betrayer. Each time when the invisible man seemed to have a good future by winning the approve from the white, he felt upset by recalling his grandfather’s advice. For instance, when he was demanded to drive Mr. Norton, one of a white trustees of the board of the university. When the invisible man was talking with him about the fate, he was frightened by the possibility of being named betrayer according to his grandfather’s standard. When he was expelled by the university due to the injuries of Mr. Norton, he felt annoyed and indignant about his situation, however, he was still unwilling to accept the advice of his grandfather, but only to accept his fate of expulsion by the university since his hope of the white who would recognize his talents and potentials, therefore he started to find a job to achieve his dream in society. In Brotherhood, had known how ridiculous and absurd the leaders and members of the organizations were, he finally intended to try his grandfather’s advice. He tended to launch a war against the white with numerous agreements and led to their destroy with his smile. Accordingly, it was his grandfather who had greatly influenced him since before his grandfather’s death, he revealed his experience of fighting against the white to the invisible with the purpose of wakening the consciousness of self-identity of the invisible man. What’s more, the grandfather was an significant and indispensable guider in his life since the experience and wisdom were conducive to helping the invisible man to know much more about the white and himself. What’s more, his grandfather used his own experience to tell the invisible man that the white are unreliable. For instance, when his grandfather had cited the articles of the American Constitution as demanded, the white still prohibited him from voting. Apart from being a vital guider in the life of the invisible man, his

grandfather was also a prophet who had foreseen and anticipated the fate of his grandson. When the invisible was overjoyed with his chance of being enrolled by a college, he dreamed that his grandfather reminded him of opening the letter of recommendation which turned out to be a sentence which kept the invisible man running all the time. This dream indicated that all the attempts and endeavors the invisible man made will be in vain in the end. He grasped this advice after Tod Clifton's funeral and being betrayed by Brotherhood. These words had haunted him of the whole life, and now he fully understood and accepted this advice. This new understanding lead the narrator to develop a new plan. He decided to follow the advice and became a spy, pretending to be loyal to the Brotherhood, while plotting to overthrow them. The very next day, he began to put his plan into practice by making use of Sybil as an inside source of information. At last, the advice finally, helped the narrator to achieve his purpose. The advice of his grandfather determined and shaped his future, finally became the basis of his life plans. This advice had the greatest impact on the narrator, as his understanding of it completed his search for self-identity.

In the novel, it is ironical that the vet who was considered as the most severely suffered from the psychosis was actually a well-known mental doctor and judged from the two conversations with the invisible man, who was talented and sensitive with clear consciousness of the social reality. After he was treated as a psychosis for many years, he could be capable of pointing out that the invisible man had been cultivated as an utterly useless person without his own judgment. The vet doctor, who warns the narrator that he is the only “mechanical man”, which is the positive guider of the narrator. When meeting him on the bus, the vet offered him the way out and said, “*Be your own father, young man. And remember, the world is possibility if only you'll discover it.*”^[15] And he pointed out, “*Play the game but don't believe in it...play the game but play it your own way.*”^[15] What the vet meant was that all the black should be the owners of their own fates and minds rather than dependent on others. What is more, the vet doctor quoteol his own example to remind the invisible man of the dilemma the blacks. “*Ten men in masks drove me out from 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.” ^[15] The vet doctor was so professional but failed to win the trust of the white but on the contrary he ended up with the greatest humiliation. However, the invisible turned a deaf ear to his suggestions since he was full of hope of enjoying a bright future with the faith that some prominent white will absolutely give a hand to him. When the narrator arrived in New York, he did not take the vet’s advice immediately since he still fancied to be supported by the rich white, such as Mr. Norton. But after several failure experiences, he realized his fate will be always controlled by others if he endeavored to gain others’ recognition rather than act according to his own will. Then the vet’s advice gradually came into his mind, and as a result he was determined to give up the fantasy of relying on the white and to create his own life by himself. Eventually, he comprehended the vet’s advice that there were many potential possibilities in life and his identity could be variable, that is, the black can be their own masters.

Dr. Bledsoe, the black president of the black college, was a negative guider for the invisible man. In the eyes of the invisible man, Dr. Bledsoe was a wealthy and successful person who won great reputation in his field and was a representative of American Dream. “*He was the example of everything I hoped to be: Influential with wealthy men all over the country; consulted in matters concerning the race; a leader of his people; the possessor of not one, but two Cadillacs, a good salary and a soft, good-looking and creamy-complexioned wife. What was more, while black and bald and everything white folks poked at, he had achieved power and authority; had, while black and wrinkle-headed, made himself of more importance in the world than most Southern white men.*” ^[15] Therefore even though the invisible man was blamed and expelled from the college by Dr. Bledsoe, the invisible man believed that was the right decision made by Dr. Bledsoe since at that time the invisible man was not mature enough to tell right from wrong. For several times, Dr. Bledsoe had told the invisible man that the only way to fawn on the white was to lie and he confirmed that all the blacks excel at lying and he even used the word negro which the black hated most to name other blacks. Ironically when he was angry with and yelled at the invisible man, he turned to be kind and gentle to the white trustees. Like a chameleon, he changed his color and attitude toward the white and the black ^[18]. With the pur-

pose of getting rid of more trouble the invisible man incurred and of expelling the invisible man from the college smoothly, he lied to the invisible man and told him that he can earn some tuition for the next year and at the same time he will not suffer from the humiliation. The fate of invisible man was changed deliberately by Dr. Bledsoe whose purpose was to please the white at any cost. With the seven letters of recommendation, the invisible man had high expectations of the life in New York, however, it was by the seven letters that the hope and future of the invisible were destroyed. Hypocritical Dr. Bledsoe was, and the invisible was forced to go through the different experiences which the common university students will not experience and due to the letters of Dr. Bledsoe, the invisible man could realize the fact in the society earlier than other adolescents. Respected and regarded as the “national leader” by the local people, Dr. Bledsoe perished the spirit of the invisible with his words and behaviors. On the surface, he was struggling for the benefits of the black, however, what he had done in fact was for his one interests of fame and profits. Therefore, he was extremely busy with making up to the wealthy and powerful people and during the process, he had achieved power and authority and he had made himself of more importance in the world than most Southern white men. When the invisible man was at the risk of being expelled by the school, Mr. Bledsoe conducted a converse with him. During the conversation, the truth was revealed that Dr. Bledsoe looked down up the blacks and he regarded himself as the white spiritually. He declared that he represented the authority by saying, “*It’s a nasty deal and I don’t always like it myself. But you listen to me: I didn’t make it, and I know that I can’t change it. But 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.*”^[15] To Dr. Bledsoe, those black brothers were nothing more than a great number of poor and ignorant and inferior nuts and he declared himself the dictator, which indicated that he had become the governor and dictator of the black mass^[19]. What is more, his monologue uncovered his selfishness and vicious nature and proved that his soul had been severely ruined by the power. Being unsatisfied with the success and progress, he had become a morally lost and illegal person.

Though being inferior in social status, Brother Trap and Trueblood actually set

good examples for the narrator to follow to define his own identity. Both of their identities were defined by the complex experiences they had undergone. Brother Trap's past sufferings and limps reminded him of his past when he was searching for freedom. Trap himself was a link to the struggle against oppression and he asserted his beliefs and dignity by refusing to yield to oppression though doing so would inflict punishment and suffering on himself. As an unimportant member of the Brotherhood, Trap knew whom he was and why he came here, so he can be regarded as a representative of some brave blacks for he dared to say no to the white. When he gave the chain link to the invisible man, he told him that the chain link could help him remember what they were fighting for and therefore the link could signify more. Before he was sentenced to death, he passed his hope to the invisible man and hoped that he can do something for the blacks. "*It is something like a man passing on to his son his own father's watch.*" [15] From Trap, the invisible man got the strength to fight against the oppression.

Although Jim Trueblood committed incest in his dream and impregnated both his wife and his daughter and the blacks considered him a disgrace and attempted to exclude him from their community, he was willing to accept responsibility for his sin and endured his wife's rage. In the end, he insisted on returning to them and facing the consequences of his actions. By telling his story, he confirmed his sense of identity. Retelling one's story means the narrator's reflection of his growing experience and his true self while this reflection is indispensable and crucial. Finally the invisible man chose to retell his story to confirm his identity and realized that one's true identity is the sum of one's experiences.

It was as though I'd learned suddenly to look around corners; images of past humiliations flickered through my head and I saw that they were more than separate experiences. They were me; they defined me. I was my experiences and my experiences were me, and no blind men, no matter how powerful they became, even if they conquered the world, could take that, or change one single itch, taunt, laugh, cry, scar, ache, rage or pain of it. [15]

With the guidance of several guides and through telling his own experience, the invisible man gradually accepted his race and its culture and history and he was

closer and closer to his true self-identity.

3.2.3 The Reasons Why the Protagonist Failed to Confirm His Self-identity

When writing this novel, Ralph Ellison absorbed a great number of materials from his own life and others' living experiences so as to add reality to the work which concerned about a humble black youth who was searching for his self-identity in the white-dominated world. The reason why the invisible man failed to confirm his self-identity may consist of three parts. Firstly, he suffered from the violence of the otherness which included the psychological injuries and invisible mental attack. The idea of "otherness" is central to sociological analyses of how majority and minority identities are constructed. Identities are often thought as being natural or innate. Rather than talking about the individual characteristics or personalities of different individuals, sociologists focus on social identities. Social identities reflect the way individuals and groups internalize and establish social categories within their societies. The social categories will shape our ideas about who we think we are, how we want to be seen by others, and the groups to which we belong. Woman is the other of man, animal is the other of human, stranger is the other of native, abnormality the other of norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness the other of health, insanity the other of reason, lay public the other of the expert, foreigner the other of state subject, enemy the other of friend^[20]. British sociologist Stuart Hall argued that visual representations of otherness hold special cultural authority^[21]. In Western countries like the UK, Australia and the USA, whether difference is portrayed positively or negatively is judged against the dominant group, with men being the default to which Others are judged against. "The 'other' is a unitary category, applicable to any minority, who are all characterized without any specificity, only in as much as they are 'others'".^[22] Accordingly, the black is the other of the white due to fact the black did not have equal power as the white did. For instance, when the invisible men worked in the paint factory, he noticed the truth that if few drops of black paint was added into the paint, the white paint would become much whiter, which indicates that the black workers worked for the white who dominated them. Therefore in the

white-dominated society, it was unavoidable that the black were regarded as the inferior and the other. As a grandson of a black slave, the invisible man was margined by the white when he was giving a speech about humility as an innocent high school student. After the speech he was sneered by the white of several violent and impolite tricks and even though he disagreed with this treatment, he had to stand silently since whether he can be a college student or not totally depended on his performance before the white. After entering into the college, when he was a junior, he was asked to drive for Mr. Norton, after Mr. Norton got to know the darkness of the black folks, the invisible man blamed himself and the black villages and what he wanted to do was to beg for forgiveness from the white, “*I wanted to stop the car and talk with Mr. Norton, to beg his pardon for what he had seen; to plead and show him tears, unashamed ears like those of a child before his parents; to denounce all we’d seen and heard; to assure him that far from being like any of the people we had seen, I hated them, that I believed in the principles of the Founder with all my heart and soul, and that I believed in his own goodness and kindness in extending the hand of his benevolence to helping us poor, ignorant people out of the mire and darkness.*”^[15] Up to now he still wished to get another chance given by the whites for him to serve for the white. Obviously, he was so confused by the successful aura of the president that he lost his basic judgment on the social reality. When he was working in New York, he was disappointed with the Brotherhood and until then did he realize that he was invisible both to the blacks and the whites due to the fact that he was neither an American nor an African. And until he was disappointed with the white world, did he realize the nature of the advocacy of the success.

Inexperience and innocence could be another reason why the invisible man failed to confirm his self-identity since he was always willing to do what was required by others, which was considered by him as a way to success, however, it was due to his unquestioning willingness to follow the whites resulted in his failure as well as his invisibility. Apart from that, he refused to learn a lesson from the past experience may be another reason. After he read the recommendation letters and got to know the true intention of Dr. Bledsoe, he was irritated but what occurred to him was to seek a revenge by killing Dr. Bledsoe rather than attempt to figure out his own

faults. He maintained that since the white played a trick on him, he must take a job immediately for the purpose of committing revenge as quickly as possible and accordingly, he worked hard as a good worker defined by the letters in the Liberty Paints where he followed the orders of the workers and received the logo that is, if you are white, you are right. However, his humble attitude did not bring him any respect, on the contrary, every black he encountered in the factory seemed to be hostile to him. Kimbro scolded him for trying to sabotage the company and the union members label him as a fink and threatened him while the Brockway attempted to kill him for being a union member^[23]. They all regarded the invisible man as a threat to their status and authority and none of them saw him as the good worker, let alone finding out his identity, that is, a black youth. His faithfulness did not win him any rewards, on the contrary, he ended up with serious injury during the exploration accident in the factory and the brain surgery in the factory hospital. After that his experience in the Brotherhood proved the fact that until now, he was invisible to both the white and the black.

3.2.4 Ascertain the True Self-identity

Before ascertaining the true self-identity, the adolescents are supposed to be clear about the three questions, that is, who was I? who am I? who will I become?

Who was I? The protagonist in the novel used to be a gifted public speaker and was invited to give a humble speech about modesty for important white men in his town in order to gain recognition from the white. It seemed that he had achieved his purpose since they rewarded him with a briefcase containing a scholarship of a prestigious college. Three years later, he became a college student, he was assigned to drive a wealthy white trustee of the college, Mr. Norton, around the campus. Mr. Norton showed strong interest in Jim Trueblood, a poor and illiterate black man who raped his daughter. The narration of the black reminded Mr. Norton of the same experience and after that Mr. Norton demanded the protagonist to drive him to a bar where he was injured and consequently the invisible man was expelled by the college. The president of the college pretended to be kindhearted to give him a recommendation letter which turned out to be one wrongly accused, and the protagonist

had to leave the university to New York with the goal of earning enough college tuition. Jim Trueblood, a black inferior whom the invisible man hated greatly since his shameful experience and story attracted Mr. Norton and initiated the domino cards, turned out to be a black who insisted his identity no matter what had happened. When Mr. Norton was interested in his story, he retold the story from the beginning to the end faithfully and narrated the sinful event including his wife's anger. Even if he was as invisible as the invisible man, Jim Trueblood never had the intention of escaping the punishment for his behavior and even though he committed the sin in his dream, he never used any excuses to justify his behavior or proved his innocence. On the contrary, he shouldered his responsibility for what he had done intentionally and therefore it could be naturally concluded that Jim Trueblood confirmed his identity by his behavior since he told his own experiences in his own voice, neither from the eyes of the whites nor that of those black college students and he told his stories to others rather than listen to their comments for he had his own opinions about his past and therefore he did not discard or hide his past from himself. On the contrary, though the invisible man never did anything more disgraceful than Jim Trueblood, he hid his past from the whites with the illusion of gaining the self-identity by confirming with the whites unconditionally. When the invisible men heard the story told by Jim Trueblood in front of Mr. Norton, the invisible man felt so torn between humiliation and fascination as if it was worse than he committed the sin due to the fact the invisible man believed that the story would bring shame to the black race and reduced the social status of the blacks in the heart of the white. Therefore, when Jim Trueblood received one hundred dollars from Mr. Norton, the invisible uttered, "*You bastard, you no-good bastard! You get a hundred-dollar bill!*"^[15] After he was expelled from the college, his life in New York began. At first he worked in a paint company where he made mistakes and was fired. After that he was regarded as an trail target for an experiment and then was persuaded to be a member of the Brotherhood where he was forced to do something and say something that he was reluctant to, and consequently he was involved in various battles and conflicts. Even though he followed the directions and demands of the white, he failed to be recognized by the white and consequently he became an invisible man.

Who am I? When the invisible man dressed up with a pair of sun glasses and a cap, he was regarded as the Rinehart who was a gangster, gambler as well as a priest, which ignited his reflection that why he can become another person thanks to the change of appearance. Whether is he a black who sticks to the old African tradition or a half black and half white person who satisfies all the desires of the white and meets all the expectations of the white at the cost of his own ideas and dignity? Why was he invisible to the white even though he tried to live up to all the expectations of the white? Now he was staying in the hole underground to reflect what he did and said in the past and the reason why he was invisible to the white as well as to the black. He had to have a light in the hole to make a torch to help him out of the hole, due to lack of paper to ignite the fire, so he had to burn his high-school diploma which he regarded as precious as life. Ironically, burning the high-school diploma which symbolized the past self-identity, will contribute to making himself visible to himself and reflecting his past life and behaviors. The fact that he burned the diploma this time indicated that he was going to free himself since he had gone through all illusions and lies of the white. In the hole, he realized he could not return to any part of his old life and he could only move ahead, so to so degree, the end of his past life could be seen as the beginning of the new life.

Who will I become? Had reflected the past in the hole, the invisible man did not attribute his invisibility to others and on the contrary he blamed himself for his past, *"But deep down you come to suspect that you're yourself to blame, and you stand naked and shivering before the millions of eyes who look through you unseeingly. That is the real soul-sickness, the spear in the side."*^[15] The world is diverse, therefore in the future he will be himself and he will walk out of the hole and end his hibernation to be a black person with satisfaction and honor as well as a person who loves and sticks to the African traditions since he reminded himself for many times that the true darkness rather the darkness of the skin lies within his own mind. He realized that if he does not change his attitude and world of view, in the future he will be invisible to millions of people including the white and the black. *"But what do I really want, I've asked myself. Certainly not the freedom of a Rinehart or the power of a Jack, nor simply the freedom not to run."*^[15] Putting the past down and refusing

the discrimination and humiliation from the white as well as confirming and affirming his own ideas and learning to say no to the white might be the probable way for him. “*So it is that now I denounce and defend, or feel prepared to defend. I condemn and affirm, say no and say yes, say yes and say no. I denounce because though implicated and partially responsible, I have been hurt to the point of abysmal pain, hurt to the point of invisibility. And I defend because in spite of all I find that I love.*”^[15] For all the people he loved and with the advice of his grandfather, he will disarm himself and go out of the hall to defend and to denounce. “*I am shaking off the old skin and I’ll leave it here in the hole.*”^[15] Just as Erikson pointed out, the adolescents will always try and experience several roles and identities and eventually will assert the mature self^[24]. In the end of the novel, however, the narrator had decided that even though invisibility may bring safety, actions undertaken in secrecy cannot ultimately have meaningful impact. One may undermine one’s enemies from a position of invisibility, but one cannot make significant changes to the world. Accordingly, in the epilogue the narrator decides to emerge from his hibernation and resolved to encounter society and make a visible difference. He failed for several times to confirm his identity. In his school days, he identified himself with Booker T. Washington and Dr. Bledsoe. He hoped that he will become a man like Dr. Bledsoe, successful and influential. In Brotherhood, he devoted himself to the work assigned to him, feeling happy and lucky that he finally found his true self. To his disappointment, both the college and the Brotherhood betrayed him, and frustrated his hope to establish an identity. After the narrator left the Brotherhood, for fear being attacked by Ras the Exhorter’s followers, he wore dark glasses and a hat, only to find that people on the streets regarded him as the man Rinehart. He recognized that if he changed his appearance slightly, he could avoid the problems of being himself and enjoy the benefits of being someone else. He once believed that the identity of Rinehart seemed to suit him, for Rinehart was master of masks: the runner, the gambler, the briber, the lover and the preacher, he was lovely to all people and Rinehart offered him an identity with which he can escape with ease and what’s more, Rinehart could change identities at will, thereby using the world to his own advantage. But as matter of fact, Rinehart was not his true self. Therefore, after reflecting his several failure experi-

ences in the hole, the nameless narrator decided to come out and end his hibernation. He was determined to act according to his own personality and to make his own contributions to society as an integrated individual. He will attempt to exert his power on the world outside of society's system of prescribed roles. By making proactive contributions to society, he will force others to acknowledge him, to acknowledge the existence of beliefs and behaviors outside of their prejudiced expectations.

3.3 Comparison and Contrast of the Protagonists in *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Invisible Man* from the Perspective of Initiation Story

3.3.1 The Common Points between the Two Novels

Erik H. Erikson once mentioned a theory in his book to illustrate the trend that the young always presented to the old and revealed the possibilities of adolescent either acting as potential rescuers or being victims of a decadent adult world^[25]. Both the authors of the two novels accepted the idea, which was closely related with their personal lives. Salinger, the son of a prosperous importer of meat and cheese, was born in New York in 1919 in a Jewish family. He was a mediocre student in the public school, and after he dropped out of the private McBurney School, he was sent to Valley Forge Academy in Pennsylvania. He later spent less than a month in New York University. As an adolescent, he was not sociable at all, which trait can be easily identified in the protagonist of *The Catcher in the Rye*. Salinger was often critical of not only his age group, but the younger generations as well. Adolescents in Salinger's novels could be divided into two types, that is, teenagers who reject the conventional values and teenagers who accept the conventional values. Apparently Salinger always sided with the former, giving a certain heroism to aimless youngsters through their reflections of the money-oriented lifestyles which was prevalent until the 1950s. Influenced by the Beat generation, Salinger showed all kinds of rebellions in the adolescents in his novel. However, Salinger held positive attitudes toward adolescents since he believed that adolescents will remain innocent before they

get into the adult world which will usually distort them by turning them into self-centered. So it is no wonder that Holden in *The Catcher in the Rye* was depicted as a potential rescuer of a decadent adult world as well as a rebellious adolescent who dared to fight against the ruined world since Salinger believed that adult world really did distort children. Ralph Ellison, the grandson of slaves, was born in Oklahoma City in 1914. His mother was a servant working for a white family. He graduated from Frederic Douglass high school and then in 1933 he entered the Tuskegee Institute which is the famous black college in Alabama founded by Booker T. Washington. Accordingly, Ellison paid more attention to the real living situation especially the spiritual change of the youths in the white-dominated society, and to the situation of black adolescents in a discriminated adult society. The invisible man initially followed all the orders and rules of the white with the illusion of winning the trust and support from the white, but due to the severe discrimination against the blacks, he became the victim of the society and became invisible to both the white and the black. Through the creation of the invisible adolescent in the novel, Ralph Ellison attempted to arouse the consciousness of the blacks of their racial identities by clinging to their culture and traditions.

First of all, both Holden and the invisible man are born good. Although Holden showed his dissatisfactions and criticized the current education system and social corruption, no matter how corrupt and tainted the world was, Holden never lost his sympathy for anything good and any good person. For instance, he even felt sympathy for a street girl. “*I took her dress over to the closet and hung it up for her. It was funny. It made me feel sort of sad when I hung it up. I thought of her going in a store and buying it, and nobody in the store knowing she was a prostitute and all. The salesman probably just thought she was a regular girl when she bought it. It made me feel sad as hell —I don’t know why exactly.*”^[4] It seems to be a meaningless attempt for Holden tried to rescue the adult world, however, his insist on the beauty and innocence in real life may pave way for the progress of the society since the conflict between the reality and idealism will always be an impetus for the social movement. As Holden experienced the painful discrepancy between feeling and expression, aspiration and actuality, and the invisible man also confronted the

trouble between his expectations and illusion. Thanks to his talent of making speech, the invisible man won the scholarship of a black college after making a successful speech on the topic of humility in front of the white therefore both his family members and himself had high expectations of him and he wished he could become an outstanding and well-known black leader as Dr. Bledsoe who was the president of the black college. The invisible man harbored the good nature since he always considered the good side of others when he had reason to doubt them. For instance, when Dr. Bledsoe looked down up him and threatened him with his authority and power and finally expelled him from the college, the invisible man still believed that Dr. Bledsoe did everything for his(the invisible man) good since he will be welcomed to come back to continue his study in the college after he got enough tuition in New York. After experiencing the cruel life in New York, he was gradually disillusioned since his tactics of winning support and reward from the white by being humble failed him, and what was worse, he underwent a severe brain surgery in the factory hospital and went through the overwhelming mental and spiritual change during several accidents. Consequently, as Holden did, he lost himself in the white and adult world and he locked himself in the underground for few days, which was called hibernation by himself and during this time, he reflected his behaviors in the past few years, and it seemed that he finally figured out the reasons why he failed and he will end the hibernation by walking out of the hole by himself, but whether he will confirm his racial identity in the future is still an open question for the readers left by Ralph Ellison. Even if the invisible man failed again, his experience will become a valuable life experience for him and for other adolescents.

Both Holden and the invisible man shared another common point that initially both of them denied their self-identities as well as the culture they were born with. Holden wished he could be a catcher in the rye rather than be the son of a wealthy businessman or could be a blind and deaf person living a simple life rather than be a white student who enjoyed the education privileges since he was disgusted with hypocritical life of the white adults. The invisible man spared no efforts to be a visible person to the white by meeting all their expectations in spite

of his own true feelings. With the purpose of assimilating into the white, he behaved humbly all the time and denied and hated his identity of being a black. However, all the attempts of getting rid of their self-identities by Holden and the invisible man turned out to be vain since their self-identities could not be changed but can be accepted and as long as they accepted their self-identities and hold a moderate and rational attitude towards their growing situation, can they walk out of their life dilemma.

Neither Holden nor the invisible man had true friends to alleviate their loneliness and fear. Being able to find companions symbolizes being accepted by people outside the family. Holden attempted to gain friendship from his classmates but failed. In the nightclub, Holden despised the three poor guys from Seattle but tried to extend the time accompanied with them as much as possible and it was not difficult for readers to find that his loneliness and longing for friendship. The invisible man was no exception. Neither did he get any true friends in the black college nor did he have any in society. Even after he was seriously injured in the factory exploration and went through operation in the factory hospital, he was too weak to walk for a long period and there was no friend to comfort him. A kind-hearted black woman named Mary came to help him when he was almost fainted. Mary was good to him by providing food and accommodation for him even when he can not afford them but the invisible kept his new jobs and other information from Mary and left Mary without saying goodbye. Jack and other youths in the Brotherhood were no more than workmates working for one goals and none of them could be named as friends of the invisible man.

From the perspective of Initiation story, with many shortcomings, both of the protagonists were anti-heroes in the contemporary works. Anti-heroes lack of fighting spirit and never did anything heroic, with odd characters they lived a gloomy life and wondered on the margins of society. Even though they refused to be socially assimilated, most of them failed to protest the society. Despite of those negative features, they never stop seeking for human dignity and self-identities. Holden was innocent so that he wanted to maintain the innocence of all the children by being a catcher in the rye. The invisible man attempted to be a famous black leader and save

the black from miserable situation, therefore he tried to win the trust and agreement from the white by being humble. Even though he was helpless by being an outsider from the mainstream society, he would not giving up his endeavor of being a racial hero.

From the angle of narrative perspective, both the initiation stories coincidentally used the first-person narration in the way of memoirs, more in line with modern ethics and cognitive concept and the distance with the readers had been successfully shortened, therefore readers could follow the protagonists' footsteps and comprehend the protagonists' psychological changes, which adds the authenticity to the images created in the novels. In both fictions, the protagonist of the story is the same as the narrator. This narrative mode is useful for the readers to understand the novel for the protagonist shapes their own images with their own words, reflecting the desire of the narrator to express themselves and build themselves. The plot of *The Catcher in the Rye* is rambling without special turning point in the development of the story since Holden described the events chronologically and added some casual recollections and associations during the process, however the readers will not feel boring since the readers especially the teenage could understand Holden more easily thanks to the first-person narration. What is more, the depression and anxiety of Holden could be comprehended more deeply through Holden's words and behaviors. In *Invisible Man*, although the plots were much more complex than that in *The Catcher in the Rye*, readers could follow the invisible man's steps and understood his pain, confusion and even indignation gradually with the help of the specific black language and the first-person narration. "*So I denounce and I defend and I hate and I love...So now having tried to put it down I have disarmed myself in the process...The hibernation is over. I must shake off the old skin and come up for breath...I'm shaking off the old skin and I'll leave it here in the hole. I'm coming out, no less invisible without it, but coming out nevertheless.*"^[15] Such narration in the novel encouraged and moved readers since they, as the same as the invisible man, were inspired by a dream in the future and the readers as well as the invisible man believe that they will definitely find their proper positions in the society.

3.3.2 The Different Aspects between the Two Novels

Both Holden and the invisible man in the novels, the same as other adolescents, were confused and perplexed during their adolescent period and both the authors of the two novels paid attention to the disappointments of the protagonists as well as their emotional changes. Both of them were living in the USA, however, they were different in family background and races, it is not a coincidence that Holden and the invisible man had the same worries and illusions.

Holden in *The Catcher in the Rye* was born in a wealthy family, and he almost never felt the economical pressure since he always got enough money to spend. However, being materially satisfied, Holden was strongly dissatisfied with his mental world since he disapproved of the existing moral and conduct principles in the mainstream of the world. He showed indifference to the expectations of his father and only followed his inner feelings and therefore when he had bad performance in exams at an exclusive school, he was expelled by the school and he wandered alone in New York to avoid the blame and criticism of his parents. When children read the fairy tales in his or her childhood, it is natural that the rules of equality and the purity of the world will impressed the children so much that they will took the equality and purity in the adult world for granted. Since every dream in the fairy tales could be achieved, it was natural for Holden to stick to his dream of being a catcher in the rye. Whether could he realize his dream when wondering in New York? Holden was not a typical hero as depicted in other novels, on the contrary, he lacked of courage and escaped from the real life and lived a disordered personal life, however he was innocent and kind-hearted and pursuit the goodness in the world. After he was expelled from the middle school, he left for the New York where he killed his time by drinking and wondering around. During the two days, he witnessed the cruelty, selfishness, ruthlessness of the society and he got contact with almost all works of life and almost all kinds of persons. After wondering around in New York for few days he became much mature, no longer be anxious about living in this impure society since he understood that it was inevitable that his sister and other children will live and grow up in a wretched environment. On the verge of a nervous collapse, thanks to his

litter sister, Holden changed his idea of running away and giving up the idea of being a catcher in the rye or being a deaf mute in the west. He rejoined his family and then entered a hospital or rest home not far from Hollywood California. His compromise did not mean his moral failure, but on the contrary, it indicated that he had a deeper understanding of the complexity of the society and the unavoidable growing process of any adolescent. *"All the kids kept trying to grab for the gold ring, and so was old Phoebe, and I was sort of afraid she'd fall off the goddam horse, but I didn't say anything or do anything. The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off, but it is bad if you say anything to them."*^[4] Although his experience in New York was anything but glorious, however, the image of "Holden" was very popular, part of the reason may lie in the fact that Holden behaved improperly but his mind was as pure as crystal and his worries originated from his innocence touched millions of readers in the world. Whether can he remain to be an innocent teenage or become to be a normal adult? What will be his new self-identity? Those are open questions the author left for the readers to imagine and reflect.

However, when adolescents gradually get contact with the real world, they will inevitably be disappointed with the true situation in the world since they found some of adults were nothing but hypocritical and dishonest, so adolescents will be unavoidably disillusioned when they knew the existence of necessary evil in the real world. Unconsciously and instinctively, they will choose to run away from the adult world. Where could they run to? Holden choose to wonder around in New York to fight against his parents and the school. In the two days, he experienced the adult life by drinking in the bars and indulged himself in a small hotel and during the two days, he got contact with several kinds of people, most of whom were hypocritical gentlemen from Holden's perspective. Even though he hated what happened around him and he wished to go to a small village but he couldn't, therefore he lived in a dilemma. For instance, he hated film, but he had to kill time in the theaters. He had an aversion to having sex without love, but he invited a street girl his room and even though he detested the abominable taste and behaviors of his girlfriend, he could not help hugging with her. Two days later, he felt disgusted with what he had done and

he wished to be a catcher in the rye so that all the innocent children playing in the rye will not fall down, which reflects his wish that as long as all the children could be kept away from the adult world, they could be as pure as crystal forever. However his wish was doomed to fail since all the adolescents will grow up naturally and stepped into the adult world no matter he was willing or not and no matter how strongly Holden fought against with the real world, he could not be a child forever. Holden cannot accept the cruel natural rule smoothly and therefore he was sent to a mental hospital to receive the mental treatment. Just as the author reminded us that it's true that we have been leading a difficult life, for we need not only to be under various external pressures, but also to encounter internal perplexities. Nevertheless the adolescents would be affected by the warmth of life if someone gives them a understanding look during their bitter struggle process. Even a mere glance would make them moved and inspired. With the glance of his elder sister, it is likely that Holden will recover from this injury and become a healthy and reasonable adult.

In the novel, Holden never suffered from economical pressure and racial discrimination since he was a son of a wealth white, and originally he could enjoy the education privileges in the exclusive school and be enrolled by a university and then become a successful person in business or other professions, however, he took all the privileges and advantages he enjoyed for granted and sought for a pure world where all the children will not be bothered by the adult world. Just like Qian Zhongshu wrote in his novel *Fortress Besieged*, those who are outside of the wall want to get in and those who are inside want to get out^[26]. Holden endeavored to run away from the white culture and failed while the invisible man in *Invisible Man* attempted to be accepted and admitted by the white and failed too. The invisible man was so overjoyed that he was rewarded a scholarship to the state college for blacks thanks to his successful speech on humility in front of the black and he received congratulation from his family members and the neighbors since it was a once-in-a-life-time chance for the invisible man to change his fate. What is more, it was a rare and valuable chance for him to be recognized by the white. Even though at that night, he dreamed his grandfather who refused to laugh as others did and asked him to open the letters in the briefcase and in the letter, keeping this boy running was written. Actually the

dream reminded the invisible man that it was a trick the white played with him and it was a trap the white set up and if the invisible man was reasonable enough, he would have refused to attend the college with the letter. However, he had no insight into the meaning with the dream. Even with the warning of his grandfather, the invisible man irrevocably run away from the black culture and left for the world of the white. In the college Dr. Bledsoe was the example for him to follow since from the perspective of the invisible man, Dr. Bledsoe, a successful man in his field, had a good relationship with the white and had gained recommendation from the white. Therefore when the invisible man was required to drive one of the trustee of the college around, he realized that it was a wonderful chance for him to flatter the rich white folks since maybe if the white man was well treated, the invisible man will be rewarded by the white such as providing a large tip, or a suit, or a scholarship for him next year. Accordingly, it is safe to conclude that it was due to the economical burden and disadvantages that the invisible man had to move upward socially, otherwise he would live much a miserable life as most of the black did. When Mr. Norton, one of the trustee of the college said something confusing and illogical, even though the invisible man disagreed, he admitted what Mr. Norton said was true and attributed his disapproval to his superficial understanding of the world as well as his lack of wisdom and experiences of life. When Mr. Norton bragged that “*I felt even as a young man that your people were somehow closely connected with my destiny.*”^[15] He tried to understand the illogical sentence and was convinced that what kind of person he will be was really related to the fate of Mr. Norton and therefore he must live up to all the expectations of the white so as not to disappoint the white including Mr. Norton. Nevertheless, after being expelled from the college and having experienced the failure in New York, he ended up with his life in a hole in the ground. Few days before the life in the hole, he came across Mr. Norton who used to claim that the invisible man was his destiny, however Mr. Norton now had no clue of what he had said and didn't recognized the invisible man at all and until now the invisible man realized that he was invisible to the white all the time and what Mr. Norton said and what other white had done was only a joke as well as a trick played by them. Until now he recalled his dream of his grandfather and realized that he himself was kept

running all the time by the white. Mr. Norton was injured seriously in the local bar and Mr. Norton had knew lots of darkness of the black people which he was not supposed to know, which irritated Dr. Bledsoe, the president of the college and consequently the invisible man was persuaded to leave for New York and the president promised that as long as the invisible man accumulated enough tuition, the invisible man can come back to finish the higher education. What Dr. Bledsoe said and done was a trick played on the invisible man too.

Although both Holden and the invisible man stayed in New York, they went there with totally different purposes and encountered different persons and various situation. Holden went there since he wanted to escape the blame from his parents and tried to experience the adult life in a extravagant way by spending money like water. However, in order to survive, the invisible man went to New York with a dream of getting a job so as to get enough money to finish his college dream as soon as possible. What is more, he believed he will be seen by the white when he worked hard enough. On the contrary, the invisible man did not find any good job and he encountered different kinds of men including those who set him up and those who helped him.

For instance, when he worked for the Liberty Paints company, he was an apprentice of an elder black worker who was envious of the college student identity of the invisible man therefore the elder black worker deliberately led the invisible man to blow up the boiler, which resulted in the injury of the invisible man. When the invisible men intended to get a job with the seven recommendation letters in New York, he was informed to have a job interview in the Mr. Emerson's office and naturally, he went there with hope, nevertheless, he found that Mr. Emerson refused to give a job and even suggested him that he should never return to the college, which surprised the invisible man a lot and the fact turned out that the contents of the letters written by Dr. Bledsoe was to keep him running all the time, "*It is to the best interests of the great work which we are dedicated to perform, that he continue undisturbed in these vain hopes while remaining as far as possible from our midst.*"^[15] Setting up by the white and other blacks must be heart-broken, however, the invisible man was fortunate enough to get help from others. For example, the Mr. Emerson

turned out to be the young Emerson, son of the Mr. Emerson. The young Emerson, different from Mr. Emerson who was the symbol of the capitalists, was abhorrent of the trap set by Dr. Bledsoe for the black youth and the young Emerson was enthusiastic and felt sympathy for the situation of the invisible man, therefore he required the invisible man to read the letters and gave him a lot of advices, such as, “*The only trouble with ambition is that it sometimes blinds one to realities.*”^[15] He reminded the invisible man of the fact that one should realize the fact, otherwise he will be at lost. In other words, as long as the invisible man can realize that it was wrong for him to rely on the white to confirm whom he was, he will be kept running all the time. The young Emerson actually was a democratic and kind-hearted person with integrate personality, however, he was considered as a treason by his father due to the fact that he refused to reconcile him with the mainstream values of the white. After undergoing the exploration accident in the Liberty Paints, the invisible man undertook the operation for few days and when he was confined to the bed in hospital, several doctors and nurses tried to ask questions about his name or mother’s name, when he failed to recall, he came to realize that “*when I discover who I am, I’ll be free.*”^[15] In fact, there will be a long journey he had to go before he could confirm his identity. After he departed the hospital, he was too weak to arrive at the men’s hotel and on the way he got the help from a black female named Mary Rambo who provided food and accommodation as well as spiritual support for the invisible man. “*‘It’s your young folks what is going to make the changes, she said. ‘Y’all’s the ones. You got to lead and you got to fight and move us all on up a little higher. And I tell you something else, it’s the ones from the South that’s got to do it, them what knows the fire and ain’t forgot how it burns. Up here too many forgets. They finds a place for themselves and forgets the ones on the bottom. Oh, heap of them talks about doing things, but they done really forgot. No, it’s you young ones what has to remember and take the lead.’*”^[15] Mary Rambo, the only complete female character in the novel, provided some help for the invisible man to search for his identity. Being sophisticated and warm-hearted, she took good care of the invisible man and encouraged him and reassured him that he would make something of himself and be a credit to his race. When the invisible man was confused about the future, Mary reminded

him of his responsibility of doing something that will bring a credit to the black race. Mary understood his misery and encouraged him that everybody worth his salt has his hard times. Her encouragement reminded us of the sentences from Mencius, when Heaven is about to place a great responsibility on a great man, it always first frustrates his spirit and will, exhausts his muscles and bones, exposes him to starvation and poverty, harasses him by troubles and setbacks so as to stimulate his spirit, toughen his nature and enhance his abilities. With the support of Mary, he picked up courage again to face the unknown world. Compared with the invisible who lacked a sense of direction for the future and the self-identity, Mary was patient and wise and hold beliefs that as long as the black youth could take their responsibility, their race will welcome a good future. With the silent pressure from Mary, the invisible man was confused about how can he do something credible. When he was enjoying the yam in the cold street, he suddenly was overwhelmed by the intense feeling of freedom since he needn't to worry about whether eating the yam while walking along the street was proper or not. And gradually he came to know that it was unashamed of what we liked. “*Now that I no longer felt ashamed of the things I had always loved, I probably could no longer digest very many of them. What and how much had I lost by trying to do only what was expected of me instead of what I myself had wished to do?*”^[15] This symbolized a huge leap took by the invisible man in ideology since he realized that his hobbies and the black culture were not as shameful as he used to thought and he was conscious that how silly he used to be. “*What a waste, what a senseless waste! But what of those things which you actually didn't like, not because you were not supposed to like them, not because to dislike them was considered a mark of refinement and education-but because you actually found them distasteful? It involved a problem of choice. I would have to weigh many things carefully before deciding and there would be some things that would cause quite a bit of trouble, simply because I had never formed a personal attitude toward so much. I had accepted the accepted attitudes and it had made life seem simple...*”^[15] And even if he had become a spokesman of the Brotherhood, he defended for the old couples, which showed that he was gradually closer to national culture and accepted his self-identity as a black and finally confirmed with the black. After that, he got acquaintance with

Brother Jack, who was the leader and a representative of the Brotherhood. Through Brother Jack, the invisible man got to know that the interests of the Brotherhood lied in the large issues rather than the benefits of the individual. In another word, every individual is a part of the whole organization and should conform to the decision of the institution. Before his awareness of the fact, he had become a member of the institution since he was prohibited from having any thoughts of his own and was supposed to follow the orders of the Brotherhood obediently. After receiving four-month training and the indoctrination of the Brotherhood ideology, the invisible man almost accepted the way of thinking consciously since he could even repeat the arguments of the Brotherhood in his dream. When he was demanded to leave Harlem where he succeed in doing his job to another place without any specific sensible reason, he even comforted himself that he must follow the order of the organization with no condition by working in a back-warded southern place. Thanks to his good performances in the organization, he got promotion and therefore he become more and more attached to the ideology of the Brotherhood and he lost almost all the symbols which suggested his racial nature and culture which defined his identity. In the Brotherhood, the invisible man was given an identity, that is, to be a speech maker and the Brotherhood could provide material support to him on condition that he would work hard and follow the instructions of the organization. At first, he was confident with this new identity and assumed that this was his true identity and accordingly, he worked hard wholeheartedly by forcing himself to accept and master the ideology of the Brotherhood. He followed all the rules and orders of the organization with enthusiasm and ambition and fortunately thanks to his hard working, the reputation of Brotherhood was wide-spread and received more members, however, he was blamed by some members who criticized him for giving up the rules and ideas of the Brotherhood, and when encountering the criticisms, he accepted them willingly so as to ensure his new identity. When he returned to Harlem, he found that the Brotherhood has shifted its focus from the national issues to international ones while the interests of black members were unmercifully sacrificed. For instance, when Tod Clifton, a respectful member, was selling dolls which degraded the blacks and consequently was killed by a white policeman, the invisible man gave a passionate

speech at Tod Clifton's funeral to prove the integrity of Tod Clifton while the invisible man was immediately accused by the white members for they maintained that the invisible man was not supposed to speak out what was in his mind. Until now the invisible man realized that he was nothing more than a tool to express the ideology of the organization which did not allow any member to think and speak independently. What impressed the invisible man was that the essential purpose of the organization was to gain benefits for itself rather than for the benefits of the black as it originally claimed.

The invisible man finally realized the realities of society the same as Holden had done, however, the invisible man was determined to take action after his reflections on his experience and he began to walk out of the hole after experiencing the oppression and prejudice and witnessing the selfishness and hypocrisy of some wealthy white men and middleclass black men including Mr. Norton and Dr. Bledsoe. The invisible man hold his views that the way advocated by Ras the Exhortor was too radical since it would lead inevitably to violence during the process of eliminating the oppression and prejudice in society. Through the depiction of the invisible man, Ralph Ellison lifted the image of a thoughtful and ambitious youth to a higher level, that is, a leader who will take actions to engage himself in an arduous quest, searching for their racial identities.

It is generally believed that optimists experience less pain than pessimists when coping with difficulties in their lives. It is clear that Holden was a pessimist who did not maintain any hope for the future while the invisible man was an optimist who experienced failures for many times but still harbored hope for his future since he believed that as long as he changed his attitude and way of behavior, and as long as all the blacks unit together, the situation of the blacks must be varied and the future of the society must be brighter. Optimists usually adopt problem-focused coping with active attitude by seeing the best in bad situation and learning the lessons from the failure while the pessimists tend to deny the reality and indulge themselves in material abuse to lessen their awareness of the problem. The invisible man realized that one main reason of his failure was his attitude toward the white and the black, which resulted in his invisibility. Therefore during his hibernation, he reflected and was de-

terminated to be a new man by sticking to his self-identity, therefore he would work for the benefits of the blacks and gain his achievement by being visible both to the white and to the blacks. When expelled from school, Holden refused to accept that the fact he was not performing well in many subjects and even refused to listen to the answers in his examination paper as if it was written by someone else. Actually, his problem was as not serious as he thought, he could go to the school or another school if he stayed at home for a short period by working hard with his study with the assistance of some home tutors. But on the contrary, he shifted his focus from his study to the evil of the society as if the evil should shoulder the responsibility of his bad performance at school. In other words, he did not realize the internal reason of his problem but blame the society for his expelling from the school, and when he was wondering around in New York for two days, his problem would not been lessen but worsened. He tried to escape from the reality to be a catcher in the rye or to be a recluse in the west, which were impractical since he had no ability to support himself economically. Consequently, he suffered from the mental crash and was sent to the mental hospital since his attempt to cope with his problem by denial and by mentally and behaviorally disengaging from the issues failed.

Living in the same country, both the protagonists in the two novels shared some common points. For instance, both of them are pure, innocent and good in nature. Nevertheless, being in different social status and different culture, Holden, the wealthy white adolescent who longed for care and guidance in his life, held pessimistic view toward the adult world and ended up with mental treatment. The invisible man, the poor black adolescent who was eager for the recognition from the white, held positive view toward the white and ended up with hibernation in the hole, however, few days later, he took the initiative to terminate the hibernation and walk out of the hole to encounter the society with a fresh peace of mind. Whether the two protagonists could confirm their self-identities are open questions left by the authors for the readers to ponder over.