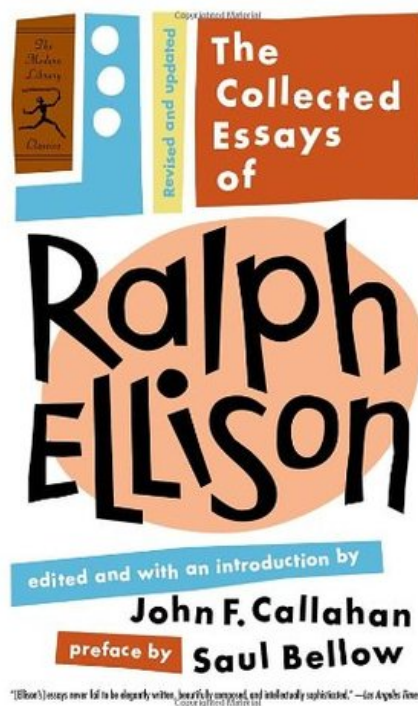




The Collected Essays

Ralph Ellison , John F. Callahan (Editor) , Saul Bellow (Preface by) , John Callahan (Editor)

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Compiled, edited, and newly revised by Ralph Ellison's literary executor, John F. Callahan, this Modern Library Paperback Classic includes posthumously discovered reviews, criticism, and interviews, as well as the essay collections *Shadow and Act* (1964), hailed by Robert Penn Warren as "a body of cogent and subtle commentary on the questions that focus on race," and *Going to the Territory* (1986), an exploration of literature and folklore, jazz and culture, and the nature and quality of lives that black Americans lead. "Ralph Ellison," wrote Stanley Crouch, "reached across race, religion, class and sex to make us all Americans."

The Collected Essays Details

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From Reader Review The Collected Essays for online ebook

Dan says

50 Years of essays and talks on literature and American culture, still very timely.

Beza says

check out invisible man

Eric says

I recommend the essay "Twentieth Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity". Ellison's analysis of "hard boiled" fiction explained to me what it was that always annoyed me about Hemingway, and the (to me) puzzling prevalence and celebration of writers like Cheever, Updike, Salinger, and Roth -- all celebrating apolitical, bourgeois characters standing for nothing.

Ellison is often arch and egotistical, but he was a great prose stylist and did stand for human dignity and equality.

Babydoll says

This book is a compilation of impressive essays from Ellison that I thoroughly enjoyed. A pretty long read, yet it will not disappoint.

Vel Veeter says

I don't know what to say about a 900 page collection of essays that represent the 50 year career of Ralph Ellison. What I can talk about are some of the various interests, ghosts, and other throughlines that make their way through these essays. He's a writer who's very concerned about the racialized criticism of language, of the experiences of Blackness, of literature, and of music. And I guess I mean by that that he's concerned about each of those items on their own, as well as in the way each is and isn't racialized in their own way.

He's also a writer who adores writing in a very fetching and earnest way. He's great at both breaking down problematic writers' contributions to American Literature while also having a clear affection for them. For all his criticism of Faulkner, Hemingway, and Mark Twain, there's a kind of reverse avuncularism to his discussion of them. He does not dismiss them because they're not perfect; he's disappointed in their imperfections. Throughout his essays, he's also dealing with his own sense of being a novelist. I've always found it really interesting that in all of his interviews he always downplays certain things about himself. He's always referred to as being a novelist first, but if your only novel comes out in 1950, what can you say about the experiences of being a novelist in 1990 that still has resonance. I don't think most people consider him a

failed novelist by any stretch....given that he wrote one of the most important American novels ever....because his importance to the world becomes a little more singular than I think he's comfortable with by the end. There's an interview from the 70s where's being interviewed by John Hersey, a more minor writer, but also a more prolific one, that strikes me as the crystallization of this version of Ellison that I have.

Regardless, his essays on literature are so very good. I found myself skimming his music essays, not because of their quality, but because of my own lack of interest in music (as an application of analysis). I also found myself beyond interested in the French writer Andre Malraux after he's a touchstone for Ellison in some 10 different essays.

This collection is both essay collection Ellison published alongside many additional essays and speeches and interviews given throughout his life.

Frank says

Background reading for *Invisible Man*.

Lindsay says

I haven't read this entire book. I read a selection of the essays for an essay that I was writing for class--all of them on the topic of jazz music. I knew nothing about jazz, but the stories told by Ellison were still very interesting to me, and I really enjoyed them.

Ron says

A wonderful collection of essays on literature, American history and politics, music, and a lot more.

Ellison's writings on race and racism are thought provoking and relevant to our times today.

Ellison's brilliance shines throughout this book. All of the essays should be read over and over.

April says

Haven't read all of it yet but wow. It's great.

Chris Moore says

I listened to this on Audible so maybe a physical book would be better to dip in and out of. I wanted to hear a sample of Ralph Ellison's work before buying this however all the samples are of the introduction and not

representative. This is pretty highbrow and dry for me unfortunately. I wanted to hear his writing on Jazz mainly and there are 3 or 4 essays on the subject however most is on the role of African Americans in 20th Century. His essays range from deeply descriptive and poetic and dry academic analysis, but too little of the former. And I am left with little idea of his point.

It is mainly dry essay and I lasted about 10h in before pulling the plug. There maybe some hidden gems but they are well hidden. Only to be used for as reference for a degree in African American History

Anthony D'Juan Shelton says

This collection has everything that is in "Shadow & Act" as well as "Living With Music" -- plus more. There are a couple of interviews with Ellison, as well as his "notes" during the writing of "Invisible Man."

It was a great find.

Ernie says

Ellison is one of the best American essayists of the century. His essays are perhaps even better than his classic, *Invisible Man*. This collection contains the entirety of *Shadow and Act*, his most famous essay collection, as well as a series of other interviews and essays. Ellison is as perceptive when writing about literature as he is when doing music criticism, and his thoughts are crucial for those seeking to gain a fuller understanding of the American democratic project as it relates to culture, literature, and race. On top of all of this, Ellison is also a brilliant prose stylist.
