Identity, Ideology, Redemption: Voices from Invisible Man

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Invisible Man is a novel by Ralph Ellison, published by Random House in 1952. It addresses many of the social and intellectual issues faced by the African Americans in the early twentieth century, including black nationalism, the relationship between black identity and Marxism, and the reformist racial policies of Booker T. Washington, as well as issues of individuality and personal identity. Invisible Man is an American literary classic. It tells the story of a nameless man who is invisible. He is invisible both literal and physical. Invisibility is literal because he is ignored by mainstream society. The invisibility is also figurative, "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me" (Ellison 3). The cause of invisibility is his race. This is because the main character—the invisible man—is Black. "Harlem…drew much of its substance from the voices, idioms, folklore, traditions and political concerns of those whose racial and cultural origins I share" (Ellison xx). Harlem is the setting of the book and also a point of transformation. He finds identity and self-discovery working with the Brotherhood, finding individuality and understanding. Invisibility, let me explain, gives one a slightly different sense of time, you're never quite on the beat. Sometimes you're ahead and sometimes behind. Instead of the swift and imperceptible flowing of time, you are aware of its nodes, those points where time stands still or from which it leaps ahead. And you slip into the breaks and look around. That's what you hear vaguely in Louis' music. Abstract

This research paper attempts to study the Negro problem of identity and existence in the postwar American Negro novel with special reference to the saga of survival and invisibility of a nameless young black man in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man. The core of this study tackles the desperate quest, this man living, in a blind, nihilistic, and racist American world denies his existence, and reducing him almost to a non-entity making him ever more restless, possessed and exhausted. Discover the world's research. 17+ million members. Cultural identity is a vexing question within Afro-American political thinking. It has been one the most central preoccupations for major black intellectuals who have addressed the issue from different conceptual paradigms. Ralph Ellisons magnum opus Invisible Man is a penetrating bildungroman tracing the protagonist journey from ignorance to self-discovery. This paper aims to explore the irrelevance of three political ideologies to cope with the plight of the blacks in America. My point of departure will examine the tradition of Booker T. Washington on the light of the individualistic oppo