

*Cultural Hybridity*  
*in*

*Ralph Ellison's*

*Invisible Man*

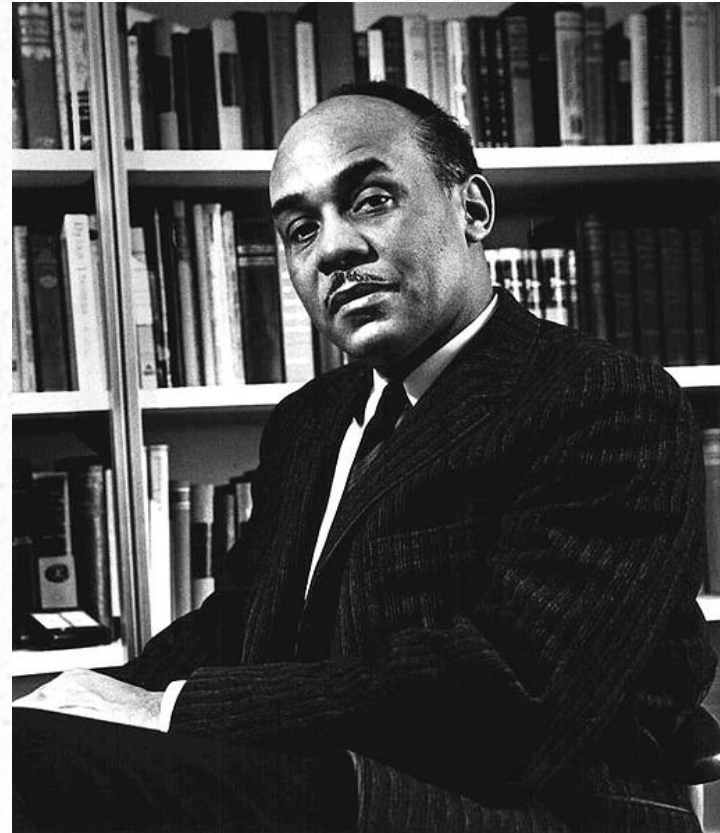
# *Ralph Ellison*

\* 1914 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

musician, writer, academic

novel, *Invisible Man* (1952)

† 1994



# *Ralph Ellison: Writing career*

1933 – 1936 trained as a musician, Tuskegee Institute

1936: visit to New York meeting author Richard Wright

This interaction leads to his first attempts at fiction

1938 – 1942 working for the Federal Writers' Project

1943: hired to cover a riot in Harlem

1952: first novel, *Invisible Man*

1964: collection of essays, *Shadow and Act*

1986: collection of essays, *Going to the Territory*

published reviews, short stories, articles, and criticism in many national magazines and anthologies

In general: work of essays, criticism, and fiction which explores the nuances of racial identity

# *Ralp Ellison: Academic career*

1955 -1957 fellow American Academy, Rome

1955 -1957 teaching at Bard College, Salzburg

1961 Alexander White Visiting Professor, University of Chicago

1962 - 1964 Visiting Professor of Writing, Reutgers University

1964 appointed to American Academy of Arts and Letters

10 years work, New York University

1970 Albert Schweitzer Professor of the Humanities, New Yourk Universitiy

charter member of the National Council on the Arts and Humanities

trustee of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

trustee of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

# *Ralph Ellison: Invisible Man*

Invisible Man (1952)

His first and only novel

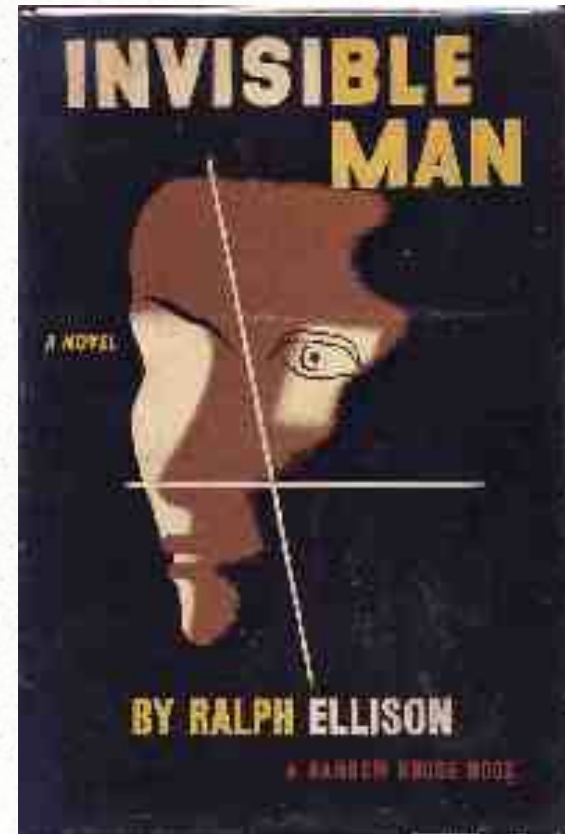
Novel questioning racial identity

Spent seven years working on the novel

National Book Award

Russwurm Award

One of the classics of American literature



# *Invisible Man: Summary*

*The novel opens with a Prologue describing the depressed state of the narrator, who remains nameless throughout the novel. He is an invisible man, he proclaims, and has taken to living unknown underground, sucking electricity from the state of New York into his many light bulbs that he has hung in his lair. The novel is to be the story of how he came to be in this position.*

# *Invisible Man: Comments*

The Critical Review (1976), F.H. Langman:

*"Although [Invisible Man] tells the story of a black man's search for himself, it represents more than the quest for black identity. It is at once more specific, a very individual story, and more general, dramatizing the identity-crisis of a whole society."*

# *Ralp Ellison: Bibliographie*

"Ellison, Ralph." African American Writers. Lea Baechler and A. Walton Litz, Editors. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991.

"Ellison, Ralph." Black Literature Criticism: Excerpts from Criticism of the Most Significant Works of Black Authors over the Past 200 Years. Vol. 1. James P. Draper, Editor. Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1992.

Ellison, Ralph. Invisible Man. Second edition. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.

Langman, F.H. "Reconsidering 'Invisible Man'," in The Critical Review, Melbourne, No. 18, 1976, pp. 114-27 in Black Literature Criticism: Excerpts from Criticism of the Most Significant Works of Black Authors over the Past 200 Years. Vol. 1. James P. Draper, Editor. Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1992.