

Point of view

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



The Author and His/Her Times:

Ralph Ellison, born on March 1, 1914 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma wrote *The Invisible Man* while at a friend's farm in Vermont. Ellison was named after the journalist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson. His father, who loved children and books, died when Ellison was only three years old leaving his mother Ida, to raise him and his younger brother alone.

In 1936 Ellison went to New York over the summer with the intent of earning enough money to pay for his college expenses, but ended up relocating. He began working as a writer for the New York Federal Writers Program. During this period of time he began to publish his essays and short stories and worked as managing editor for *The Negro Quarterly*. (Biography. com Editors)

Form, Structure, and Plot:

This novel is 581 pages long with twenty-three lengthy chapters. The author organizes the novel by starting the book with the end of the story. The narrator then begins to have flashbacks and tells the story of how he is in the position he is in and finishes the novel with where he started in the beginning of the book. The narrator near the start of the novel dreams that the scholarship given to him reads *Keep This Nigger-Boy Running*. This foreshadows the event that occurs later in the book when he joins the Brotherhood. The beginning and the end of the book are very similar considering they both are technically the end of the story which is being told.

Point of View:

The narrator writes this novel in first person, by heavily detailing is

experiences and the way he feels about the events that he has been through. The narrator is the protagonist in this novel, with few shifts in perspectives throughout the book. This is a reminiscence perspective written in the past. By writing in this point of view the author achieves a powerful effect on the reader. By telling the story and events that had happened to him in first person it allows the reader to really understand his feelings, emotions, and sympathize with the narrator.

Character:

The main character in this novel as well as the protagonist is the narrator. He is perceived as innocent and naive throughout the book and his name is never revealed. The name that he is called in the Brotherhood and the hospital is unknown, thus the title of the book *Invisible Man*. There are more complex characters such as Brother Jack that appear in the story. Brother Jack, a red headed white male and leader of the Brotherhood, is seemingly compassionate and helpful towards the narrator but soon becomes clear that Jack is a betrayer and is the same as the rest of the white men with racial beliefs. Another member of the Brotherhood is Tod Clifton. Tod is a passionate black male who eventually leaves the group and begins selling Sambo dolls on the streets. These dolls represent the stereotype of black people at the time, which was lazy and uneducated. The minor character Rinehart, never appears or speaks in the book but is known by reputation. Rinehart is known as a pimp and many other things. The narrator gets mistaken for Rinehart when he goes incognito and wears dark glasses in the streets of Harlem.