

Invincible man

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

TEACHER August 15, Ralph Ellisons The Invisible Man and Race Relations. Ralph Ellisons " The Invisible Man" is a novel which, although it sounds like science fiction, is often considered a classic of literature. One of the most interesting ways about the novel is the ways in which the narrator and the rest of society perceive his invisibility, which is only social, and how it relates to themes like racial hatred. The narrator has a lot of trouble perceiving himself as an individual, because he is African American. The rest of society, on the other hand, often perceive him as a generic African American male, and refuse to even consider him as a person in his own right. Throughout, the novel examines the motifs of blindness and invisibility in a number of ways. Ultimately, the narrators " invisibility" can be understood as a discussion of the problems African Americans face in gaining acceptance in the wider community.

One of the big problems in the novel is the narrators perception of himself as an individual person compared to how others see him. Most of what the reader gets about his this identity is created in the very first chapter, where he basically describes his history in short form. He is not modest, and thinks that he is actually more intelligent and useful than most people. In the opening chapter he compares himself to various inventors, and talks about his theories and his intelligence. Later in the novel this is shown by his trip to college and his ending up where he does, which results in him living and writing for free without anyones understanding it any better.

Although he is intelligent and well-educated, the narrator is constantly made to doubt his own achievements, such as in the way he earns his scholarship to college, which is very degrading to his race, and in the way people constantly scheme to take advantage of him because they think that as a

<https://assignbuster.com/invincible-man/>

black man that is all he is good for. One example of this is with Norton in the bar, who faints and has to be treated by an African American veteran after he has spent the chapter discussing African Americans in very stereotypical terms.

All of this is summed up in the motifs of blindness and invisibility, which take place throughout the novel even as all of the problems with identity happen. Blindness is essentially the way all the people in the novel see only what they want to see about other people, or about themselves. The narrator suffers from this kind of blindness in others all the time, which is what eventually leads him to decide to be invisible on purpose instead of by accident. This is where the title comes in, and is basically blindness turned around on itself so that you can choose to manipulate peoples expectations and do whatever you want.

In conclusion, the novel "The Invisible Man" is a story about peoples perceptions, and the way they affect racial relationships. The narrator of the novel finds that the best way for him to interact in such a blinded world, is to take on a role of invisibility until he can figure out a way to get people to see what is really there in individuals, and not what they expect to see there.