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Breaking Silence / Uttering Agony: The Black Female Body in Pain and the Power of Parody from Invisible Man to Corregidora to Possessing the Secret of Joy

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To speak, to utter, to name the discourses of painful mind-body traumas is the mission of both Gayl Jones in her 1975 novel *Corregidora* and Alice Walker in her 1992 novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (*Possessing)*. Jones's and Walker's novels interrogate black female body discourse and specifically Ursa Corregidora's and Tashi Evelyn Johnson's aftershocks from losing body parts affecting their reproductive and sexual capabilities. According to Elaine Scarry in *The Body in Pain,* the mental or physical injuries which women sustain at the hands of abusive males cause the victims to elicit a "pain discourse." Utterance of the internal pain—whether vocables, phrases, or sentences—is a language, for the sound is an expression of the body's sensations. Correspondingly, Carole Henderson's observations in her book *Scarring the Body* complement those already noted by Elaine Scarry.

Henderson specifically addresses the physical contours of the body, and points out that external body marks function as lexicons of language; they signify upon the historical, cultural, geographical, and temporal eruptions of the scars. Sequentially, Ursa Corregidora's and Tashi Evelyn Johnson's body marks from a hysterectomy and a female circumcision procedure arise because of direct or indirect acts of male violence at different continental land sites. Whether the men's actions against them occur in Africa, Europe, or America, argues Jones and Walker, black women in Africa or the diaspora must resist, reject, and transform the ancient and contemporary patriarchal laws which have dictated gender power over the black female body.

To offset this masculine hegemonic grip, both writers set out at different times to revise literary history by parodying Ralph Ellison's classic 1952 novel *Invisible Man.* The work exemplifies the suffocating masculinist and white feminist discourses that have kept black women muted and consigned to subordinate social positions in American culture and its imperialistic global networks.

For this reason, Jones and Walker, by means of intertextual repetitioning upon the microscopic representations of black women in *Invisible Man,* extrapolate, magnify, and signify upon specific scenes in order to script and design "Afrofeminist spirit discourses" of liberation and wholistic healing. Invisible Man's mind-body traumas occur from a factory explosion. While his mental and bodily sufferings are short term and his recuperation is rapid, it is the obverse experience for Ursa and Tashi. Theirs is the usual three-to-six weeks of recuperation for their surgical wounds to heal, but the attendant scars never enable them to slough off the psychic damage to their self-esteems. The scars are everyday reminders of their bodily dismemberments and also emblematic of their double- and triple-decades long mental sufferings that are handicapped by few, if any, facilities dedicated to black women's health issues. Jones and Walker show that Ursa's and Tashi-Evelyn's (Tashi-E's) quests for wholeness must entail their local and transnational searches for and/or creations of an archeology of Afrofeminist mind-body spirit discourses. And like Invisible Man's rightful or wrongful oratory skills, Ursa and Tashi-E eventually, too, find autonomy through the power of the spoken word—the African, Nommo life force—as expressed through public songs or testimonies. Their speech acts are inspiriting, for they incite the heroines' to devise their own Afrofeminist strategies of resistance in order to expose, undermine, transform, and/or destroy the maleovolent, masculine discourses that have crippled women like them at different land sites worldwide.

The Power of Parody: Breaking Land-based Gender-Race Barriers/Developing an Afrofeminist Spirit Discourse

Both Gayl Jones and Alice Walker were products of the 1960s and 1970s advanced guard of African American women writers attempting to theorize the nascent principles of black feminist epistemological frames and discursive modes.

They immersed themselves in the male-governed, "Afrocentric spirit discourse" of the 1960s Black Nationalist Movement, and eventually, owing to black masculinist suffocation, separated themselves by forming their own black women's coalitions to forge a feminist discourse describing the uniqueness of the black female experience. "Spirit discourse" is a term that I have coined relational to the wholistic health of the black body in Africa as well as in European, American, and other diasporic contact spaces over issues concerning race, class, gender, age, and sexuality. Most often in the 1960s and 1970s, black women fulfilled traditional, behind-scene roles to support African American male leaders in their unified quests to free themselves of European-American racism and imperialism. However, while participating actively in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and its literary offshoot of the Black Arts Movement, African American women too frequently found themselves relegated to secondary roles, if not invisible statuses as far as making key decisions about activities. Eventually, they revolted against overtly, offensive African American sexism and white male and female racisms.

To illustrate their disenchantments with black and white masculinist and white feminist oppressive coalitions, African American women writers turned inward towards culture to locate literary paradigms to express the particularities of their race and gender concerns. They found models in the African and African American cultural and literary practices known variously as intertextual repetitioning, revoicing, or, according to Henry Louis Gates, "signifyin'" (110). Sonya Sanchez led the way as far as black women writing parodies of Ralph Ellison's 1952 classic novel *Invisible Man* in her 1968, one-act play "The Bronx is Next." Jones and Walker considered *Invisible Man* as a model text to signify upon as well. Ellison's work covers the history of slavery, post-slavery, Reconstruction, the 1930s Great Depression era, rise of Communism, and the disappointments which blacks experienced at each venture as they sought equal rights guaranteed to American citizens. His hero is nameless and more of a composite Black Everyman.

However, Ellison's black hero never embraces a black female as a love interest or sexual partner in the entire novel. Coupled with this omission in Ellison's work and Invisible Man's other multiple social blunders, his actions enable Jones and Walker to signify upon various scenes. But the two black women writers bring different nationalist, geographical, racial, cultural, and gender perspectives to their revoicings of *Invisible Man.*

Jones is artistically skillful as a poet, novelist, short story writer, and literary critic. After *Corregidora*, Jones published *Eva's Man* in 1977; *Hermitage-Woman* in 1983, *Liberating Voices: Oral Tradition in African American Literature* in 1991, and *The Healing* in 1995. In *Liberating Voices*, Jones critiques *Invisible Man* among the many works that she analyses about how African American authors have focused on orality, vernacular expressions, and blues and jazz music in their writings.

As for Walker, she, too, has written a vast array of poetry, novels, short stories, and literary criticisms. She helped the black feminist cause in the 1970s when she located the gravesite of Zora Neale Hurston in Eatonville, Florida; Walker parodied Hurston's style by focusing upon the black community in her other novels such as *Meridian* in 1984 and *The Color Purple* in 1985. However, while Walker specifically states in her afterword to *Possessing* that her characters of Tashi, Adam, Olivia, and their African American relatives are not repeat characters from *The Color Purple*, her undeclared parody of *Invisible Man* causes readers to wonder why they re-appear with the same names and family ties (283). The reason is that Walker is merely engaging in intratextual repetitioning of her own creations to illustrate that parody not only works intertextually but within an author's own canon as well. Finally, Walker's creation of a literary theory on "womanist discourse" has garnered her international attention. Her 1983 manifesto lauded and encouraged the "outrageous, audacious, courageous [and] *willful* behavior" of dissident black women to break away from being traditional, silent followers under masculinist control (Walker, *Search* xi). However, her "womanist" theory is not readily accepted by many African women theorists because African collective identity embraces men (Ogundipe 543). Portions of Walker's tenets complement my own term and meanings for "Afrofeminist spirit discourse" that I will be using throughout this essay and which concerns the struggles of women of African descent to achieve autonomy, regeneration, and spiritual wholeness.

Thus, Walker does converse with Jones in perceiving *Invisible Man* as an anti-black feminist text and apt prototype to parody. The two authors are specifically concerned over black women's experiences with abusive males and their resultant bodily injuries, which lead the heroines of *Corregidora* and *Possessing* to seek health and healing solutions for their wounded minds and bodies in America, Africa, and/or Europe. There is a sequence in *Invisible Man* that enables Jones and Walker to accomplish this revoicing of Ellison's work and insert the black woman's perspective.

At one point in Invisible Man's many adventures in the North, he finally succumbs to lower his expectations of acquiring a white-collar job and accepts a position as a factory worker. But on the first day he messes up every assignment and as a last resort, his white supervisor assigns Invisible Man to the section where paint is mixed and processed. However, the supervisor Brockaway, an African American and long-time employee, resents Invisible Man's encroachment on his turf and believes that Invisible Man is a spy for the unionists in the company. In a deliberate act to rid himself of a problem, Brockaway assigns Invisible Man to monitor the gauges for the boilers that mix the paint. He then tells Invisible Man to raise their temperatures and disappears before they explode. The result is Invisible Man's injury, hospitalization, revival by means of machines, and release from the hospital with a modest compensation from the company. However, in the next weeks as Invisible Man recuperates, he begins to itch profusely and shed his old skin as his body heals.

Jones in 1975 and Walker in 1992 modify Ellison's characters by race, gender, age, and sexuality in order to express the pain which black women suffer when they are assailed and/or injured by abusive males, no matter the land site. To illustrate, Ursa, like Invisible Man, is an African American but female while Tashi-E, also female, is constructed as an African naturalized American. Jones and Walker also revise the circumstances leading to the women's bodily injuries, and also the kinds of injuries which they both sustain. For example, Ursa's opening memory concerns her victimization from spousal abuse in Lexington, Kentucky, in April 1948. Like Invisible Man, the geographical site is minimally describe because the battering is more significant. Mutt Johnson, Ursa's husband of four months, out of jealousy, causes Ursa to fall down a flight of stairs backstage at Happy's Café. At the hospital, she loses her womb to a hysterectomy, thereby negating Ursa's capability to fulfill the historical, matriarchal commandment of Corregidoran women to make "make generations" (Jones 10). The disappointment causes Ursa to lapse into a state of depression bordering on insanity. Similarly, Tashi-E has an opening recollection of a family crisis occurring in her Olinkan, West African village. It, too, is minimally described because the historical events are more important. At the tender age of five in the 1940s, Tashi-E's sibling Dura dies suddenly. Tashi-E's African mother Nafa forbids the young child from crying out loud in front of a group of newly-arrived African American missionaries.

This silencing of her pain becomes so consciously submerged that Tashi-E, after voluntarily insisting that M'Lissa the *tsunga* perform the eighteen-year-old's circumcision rite, still is unable to understand how trauma one—the death of her sister—has any psychological bearing upon trauma two—her submersion into deep depression and then insanity after her genital mutilation ritual. Yet the painful mind-body traumas of both Ursa Corregidora and Tashi Evelyn Johnson are not unrelated.

Breaking the Spirit: the Wounded Black Female Body/theFractured Psyche

Both Jones and Walker skillfully illustrate that shedding skin for Invisible Man is not as serious as black women having their reproductive and sexual organs excised. Certainly Brockaway's deliberate attempt to "kill off" Invisible Man in New York is clearly another example of black-on-black crime. The Brockaway clones of Mutt Johnson in Kentucky and M'Lissa in Olinka also disappear after performing their violent deeds. Abusive black males, along with their female allies, are the major concerns of Jones and Walker. In each case, the present-time actions of the culprits have transhistorical effects upon the present-time lives of Ursa and Tashi-E. As they age over twenty-five and thirty-five years, respectively, they remain psychologically-stunted in the temporal moments of their injuries. Their traumatized minds, more than their post-surgical shocked bodies, attest to the damage. For instance, Invisible Man blacks out after the explosion. Coming back to consciousness in a New York hospital, he recalls:

When I emerged, the lights were still there. I lay beneath the slab of glass, feeling deflated. All my limbs seemed amputated. It was very warm. A dim white ceiling stretched far above me. My eyes were swimming with tears. Why, I didn't know. It worried me. I wanted to knock on the glass to attract attention, but I couldn't move. The slightest effort, hardly morethan a desire, tired me. I lay experiencing vague processes of my body. I seemed to have lost all sense of proportion. Where did my body end and the crystal and white world begin? (238)

He wakes up mentally confused and bodily benumbed in a glass-covered metal cavern with various instruments attached to his body. A host of white doctors attempt to jog his ontological memory with questions about his name, his mother, his place of birth, and finally folktales about "Buckeye the Rabbit and/or "Brer Rabbit."

In Invisible Man's vacillating emotions of "sorrow," "mental pain," and then "shame" for being an amnesiac, he instantly recovers his cultural identity with the rabbit questions. He even starts to play the "dozens" with his interlocutor over the "Brer Rabbit" reference: "He was your mother's back-door man, I thought" (241-42). The folktales from African American culture revive his memory about the stories of the clever little rabbit which African slaves brought to America, but over time, changed Kalulu's name to "Brer Rabbit" and pronounced it in vernacular forms of English (Ellison 241; *Brer Rabbit*).

In their parodies of Invisible Man's work-related accident in which he did not suffer amputation of his limbs or organs, contrarily, Jones and Walker illuminate how both black women respond to their life-altering body-part removals. The torturers Brockaway, Mutt, and M'Lissa cause them to experience life-altering bodily injuries. But unlike Invisible Man's temporary mind-body dysfunctions, Ursa in Kentucky and Tashi-E in Olinka have drastic reactions to their physical alterations which instantly trigger their schizophrenic, mental declines. That is because the victim whose body is in pain, according to Elaine Scarry, experiences articulated or unarticulated mental pain as well (47). Invisible Man has a short spate of mind-body numbness, but Ursa's differs. She learns from the doctor that she not only miscarried a fetus with her fall but also must face a hysterectomy. It means loss of two body parts: a fetus and a womb. Ursa does not recall the surgical operation, but she does have a team of doctors and nurses as support staff. While Brockaway has totally absented himself in Invisible Man's life, she learns from the doctors and nurses that Mutt has frequently visited her, but never during her conscious moments. Says Ursa, "They said that when I was delirious I was cursing him *and* the doctors and nurses out" (4). In other words, Ursa has no memory loss unlike Invisible Man, and needs no prompts to recall her four-month marriage to an abusive husband who has been disappearing and reappearing as she has been recuperating.

Also in a simulation of Invisible Man's brief experience, Ursa's mental and bodily healths begin to decline during her hospital stay in forms of negative sensory perceptions and fits of mental depression. There and over the next few days and weeks, she suffers Invisible Man-type numbness or nervous tension (touch), insomnia (sight), and loss of appetite (taste). She also touches her stitches, and, like Invisible Man's case, they hurt and itch as her scar begins to heal. And Ursa's dysfunctional body causes other side effects.

Her loss of appetite sickens her body and causes weakness, gastritis, and weight loss—symptoms which had caused Invisible Man to pass out on a Harlem street after discharge from the hospital. To Tadpole McCormick's inquiry of "How do you feel?" during his hospital visit, Ursa replies, "As if part of my life's already marked out for me—the barren part" (Jones 6). Her response indexes Ursa's twinned, mind-body pains exceeding Invisible Man's. And her loss of freedom to procreate is the reason that Tadpole consistently finds Ursa in a light sleeping mode or in an insomniac state. Her unconscious sleep patterns or conscious wakefulness all focus on the same issue as represented by Ursa's consistent fixed gaze on the "blank" ceiling above similar to Invisible Man's point of reference from lying horizontally in bed. And different from Invisible Man's wakefulness to inexplicable, tearing eyes, Ursa, although sighted, remains dry-eyed from still being benumbed from her tragedy. The white ceiling symbolizes not only her barren body but also a more complicated problem of her thwarted, mandate to "make generations" of Corregidoran children, preferably childbearing girls (10). She now lacks freedom of choice to reproduce a matrilineal body narrative script in the form of a female heir. Her future appears bleak.

A continent away in West Africa, Tashi-E, too, reflects upon the changes to her bodily functions, and specifically, her optical problems from having her clitoris amputated. M'Lissa the Olinkan circumciser is the only one present during Tashi-E's secret operation. Like Brockaway, she, too, disappears. Adam Johnson, Tashi-E's childmate, teenage lover, and prospective husband, who after a three-month search throughout the bush, finally locates her. He is her only post-surgical audience in that instant. Just as in the case of Jones, Walker signifies on the eye symbols from Invisible Man's experiences. The first thing that Adam notices is the pain that is still unarticulated, but yet is outwardly denoted in Tashi-E's eyes that "were flat as eyes that [had] been pained in, and with dull pain. There were five small cuts on each side of her face. . . . " (43-44). Tashi-E, from her perspective, also consciously recognizes her visual impairment because of the pain and thinks: "*My eyes see him but they do not register his being. Nothing runs out of my eyes to greet him. It is as if my self is behind an iron door"* (45). Like Ursa's, Tashi-E's senses have become dulled from the shock of her surgery; her trauma is so great that she cannot even shed tears, unlike Invisible Man. This outward suppression of pain goes back to Tash-E's early age of five when she, like other Olinkan girls, were culturally trained to suppress their feelings of pain and sorrow.

Now Tashi-E's body senses have reacted in its normal, but traditionally-suppressed state, the case here being a post-surgical, dysfunctional mode of operation. The metaphors of dull, untearing "eyes" and an "iron door" blockading her soul signify upon her benumbed state (45).

More akin to Ursa's experience than that of Invisible Man's, Tashi-E also experiences post-surgical, mind-body splitting. Tashi-E's Self or "soul" takes refuge somewhere else outside of her pain-racked body. This body-soul splitting is briefly experienced by Invisible Man as he seems to have "lost all sense of proportion"—where his body ended and his "soul" merged into his life-support machine: "I seemed to exist in some other dimension, utterly alone" (238). While Ursa can pinpoint the month and year but not the calendar day of her injury, Tashi-E's experience, more like that of Invisible Man's, is remarked by a lack of specificity about the month, date, and year of the accident. A reason that Tashi-E does not name the specific date of her trauma is because of West-South continental differences and cultural practices. African Time is marked by seasons or events, and Tashi-E's historical moment is now Time based and carved into Tashi-E's memory permanently like that of Ursa's (Mbiti 78). Olivia, Adam's sister, best describes Tashi-E's altered mental and physical states on the day of Tashi-E's post-rite, hurried marriage to Adam: "It was heartbreaking to see … how passive Tashi had become … Her movements which had always been graceful, and quick with the liveliness of her personality, now became merely graceful. Slow … That her soul had been dealt a mortal blow was plain to see to any who dared to look into her eyes" (66). In this case, both Tashi-E's self-assessment and Olivia's observations authenticate Tashi-E's loss of animus, her soul, and her thwarted ability to sense the core of being in others. Her altered state is also apparent by Tashi-E's reformed walk known as the Olinkan woman's shuffle. Her dulled eyes and adjusted walk are signatory of a tribally-castrated female's body no longer free to threaten African males fearful of penis envy (Koso-Thomas 25).

Land Sites/Ontological Shapings: The Black Atlantic Nightmare

In the presentness of the 1940s when Ursa's and Tashi-E's bodies are maimed, a question immediately arises: Why are they the victims of violent if not hateful black men? Ursa's Brockaway-styled attacker, her spouse Mutt Johnson, is clearly identifiable in her present-time sequences.

As for Tashi-E, the matter is more complex. M'Lissa the West African circumciser is older like Brockaway the African American, clearly the abusive surgeon, but definitely not masculine. Is M'Lissa a black woman hater? A possible answer resides in ontological practices at specific land-based cultures, and the political systems in force in *Invisible Man* which differ when Jones and Walker recast the events. They not only modify the victims's genders but also delay revelations of invisible male-governed political infrastructures actually responsible for the wholesale assaults upon Ursa's and Tashi-E's bodies. Chapter II is an important prototypical scene in *Invisible Man* that exposes how white male power operates and castrates. The nameless twenty-one-year old hero, a southerner, Alabaman, descendant of slaves, and junior in a Tuskegee-type all-black college has experienced three uneventful years until the visit of a powerful, northern white philanthropist. Being privileged to escort Mr. Norton, an American, on a tour of the area, Invisible Man foolishly drives less than a mile away past a dilapidated, former slave cabin housing the Trueblood family. In answering Mr. Norton's inquiry about the husband, Invisible Man makes a Freudian slip and reveals that Trueblood the husband has impregnated both his wife and daughter.

This incest scene is significant. Its race and gender symbols reflect white culture's sweep of power and the black man's reactive feelings of impotence and self-hatred which he directs towards powerless black women. Mr. Norton insists that Invisible Man stop the car, approaches Trueblood, and demands that the illiterate sharecropper tell his incest story. Invisible Man stands to the side of Mr. Norton, but both stand facing Trueblood whose very pregnant wife and daughter stand beside him. Trueblood spins a colorful tale of post-slavery poverty that forces him, his wife, and daughter to sleep in one bed. But Norton does not care, for the scene reveals Norton's own deep-seated incestuous desires for his deceased daughter. This is why Norton tips Trueblood a hundred dollars, and by means of psychological transference, pays Trueblood for acting out what Norton had done or wanted to do with his deceased daughter. In the meantime, since he can only stand muted in front of Mrs. Trueblood and Mattie and cannot rise up against the powerful white man to insist that they leave the Trueblood shack, Invisible Man channels his self-hatred towards the pregnant wife and pregnant daughter eyewitnesses to his impotence.

Invisible Man resents Trueblood for receiving a reward, but he hates the black women more so who have remained muted but cognizant of Invisible Man's failed manhood.

Here, Invisible Man, the college youth of the present time of 1930, displays traits of the Black Atlantic Personality which powerful European-Americans like Mr. Norton had created in the sixteenth-century early stages of slavery. Two important theories on the African Wholistic Personality and the Black Atlantic Personality now need explanation so as to explain Invisible Man's loathings of black women, and why and how Jones and Walker represent Ursa and Tashi-E as being the victims of self-hating, other Invisible Man types. The theories of contemporary philosopher V. Y. Mudimbe and cultural critic Paul Gilroy both re-examine ancient African life and the European-American slave trade, which subsequently recodified diasporic Africans into chattel laborers—especially black women. In Mudimbe's 1988 work *The Invention of Africa, Power, and Knowledge*, he builds upon the ideas of historian Michel Foucault by arguing that in order to decolonize one's mind about misguided western ideologies which they invented to justify slavery, African-descended people must return to African culture as the site of knowledge.

"Gnosis," meaning "to know," is the key word which Mudimbe posits for learning about the ancient traditions of African people whom he represents as human subjects before western colonization and slavery were imposed (ix). Mudimbe's theory, so to speak, is the "cure" or mode for healing the Black Atlantic fractured psyche described by Paul Gilroy. In his 2002 work *Black Atlantics as Counterculture to Modernity*, Gilroy rejects traditional European-American versions of history. He argues that the symptoms of a fractured psyche, cultural amnesia, and cultural alienation often attributed to being traits of westernized subjects in their reactions to the shocking events of World War I are erroneous. Instead, he associates those symptoms of feeling isolated as being the same reactions of captive Africans who were suddenly and brutally forced away from home onto unfamiliar slave ships bound for the New World. Their experiences of physical brutality, insanity, and suicidal thoughts, Gilroy explains, reflect their premodernist conditions of reacting to sixteenth-century European-American slave trading that occurred three centuries before World War I.

The African captives, although coming from different tribal regions, collectively forged a new nation of slaves who all commonly had been kidnapped, uprouted, and rerouted onto slave ships bound for foreign ports in the New World to work at forced, life-long, unpaid, labor (15).

These descriptions of the Mudimbean gnostic, African Wholistic Personality acquired at birth for any African child born into a patriarchally-governed, collective family, tribe, or clan is the experience of Tashi-E and should be the experiences of Invisible Man and Ursa Corregidora. For example, Jones's parody and revision of Ellison's Chapter II make Ursa's Black Atlantic family history explicable, especially since she, too, is a descendant of slavery and incest on her maternal side. In just revising the first parody of the Trueblood scene, Mutt becomes the impotent black male, woman hater. Ursa forms a larger composite as a professionally-paid Trueblood-type, blues singer/stage performer and partial composite of Trueblood's incest-impregnated daughter, although Ursa initially is ignorant of her condition. Moreover, Corregidora, the long-deceased Portuguese slavemaster/father/great-grandfather of Ursa reconstructs as the invisible, but powerful Mr. Norton figure whom all the Corregidoran women including Ursa obsessively think or talk about. It is he, a European slaver, who had brought Great Gram, his young, "coffee-bean" colored, African-descendant of unknown parentage to Lousiana and then Kentucky, and turned her into his "Dorita. Little gold piece"/sex slave, incest-mother. With such a tangled, transnational European-African-American blood lineage, it is no wonder that Ursa becomes mentally and physically ill in the hospital. Her shocked mind transforms into the fissured psyche of the Black Atlantic Personality--Ursa feels as if her life has been uprouted and rerouted to a barren future. Like Invisible Man moving about Harlem or to downtown New York City, Ursa does not physically travel afar in/from/to Lexington, Kentucky, but she becomes psychologically redirected from the status of a healthy, fertile woman to the position of a barren, dysfunctional being.

She even mentally scripts known truths concerning black women's mental health in this era. In the 1970s, there are white feminist books dealing with women's health problems which account for the older Ursa not mentioning them. She reacts typically like other members of the black community who have learned to distrust white feminists because of their racism and exclusion of black women's values in their studies (Hudson-Weems 49).

Invisible Man's brief psychotherapy in the hospital illustrates how blacks in the 1930s have become New-Deal era experimental subjects. Just from historical practice, Ursa is suspicious of professional, white male psychiatrists. She, like other black women still equate the latter patient-therapist discussions with being another act of betrayal to black culture by divulging community secrets. Moreover, European-American doctors would be applying Sigmund Freud's pro-masculine theory of psychoanalysis, especially that portion blaming women for suffering from penis envy. Through Jones's crafting, however, Ursa unknowingly does signify upon the popular book *Our Bodies, Our Selves* that currently in the 1970s focuses upon white women's self-generated discussions about the functions of their bodies. Another is *The Joy of Sex* that converses on female anatomy, positions for coitus, and sexual pleasure—all still directed towards a white audience. Nonetheless, Ursa signifies upon both books in scenes concerning her self-assessments about the illness or wellness functions of her black female body, and post-surgical attempts to achieve sexual pleasure with Tadpole McCormick, her second husband. Ursa rejects all of these pro-white westernized scientific forms of gynecological or psychotherapeudic health practices. Why? She turns inward to self analysis, and looks for time-tested truths in the matriarchal, Corregidoran family history. The African Nommo "life-force" power of oral speech passed downward from one human to the next is the Corregidoran women's style of knowing gnostic truth about mental and sexual empowerment as taught to them by the family matriarch Great Gram (Alkebulan 28).

Similarly, Tashi-E acquires a Black Atlantic fractured psyche, one in which, by contrast, she looks outside of herself and her African tribe towards American and European doctors for health and healing purposes. After all, she had earlier converted to western Christianity; however, even those tested sources of knowledge do not work for her. When Tashi-E sees Adam at her campsite in the bush, unlike Ursa's musings on Corregidora, she already had begun mentally to distance herself mind and body from her present African environment. She hurriedly marries Adam, and then globe hops to America that actually uproutes and reroutes Tashi-E from her tribal clan in Olinka. But Tashi-E has no separation anxiety; she is another type of Black Atlantic who has been betrayed on the home front by her own Brockaway-type, African kin who sold other kinspeople to European slavers and allowed Christian missionaries to occupy their homelands. Yet, Tashi-E's deliberate and conscious geographical distancing of herself from Africa does not obliterate her mental pain.

Once arriving in America, Tashi-E willingly embraces western epistemological theories, not realizing that these very same medical practices have been used to subjugate African American women and will only validate their racist perceptions of Africans as being savage. Invariably, she becomes another representation of the African savage no different from that of the Hottentot Venus, Sarah Baartman, whose circumcised genitalia had been her attraction to freak show audiences in both London and Paris from 1810-1815 (Chase-Riboud 106). While Sarah had been from Cape Town, South Africa, and Tashi-E is from Olinka, West Africa, Tashi-E, nonetheless, becomes another representation of the African female body type in the late 1950s that is opposite to the idealized western white female body. She joins Sarah in the rank of being a freak show attraction. Lying in her hospital bed in California, she becomes a spectacle for a gazing audience of doctors, which signifies upon similar events on American soil noted in both *Invisible Man* and *Corregidora*. The American medical establishment does not know how to treat Tashi-E's infibulated genitalia and she immediately becomes a sensation, a spectacle for viewing by seasoned and junior medical professionals. After Tashi-E conceives and goes into labor, she, like Ursa, finds herself constantly propped up in stirrups so that doctors may view her genital area because of the medical risks which she faces in the birthing process. Benny her son is an example of the child at risk when his mother is circumcised; he is born retarded because of Tashi-E's unyielding tightly stitched vagina which requires defibulation.

In the course of Tashi-E's long, mental health journey to self-knowledge, she eventually assimilates into customs of the West in that she is free from oppression. She hears about many texts of currency on women's health in between the 1950s and 1980s which are about white women's bodies, but few or none offer solutions for treating the black African female excised body type. Tashi-E the victim-patient is left out of the discourse of American mental health assistance for many years. This is evident by her reference to but ignorance of Simone de Beauvoir's 1952 publication *The Second Sex*, which Adam's long-time French mistress Lisette introduces to her. As Chikwenye Ogunyemi notes, "[de Beauvoir's] account does not cover the experiences of the the black woman" (32). Tashi-E is in a medical boat alone with or without white feminist or gender-castrating Freudian theories. During treatment with her first American psychiatrist, he uses Freudian theory to analyse her depression and makes Tashi-E feel guilty for her own illness by stating that "black women could never bring themselves to blame their mothers" (*Possessing* 19).

However, Tashi-E does discover that American hospitals have other benefits. Tashi Evelyn Johnson the married African become-naturalized-American citizen consciously and routinely admits herself into a hospital for mental stress to spite Adam when he would twice yearly visit his white mistress Lisette in France or bring her to California near their home. Ironically, the hospital ward becomes Tashi-E's "safe haven" that she applies to an undefined, self-actuated Afrofeminist spirit discourse. She learns to use the western dollar or Adam's money for spiritual uplift on her own terms. Only after Lisette and Adam's son Pierre becomes a student at Harvard University and then graduates which coincides with Lisette's own cancer health crisis does the white feminist mistress concede to aide Tashi-E. It is from Lisette that Tashi-E also learns about Jungian psychology.

Like Invisible Man's experience with Norton in the Trueblood scene, powerful white men in businesses or in the medical professions perpetuate racist theories about blacks. At the hospital, the doctors ask Invisible Man about Brer Rabbit. During her six weeks of post-surgery recuperation and trips to the doctor for follow-up examinations, Ursa reports no dialogue occurring between herself and her gynecologist about the state of her mental health. Instead, it is only her non-reproductive body in a horizontal position that rivets his attention. Ursa consistently reports climbing upon the doctor's examination table, and like Tashi-E, placing of her feet into stirrups, feeling metal probes of instruments enter her vagina, and then receiving prescriptions for pain killers. Her doctor's scientific disinterest in her as a human subject is like Invisible Man's being resuscitated by a metal machine under the eyes of gazing doctors. With Ursa, nothing is discussed between doctor and patient about the state of her mind. Hers is the typical sterile white doctor-black female patient relationship.

Other Brockaway types inciting black-on-black crime include members of the black community, who themselves are Black Atlantics and of no help to Ursa, either. It is they who pass on traditional African, European, or American phallocentric myths that define a woman's womanliness by a man's sexual prowess at pleasing her. Jones parodies two scenes in Invisible Man that refer to deviant sex and racial phallocentric myths. The first concerns Chapter I when Invisible Man, the high school graduate, is invited along with other young black male graduates, to perform for the local white businessmen.

However, the three sequences on black male bestiality and sexual degradation consist of the boxing match, the nude white prostitute dancer, and the collection of pay. The businessmen have staged all of the performances to prove that the youths are animals. The Negro-as-rapist beast or deviant sexual stud Invisible Man also learns are the expectations of him from Sybil his second white feminist sexual partner. She begs him to "rape" her, but Invisible Man uses Norton-type psychological transference to play a joke on her. He allows Sybil to become drunk, and then writes a lipstick message on her stomach stating that she had been "raped by Santa Claus" (522). He escapes unsullied. These themes of black sexual deviance Jones parodies as experiences of Ursa. She receives an option for curing her sense of unwomanliness from her long-time neighbor Cat Lawson. Cat exposes her secret lesbian life and love for young fourteen-year old Jeffy who attempts to seduce Ursa through negative psychology. To forewarn Ursa about the bleak heterosexual world facing her now, Jeffy tells Ursa that her absent womb will "Mess up [your] mind and fuck up [your] pussy" (Jones 37). In other words, Jeffy is asserting that Ursa is no longer of value to men and will need to cross over to women for sexual satisfaction. This expose', however, brings out Ursa's own in-cultural homophobia so typical in the black community as noted by Patricia Hill Collins (*BFR* 193; *BSP* 97). Somewhat like Invisible Man does to Sybil, Ursa rejects lesbian love from both Cat Lawson and Jeffy, moves back to Tadpole's room, and ceases friendship with both women to escape typecasting of being sexually deviant.

Tashi-E does not fare any better in an African Wholistic community bound to ancient traditions, some of which involve secretive sexual taboos. Her mind and body therapy differs from Ursa's because Tashi-E had been born an African Wholistic Personality with a collective identity. The traditions of the family or clan always surpass the individual's needs. For instance, Tashi-E finds herself too individuated at age eighteen once she re-converts back to wholistic practices. However, she discovers that the village women consider her to be a monster because of her uncircumcised genitalia. When Tashi-E follows the normal path for women in her Olinkan community and loses that body part which they had perceived as unnecessary and unclean—her clitoris—her life immediately changes among the villagers during her weeks of recuperation. The women ironically now embrace the very person whom they had formerly condemned as a social pariah. But, Tashi-E the victim has a deeply submerged secret.

It is revealed years later in her face-to-face discussions with M'Lissa who is now hospitalized and unknowingly is Tashi-E's intended murder victim. Tashi-E learns from the *tsunga* that young pre-marital Olinkan males have traditionally engaged in homosexual relations while raising money to pay their bride prices. Walker here adapts this scene from the deviant sex theme in *Invisible Man.* M"Lissa's confession is long overdue, for her Nommo oral revelation frees Tashi-E, finally, to utter, to confess to M'Lissa how she and Adam had broken tribal taboos and had, too, secretively practiced anal intercourse. While Tashi-E is embarrassed at recalling the pleasure she had experienced, M'Lissa informs her that this alternate method has been the normal and primary manner in which excised women have achieved orgasm (246). However, Tashi-E had quickly rejected the practice, for it had seemed to be unnatural sex in her eyes. Tashi-E, here a senior citizen, has symptoms of the Black Atlantic Personality suffering from cultural amnesia owing to having assimilated to western puritanical values because of her and Adam's Christian backgrounds. Nevertheless, as unmarried Christian youths, they still had sacreligiously engaged in oral sex. Ironically, while attacking her gnostic roots through M'Lissa, it turns out that Tashi-E, like Invisible Man, does not understand her cultural heritage and ancestry; neither does Ursa.

Land Gnosis: Messages from the Ancestors and Elders

One of the significant issues which Ellison addresses concerns the historical gaps in Invisible Man's family lineages; Jones and Walker replicate this void metaphor as being problematical for Ursa and Tashi-E. The disruptions in the continuities of their maternal and paternal heritages date back to Africans being forcefully removed from their homelands owing to the European slave trade. Columbus inaugurated the slave trade as early as 1494 when he removed African slaves to Hispaniola, now the Dominican Republic (Conniff 73). In his journals from 1498-1500, he reports some Native Americans to be still inhabiting the Caribbean islands. However, the Spanish monarchy which he served was the leading foreign imperialist by 1502 in simultaneously exterminating indigenous Native Americans as they replaced them with African slaves (129). Palacio Rubios's decree written in Spanish in 1512 to Native Americans in the Caribbean and South America signified the avaricious natures of Europeans bent upon seizing indigenous lands for building their empires. He ordered the Native Americans to relinquish their lands and convert to Catholicism or "die" (Rubios 118).

His actions and those Europeans who followed uprouted and rerouted Africans as slave laborers to disparate New World sites. The Europeans's inhumane displacements of tribalized Africans probably account for the unknown, disparate fates of Invisible Man's grandfather's and Great Gram's foreparents. But even though Tashi-E's African wholistic ancestral heritage seems to be transhistorically intact and thereby different from obvious Black Atlantics Invisible Man and Ursa, they are all cultural amnesiacs of sorts with gaps in their ancestral histories owing to invading Europeans and Americans causing Spatial and Temporal shifts in culture preceding their births. Hence, the ancestral Past with its historical gaps, whether African Wholistic or Black Atlantic transformed, is important to note in *Invisible Man* in order to understand how Jones and Walker modify them in *Corregidora* and *Possessing*.

Chapter I of *Invisible Man* takes place in the American South. It is a key land site and prototypical scene for noting the cultural practices of the transformed African descended, African American family. In this setting of Alabama, the elder patriarch of the family—the ex-slave grandfather—is dying and wants to perform a Nommo act of orally passing on survival knowledge to his family. Ellison's grandfather has no ancestral past, but ironically, has retained some vestiges of African warrior spirit and combat skills, now African Americanized. The grandfather conveys to his family that, although he had put down his gun after Reconstruction, he had learned to outwit the white man by playing meek and mild and "yessing" and "grinning" them to death until they "busted wide open" with their conceits that he was a loyalist Negro (16). Neither the second-generation son nor his wife or their children understand the grandfather's strange message; in fact, the parents become frightened and usher the children out of the room.

The problem is that Invisible Man, his parents, and his siblings are Black Atlantic cultural amnesiacs. Somewhere along the line of enduring and surviving slavery and post-slavery Ku Klux Klan violence, the grandfather had managed to hold the family together like an African tribal father. On the other hand, he failed to pass on his Nommo, gnostic knowledge about survival to his second-generation son. Thus, in receiving his oral message, the second-generation son and third-generation grandson—Invisible Man—are both ignorant about how slaves had managed to survive the horrors of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the oppressiveness of British Colonial America/United States slave policies, and the wreckage of the African patriarchal family.

Specifically, the legislators who passed the Virginia Law of 1662 transformed the diasporic American slave family into a matriarchally-governed unit: children, slave or freed, had to follow the conditions of their mothers. Grandfather's maintenance of his position as family patriarch is an exception. Somehow, by using his slave wit, he had avoided the complementary Virginia Law of 1669 that was even more lethal: it allowed masters with impunity to "kill off" rebellious slaves (Heath 14). On the other hand, the grandfather used his slave wit by playacting the meek and mild, loyalist Sambo before his slave or neo-slave oppressors in order not to be "1669d." At the same time of performing his minstrel act, he was undermining the master's economic system. Unfortunately, his second-generation son has grown up spineless, effeminate, and witless, which has caused an "interstice" or "gap" to arise between the grandfather and his third-generation grandson (Bhabha 277). The African practice of oral teaching as a life-inspiriting force totally escapes the grandfather's Black Atlantic assimilated family of cultural amnesiacs (Alkebulan 28). It is also the reason that Invisible Man spends twenty years stumbling about from having adopted deceptive American nationalist creeds meant to "1669" or "kill him" off like the Communist Party does to Todd Clifton. Invisible Man's journey to self-knowledge not only involves wholistic healing by shedding of his old skin, but also shedding of his Black Atlantic mindset so that he can be freed of European-American "false illusions" of freedom and social equality (499). He must return to the African-based Nommo gnostic knowledge of his grandfather.

Hence, Time and Spatial tropes are essential to identify in the experiences of Invisible Man as well as in the revoiced experiences of Ursa and Tashi-E. Ursa's slave-descended family falls into the Virginia Law of 1662 category in which a black slave woman has ascended over the black male as head of household. While Mama had a brief marriage to Malcolm, his absence as a father figure to Ursa confirms the lethalness of the Virginia Law of 1662. Great Gram reigned cross generationally as the female head of the household, and passed on gnostic knowledge to Gran Mama, Mama, and Ursa. Ursa realizes that she has introduced an interstice into the Corregidoran gnostic line; she, the fourth generation, has unwillingly broken Great Gram's oral mandate to procreate. On the other hand, Tashi-E's Nommo decree to infibulate is more convoluted. M'Lissa is the direct link, but she is merely an instrument or messenger for the two African national "Leaders" from the far past of her childhood to adulthood and newer one of her elderhood who had called for restoration or continuation of the traditional practice of female circumcision.

On the other hand, Tashi-E's thirteen-year Time gap had started immediately after Dura's death when Nafa her mother had rejected African gnostic religious and spiritual practices and converted to western Christianity. No mention is made of Tashi-E's biological father because Nafa at this time had been a traditional co-wife and all wives and children of the tribal father were considered to be related in a family unit. But with Nafa-Catherine's rapid conversion to Christianity, complete with a new name, she had imposed the same upon Tashi-Evelyn. Like Invisible Man's memory gap between himself and his grandfather, Tashi-E the Christian grows up with a similar gap in knowledge about Dura's death and its link to her female circumcision rite. The eighteen-year-old woman warrior had volunteered to undergo the African gnostic ritual in order to please the current "Leader."

This honoring of the tribal father is why, like blind-sighted Black Atlantics in the stead of Invisible Man, Ursa and Tashi-E of the present must recover African, African American gnostic healing narratives and rescript them into contemporary Afrofeminist spirit discourses in order to cure their fractured minds and bodies. After he discovers that he has been a pawn for the Communist Party, Invisible Man does attempt to practice his grandfather's slave wit by filing false ballots during an election in Harlem. But it metaphorically blows up in his face; however, the lesson he learns is that old slave wit must be upgraded to conform to modern times. For this reason, after abetting the Harlem riot, he goes underground in the "Prologue" and spends the next fifteen years meditating upon ways to modernize his grandfather's message. The "Epilogue" scene suggests his having arrived at a solution when Invisible Man ascends from his hole; however, Ellison's reader never knows what solution Invisible Man has to offer.

Ellison also introduces Spatial tropes relating to Invisible Man's national but limited travels from Alabama to New York. They do not correspond to the Time tropes in those places since many of Invisible Man's reflections are flashbacks or flashforwards as he sits in his underground hole bordering Harlem. Similarly, Jones and Walker adapt Ellison's modernist Time and Spatial tropes, but instead of a present-time, fifteen-year coverage, they construct Ursa's and Tashi-E's as journeys of twenty-five to thirty-five years, respectively.

Also, because of Corregidora's global travels, Jones has better illuminated how miscegenation inaugurates the Corregidoran maternal line owing to the white Portuguese slaver's connections to Europe, Africa, South America, and the United States as conveyed by way of Ursa's present-time, past-time and/or future-time memory travels. On the other hand, Walker portrays Tashi-E physically located at different land sites in Africa, Europe, and the United States during her present-time sequences, although her reflections, too, occur in forms of flashback and flashforward thoughts. Both black women's protracted journeys to wholistic healing become more apprehensible when they are examined through the lens of community-based Afrocentric spiritual practices.

In his work *African Philosophies of Religion*, John Mbiti clarifies some major points about the "corporate" or collective identity that attaches an individual at birth to his/her tribal family. He observes that African cultures believe in a three-fold unified relationship between the Spirits and/or Living Dead of the Past, the Living Present, and the Future Unborn. He also debunks myths about ancestral reverence and assumptions of the age of these Dead persons. Mbiti states that the term "ancestor" does not necessarily refer to the aged, for there continuously are cases where the deceased have been infants, children, young adults, and mid-range adults who have died prematurely. They as well constitute the classification of the "Dead." He also suggests use of the distinctive terms of "spirit" or the "living-dead" where applicable, and for good reason (84).

The Dead are not necessarily Dead, according to Mbiti. Gnostic African cultures believe in separation of the body and soul. In real instances of death, the recent Dead or the Remembered Dead for four to five generations still maintain their human forms because they are living in the transitional region known as Sasa or even in the world in bushes, trees, forests, etc. These are called the "Living Dead." After the last person in the fifth generation dies, the Dead ascend to the level of "Spirit." This is a higher level known as Zamani and is the closest level to God. Their human forms now shapeshift into shadowy spirits if it is a healthy passage (82-83; 78). However, there is an adverse side to these Living Dead presences; they exist in healthy or unhealthy states. Those who are spiteful or who refuse to remove to the netherworld of the forgotten dead when it is time often become spirits known as "ITS," which Zora Neale Hurston in *Tell My Horse* calls a "duppy" (Mbiti 78; Hurston 42-44).

The ITS or duppy may choose to stay out in the world and take on an evil life force of its own making; villagers fear them and perform exorcisms to rid themselves of these evil creatures. On another level, says Mbiti, some "Spirits of the Dead" upon cessation of life at times transmigrate as souls into the becoming Future Unborn waiting to be born. However, contrary to myth, this is not a full body transference but merely a partial rebirthing of a trait of the deceased into another personage (83). These soul transferences can be healthy or unhealthy processes.

Writer Quince Duncan has devised the term of "Afro-realism" to describe the surreal events which occur in culture, inclusive of spirit possession (Martin-Ogunsola vii). This term aptly applies to Invisible Man's state of mind and body in the "Prologue" sequence of the novel when he has just entered his underground hideout. In many respects, Invisible Man acts and sounds insane as he proudly admits to siphoning off electricity from Monopolated Light & Power Company which cannot identify the source of the electrical drainage. In other ways, he demonstrates a long-overdue ownership of his grandfather's slave wit by staging a revolt against the capitalist society aboveground which the Brotherhood of Communists had claimed to be its goal of enhancing the economic empowerment of oppressed blacks. But the Brotherhood was the last straw of deception.

Invisible Man now feels free to develop his own amoral codes of freedom. He has paid his dues by believing in causes promoted by false father figures and found himself consistently deceived. This is the reason for his exaltation over the 1,369 light bulbs emblazoning his darkened hole, for, as he explains: "I have been boomeranged across my head so much that I now can see the darkness of lightness. And I love light. Perhaps you'll think it strange that an invisible man should need light, desire light, love light. But maybe it is exactly because I *am* invisible. Light confirms my reality, gives birth to my form" (6). His definitions of darkness and lightness are just some of Invisible Man's own discourses on race in forms of fragmented statements or conundrums. He reports smoking a "reefer" which provides him with a new "analytical way of listening to music"—Louis Armstrong's song "What Did I Do to be so Black and Blue?" The drug enables him to escape the painful present and shapeshift into the world of the music or at other times to hear "other voices" from the past that appear in italics to indicate his stream-of-consciousness states.

His drug-induced hallucinations account for Invisible Man's erratic Nommo orations about a church service, Ras the Destroyer, Brother Jack, Rinehart, etc., which make no sense to the reader. As the recently-emancipated, mentally-enslaved, modernist freeman admits, the "drug destroys all sense of time completely." And since he is no longer hampered by western time or an employer's work schedule, Invisible Man feels free to hibernate, inebriate, hallucinate, and mind-body separate (6).

For Jones and Walker, Invisible Man's erratic "Prologue" serves as a prototype to revoice Ursa's and Tashi-E's gradual descents into madness. Such repetitions involve Invisible Man-type out-of-body experiences, shapeshiftings, or dream states during their prolonged journeys to physical, mental, and spiritual well beings. For example, within hours or days after her conversation with Tadpole about her legacy of sexual slavery from Corregidora, Ursa falls into an Afro-realistic dream state. She recalls verbatim scripts of Great Gram's remarks when she had been passing down slave narratives of matrilineal miscegenation and rape-incest to Ursa at the young age of five (Jones 6). Long deceased, Great Gram repeatedly enters Ursa's present dream state as a "Living Dead" ancestor whom Ursa cannot forget. She recalls that her child-self could only comprehend through her senses. She heard the tone of "anger" in Great Gram's voice and felt the "moisture" in the palm of her old hand (11-12).

As Ursa the "Living Present" adult's memory journey broadens, she becomes more agitated and disruptive because, as Mbiti notes, she is suffering from "spirit possession" like that of Invisible Man in his hole (Mbiti 80). And different from Invisible Man's multiple spirit encounters, Ursa's spirit visitors are mostly Corregidora and Great Gram who simultaneously possess her. Their victimizer's and victim's holds over Ursa are evident by the nature of Ursa's stream-of-consciousness thoughts which intercut and collude with Invisible Man-type Past and Present conversations that she had engaged in with other people. Ursa even experiences body-soul splitting: she feels especially vulnerable when her "Living Present" spirit occasionally time shifts to become an actant in Great Gram's and Gran Mama's frame stories that cause more interlocking voicings and temporal confusions for her and the reader. These Time-based obfuscations become more acute as Ursa's consciousness collapses and elides time differences in the manner of a chronotope (Moya 138).

The unmediated time frames illustrate the tenuous line separating Ursa's opposing mental states of reality versus fantasy and sanity versus insanity. One could say that Ursa, literally and figuratively, is suffering from womb "hysteria," an eighteenth century term for madness since her mental illness is biologically inherited from Corregidora's Spanish heritage and ties to the European's evil spirit discourse of African slavery (Foucault, *Madness* 138).

In Invisible Man's legacy, he frequently ponders over his grandfather's dying Nommo commandment as if it were more of a curse than a cure. Before leaving home for college, he recalls standing beneath his [grandfather's] photograph with [his high school] brief case in hand," for Invisible Man has had a nightmare foreboding that someday the brief case would hold "an official envelope" inside of which would be a letter: "To Whom It May Concern… Keep This Nigger-Boy Running" (33). The nightmare foreshadows truth, and symbolizes Dr. Bledsoe's action of writing seven letters of recommendation to New York corporate leaders that would keep Invisible Man running towards nowhere, no employment. How does Invisible Man's insane dreams about his grandfather translate to Ursa? Invisible Man has achieved what Paul Gilroy assigns as the insanity state of Black Atlantic slaves who could not cope with their sudden, deceptive captivities and shipments to foreign places away from home. This is the case of Invisible Man—Bledsoe's deceiving him and shipping Invisible Man to New York under false pretenses of his working a summer and then returning South. He never does, and Invisible Man's erratic ramblings in the "Prologue" illustrate his state of dementia from having become a duped and disillusioned New York-based, Black Atlantic. Jones correlates Ursa's post-surgical dementia as being a side effect from not running, but stasis from becoming a barren Black Atlantic now inhabiting a foreign place of nowhere. Her loss of reproductive ability has become a curse, for she has broken a slave decree for Corregidoran women which originated with Great Gram.

Somewhere in time, Great Gram suffered the fate of other insane Black Atlantics after becoming separated from her nameless African or African American family: being sold to a slaver, and then perhaps being sold again to Corregidora who brought her from Louisiana to Kentucky. The evil ITS demon of Black Atlantic slavery which had haunted Invisible Man's grandfather in his time eventually came to possess in future Time his gnostic-barren, third-generation grandson.

Similarly, Corregidora the great grandfather's demonic self transmigrated into the future Time of Ursa's fourth-generation young body (11-15). His deviant sexual demands for dual partners eventually affected both his black and white female victims. An instance is Ursa's recollection of Great Gram's narrative that refers to Corregidora's Portuguese wife's feeble attempt to produce a legitimate heir for Corregidora. Great Gram had called the male progeny "a sick rabbit that didn't live to be a day old" (23). It was not a Brer Rabbit survivalist baby; the rabbit models were Invisible Man's grandfather and Great Gram. However, Great Gram's testimony reflects the shared history of insanity in the family which they all had contracted from Corregidora's ITS persona. Both women became entrapped in a triangle of Black Atlantic sexual deviancy and mental illness from becoming Corregidora's property. And Ursa, by her being the "Living Present" Nommo recipient of Great Gram's angry rantings, too, eventually had to ingest Great Gram's mental illness while equally being spiritually possessed by Corregidora the "Living Dead." Others had thought her to be mentally unsound. As Ursa recalls, Mutt had once asked her if insanity were a family trait. Like Invisible Man, Ursa has kept the madman's evil ITS "spirit" alive not only by incessantly talking about him but also by keeping his photograph on her dresser (10).

Another of Jones's parodies of Invisible Man's experiences concerns Ursa's body doubling or shapeshifting. In losing her selfhood to spirit possession, Ursa's individuated, temporal experiences begin to conflate and/or blend with others in a reverse, negative mode of African collective identification. Her hidden body mark elicits metanarratives from other voices who now have become intertwined in Ursa's hallucinogenic spells from taking pain killers. One of her recollections illustrates how people and events have become jumbled in her mind like a chronotope. For example, in continuing to describe Corregidora's sleeping habits with his wife, Great Gram had said to the child Ursa:

" . . . *So then he just stopped doing it. Naw she couldn't do a damn thing* ."

"No, because it depends on if it's for you or somebody else. Your life or theirs."

I wouldn't take my eyes off her. She kept looking down at me . (23)

The second response in boldface is so skillfully crafted that the reader only gradually surmises that Ursa of the "Living Present" is commenting on past remarks. Her five-year-old response is located in the second line of italics. Ursa has been taking pain medications and they, like the drug-induced states of Invisible Man in the "Prologue," also exacerbate Ursa's Afro-realistic dream sequences. To further illustrate Ursa's muddled thoughts, she, in the "Living Present" also interjects non-related outsiders into her own former dreams such as those conversations in the Past which she had shared with Mutt, Jeffy, or Tadpole. Such a barrage of disjointed comments parody Invisible Man's deranged mindset in the "Prologue." In Ursa's case, the other voices signal the severity of her mental decline (42; Laurel 58).

Instead of engaging in self-diagnosis as does Ellison's Invisible Man and Jones's Ursa, Walker portrays Tashi-E globally interacting with professional psychiatrists and legal experts in her quests to heal her sick mind. In Zurich, Switzerland, Tashi-E receives formal psychiatric treatment from her second therapist Dr. Mzee, Lisette's uncle. Unlike Ursa, Tashi-E has abandoned Africanist culture's habit of protecting community secrets which still inhibit most African Americans in Ursa's day. Tashi-E the outsider without qualm rejects those American, racist forms of treatment that had further turned her into a victim rather than a survivor. One reason is that Lisette, the Algerian-born and educated French feminist, overcomes her condescension of Tashi-E and decides to help her. Lisette knows the significance of de Beauvoir's work that calls for white feminists to reject Freudian psychology because "Freud never showed much concern with the destiny of woman; it is clear that he simply adapted his account from that of the destiny of man, with slight modifications" (de Beauvoir 43). Although not mentioned, Lisette would also be knowledgeable of Shere Hite's 1987 study which revealed that "70 percent of women do not have orgasms from intercourse, but *do* have them from more direct clitoral stimulation" (xxxiv). Tashi-E, although once having a clitoris, is still ignorant about its appearance, even in middle age. Lisette would be the one knowledgeable about its anatomical shape and function. It was she who had finally encouraged Adam to take Tashi-E to a real, non-Freudian psychologist. Dr. Mzee is the proper choice, for he uses Jungian psychology with Tashi-E to untrap her blocked subconscious. She is in an Invisible Man-type hole, but not a real one. Hers is a psychological hole of mental darkness or extreme insanity with no light shining through.

In fact, Walker signifies upon Invisible-Man's darkness-lightness race discourse to explain Tashi-E's epiphanies after years of darkness, thanks to Mzee. For example, Tashi-E's own body scar triggers a series of metanarratives, the first being about Dura. Dura had been born with a distinctive slight scar at the corner of her mouth. Tashi-E's recollection appears in italics, also symbolizing her thoughts occurring in an Invisible Man-type dream state but not necessarily drug induced (Walker 10, 20). Moreover, the majority of Tashi-E's memories, whether past or present, are reported in boldface to capture the "Present" moment that they are being re-lived. Tashi-E had repressed memories of Dura's circumcision rite and her death; Walker represents this recollection in boldfaced type to symbolize the presentness of the past similar to the format of the twenty-five, past-time chapters in *Invisible Man*. This boldfaced font illustrates that Dura has now become one of the "Living Dead" inhabiting Mbiti's Sasa region owing to Tashi-E's recalling of her sister from the realm of the forgotten Dead. Another healing strategy which Mzee uses is a parody of Invisible Man's activities in his hole. Invisible Man, while trying to make his underground home comfortable, mentions his looking through "picture books" for inventions to keep him warm (7). Walker, in parodying Ellison's penchant for technology, recrafts it as a motion picture projector. Mzee shows a film and Tashi-E reacts strongly to the subject matter set in Kenya that only reveals the bodies of young, unidentified girls lying down in a row. It is a post-circumcision rite, one familiar to Jungian psychologists from photographs of Jung's own studies of indigenous Africans. Joseph L. Henderson notes the healthy nature of circumcision rituals in terms of inspiriting the collective identity formations of young boys and girls:

In tribal societies it is the initiation rite that most effectively solves this problem. The ritual takes the novice back to the deepest level of original mother-child identity or ego-Self identity, thus forcing him to experiencea symbolic death. In other words, his identity is temporarily dismembered or dissolved in the collective unconscious. From this state he is then ceremonially rescued by the rite of the new birth. This is the first act of true consolidation of the ego with the larger group, expressed as totem, clan, or tribe, or all three combined (130).

This Wholistic rite symbolizing a death-rebirth process did not happen for Dura; she actually died.

It did not happen for Tashi-E, either, at a too-old age of eighteen, for she metaphorically "died" when she physically became dismembered. She did not mentally re-integrate from the bodily wound.

Sitting in Mzee's house, however, Tashi-E thrives from Mzee's cautious strategies of psychotherapy by using a system of associationism. The film "inspirits" Tashi-E's soul and causes her to "feel" a resurgence of life, animus, and to re-emerge from death, stasis. She reports, "The film ran on, but suddenly I felt such an overwhelming fear that I fainted. Quietly. Slid off my chair and onto the bright rug that covered the stone floor. It was exactly as if I had been hit over the head. Except there was no pain" (Walker 73). Having been suppressed for years, Tashi-E's forgotten "Dead" emotions suddenly reactivate into the "Living Present" and to function anew after having been traumatized by Dura's sudden death when Tashi-E had just been a child herself. Moreover, benefiting from association of ideas through a system of accretion, Tashi-E next turns to what appears to be Jungian-style, painting sessions. First she constructs a giant rooster, and then eventually adds to the scene a human foot. Finally, after days of mental struggles she figures out that it is M'Lissa's crippled foot which she had raised to kick a cluster of discarded female genitalia/body parts to the awaiting, greedy rooster. These epiphanies are monumental mental hurdles for Tashi-E; she now has linked M'Lissa to the brutal act of permanently "killing off" the healthy sexual lives of young girls just by the slash of her razor.

The trauma of multiple personalities is also a side effect of Ursa's and Tashi-E's mental disorders, according to Jones and Walker. Each author has chosen to parody a parody—that is, Invisible Man's impersonation of Rinehart, the Harlem czar with the multiple identities. After his factory accident, Invisible Man had literally felt like his benumbed limbs had been amputated, but that was not the case. However, in the "Prologue" hole narrative as he insanely rambles onward about people from his past, one person is Rinehart the ubiquitous Harlem underworld czar whom Invisible Man had found to be as economically powerful as Mr. Norton, but on a smaller scale. Jones and Walker draw upon these white and black icons profiting off the sexual organ maimings of black women's bodies in order to cast light on their representations of Corregidora and the multiple, time-shifting Olinkan nationalist leaders. Norton seems more static but he actually symbolizes the White Everyman power figure in America and/or the West according to quips from the prostitutes at the Golden Day.

From their perspectives, Mr. Norton seems to be a man with multiple identities, such as "whitefolks," "Mr. Eddy," the "Messiah," "Thomas Jefferson," "John D. Rockefellar," etc. (76-80). On a localized scale in Harlem, Rinehart has multiple identities of a pimp, number runner, pastor, and hardened confidence man. Invisible Man learns about this multi-talented man after he dons dark glasses and people begin to address him as Rinehart.

In creating a composite of Corregidora, Jones adapts Norton's nation-wide, power as a wealthy philanthropist and conflates it with Rinehart's local area power as a wealthy, hard-hearted, black Harlem confidence man. Together, Norton and Rinehart configure Corregidora's composite as a wealthy, powerful, morally decadent personage with multiple sides to his identity. Indeed, Rinehart's roles as a pastor and a pimp adapt to form Corregidora's trait of moral decadence which has been endorsed by both the Spanish Catholic Church and the monarchy. Ultimately, in his sex slave trade of profiting off of Great Gram's and Gran Mama's bodies, Corregidora the Catholic royal servant had acted no differently from Mr. Norton the incest father or Rinehart the pastor and pimp.

The purpose of the sex trade by any name has transhistorically always been for profit, so Corregidora proves. It was the European church—whether Catholic or Protestant—that used the Bible to spawn the Great Chain of Being myths which enabled European explorers and empire builders to reconstruct black Africans into Devil images to justify enslaving their black bodies for life-long servitude. European philosophers from David Hume (50), Immanuel Kant (53), Georges Leopold Cuvier (54), and Thomas Jefferson published propaganda equating the dark skins of Africans to Devil imagery (44). As Phillis Wheatley the African American poet had broadcasted in her 1776 poem "On Being Brought from Africa to America," the general public continued to believe that "their [Africans's] colour is a diabolic die" (12). Over time, Ursa, like other Spanish-, French-, or British-owned African slaves brought to colonial America, had been brought up in a nationalist, white-governed, Judaeo-Christian puritanical society that propagated religious beliefs in God the father as attested in the Old Testament: Biblical "creation" stories about an unseen, beneficent Christian God; Adam and Eve, and the Cain and Abel murder parable.

All were used as propaganda to "body mark" the black skin of African-descended people as boding evil. Moreover, that portion of the "true" "origin myths pertaining to mind-body ranks of leaders to followers, and demarcating women to be inferior to men abounded in the pre-Christian writings of Aristotle (114). The "origin" myths, whether pagan or Christian, as de Beauvoir would point out, early onward stressed the primal father's or God's decrees that racially, blacks were inferior to whites, and by gender, that women were inferior to men.

These European religious doctrines claiming Africans to be inferior to whites equipped Corregidora to build his perverse sex-slave empire in America that came to symbolize him as an embodiment of evil. He arrived in America with the purpose of exploiting black women. With Great Gram he consistently raped her until she became black, blue, and toughened in her genital area in order to prepare his sex slave laborer for his clients. Gran Mama, his progeny, also faced the same brutal initiation rite into sexual dehumanization. On the other hand, Corregidora the European considered all women to be inferior to men. He would insult his legal Portuguese wife by sexually abusing Great Gram in the same bed, thereby demonstrating Corregidora's aberrant sexual needs, condescension of women, and perception of black women as beasts. And like an "ITS" refusing to consign itself to its netherworld region, Corregidora's evil shadow from the Past still stalks Ursa's "Living Present" world (Mbiti 78).

The main reason is that the Corregidoran women deliberately have refused to let the ITS die; it is their Nommo, oral mode of revenge to keep his "phantom image" alive in stories or in photographic space on their mantles. Great Gram taught her female descendents well, and also taught Ursa about the Nommo verbal power to conjure up Corregidora's image in an instant. By means of words, Great Gram painted a verbal portrait of the younger Corregidora in his prime as "a big strapping man" with [hair] black and straight and greasy . . . . (Jones 11-12). Invisible Man provides no verbal image of Mr. Norton in the Trueblood scene. However, once in walking the streets aboveground, he thought he had seen an elderly, frail Mr. Norton—a phantom image of his former self. By means of parodying Mr. Norton's aged image, Jones enables Great Gram and Ursa collectively to provide concrete descriptions of Corregidora because of his photographic representation. In looking at his older, Norton-type elderly image in his photograph, Ursa notes how Corregidora now appears as a "Tall [man with], white hair, white beard, white mustache, an old man with a cane and one of his feet turned outward, not inward …" (10).

Like Invisible Man's oxymoronic descriptions, Ursa equates Corregidora's whitened corporeal image symbolizing purity with his twisted foot. Both connote his evil, twisted soul. He, Corregidora, is a "Living Dead" whose photographic image has transcended the mortal times of himself, Great Gram and Gran Mama. Now the ITS stalks Ursa--Corregidora's spirit-possessed, chattel-descendant who continuously has kept the duppy alive by showing Corregidora's picture to her ex-spouse Mutt and new spouse Tadpole. And regardless as to whether his image appears "alive" in real Time or "dead" in photographic Space, Corregidora the potent, maleovolent phantom has haunted all of the Corregidoran women including Ursa up to the novel's conclusion.

Tashi-E also experiences phantom nightmare images of her Leader but quite differently from Ursa's. Since Tashi-E grew up in a gnostic, Afrocentric world in Olinka, Walker also extrapolates the figure of Rineheart to use as a model for the temporally-evolving, nameless "Leaders" of the Olinkans. According to Walker, Tashi-E's present-time leader of her childhood and youth, and newer one of her elderly years have all parroted the same mantra: females must be circumcised. In fact, this unknown man is a Rinehart composite, differing only by his indistinguishable corporeal image during his era of living. The politically-zealous adolescent had re-converted at the call of the current nationalist leader to reject western ways. How could she not? The young grownup Tashi-E had become enamoured with the "Living Spirit of New Africa," the Leader whom his disciples oxymoronically dubbed "Our Leader, Our Jesus," thereby reflecting how the gnostic African Olinkans have become hybridized from the presence of Adam's Christian missionary family.

However, there is another component to this segment of Tashi-E's scrambled memories that pertains to her confusions about the differences between a "hero myth" and "initiation rite." The two should remain separate, but sometimes they errantly become merged. Says J. Henderson: "The typical hero figures exhaust their efforts in achieving the goal of their ambitions; in short, they become successful even if immediately killed for their *hybris*. In contrast to this, the novice for initiation is called upon to give up willful ambition and all desire and submit to the ordeal" (131-32). This happens to youthful Tashi-E in terms of her priorities. She, like other young girls, had become mesmerized by the heroic and mythic figuration of the leader in blatantly resisting colonial rule at the cost of his freedom.

And in this euphoric state, Tashi-E had blindly given up her "willful ambition" or freedom to remain bodily whole and "submit[ted] to the ordeal" of female circumcision, the Leader's commandment. Her body sensations afterwards transmit one long discourse of pain: from infibulation to bruising and battering during coitus to difficult processes of urination and menstruation to a surreal pregnancy and a birthing nightmare. Her initiation into the rites of male-female sexual intercourse with Adam had been no different from Great Gram's horrid initiation rite into sexual slave labor at the hands of Corregidora.

Also, Tashi-E's excision had been a lesser repetition of M'Lissa's bodily abuse in the era of M'Lissa's child Leader. During her circumcision rite, M'Lissa's mother had attempted to salvage a nub of M'Lissa's clitoris. However, a hardened, male witchdoctor had cast her aside, completed the excision, but accidently had cut a thigh muscle that had left M'Lissa's with a crippled leg. These delayed facts Tashi-E learns first-hand from the hospitalized *tsunga.* M'Lissa. too, had been as equally, patriarchally controlled by a heroic leader of her time and those in ancient times before M'Lissa's birth. African gnostic history had repeated itself, preserved itself, and immortalized itself as far as male dominance over the bodies of African females (122). Tashi-E, too had hero "worshipped her Leader of her time and considered him to be a "perfect lover" and "ideal mate," despite his having three co-wives. Now in her elder status as an abused victim, her Leader has morphed into an indiscernible ITS figure, who, too, has refused to die in her traumatized memory.

Because of her Leader, Tashi-E the victim by default also acquires some Rinehart-type, ontological side effects which her multiple names symbolize. More severe than Ursa's taking on multiple personalities during her schizophrenic conversations with Great Gram, Tashi-E, by multiple variants of her own given and surnames, reflects one problem of her mental crisis. She has multiple, racial, geographical, and cultural identities which collude and clash at her different global sites of residence versus Invisible Man's more limited spatial movements in the American South or North. The refusal of whites to recognize the corporeal existence of his black body at night or in broad daylight sparks Invisible Man's revolt and resortment to his grandfather-type slave wit in order to scramble the meanings of the master's language.

In the hole, he redefines the literal meanings of "blackness" and "lightness" in order to rescript the white world's reconceptualization of him as a symbol of "lightness." He appends new oxymoronic, connotative meanings to their standard dictionary meanings of "the Negro" as a slave, non-person.

By means of his linguistic adjustment to meanings, he validates how white people have perceived black people to be non-entities—even in broad daylight. So in validating their visual impairments by reversing their literal, dictionary meanings, he thus self-inaugurates his corporeality and humanity. To illustrate, Invisible Man signifies upon Herman Melville's juxtapositions of the meanings of light and dark symbols in *Moby Dick*. Invisible Man, by means of Melvillean code switching, now defines lightness as confirming his corporeality, and blackness as only erasing or blurring his form. Walker modifies Invisible Man's new obverse light-dark, racial symbols to fit Tashi-E's racialized gender conflicts. Her black body mark casts off unseen, light symbols of knowledge about how and why her pre-circumcision and post-circumcision name changes and thus multiple identities emerge: Tashi the tribal African; Tashi-Evelyn the Christian, and Tashi-Evelyn-Johnson, the wife of Adam Johnson.

However, her most significant name change is her final one of Tashi-Evelyn-Johnson-Soul at the novel's conclusion when she is shot by an Olinkan firing squad. Hence, Tashi-E the non-corporeal suffering body, now a Soul ascends to the Sasa region of the Living Dead. She has sacrificed her life like a true martyr in order to disband female circumcision rituals. For her Leader, unlike Invisible Man's involuntary accident, Tashi-E had endured painful anatomical alterations of facial "scarring" and "cleaning/excising" of her aberrant genitalia in order to become homogeneously "Completely woman. Completely African. Completely Olinka" like the other girls (Walker 64). And unlike Corregidora to Ursa, Tashi-E the adolescent had never thought of her phantom Leader as an evil ITS, nor did he ever seem like a shapeshifting Rinehart-type hiding behind dark glass. In fact, Tashi-E recalls that the Leader's eyes in his poster had seemed to project defiance in an oxymoronic form of a "laughing gaze" of mockery and arrogance towards his white colonial oppressors (118). Unlike Corregidora's photograph, the Leader's happy façade in the poster had masked the evilness of his dictum which had called for loyalist women to engage in a brutal mutilation ceremony that exalted male control over their bodies.

Another aspect of the phantom images parodied by Jones and Walker pertains to coitus, real or artificial, and children as by products.

Invisible Man never became attracted to or had sex with a black woman after his Trueblood exposé. Yet, his rejection is a form of abuse by his unstated depiction of them as unacceptable partners in his pathway to manhood, unless they served as mother figures. On the other hand, Jones and Walker argue that Invisible Man is the black woman's nightmare, a figurative exciser of her personage as an acceptable love interest or sexual partner in favor of the white woman. For example, Groscz notes in studies of "phantom limbs" experienced by amputees that women incur feelings of phantom breasts after having mastectomies, but have never reported experiencing sensations of phantom wombs or clitorises (70-71). However, both Jones's Ursa and Walker's Tashi validate that experience as a fact arising from black women's testimonies about their "lived experiences"; their "personal voices of authority" confirm truths of their claims (Collins 17). Invisible Man never had actual sexual intercourse with Sybil. But in waking up and believing that she has experienced fantastic coitus with him, Sybil follows her phantom sexual stud to Harlem where she exacerbates the riot already in progress over Clifton's murder. In Jones's parody of Sybil's phantom sexual experience, she rescripts it as the experience of Ursa with Mutt. Because of her mind-body traumas after surgery, Ursa fails to respond to Tadpole's vaginal, anal, or clitoral stimulations (Jones 151). It is because Mutt remains the haunting shadow, the ITS in Ursa's sick mind. Her body involuntarilty recalls and simulates the rhythms of "phantom sex" with Mutt as if she still had an intact uterus. But this recalled sensual pleasure turns into a nightmare as far as the reproductive purpose of her womb. Ursa also alternately has dreams about having a "phantom childbirth" that is signatory of her guilt over never carrying her baby to full term dilation and labor (46; 76).

On the other hand, Tashi-E's dreams about phantom limbs are more extreme and rooted in ancient gnostic history. She continually has terrifying nightmares about a "dark tower" haunting her for years. This haunting, indecipherable spirit even drives Tashi-E one night to mutilate her ankles with a razor while in a dream state. Pierre, Lisette's bi-racial, Harvard-educated normal son and actually Tashi-E's fourth therapist, ironically, unlocks the door to the symbolical meaning of Tash-E's elusive dark tower. Its figurative meaning equates a female's engorged clitoris to that of a male's gestated penis.

These interpretations of and remedies to disempower females of self-stimulation by excising their clitorises dates back to ancient African gnostic traditions passed down from the God Amma to the Dogon Clan of the Mali Empire (Walker 38; Medupe).

Yet, while having an intact body, Tashi-E in the past had allowed Adam to perform premarital, cuninlingus on her. But then the western concept of Christian "sin" had begun to plague Tashi-E with feelings of guilt. She admits to her third African American psychologist-lawyer Raye that she had engaged in oral sex with Adam during their youth, which had and still has remained the "greatest taboo" in gnostic Olinkan, tribal customs. Tashi-E had even initiated the trysts with Adam, and had blatantly shown her disdain for Olinkan culture by performing these sexual acts in the fields which was associated with pollution of the harvest (Walker 28; 32). But those days of dual, Christian-Olinkan sinning have been eradicated. Now, Tashi-E's excised clitoris has become a "phantom limb" of former manual and/or oral pleasure at nightmarish level. Another of her "phantom limb" crises has to do with Dura's "mute phantom cries." First, M'Lissa confesses to Tashi-E her guilt over hearing Dura's "phantom cries"; the *tsunga* had walked away from the hemorrhaging child in disgust because Nafa had known that Dura was a bleeder. By association, M'Lissa's revelation sparks Tashi-E to confess to Raye that she, the five-year-old, had broken another tribal taboo by sneaking to the circumcision hut where, outside, she could hear Dura's screams. As Raye points out, Tashi-E's too young mind had suppressed Dura's cries which became expressed as a phantom "boulder" blocking her senses. Dura's and her own pain discourses had sent Tashi-E spiraling into insanity.

Afrofeminist Body Discourse Epiphanies: Land-based Spiritual Rebirths and Self-Regenerations

One of the major themes in Invisible Man's journey to manhood concerns his assessment of, solution to, and self-governance over his errors in judgment. Throughout the text whether South or North, he has misunderstood or ignored his grandfather's gnostic lesson on black manhood strategies for survival in America. And by not understanding his grandfather's mandate, Invisible Man has proceeded to make multiple blunders that have left him parroting Louis Armstrong's song "What Did I Do to be So Black and Blue?" As a result, it takes him fifteen years to become an existentialist in control of his own destiny.

It simultaneously takes him this long to find a solution for African Americans to achieve "social equality" in America. The "Epilogue" conclusion suggests that Invisible Man has arrived at a solution; he is preparing to emerge aboveground and become a race leader (570). Unfortunately, Ellison the author never provided his reader with Invisible Man's plan. It is left unstated for the reader to solve.

Differently, Jones and Walker not only parody Invisible Man's struggles for autonomy, but also offer solutions to health problems for black women with wounded minds and bodies in their families, their tribes, or their universal sisterhood clans. There are several stages to Ursa's and Tashi-E's disparate steps toward wholistic healing that are revoiced as or transcendent over Invisible Man's male, gender-directed efforts. For example, Ursa's work as a professional blues singer signifies upon Invisible Man's recurring question of "What did I do?" after each debacle occurs. Ursa, too, wonders what to do after Mutt's life-altering abuse. In Kentucky, she expresses her pain in Louis Armstrong-style blues lyrics, which comforts Invisible Man in his New York hole. After her surgery, Ursa's voice becomes huskier, which is better for that lyrical style. She adopts "Trouble on My Mind" as her favorite piece, which she sings repetitively as she attempts to obtain self-governance over her life. Along the way of making new choices about husbands, friends, work, and a place to live, she begins an autonomous quest for truth by becoming free of Invisible Man-type "false illusions."

On the other hand, Tashi-E seemingly acts differently from Ursa because Tashi-E's voice and emotions have long been blockaded. The boulder-like lump in her throat has symbolized her constricted mind-body functions. Under Mzee's guidance in Switzerland, however, her body begins to unthaw, and to unblock her subconsciousness. She finally cries, faints, and utters words to express the pain wracking her mind and body. From that activation to consciousness, she, like Ursa, begins to free herself of Invisible Man-type false illusions. Her direction is more of a performance rather than vocalization of a "this is what I am going to do" refrain. For example, Tashi-E, breaks free of Adam's African-type liberties of having a concubine and another child without her permission. When Tashi-E discovers that she is pregnant a second time, she takes self-control over her body. She decides to abort a female fetus without even asking for Adam's consent. This move is antithetical to ancient African traditions valuating the Future Unborn.

What Ursa desires—to "make generations"—Tashi-E does not. She reports going to an American doctor for the abortion, but does not indicate whether her procedure had been performed at a legal clinic or at an "underground" unit reported by Loretta J. Ross as being so popular between the 1950s and 1970s (150).

Moreover, unlike Ursa's reaction to her miscarriage, Tashi-E does not regret aborting of her fetus. She knows that she could not withstand another trauma of prolonged labor that would result in restricting the air flow to the fetus in the birth canal, and for herself, to experience the tearing of her unyielding, toughened vaginal scar tissue, and final outcome of a probable, second retarded child (Koso-Thomas 12; 27). That process would be torturous and inhumane for both mother and child.

Nonetheless, Tash-E by accident finds her solution to loss of an Aborted Daughter. A second choice that she makes is to kill M'Lissa to prevent her service to male leaders who thoughtlessly have ordered the genital mutilations of females's bodies. At M'Lissa's Olinkan hospital site, Tashi-E meets Mbati, M'Lissa's caregiver. They form a mother-daughter bond, despite Tashi-E's criminal charge. She adopts Mbati to replace her Unborn Fetus-Victim. In that capacity, she, unlike Ursa, does continue the triadic link between her Dead-Child of the Past, herself the Living Present, and Mbati the Future mother of the Unborn. Moreover, the Future Reborn or to be Born is guaranteed by Tashi-E's thousands of surrogate daughter disciples who have converged upon her Olinkan prison to ban together collectively in African style in order to disband the male-governed, female-supported practice of female circumcision.

Preceding Tashi-E, Ursa had begun to recognize that the legacy of Corregidoran women must now change in order for her not to remain Mutt's victim. She must become a survivor and to do so, she begins to re-examine gnostic patterns. Mama had escaped birthing an incest baby when Corregidora died. She had created a variant in the biological legacy when Mama had chosen her own spouse/sexual partner. It was self-driven, however, by Great Gram's mandate to "make generations." It appears that Mama had wanted to alter the cycle of female sexual victimization as well as to circumvent Corregidora's evil spirit from being passed on. But the question is, does she vary the female Corregidoran history enough by choosing Malcolm, a local black man for her procreative requirement?

The answer is negative based upon Ursa's subsequent dementia from being unable to produce a female heir to carry on her matrilineal legacy. Nonetheless, Ursa is able to script a variant as well to the female dictum. Right after she divorces Tadpole for adultery, she stops the Corregidoran story and practices sexual abstinence between her ages of twenty-seven and forty-seven as she mulls over a solution to her quandary.

Her self-willed celibacy is a small variant of her mother's actions, for Mama also had abstained from sex after cleaving with Ursa's father Malcolm. To Ursa, sexual abstinence calls for geographical shifting and forging of new alliances, rather than following an Invisible Man-type hole of isolation. She moves from the East side of town to the West side, and also acquires a new job at a night club. But, while changing her location of culture helps, it does not heal Ursa's psychological pain. Her physical scar has healed but Ursa's mental scar has not. Mutt's phantom image still recurs over and over at her new location since Mutt's "phantom emissary" Jimmy, a cousin, tracks Ursa to her new job and keeps Mutt updated on her movements.

It is Mutt's reappearance in corporeal form that enables Ursa to reach closure at the novel's ending. No longer is he just an ITS trekking about in spirit form in her mental world; Mutt has now materialized. His may be a "returnee narrative," but Ursa is determined to script its outcome into an Afrofeminist spirit discursive of victory with a pre-determined outcome. She crafts Invisible Man's revenge against the Brotherhood for Clifton's murder by targeting Mutt as her object to kill. And based upon Ursa's own returnee journey back to Bracktown to acquire the gnostic knowledge from Mama about how the Corregidoran women had managed to control their male victimizers, she is preparing the same outcome for Mutt. The Corregidoran women had used mind-body wit and turned the table on Corregidora their sex abuser. They mastered the art of administering fellatio, the female's sexual weapon that ultimately would disarm men. Mama's Nommo-styled message is like an emancipation decree for Ursa, for she learns how the Corregidoran women had both attracted and repulsed Corregidora and then Malcolm by titillating them to levels of enraged desires for them. The act of fellatio had totally, sexually disempowered them. Like Invisible Man, Ursa simply had been a slow learner because she had refused to perform that act for Mutt.

But now having recognized her Invisible-Man type error in judgment, Ursa has the capacity to rectify a twenty-two year old grudge against Mutt. When he finally surfaces and reveals himself to Ursa, she quickly agrees to reunite with him so that she can make him feel her pain. She also has a plan to mutilate and castrate Mutt by injuring his organ in order for him to understand the gravity of his assault that has left her barren. At the novel's conclusion, Jones shows Ursa in the victor's position—on her knees preparing to perform fellatio. Her lowered position "mirrors" the empowered postures of her female predecessors.

But before they commence, Mutt disrupts the action. He requests that Ursa "not be the kind of woman that hurt you," meaning the evil avenging Corregidoran woman of the past whose wrathe can rise to the level of an ITS (185). He, himself, feels "castration anxiety" (Kline 68). On the most basic, instinctive level, Mutt's fear of castration relates antithetically to the flowing of menstrual blood, now ceased in Ursa's body because of her hysterectomy caused by him. The "bleeding" metaphor is still present since Ursa could dismember him. He wants fellatio which still involves Ursa's orifice—her mouth—that contains teeth, and his fear is appropriate. As Ursa begins to exert pressure to Mutt's penis, thereby almost lacerating the skin with her teeth, he naturally reacts with pain and fear. He does not bolt, but repeatedly requests a second, third, and fourth time for her not to become his castrator and an ITS evil spirit of revenge.

This is the historical moment when Ursa revises the Corregidoran matriarchal script and takes a step towards her mental and bodily healings. She ceases her intentional plan to kill Mutt by castration; instead, when he begs her not to mutilate him, she falls away from Mutt and cries. Her body language of unleashing a sudden gush of tears signifies an emotional change in her spiritual well being. Her senses had been blockaded for twenty years, and now have burst out in a deluge of tears that signifies her fragility, her humanness, and her overdue subjectivity. Ursa has broken down the wall of non-feelings born as a self-protective measure during Great Gram's slave times. Ursa has also humanized the Corregedoran female line. Moreover, she still has another means of keeping her promise to Great Gram to "make generations." Ursa has a talent for singing blues music which had birthed its roots from American African slaves like Great Gram who had found a way lyrically to express their pains and sufferings.

Ursa's blues singing will keep that Afrofeminist spirit of pain and suffering alive, which is Ursa's alternate method for solving her Corregidoran reproduction problem. Every song is a birthing experience and tribute to the Corregidorean female line and legacy of survival. On the other hand, her story does not conclude on a romantic happy ending because the slave, post-slave experience, and its modern-day residues do not script such idealism--even if Ursa decides to remarry Mutt. But the ending is unique and ahistorically liberatory for Ursa by its difference from her mother's narrative. Ursa the daughter has emotionally shapeshifted into a feeling, human subject and Nommo life force by means of her blues music.

She now is both physically and psychologically in control of her mind, body, and spirit by introducing a hybridized, Future Rebirth mode into her Nommo family decree.

Just like Ursa, Tashi-E's journey to self-knowledge involves her interactions with her male victimizers and their female agents. This is the difference between the endings of *Corregidora* and *Possessing*. Unlike Ursa, Tashi-E actually kills off evil and an ITS at the same time when she murders M'Lissa. Therefore, Tashi has excised the immediate instrument of death to women's sexual pleasure. Like Jones, Walker is advocating that to end a pernicious cycle of evil, one has to transform history, and if necessary, to cut off the immediate agent or servant of the evil practitioner. M'Lissa had been the female emissary for the several Olinkan patriarchal leaders over her lifespan just as Great Gram had been the agent-receiver of Corregidora's messagings through the period of Ursa's childhood. So Tashi-E acts like Ursa and pinpoints the present-time emissary of the evil patriarch to "kill off." However, there is a gender difference being that a diehard, older woman M'Lissa is the Present-time enemy-agent unlike Mutt who is still in his prime. Yet, Tashi-E is at peace. Having killed M'Lissa with no regrets, Tashi-E becomes free in mind, body, and spirit. She also had killed off the *tsunga's* razor which her family identified as a source of AIDS contamination (see Obbo 166). Owing to Tashi-E's imprisonment, they had started to teach AIDS awareness classes to prisoners. In essence, Tashi-E has become a spiritual leader for women's health rights on many levels. These are the reasons that she no longer feels enraged and hostile for she has quashed the ITS, and has by the ending, shapeshifted into the calm leopard of her birth sign.

Finally, Tashi-E becomes an international heroine, "a cosmopolitan" woman, and model universal humanist for other women worldwide who have been too fearful to speak out against the male-governed laws demanding excision of their most sacred body part—their clitorises (Appiah 242). In the world of the text, Tashi-E has actualized Homi Bhabha's "hybridity" theory by inspiring a female collective of racially- and ethnically-diverse followers all allied to a common cause about the female body. This is because Tashi-E's cause has placed her in a well-publicized global arena made possible by her quadruple identities of Tashi-Evelyn-Mrs. Johnson-Soul. She has proven that a singular case can spawn a script of Afrofeminist spirit discourse of fighting for freedom that unites victimized women all over the world into a global, sisterhood collective.

To conclude, Ursa's and Tashi-E's bodily scars of mutilation signify the sexual abuse of black women but also their resistances to patriarchal controls over their gender and sexual beings and identities. The bodily scars function as metanarratives on how the European, African, and American male-driven actions of racism and sexism have placed the black female body at risk for nearly four hundred years. In re-scripting counterdiscourse narratives of Afrofeminist spirit discourse and freedom at the various land sites in *Corregidora* and *Possessing*, the authors Jones and Walker, respectively, illustrate through their tortured heroines that black women must reformulate the scripts of the Afrocentric community in order to write narratives of self-protection and wholistic healing. This they accomplished by way of the convoluted lives of Ursa Corregidora and Tashi Evelyn Johnson, respectively. Ursa and Tashi-E suffered mind, body, and spiritual traumas owing to their lack of control over their genders, sexuality, and reproduction rights. However, by means of their "lived experiences and Nommo-empowered, "personal voices of authority," they validated the empirical truths of the black female experience by means of the particularities of their Afrofeminist spirit discourses, which, re-scripted had inspired individual and collective networkings of black women locally and transnationally. Women can lose vital organs if they do not become agents over their minds, bodies, and spirits; Ursa and Tashi-E are examples. But there is a liberatory note at the conclusion of their journeys to self-knowledge, for their regenerative quests for attainment of the wholistic black female self succeeds and is illuminated by Ursa's and Tashi-E's disparate levels of autonomy and self-governances over their bodies, their sexualities, and their mental well beings at each text's ending.

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