

# Ralph Ellison and the uses of imagination

## Bobbs-Merrill - Ralph Ellison and the uses of imagination



Description: -

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Homer -- Translations into English  
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Festivals -- Australia -- Melbourne -- Pictorial works.  
Estonians -- Foreign countries -- Social life and customs -- Pictorial works.  
Ellison, Ralph, -- 1914-Ralph Ellison and the uses of imagination  
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## Ralph Ellison

While on stage, he spins the bingo wheel by pressing a button but is then unable to take the chance of letting the button go. How, in other words, should I think of myself and my pluralistic sense of the world, how express my vision of the human predicament, without reducing it to a point which would render it sterile before that necessary and tragic—though enhancing—reduction which must occur before the fictive vision can come alive? Therefore, the narrator questions whether the education he is receiving is being used to manipulate his choices and thoughts as a black person among white citizens.

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But to whom can I be responsible, and why should I be, when you refuse to see me? The first chapter begins with the narrator discussing his youth living in the American South. Confused by the cyclone that moves through the town, an airplane pilot mistakes the fire of the lynching for an airport flare and flies too low through the town, knocking loose a wire and electrocuting a white woman. And with consciousness a more refined consciousness, and most of all, that tolerance which takes the form of humor, for when Americans can no longer laugh at each other, they have to fight one another.

## RALPH ELLISON AND THE USES OF IMAGINATION (Bobbs)

The final image is of Todd watching a buzzard flying against the sun, glowing like a bird of flaming gold. For as we viewed these pillars of society from the confines of our segregated community we almost always saw crooks, clowns, or hypocrites.

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This was due, in part, perhaps to the fact that some of us were fatherless—my own father had died when I was three—but most likely it was because boys are natural romantics. Surely our fantasies have caused far less damage to the nation's sense of reality, if for no other reason than that ours were expressive of a more democratic ideal. What shall I make of the life around me, what celebrate, what reject, how confront the snarl of good and evil which is inevitable? So I approach it through division.

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