



# Ralph Ellison´s Invisible Women:

- A Comparison of Invisibility Between the Invisible Man and Selected Female Characters in Ralph Ellison´s *Invisible Man* (1952)
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Ralph Ellison´s Osynliga Kvinnor:

- En Jämförelse i Osynlighet mellan Invisible Man och Utvalda Kvinnliga Karaktärer i Ralph Ellison´s *Invisible Man* (1952)
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Subject: English Literature

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Points: 15 Hp

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Date: 15 Sep 2014

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Serial number

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## **Abstract**

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) is a world-renowned and critically acclaimed novel which explores the struggles of African Americans during the pre-civil rights era. The novel portrays the experience of an African American man in a racially segregated society in 1940s America. The unnamed African American protagonist—who is referred to as the Invisible Man throughout this essay—considers himself to be socially invisible; thus his invisibility is representative of the enforced conformity and racial inequality imposed on the African American community prior to the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Racial prejudice and injustice caused by the white society along with his perception of himself contributes to his invisibility and lack of identity. The aim of this essay is to show that the social inequality and invisibility enforced on the Invisible Man is not exclusively reserved to him; it is also applicable to female characters within the novel. The female characters are portrayed not as individuals but rather as symbols and as a collective representative of the female gender and women's situation at the time. There is, within the novel, a direct parallel between the ill-treatment of the female characters and the Invisible Man's journey towards enlightenment. The female characters are deprived of their visibility at the expense of the Invisible Man's journey. The Invisible Man's journey towards finding his true identity will be focus for a comparison between his invisibility and the invisibility of the exotic dancer, Mary-Lou and Kate as well as the prostitutes at the Golden Day.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) is a world-renowned novel which explores the struggles of African Americans during the pre-civil rights era. According to Adam Bradley, Ellison emerged as the foremost advocate and spokesman of the complex ties between blacks and America (82). *Invisible Man* portrays the experience of an African American man in a racially segregated society in 1940s America. The unnamed African American protagonist—who will be referred to as the Invisible Man throughout this essay—considers himself to be socially invisible; thus his invisibility is representative of the enforced conformity and racial inequality imposed on the African American community prior to the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Racial prejudice and injustice caused by the white society along with his perception of himself contributes to his invisibility and lack of identity. He is willing to endure immense humiliation at the hands of a white racist society in order to try and discard the invisibility imposed on him. His yearning for recognition and social equality results in a journey of discovering his true identity and individuality as an African American.

Ellison's portrayal of the protagonist and his journey emphasises the social inequalities imposed on black men as well as the social hierarchy constructed by white society in 1940s America. The aim of this essay, however, is to show that the social inequality and invisibility enforced on the Invisible Man is not exclusively reserved to him; it is also applicable to female characters within the novel. The female characters are portrayed not as individuals but rather as symbols and as a collective representative of the female gender and their situation at the time. There is, within the novel, a direct parallel between the ill-treatment of the female characters and the Invisible Man's journey towards enlightenment. The female characters are deprived of their visibility at the expense of the Invisible Man's journey. His journey of finding his true identity will therefore be focus for a comparison between his invisibility and the invisibility of the exotic dancer, Mary-Lou and Kate as well as the prostitutes at the Golden Day. The female characters will be analysed based on their gender rather than their race. Their ethnic background will be mentioned but will not be taken into account when performing the analysis. However, in order to perform the analysis it is necessary to first define identity and individuality with regards to the African American society in 1940s America, as the main focus of the essay is the lack of the characters' individuality and identity. The construction of society within the novel, taking the gender roles into account, will also be clarified as the novel is a reflection of the prejudice and injustice imposed on women as well as the African American community in 1940s America.

According to Charles Banner-Haley the concept of race for African Americans has been tied up with slavery. Therefore race and culture share the same boundaries for African Americans and thus both race and ethnicity are socially constructed identities (2). During the slave era, African Americans were not treated as equals nor were they considered to be equal to the white society; their identity was based on the values and ideas of the white community. As John Ernest makes clear, the whole of black America was deeply influenced by the experience of slavery; even after the abolishment, slavery continued to be a national system where ideological beliefs in political, legal and economic spheres were maintained. The white America had a clear idea of what being black entailed and imposed their notions on African Americans in every area of life. The black communities, on the other hand, struggled to identify themselves (12- 20). Similarly, in the novel *The Invisible Man* struggles to find his true identity in a society where racism is the main ideology; an ideology which is based on the belief that one race is superior to another. The constructed identity of African Americans, in the novel, is considered to be inferior because their race and their culture are defined by others. The Invisible Man recognises, at the end of his journey, that his invisibility is in fact a socially constructed identity, as he proclaims that his invisibility is “A matter of the construction of their [the white community] *inner* eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality” (Ellison 7). Here the Invisible Man refers to the ideas, values and ideology of the white community as their inner eyes and emphasises the lack of recognition and the inability of the white community to acknowledge the black community as equals. What they see is the image of the stereotypical slave; someone who is not to be recognised nor treated as an individual human being because of their dark skin-colour.

The negative view on African Americans was not only shared by whites; African Americans themselves had been conditioned by the white culture to accept their situation (Ernest 13) and this is reflected in the novel. The African American characters perception of themselves was influenced by the standard ideals at the time; being white brought power, recognition and social status, being black on the other hand meant a life of injustice and invisibility. The way in which society is constructed in the novel means that power lies with the white patriarchy and not with the black community nor with white females. At the beginning of his journey, which the Invisible Man refers to as his “pre-invisible days” (Ellison 19) due to his inability to recognise the invisibility imposed on him, he gives a graduation speech in which he encourages the black community to be humble and to submit to the white society. His speech earns him an invitation to perform his oration in the presence of the white

elite in the battle royal scene. He is eager to please his town's white elite because he correlates his self-worth to the values of the white community to the extent where he even feels guilty thinking of going outside the social hierarchy determined by that community. He proclaims " ... I felt a guilt that in some way I was doing something that was really against the wishes of the white folks ... "(Ellison 18). Here it is made clear in what kind of regard the Invisible Man holds the white community.

Due to the association he makes, he believes that he has gained recognition and feels worthy when he is invited to deliver his speech in the presence of the white elite. "It [the speech] was a great success. Everyone praised me ... "(Ellison 18). He does not understand that the praise has hidden agendas whereby the white community wants to continue to establish their superiority and in giving the speech he accepts the situation imposed on him. His speech portrays the image of the stereotypical slave and conforms to the racist ideology held by Caucasian society. His yearning for acceptance and recognition is influenced by the white culture as he is hoping to gain their respect through obeying their rules. He indirectly accepts the boundaries set on African Americans by a racist authority and thus his own action contributes to the feeling of inferiority among African Americans; furthermore his actions establish the superiority felt by whites which in turn reinforces the social hierarchy by which whites are at the top and blacks are considered to be second-class citizens.

Ellison's portrayal of the battle royal scene, in which black men are to fight for the entertainment of the white elite, and the portrayal of the exotic dancer puts an emphasis on the social structure within the American society at the time. The scene, as A. Robert Lee explains, is a clear example of how the white power-structure is able to control, use and manipulate the black man ... (23). Furthermore, it is also an example of how the white power-structure is capable of manipulating women regardless of their ethnicity. The exotic dancer is the first white female the Invisible Man encounters on his journey and although white females were considered to be of a higher status than black women at the time, they were looked upon as possessions and as second-class citizens. Ellison illustrates this through withholding a name for the exotic dancer. The namelessness exemplifies her position within the social hierarchy; she is at the lower end of the scale and thus equal in invisibility to the Invisible Man.

In the battle royal scene, the exotic dancer is used for the entertainment of the male white elite. The exotic dancer, who is described as a “magnificent blonde” (Ellison 20), is seen as a sexual object to be exploited by those in power in any way they desire. Julia Eichelberger argues that the Invisible Man has been taught, by indirect cultural affirmations, to equate white women with power and possession and not as human beings (35). The Invisible Man describes the exotic dancer as almost non-human as he proclaims that she looked like a “ ... circus kewpie doll, the face heavily powdered and rouged, as though to form an abstract mask, the eyes hollow and smeared a cool blue ... ” (Ellison 20). The heavy make-up which forms the abstract mask indicates the invisibility and lack of identity imposed on her by the white elite; they do not see her as an intellectual or as an individual as she is purely there for entertainment purposes and for their satisfaction. As well as using her for their own entertainment, they also use her sexuality to control the Invisible Man and thus the power and possession theory, which is argued by Eichelberger, is due to the association made by the Invisible Man between the white elite and white females. Although the exotic dancer is at the lower end of the social hierarchy, she is equated with power as the power comes from the association of her skin-colour with that of the white elite. The possession is due to the white elite’s assumption that the exotic dancer belongs to them hence white women are objects rather than human beings.

Upon seeing her, the Invisible Man feels a “wave of irrational guilt and fear” (Ellison 20). He feels fear and guilt because he knows that black men are not allowed to take part in the sexual enjoyment felt by the white elite and as his aim is to please the elite he will be disobeying the rules and regulations imposed on black men by watching the white exotic dancer. A. Robert Lee explains, the dancer seems to stand for Mother America, whose possession, both sexually and politically, is a matter for whites and not for the black community (23). This is further emphasised by the fact that the exotic dancer has “ a small American flag tattooed upon her belly” (20) and the fact that the Invisible Man wants to “caress her and destroy her, to love her and murder her ...” (20) all at the same time. If the exotic dancer stands for Mother America it is understandable that the Invisible Man feels hatred towards her because of the ill-treatment he receives and the love he feels is a symbol for his expectations of what might be if he is seen as an equal. As the possession is not made available for the black community, then the black men are prohibited from watching the exotic dancer. She is, in essence, just as much the “property” of the white men as the Invisible Man and thus she is untouchable to him. The irrational fear, the Invisible Man feels, also

indicates that on some level, despite his naivety in putting his faith in the hands of the white elite, he is aware of the injustice and dehumanising behaviour towards him from the elite and their community as a whole.

Drawing on A. Robert Lee's theory, then, the Invisible Man's description of his feelings as irrational is connected to his brief but misguided sense of individuality, as individuality, to the Invisible Man, is seen as a representation of power, success and recognition. He declares, upon arriving to the ballroom, that he "felt superior to them [the young black men] in my way and I didn't like the manner in which we were all crowded together into the servants' elevator" (Ellison 19). He feels superior to the black men as he believes that the sole purpose for his attendance is to give an oration and that he will not be humiliated to take part in the fight. His naivety in believing that he will be seen as an individual by the white elite, once he has performed his speech, is clear as he does not recognise the hidden message by the elite when they decide to cluster the men together in a servant's elevator. Their view of him as a subordinate has not and will not change despite his wishes. Furthermore his description of his feelings as irrational indicates his confusion and naivety surrounding the female dancer as he believes that if he is seen as an individual he will be considered to be of equal value to whites as they would have recognised his ability as a human being and as a result he would be above any of the restrictions enforced on the black community.

The Invisible Man is eventually persuaded into taking part in the battle royal and as the battle royal fight is about to start the black men, including the Invisible Man, are blindfolded: "All ten of us climbed under the ropes and allowed ourselves to be blindfolded with broad bands of white cloth" (Ellison 21). The blindfold is a symbol of the power and humiliation asserted on the black community by the dominant society, and the colour of the blindfolds clearly illustrates the whiteness of that power. It is also a symbol of the Invisible Man's naivety in not being able to see the true motives behind the white elite.

The Invisible Man will go to almost any lengths in order to appease those who are in power, and despite one of the whites yelling "I want to get at that ginger-coloured nigger. Tear him from limb to limb" (Ellison 22), with reference to the Invisible man, during the battle royal, he is still naïve enough to think favourably of the white elite. He expresses his deeply rooted belief, that recognition from the white elite will earn him his individuality by

declaring “I wanted to deliver my speech more than anything else in this world, because I felt that only these men [the white elite] could judge truly my ability ... “ (25).

Unlike the Invisible Man, the female dancer is not and has not been misguided in her lack of individuality. The Invisible Man recognises that she performs for the men with a “detached expression on her face” (Ellison 21). She is not yearning for recognition from the white elite as she, through her sexuality, is made visible by the elite as explained by the Invisible Man “the blonde continued dancing, smiling faintly at the big shots who watched her with fascination ...” (21). Her visibility is already acquired when she is objectified. The reason for her presence is not to acquire recognition as she is aware of the power exerted upon her by the white patriarchy and thus she is aware of her position within society and the extent of her visibility. The Invisible Man recognises that she is being treated as possession as he reveals that he saw “the terror and disgust in her eyes ... “ (21) and he continues on to say “ ... almost like my own terror and that which I saw in some of the other boys” (21). Despite the Invisible Man recognising the ill-treatment of the female dancer—her lack of individuality and identity in the eyes of the white patriarchy—he is still blind of his own dehumanising treatment by them which results in his own invisibility.

In 1940s America, both communities had a certain social order by which women were considered to be less significant than men. According to Erica Dunbar, females within the black community had little power and authority over their own lives and their family members (9). Black females were considered to be of the lowest social-order both within their own community and that of the American society. In the novel women, regardless of their race, are considered to be inferior and thus the invisibility of the exotic dancer is equal to the invisibility of Mary-Lou and her mother. The Invisible Man comes across Mary-Lou and her father during the end of his junior year at college when he acts as a chauffeur to Mr Norton—a wealthy white philanthropist. Mary-Lou is a young African American girl who is raped and becomes pregnant by her father Jim Trueblood. Despite this act he is compensated by the white community and expresses his disbelief at being rewarded: “But what I don’t understand is how I done the worse thing a man can do in his own family and ’stead of things gittin’ bad, they got better. The niggus up at the school don’t like me, but the white folks treats me fine” (Ellison 60). According to James B. Lane, the assumption in the *Invisible Man* is that black people become recognisable only when they conform to the emasculating parodies of the white man’s self-contradictory image of them; white America had defined black people, among other things, as violent-prone and childlike (65) as is the case with Jim Trueblood.

As A. Robert Lee puts forward, Jim Trueblood is a projection of white sexual fantasies and an expression of the sexual anarchy imagined by white society to be the permanent lot for all of the black community (24). Jim Trueblood is recognised and rewarded for his behaviour because he is conforming to the stereotype the white community have of black men. Despite his violent act against his own daughter he is not reprimanded in any way nor does the white community question his excuse for his behaviour—he was asleep and thought it was a dream—and thus Jim Trueblood believes that he is not responsible for his actions. He considers his own lie to be true, almost in a child-like way, as he says “You ain’t guilty, but she thinks you is” (Ellison 56) referring to himself when his wife, Kate, finds out what he has done. The invisibility of Mary-Lou is evident not only in the fact that her father will not take any responsibility for his actions but is also evident when the white community is accepting of his deed. His action does not have any consequences as he is free to do whatever he wants to his daughter without any fear of the white community.

Mr Norton, who represents the white community and who seemingly wants to improve the status of the black community, does not ask about the welfare of Mary-Lou. Instead he seems more fascinated by the rape and excitedly asks Jim Trueblood for them “[to] go where there is shade” (Ellison 47) so that Trueblood can share his story with him. It becomes clear that Mr Norton, although his daughter is deceased, harbours the same thoughts as Jim Trueblood. Mr Norton seems fascinated by his deceased daughter, almost in the same way as Jim Trueblood is of his own daughter. Mr Norton describes her as:

She was a being more rare, more beautiful, purer, more perfect and more delicate than the wildest dream of a poet. I could never believe her to be my own flesh and blood. Her beauty was a well-spring of purest water-of-life, and to look upon her was to drink and drink again... She was rare, a perfect creation, a work of purest art. A delicate flower that bloomed in the liquid light of the moon. A nature not of this world, a personality like that of some biblical maiden, gracious and queenly. I found it difficult to believe her my own...(39)

Mr Norton’s description almost signals an inappropriate desire or longing for his daughter. Unlike Jim Trueblood, Mr Norton cannot act upon his inappropriate desires as, according to A. Roberts Lee’s theory, this sexual anarchy was reserved, in the minds of the whites, only to blacks. Furthermore, in accordance with Lee’s theory, Mr Norton is, through his fascination and inability to stop listening to Jim Trueblood’s story, using Jim Trueblood as a gateway to

project his forbidden sexual fantasy. The fact that Mr Norton does not act upon his deepest darkest wishes, regarding his daughter, and Jim Trueblood is able to, further highlights the invisibility and insignificance of Mary-Lou as she neither gets help from the white community nor from her own community. Had Mr Norton done what Jim Trueblood did he would have been shunned from his community because of the laws and restrictions surrounding the upper-class elite and it is evident that Mr Norton is well aware of the consequences of such an action as he exclaims “You have looked upon chaos and are not destroyed” (Ellison 46) when speaking to Jim Trueblood about his actions. Mary-Lou is unimportant not only because she is a member of the black community but also because of her gender.

The invisibility imposed on Mary-Lou, is comparable to that imposed on the Invisible Man by the white community as Jim Trueblood compares the rape of Mary-Lou with the feeling of “feelin’like [he] was rich folks” (Ellison 50) when explaining the dream to Mr Norton. Jim Trueblood indirectly relates the power he feels through the rape with the power and superiority the whites feel towards the black community. In the same way the white community exerts power through humiliation and dehumanising behaviour without any reprimand, over the Invisible Man, so too does Jim Trueblood as he exerts power over both his wife and his young daughter.

His wife, although she condemns his behaviour, as she shouts: “Goddam you’ soul to hell! Git up offa my chile” (Ellison 55) when she witnesses the end of the rape, is dependent on him as Trueblood explains that “ ... even if Kate won’t speak to me she took the new clothes I brought her from up in town ... “ (60). Moreover, when Kate wants to call on the midwife to terminate her daughter’s pregnancy, Jim Trueblood goes against her wishes as he states “ ... I knows I don’t want her [the mid-wife] foolin’with *my* [emphasis added] womensfolks” (59). Although Kate tries to take the matter into her own hands by calling a midwife she is not ignorant of the position she is in. She is aware of her status in society and does not report Jim Trueblood’s crime to the police or the government as she knows that they are made up of white people with power who will not care about her or her daughter. The fact that Kate is submissive towards her husband and her lack of action not only illustrates her insignificance within society but it also exemplifies her awareness of the hierarchy within society. She does not want to agitate neither her husband nor society and because of this she chooses to remain silent and does not take the appropriate actions against her husband which ultimately results in her invisibility and thus highlights the fact that she is not ignorant of her social position. Jim Trueblood, on the other hand, clearly sees both his wife and daughter as

his property and not as individual human beings in the same way the white community perceives the Invisible Man. Kate and Mary-Lou are just as dependent on Jim Trueblood as the Invisible Man is dependent on those in power and all three are treated as inferior beings. They have been robbed of their dignity, been humiliated and have had their individuality taken away from them by people who want to assert their superiority.

The Golden Day, which is a brothel where old black veterans gather and where the Invisible Man drives Mr Norton, due to his faintness and shock, after their encounter with Jim Trueblood and his family, is yet another example of the invisibility imposed on both the Invisible Man and females within the novel. Yet again, Ellison has avoided establishing an identity through a first name for the majority of the black female prostitutes to exemplify their social position and their lack of individuality. The ones who do carry names—Edna, Charlene and Hester—are dehumanised due to their profession. The Invisible Man describes the prostitutes using outwardly attributes “... women in short, tight-fitting, stiffly starched gingham aprons” (Ellison 64).

In addition, the prostitutes’ conversations are focused on their clients and as Mr Norton faints, one of the named prostitutes, Edna, expresses her fondness for rich white men as she announces, after an unnamed prostitute points out that she likes white men, “I sho do. I just love 'em ...” (Ellison 75). The prostitutes are named and recognised in connection with white patriarchy. Charlene’s name is revealed when the owner of the brothel calls on her to tell her “... We got white folks in the house” (71) referring to Mr Norton. The third and final prostitute’s name is revealed when she asks Mr Norton “How is white-folks making out? White-folks, baby, you done come to” (79). The connection is yet another revelation to the power asserted over the black community and is an example of the invisibility imposed on black females. The Invisible Man and the prostitutes share the same invisibility as it has been imposed on them by the dominant white patriarchy. Additionally, they share the same concern for whites and indirectly or directly share the same belief that whites are superior. Despite the concern they share and despite the prostitutes being named and recognised in connection with white patriarchy, the prostitutes are not actively seeking to gain recognition from Mr Norton, unlike the Invisible Man, instead they simply acknowledge his presence. They are not eager to please Mr Norton and they are not of the illusion that Mr Norton’s acceptance will in any way improve their social status. Furthermore, Edna’s fondness of the men who deem her to be less worthy also indicates her awareness and acknowledgment of not only her own social status but that of her friends, and although the white exotic dancer is more favourably described

with regards to her attributes, the black women are also sexually objectified and stereotyped as the lesser of the two genders.

The Invisible man's perception of whites is once again highlighted when Mr Norton has fainted and a voice tells the Invisible Man to "Stop screaming" (Ellison 74) and reminds him that "[Mr Norton] is only a man. Remember that. He is only a man" (74). The Invisible Man's lack of identity is made clear when one of the veterans tells of the Invisible Man to Mr Norton, who by now has recovered, that:

And you, for all your power, are not a man to him, but a God ... he believes in you as he believes in the beat of his heart. He believes in that great false wisdom taught to slaves and pragmatists alike, that white is right. I can tell you *his* destiny. He'll do your bidding, and for that his blindness is his chief asset. He's your man, friend (82)

What the veteran understands and the Invisible Man does not, at this stage of his journey, is that the Invisible Man is conforming to an identity determined by the white community. The veteran is not only referring to the fact that the Invisible Man is chauffeuring Mr Norton around and abiding to every single one of his personal whims, he is also pointing out that the Invisible Man has been brain-washed, manipulated and controlled in his relationship to not only Mr Norton but the whole of the white community. Furthermore, the veteran is aware of the Invisible Man's lack of individuality as he essentially describes him as a puppet because of the Invisible Man's inability to see Mr Norton for what he truly is; a manipulative oppressor. The speech also functions as a warning to the Invisible Man as the veteran predicts the Invisible Man's destiny if he does not see reality for what it is.

The invisibility of the Invisible Man is evident throughout the novel, and at the end of his journey he has come to understand the reason for his invisibility. He states:

I am an invisible man. No I am not a spook like those who hunt Edgar Alan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fibre and liquids – and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination- indeed, everything and anything except me (Ellison 7)

The Invisible Man has realised that his invisibility is imposed on him by the people he is eager to please. The dominant white community through their racial prejudice, their inability to truly recognise him as a human being and as an individual as well as his eagerness and naivety in wanting to please them forms the foundation for his invisibility. Similarly the imposed invisibility is applicable to the exotic dancer, Mary-Lou and Kate as well as the prostitutes at the Golden day. The invisibility of the exotic dancer and the Invisible Man is a product of the white patriarchy. Mary-Lou, her mother Kate and the prostitutes at the Golden Day on the other hand have not only had their invisibility imposed on them from whites but from their own community as well.

However, unlike the Invisible Man, at the beginning of his journey, the females are aware of their own invisibility or rather visibility as second-class citizens. They are not misguided in the same way the Invisible Man is as they are not, in any way, trying to push the boundaries set upon them by the white patriarchy. Instead the Invisible Man acknowledges the treatment of the female characters and recognises their invisibility. According to Jim Neighbors, Ellison has said “In my novel the narrator’s development is one through blackness to light; that is, from ignorance to enlightenment: invisibility to visibility” (227). The Invisible Man has gained his visibility through an understanding of society and as Eichelberger states; he discovers his true identity and affirms democracy in a convincing way (25). Ellison’s statement with regards to invisibility indicates, therefore, that the females are not ignorant of their position within society and the Invisible Man’s encounter with the female characters and their treatment is used to enlighten him of his own invisibility. Furthermore, the female characters already have an understanding of the society in which they live and thus cannot embark on a journey of finding their true identity as they, seemingly, have a clear idea of their position in life. In other words, the female characters within *Invisible Man* continue to be invisible despite the Invisible Man discovering his identity and shedding his invisibility. As Carolyn W. Sylvander makes clear “While Ellison uses the artist’s skill to depict and explore and evaluate the humanity of Black men, to thereby confute the effects of stereotyping, he remains blind to the humanity of his women characters” (77).

Ellison has depicted the complexity of being African American and male at a time when racial prejudice and injustice was the norm and thus giving visibility to the Invisible Man. Unfortunately he evades fully developing the complexity of being a woman as well as the question of ethnicity for the female characters; whether this was a conscious choice in-order to express the injustice of females or not, the fact still remains that the female characters

are deprived of their visibility. They are simply used to further the journey and the story being told of the Invisible Man. They are mere symbols or extras with no real character or any real substance behind them which also contributes to their invisibility. The female characters being portrayed as a collective One is evident in the novel as the females are passive in their actions, stereotyped and sexually objectified regardless of their race. Furthermore, they are not depicted as reflecting upon their situation and their experience as white or black or simply as a woman nor are they seeking recognition and higher status in the same way as the Invisible Man, which yet again could indicate the female characters' awareness and acknowledgement of their (in)visibility and their position within society.

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