

In Gayl Jones' *Corregidora*, it becomes obvious the trauma that Ursula "bears witness" to as a result of her familial history and the familial duty to reproduce for the sake of not forgetting where the Corregidora matriarchy stems from. The traumas of Ursula's mama, grandmama, and great grandmama begin to culminate in Ursula since childhood and have numerous implications on Ursula's life as she ages, one of which permeates the sexual and romantic relationships Ursula forms with men who also bear witness to their family traumas. Tadpole, whom Ursula marries briefly after leaving her first husband, Mutt, for pushing her down the stairs, confides in Ursula early on in the novel about his familial history. Tadpole tells Ursula that "[his] grandmother was white" and that "she was a orphan and they had her working out in the fields along with the blacks and treated her like she was one" (Jones 13). Tadpole reveals that "[his grandmother] was a little girl, about nine, the, 'leven. [His] granddaddy took her in and raised her and then when she got old enough he married her. She called him Papa. And when they were married, she still called him Papa" (Jones 13). Tadpole continues by stating that "one of the children came out black and the other came out white" in reference to the children had by this white woman and his grandfather, which adds to the nuanced nature of interracial relationships in the context of oppression (13). During slavery, interracial relationships served only as a marker of rape or breeding by the owner; consensual interracial relationships were not acknowledged at the time, and so the power dynamic becomes evident in the fact that she still calls him "Papa" even after they're married.

Further, this confronts the idea of consent in the context of oppression, and thus leads to Tadpole's regarding of sexuality as revolving around his own needs for pleasure, which is similar to Mutt's understanding of sexuality, as well. While not an excuse by any means for their behaviors, it becomes clear that although he is not physically violent, Tadpole seeks to control Ursula through emotional and sexual submission. Both Mutt and Tadpole's treatments of Ursula very much reflect how Corregidora treated Ursula's great grandmother and grandmother—Mutt even says to Ursula that "[her] pussy's a gold piece, ain't it Urs? [His] little gold piece," which draws a connection to Corregidora's saying to her great grandmother "A good *little* piece. My best. Dorita. Little gold piece" (10-60). This emphasizes the notion that both Mutt and Tadpole view women as commodities, only worth something in terms of their sexual abilities. Ursula even compares Tadpole's control to Mutt's when Tadpole rejects Ursula's want to sing at the dinnertime show, which also relates a sense of possessiveness by Tadpole over Ursula. Tadpole then requests Ursula to sing for him, and dominates her as he removes his pants and expects her to "service" him. Tadpole later says to Ursula "I want to help you Ursula . . . Let me up in your pussy . . . Let me get up in your pussy, baby . . . Damn, you still got a hole, ain't you? As long as a woman got a hole, she can fuck," which further exemplifies the idea that Tadpole, along with Mutt, have a tendency to reduce Ursula to her "pussy" (Jones 82).