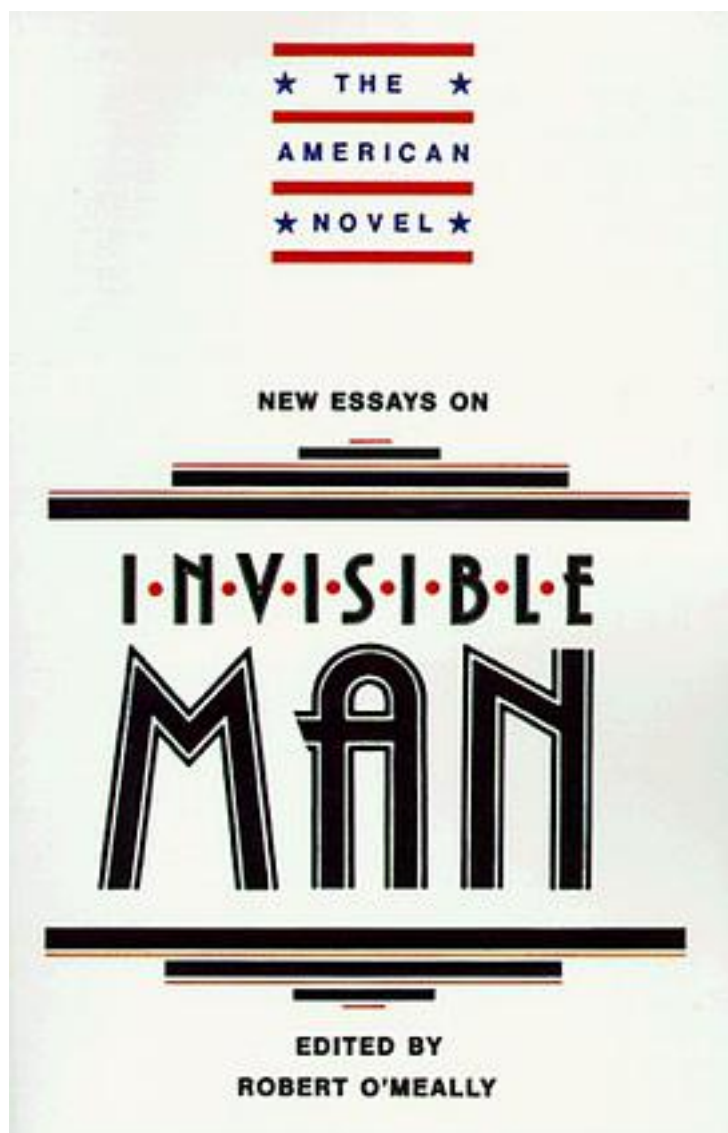


New Essays on Invisible Man (The American Novel)



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Published less than fifty years ago, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* shares with older classic works the odd quality of seeming to have been in place much longer. It is a novel that encompasses much of the American scene and character: though told by a single Afro-American voice and set in the contemporary South and then in modern New York City, its references are to the First World War, to Reconstruction, to the Civil War and slavery, to the founding of the American republic, to Columbus, and to the country's frontier past. In his introduction to this volume Robert O'Meally discusses Ellison's fictional strategies for reaching a wide audience while remaining true to his own artistic vision and voice. Then each of five critical essays explores a different aspect of this capacious novel. One looks at the novel's protagonist as an embattled artist-in-training; another focuses on the novel's political and philosophical backgrounds; a third discusses the style and meaning of the nameless narrator's speeches; a fourth examines the novel's modernism in light of its references to jazz and anthropology; and the final essay considers *Invisible Man* as a kind of war novel. Written in an accessible style, these essays represent the best of recent scholarship and provide students with a useful introduction to this major novel.

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