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Articles

Breaching the Walls of Academe: the Case of Five Afro-Caribbean Immigrant Women within United States Institutions of Higher Education.....206

Mirando Hacia Afuera: la Interrupción de la Trayectoria Educativa de Varones Adolescentes desde la Perspectiva de Género.....234

“I don’t care” or “It’s their fault”: System justification and the lack of empathy as complementary obstacles to dealing with the modern sexism255

Salomé en el cine, un Weibermacht a la sombra de Wilde.....280

Review

Roger Campdepadrós.....304



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Breaching the Walls of Academe: the Case of Five Afro-Caribbean Immigrant Women within United States Institutions of Higher Education

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Breaching the Walls of Academe: the Case of Five Afro-Caribbean Immigrant Women within United States Institutions of Higher Education

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Abstract

While a growing tendency among researchers has been for the examination of diverse forms of discrimination against Afro-Caribbean immigrants within the United States (US), the types of ambiguities that these create for framing the personal and professional identities of Afro-Caribbean women academics who operate within that space remain relatively absent. The literature is also devoid of substantive explorations that delve into the ways and extent to which the cultural scripts of Afro-Caribbean women both constrain and enable their professional success in academe. The call therefore is for critical examinations that deepen, while extending existing examinations of the lived realities for Afro-Caribbean immigrants within the US, and, the specific trepidations that they both confront and overcome in the quest for academic success while in their host societies. Using intersectionality as the overarching framework for this work, we demonstrate, through the use of narrative inquiry, the extent to which cultural constructions of difference nuance the social axes of power, the politics of space and identity, and professional outcomes of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women who operate within a given context. These are captured within our interrogation of the structures of power that they confront and their use of culture to fight against and to break through institutional politics.

Keywords: academe, afro-caribbean immigrant women, higher education, success

Rompiendo los Muros de la Academia: el Caso de Cinco Mujeres Inmigrantes Afro-Caribeñas dentro de las Instituciones de Educación Superior de los Estados Unidos

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Resumen

Mientras una tendencia creciente entre los investigadores ha sido el examen de diversas formas de discriminación contra las inmigrantes afro-caribeñas dentro de los Estados Unidos (EE. UU.), quedan en cierta manera obviadas las ambigüedades creadas para enmarcar las identidades personales y profesionales de las académicas afro-caribeñas que trabajan en ese contexto. La literatura también carece de exploraciones sustantivas que profundicen en las formas y el grado en que los guiones culturales de las mujeres afro-caribeñas limitan y permiten su éxito profesional en la academia. Por lo tanto, se hacen necesarios exámenes críticos que profundicen, al tiempo que amplíen los exámenes existentes de las realidades vividas para los inmigrantes afro-caribeños dentro de los EE. UU., y las inquietudes específicas que enfrentan y superan en la búsqueda del éxito académico en sus sociedades de acogida. Utilizando la interseccionalidad como marco general para este trabajo, demostramos, mediante el uso de la investigación narrativa, hasta qué punto las construcciones culturales de la diferencia matizan los ejes sociales del poder, las políticas del espacio y la identidad, y los resultados profesionales de las mujeres inmigrantes afro-caribeñas que operan dentro de un contexto dado. Estos temas se abordan enmarcadas en las estructuras de poder que enfrentan y su uso de la cultura para luchar y romper la política institucional.

Keywords: academia, mujeres inmigrantes afrocaribeñas, educación superior, éxito

While Afro-Caribbean immigrants represent a substantive number of the Black immigrant population in the United States-US (Deux, Bikmen, Gilkes, Ventuneac, Joseph, Payne, & Steele, 2007; Kent, 2007; Waters, Kasinitz, & Asad, 2014), they continue to struggle against systemic forms of discrimination and marginalization that extend into institutions of higher education (Gregory, 1999, 2006; Fourniller, 2010; McLean, 2010; Alfred, 2011; Jean-Marie, 2014). A growing tendency among researchers has been for the examination of diverse forms of discrimination (related to racism, classism, sexism), and the types of ambiguities that these create for framing the personal and professional identities of Afro-Caribbean women academics who operate within that space (Alfred, 2001; Fourniller & Lewis, 2010; Jean-Marie, 2014). As a way of extending such lines of research, Fournillier, McLean and George (2013, p. 261) contend that the “overarching\umbrella categories of race\ethnicity that are currently used to identify migrant and minority groups fail to address the distinct real-world perspectives, sociocultural practices, and identities that exist in authentic ways with which individuals identify”. The push in this case is for deepened and extended understandings of the complexities that immigrant groups encounter and the implications of these for their experiences and practices within host societies. The call is also for greater scholarship on Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the US academy that takes into consideration their identity, the relevance of context, the peculiarities of that space, and, the extent to which these influence their lived realities within the walls of academe. This renewed line of research is particularly necessary given the invisibility that obtains on the multiple ways in which Afro-Caribbean immigrant women both experience and resist institutional marginalization in their quest to claim professional success (Guy, 2003; Alfred, 2003; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008; Jean-Marie, 2009, 2014; Fournillier, 2010; Louis, Thompson, Smith, Williams, & Watson, 2017).

Our work on Afro-Caribbean immigrant women within the US academy emerges as a response to these concerns and calls to advance existing research within this field. In addressing these, the paper therefore speaks to the experiences of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women in the US academy, and, explores the ways in which they attempt to breach the walls of academe. In so doing, we take the position that the cultural

sensitivities of Afro-Caribbean represent a critical frame from which they both experience and cope with the intricacies associated with working in institutions of higher education in the United States. Using intersectionality as the overarching framework for this work, we demonstrate the extent to which cultural constructions of difference nuance the expressions and implications of social axes of power for the professional identity, experiences, and outcomes of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women who operate within a given context. We specifically articulate, (i) the cultural particularity in constructions of difference for Afro-Caribbean immigrant in the US, (ii) the tensions that these created for adapting to their institutional and broader societal contexts, (iii) the relative importance of these cultural proclivities, both to the psycho-social orientations of Afro-Caribbean women, and, (iv) to the strategies that they adopt to push through the walls of academe. While these cultural references intensified the multiple sources of conflict within their host contexts, we underscore the ways in which these also served as critical points of departure that influenced how they successfully breach the walls of academe.

Intersectionality

In this paper, we premise our examination of Afro-Caribbean women within the US academy on the theoretical tenets of intersectionality. The rationales here are twofold. First, intersectionality offers an important framework from which we can begin to trouble socially constituted categorization of difference that configure the everyday experiences of persons within a given context. At the crux of intersectionality theory is the examination of the various ways in which social categories and axes of difference (such as race, gender, and sexual orientation) intersect to frame the individual identity (Crenshaw, 1995; Knapp, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Lykke, 2011; Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). Second, intersectionality presents critical insights into the mechanisms and processes through which these social axes of power create inclusive and exclusive politics around individual opportunities and positionalities; particularly for marginalized groups (Davis, 2008). Such interrogation

calls for close assessments of the discursive and relational aspects of social experience. A unique benefit here is that of using a macro-micro level analysis that allows for the contextualization or the social location of identity and experience (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). We also extend such analysis to address the comparative ways in which identity and experience are both conditioned by and challenged by the nuances of context (Esnard & Cobb-Roberts, 2018). In applying this framework to the study of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women, we interrogate the contextual differences within the social constitution of power, difference, identity, and experience across context; that is, in the United States and the Caribbean. A critical reflection in this case therefore is for the cross-examination of the situated meanings and experiences related to these constructions of difference and the unique challenges that these introduce for immigrant Afro-Caribbean women who remain the core area of interest in the study. The use of an intersectional perspective in this case also provides a theoretical framework through which we make visible the connection between the systems of power that exist at an institutional level and that of the personal narratives and stories of Afro-Caribbean women who operate within US based institutions of higher education.

Methodology

The study centers the lived experiences of Afro-Caribbean women in the US. To understand the complexities around these, we embraced narrative inquiry as a research design that allows for examinations of the stories that speak to social experiences within a given context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2013). For this study, participants were purposively selected based on specific characteristics (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this case, the inclusion criteria were participants who identified as being Afro or Black Caribbean women, and, employed as an academic within a US institution of higher education. To initiate this process, we tapped into the Caribbean Educators Research Initiative (CURVE) group to identify a list of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women who now work within US institutions of higher education and used this initial connection to seek additional referrals or potential persons to be interviewed. Once we obtained initial contact from Caribbean

networks of academics, we invited persons to participate in an estimated hour-long interview on issues related to these experiences, challenges, and strategies for navigating the academy. Once participants consented, we asked for a reflection on their social and professional relations and an evaluation of how these affected their experiences within their respective institutions.

We interviewed five Afro-Caribbean women academics for this study. Participants varied in institutional experiences and rank. Two of the participants were assistant professors with between 5-10 years of experience within that role. One participant served in the capacity of an associate professor and has at least 15 years in academe. She is currently employed at a predominantly white institution. Another participant is at the level of a research associate. She has been in that position for over four years and in a similar position for another 5. While she has the desire to move into the teaching and research stream, she has not been able to secure an appointment as a faculty member. Our final participant is a full professor with over thirty years in academe. She was also a former administrator with a wealth of experience from serving at different types of institutions across the US. She is also directly involved with issues of diversity in higher education.

Each interview was conducted by the two researchers, audio-taped, and professionally transcribed to allow structural coding and thematic analysis of the data. We also employed the use of McCall's (2005) inter-categorical analysis to draw on the findings related to various axes and relations of power that work to affect the lived experiences of these women. Using the framework of comparative intersectionality (Esnard & Cobb-Roberts, 2018), we specifically probed into the contextual nature of their identities, and the tensions and/or ambiguities that unfold around their experiences as Afro-Caribbean immigrants within the US. Based on that process, two key findings were that of the difficulties associated with confronting diverse yet complex systems of power in academe, and, the significant ways in which these women were able to break through the barriers that surface through that experience. In the case of the latter, we point to the relative importance of culture; both

for how they respond to institutional politics, and, creatively draw on existing systems of support.

Confronting systems of power

Our examinations point to the many ways in which these five women fought against everyday expressions of racial discrimination and marginalization within and beyond their professional lives. On a broad level, both Terry and Stacy spoke to the pervasive racial structures and relations of power that affected the experiences of Black persons within the US academy. In expounding on this, Terry for instance spoke to her own engagements or conversations with other professional Black women and who have “traversed this [academic] landscape...[who have] attend[ed] university [whether public or private or even Ivy league, and, who have all pointed to their own] struggles within the university.” In most cases, she remarked that the “struggles were always the same; those being with tenure and promotion, about being a Black person on tenure track, the stereotypical and dismissive perceptions that exist around race related work, especially if it addresses the specific experiences of minority groups”. She noted therefore that in the context of the US, Black persons (regardless of their place of origin, particular socio-economic standing, ethnic upbringings), become part of systemic structures of oppression that ignores the injustices that these introduce in general to Black persons, and, more specifically, to other ethnic groups. For Terry, this oppressive and monolithic treatment of Blacks created a *troubling sense of invisibility*, as in her case, where Afro-Caribbean immigrant women did not identify with, or remained sensitive to the prisms of race, and, the socio-political meanings that were associated with being Black in the US. A consistent contention here therefore is that of the conflicting meanings of what it means to be Black in the US vis-à-vis that of what obtains within their homelands, and, the stresses associated with that reality (Vickerman, 2001; Hine-St. Hilaire, 2008; Warner, 2012; Johnson, 2016; Esnard & Cobb-Roberts, 2018). The issue therefore becomes one of the politics around identity (Rogers, 2001, 2006), the importance of context in the construction of identities for Afro-Caribbean women (Gregory, 2006), and

the ways in which these created misconceptions and inter-racial controversies within that context (Kent, 2007; Greer, 2013).

This process of racialization and of being racialized present a particular challenge for these women (Lee, 2004; Benson, 2006; Boyce Davies & M'Bow, 2007). Researchers suggest that such racial and ethnic discrimination in the US affects identity construction and ethnic development, and, the tensions associated with working through these (Hintzen, 2001; Lee & Rice, 2007; Fries-Britt, George Mwangi, & Peralta, 2014; Malcolm & Mendoza, 2014). Our findings confirm this conjecture. In fact, our findings suggest that these women also struggled with the use of dominant cultural and racial filters to define their personal and professional identities within the US context. In many cases, they pointed to the cultural peculiarities around race and gender, and, the extent to which these introduced many rigidities related to how they defined themselves, how they were identified within their homeland or place of birth, and were being defined by others in the US. Where these cultural or ethnic filters remained at odds with those that were dominant within the space, these women also experienced intense periods of cultural dissonance within academe. Thus, both Joy and Martha for instance spoke to their experiences of working within predominantly white institutions and the cultural parameters that these imposed onto their sense of selves. In the case of Joy, she particularly spoke to what it meant to occupy or to be part of “white spaces;” to be racially and ethnically minoritized, and/or, to feel isolated within the academy. Joy specified for instance that “I struggled in white spaces...somehow when...they see a Black person, and they hear a different accent... [then] it goes back [to an understanding of how Black persons are supposed to] act in a [particular way]”. In this sense, acting in the particular or “right way,” therefore becomes a case of whether or not persons are aware of and embrace the dominant cultural norms and values (as subtle and not so subtle forms of cultural imperialism or perhaps oppression) that pervade in a given context. These stressors are further muddled by the need for one to respond to dominant Eurocentric white cultures and those of other Black groups within the US; who they are often (mis)identified with. This is particularly the case where the thinking and practices of diverse cultural and ethnic groups are

not validated within a given space (Schiele, 2000; Hanna, Talley, & Guindon, 2000). These conversations also raise questions around the possible relevance of situating Caribbean-centric frameworks within broader debates related to Eurocentricism, Africanism, Pan-Africanism and nationalism. In the context of higher education, these issues also point to related reservations around the use of the “hidden curriculum;” as cultural artefacts of the dominant social-cultural and racial landscape within the US, which in one way or the other affect the collective success of Black women in academe (Bertrand Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013),

It is this sense of racial and cultural conflict which affect the emotional and psychological wellbeing of immigrants (Foner, 2000; Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014; Esnard & Cobb-Roberts, 2018). Martha for instance elaborated on the liminal feelings that emerged from her cultural adaptation to the US context, the retention of her own cultural proclivities, and implications of these for ethnic networks to which she gravitated. In fact, while Martha attained professorial status, she reflected on the difficulties associated with the process of acculturation, and, the invisibility of her own cultural inclinations in that space. In both cases, this cultural tension created a growing sense of cultural erasure on one end and that of cultural adaptation on the other, and, in some cases, the adoption of a bi-cultural modus operandi, which allowed for code switching when this was deemed necessary. For Joy, such ambiguity produced a sense of being “in limbo...where you are really trying to find your identity; of who you are as a person, as a scholar, and being able to fit in”. This also created many points of discomfort and discontent; particularly around the use of native languages or cultural reference points within the classroom. This lack of sensitivity to the cultural practices and norms of Afro-Caribbean immigrant women or push for developing cultural competencies within the host societies created a distinctive sense of marginality (Alfred, 2001, 2003) and related strains within and between other racial groups (Rogers, 2001, 2004; Vickerman, 2001; Fournillier & Lewis 2010; Alfred, 2011; Thornton, Taylor, & Chatters, 2013). It is this intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender that leave Afro-Caribbean immigrant women isolated within academe (Louis et al. 2017; Esnard & Cobb-Roberts, 2018).

Securing Success: the lived and the imagined

Typically, faculty are assessed on their academic achievements (in teaching, research, and service), and the extent to which these result in the award of tenure and promotion. Where race and class become the axes of power through which Black women are structurally and socially disadvantaged, they are often forced to adopt specific strategies to sustain their engagement in academe (Collins, 2000; Alfred, 2001; Stanley, 2006). Our findings also point to the conscious ways in which these Afro-Caribbean women attempt to resist the complex web of power (inclusion of race, gender, and ethnicity) that operate within their institutional spaces. In so doing, these Afro-Caribbean women also spoke, not only to the many strategies (mentoring, social support from significant others, cultural lessons, and self-motivation) that they employ to breach the walls of academe, but their own considerations for (re)defining and (re)crafting strategies *of* and *for* their success in academe.

Breaking Barriers: Fighting politics with culture

One of the key findings within this study was that of how these Afro-Caribbean women employed the cultural scripts from their homeland to combat institutional forms of marginalization. In all cases, this strategy served as a central aspect of how they broke through institutional politics. Terry can be considered as one of the Afro-Caribbean women who has successfully breached the walls of academe. She is a tenured associate professor at a predominantly white institution, and one who sees her tenured position within a PWI as a hallmark of achievement for a Black woman within such marginalized context. She noted in this case that she was now the “fourth Black woman” to be tenured at the institution”. She stressed on “those kind of achievements” and the symbolic meanings that unfold through these; particularly where [she is] “one in a very rare group of individuals”; not just as Afro-Caribbean migrant women, but as Black women in a collective group. For other researchers, this type of penetration of Black minority women on a general level is both symbolically and materially significant given the insider-outsider status

that obtains for Black women within predominantly white institutions (Collins, 2000; Stanley, 2006; Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013; Jean-Marie, 2014). However, on a more specific level, this culturally embedded response also introduces a way of talking back to systems of oppression while shifting the axes of influence. In speaking to this issue, Terry's narrative also drew on *the strength of a Black woman discourse* (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Nelson, Cardemil & Adeoye, 2016). In fact, she spoke of the resilience of Black women, the "ability to be steady...and to navigate certain situations". She also spoke to the importance of early socialization patterns and messages of resilience that emanated through her interaction with her immediate family (friends and family) within the Caribbean. Here, she referenced her particular thinking around the need for achievement, the value of education, and the need for persistence in the process. She also spoke of important messages around being resourceful, strategic and self-confident. These became cultural reference points through which she adopted a mantra that "you do not set yourself up for questions about why you are not succeeding". She contended that these cultural reference points become both a tool and a shield through which she was able to move beyond the view that the academy is a "place of deprivation". The key disposition in this case was for the rethinking and reimagining of the academy; using her own knowledge of the structures and relations of power that operate within that contexts and her own cultural reference points to carve out strategies for her own survival and success. In fact, she argued that "if you are fortunate enough to land a position in the academy, that [you need to draw on all] the [external] resources and internal skills in order to succeed". For Terry therefore, an important aspect of being progressive within academic climates involves the need to understand the nature and dynamics of the social and professional networks that exists within the academe". However, she also called on other Afro-Caribbean immigrant women to be their "own advocate and to understand how the policies and the political situation" within the academe affects whether or not one succeeds. In such contexts, she suggested that these women should also draw on the lessons of resilience acquired in the home or in the Caribbean contexts to navigate this political terrain. While she is aware of the cultural nuances across contexts, she remained convinced of the power of strategic thinking and

certain values that support this in breaking through different landscapes. Therefore, while the tensions of “fitting in” for Afro-Caribbean immigrant women within the US academic system remains an issues for which they must confront (Alfred, 2001, 2003), our findings also speak to the importance of cultural practices to their reported levels of resilience (Gregory, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos 2005).

Building on critical systems of support

Another important finding within our study was that of how these women used their cultural reference points to build on their systems of support. In these cases, we noted that while these Afro-Caribbean women drew on the support of other professional women in that space, they also extended their working systems of support to that of their own thinking and practices within that space. We speak to this.

Terry, June, and Martha all spoke to the importance of mentoring and social support; albeit in varied ways. Terry for instance drew on the importance of being mentored by persons in positions of leadership (department heads and deans). These relationships were presented in her narrative as important to how one navigates the academic landscape and strategically maps one’s professional trajectory. In particular, she suggested that they have the ability to “pull the first strings and to open doors.” She also highlighted the role and impact of a department chair who “offered a candid conversation ...about [her] professional trajectory” and her dean for instance who placed her on a “number of different college-wide committees.” It is this type of professional and social support that led Terry to suggest that even though promotion and tenure is supposed to be “based on your productivity, [that there are other non-written and political threads that] determine one’s progress within higher education. Her thinking here was that of the extent to which department chairs and deans can bolster or to “halt [academic] success”. Outside of the support of administrative heads, Terry also stressed on the importance of having other non-administrative faculty mentors within the academy. She indicated that “these mentors could be folks that were in your

graduate program that you can pick up the phone and call us say, hey, this what's happening". For Terry, these informal networks with faculty offer flexible and open spaces through which Black women can develop their personal and professional identity, while gaining some visibility within their academic circles. On one level, this underscores the need for mentoring frameworks and opportunities (whether formal or informal that advance the professional development of Black scholars while framing systems of psycho-social support and development that align with aspects of their cultural reference points (Alfred, 2001; Archibald, 2011; Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2014). Thus, we see for instance that these experiences provided invaluable moments through which June learnt how to "think strategically, communicate effectively and all these things that we know are important, that we learn along the way once you get here". On another level, these narratives also underscore the importance of professional relationships in building the professional identity of foreign born academics (King, 2005; Williams & Johnson, 2011), and, of dismantling while creating non-hierarchical spaces for mentoring marginalized women in academe (Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008; Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2014). An important spin off here is that of how these asymmetrical frameworks create pedagogical opportunities to mentor or to socialize early career academics and minoritized faculty in alternative and productive ways (Bertrand Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013; Davis-Maye, Davis, & Bertrand Jones, 2013; Perlow, Bethea, & Wheeler, 2014; Cobb-Roberts, Esnard, Unterreiner, Agosto, Karanxha & Wu, 2017).

Professional development and mentoring however do not typically address the intersectionality of Black women's experiences (Bertrand Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). This is particularly the case where there are sources of conflict and exclusive practices that hinge on the relative significance of race, gender, and ethnicity for instance within the broader constructions and functions of professional academic networks (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2012; Esnard, Cobb-Roberts, Agosto, Karanxha, Beck, Unterreiner, & Wu, 2015). Our interviews also spoke to the shortcomings of these professional spaces and the need for tapping into their strengths for their survival. In this case, we saw through the interviews, the ways in which these women used their cultural referents points to build on professional systems of support within academe. This

allowed these women to break through the oppressive intersections of power that existed in academe. June exemplifies this individual who takes charge of the processes around which she is being evaluated while in academe. June also spoke of the importance of “staying true to [herself], and to listen to her inner voice.” Staying true to yourself for her would extend to the considerations of the one’s values and ethical standards within considerations of possible research agendas. Like Terry, June contended that Black women must take “responsibility for their own career development”. She elaborated that part of doing this requires that these women seek information and advice from those who have gone before and to get the necessary resources that are needed to become successful. At the heart of that process therefore is a negotiation of personal (individual), social (group), and the political (power dynamics) artefacts of that space. This would imply that one “cannot sit and complain” about the structures of power that persist within his or her environment, but also to take charge of a process through which s\he can create opportunities for success. Like June, Stacy who is also up for tenure this year, continues to support efforts at diversity and social justice; particularly among vulnerable groups. Stacy insisted that part of her achievements in that regard center around her connections with her own value systems and how these inform her own engagement within academe. She also spoke of “knowing what you value, knowing what...is your core principle...knowing what standards you want to preserve...knowing your likes and dislikes...knowing what your breaking point is....and, being true to yourself”. It is here that we begin to understand therefore how these socio-cultural patterns of socializations serve as important learning moments through which Terry, as an Afro-Caribbean immigrant woman, was able to make sense of and navigate the politics of her institutional context.

Such is the also case of Martha who celebrated her success in breaching the walls of academe. As someone who has served within various administrative roles and who has been awarded full professor, she remains one of the few Afro-Caribbean women who has entered into such ranks. However, unlike Terry, Martha drew on the value of her early childhood upbringing in the Caribbean and its connection to her personal

sense of strength. While in discussing this as the basis of her success, Martha, returned to her own social biography to note the learning moments in her early childhood period, the opportunities to observe the coping mechanisms within the home, and the push from her parents to take overcome adversities. Key lessons within her narrative therefore were those of persistence, strength and determination. These were also developed to contest related concerns associated with experiences of gendered racism within the US. When these are transferred into their new environments, then the role of community and the practices that are learnt within that community becomes critical (Sutton & Chaney, 1992; Alfred, 2001). What we observe therefore are the ways in which Martha uses her cultural scripts as mentoring queues through which she has successfully navigated academe. She claimed that while you have to work within oppressive institutional and societal contexts that transcend racism, you are to be remain “encouraged and motivated” and work towards the “betterment of others”. She cautioned however of the need to “check oneself” in the process; particularly if one is “losing the focus on why [s\he] came [to academe] in the first place”.

Joy also raises a serious question over the *raison d’etre* or the reasons for being in academe, the meanings that are attached to that role, the experiences that capture these, and the implications for someone who remains outside of that role. While she continues to plan around breaking the glass ceilings that exist in academe, and, securing a tenured position, she questioned the purpose and notions of success within academe within the core. While she acknowledges the importance of mentoring and informal social networks in moving from the margins, to the center, she also questions the narrowness of thinking around notions of success within the center, and, the ways in which such conceptualizations, render invisible, the successes that take place on the margins. In particular, she reflected on notions of success and non-success, and the ways in which these are defined from the core, communicated through the core, and radiate across and through the structures and practices within academe. She stressed on the ways in which graduate training processes for instance serve to “indoctrinate” graduate students into what it means to be successful in academe. In that discussion, she highlighted the need for someone on a tenure track position, to prove one’s worth as a researcher

and educator in ways that were consistent with how these were institutionally defined and measured. She stressed on the many ways in which those processes and imaginations around academic success intensify professional struggles; particularly for Afro-Caribbean women who confront both the complexities of race, gender, class and ethnicity, and, who attempt to reframe notions of success within that space. While the key takeaway here is for the reconfiguring and reimagining of the academic space, these narratives underscore the need for safe and supportive environments that move beyond the skills required for functioning within academic contexts but also for developing strong psycho-social dispositions that aid their success in academe (Davis-Maye, Davis, & Bertrand Jones, 2013).

Discussion

There is very little research on Afro-Caribbean women faculty in the US. Much of the research focuses on challenges facing Black women generally defined (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001); a reality that negates the nuanced experiences of Afro-Caribbean women in the US, who would/could be defined as Black immigrants from the Caribbean (Alfred, 2001; Jean-Marie, 2014; Louis et al. 2017). What we see therefore is how Afro-Caribbean women are othered, raced, gendered and classed in their professional environments, and how those intersecting realities are either neglected in the literature or subsumed by the research on Black women in the academy. This type of invisibility can have a tremendous impact of women and their psychological well-being (Jean-Marie, 2009; Esnard & Cobb-Roberts, 2018). In this paper, cultural tensions muddled the challenges associated with working within a web of gendered racism that operated within US institutions of higher academe. In these cases, the lumping of these women into broader categories of Black and female, created specific stains around their own personal and professional identities. These women are faced with discrimination and marginalization based upon their identity and culture and it is the very intersections of their social identities that makes their experiences unique

and nuanced. Thus, when we look at the challenges of these Afro-Caribbean women, examinations of the data point to the salience of identity struggles, cultural incongruences, and the related tensions that emerge when these intersect. At a professional level, this burden or struggle transformed into that how they located themselves within and respond to the realities and labels associated with being part of a marginalised minority. In the case of the latter, we also noted that such an identity struggles also influenced experiences of racial tension (from both black and white colleagues) within the professional space, their own positionalities within the institution, as well as their fight for scholarly legitimacy. Thus, the very institutions that they have been recruited for these positions, is the place where their very intellect and contributions are challenged. The core issues here was that of how these women were pressured to either succumb to being “African American/Black” or reject being “Black” to emphasize their cultural heritage; a reactive pressure that places them in a vulnerable state. By so doing, this work illuminates the discourses on diversity in particular race, ethnicity, culture, geo-spaces and various other aspects of identity within higher education.

However, what is less known is how they respond to this climate of marginalization. As such, participants were not only subjected to racial stereotypes but actively used of cultural markers to demarcate their unique ethnic identities. This exploratory study examined the experiences of five Afro-Caribbean women who sought to thrive in an environment that was fraught with racism, sexism, and identity politics. Their lived experiences provide a significant commentary on the challenges and opportunities of being an Afro-Caribbean woman in the US context of higher education. In many ways, participants saw this as a fluid, dynamic and complex struggle that morphed overtime. In other words, we noted that while they all recognize themselves as Afro-Caribbean, they also acknowledged the complex ways in which their identities intersect, shift and take on a different significance or emphasis based on contexts, personal or professional standpoint, career trajectory or type of institution, that is research versus teaching. The stories of these women challenge us to contextualize and to appreciate the persistent struggles of Black Caribbean women in the academy as they attempt to circumvent the inherent processes that are designed to impede their progress, their breach. The use

of their voice provides a vehicle, mechanism through which these women can openly counter the norms of mainstream society, while reconstructing their own realities that render the invisible visible. Albeit to different degrees, participants acknowledged the ways in which the cultural messages of resilience and hard work differently framed broader perceptions of racism and responses of Black academics from the Caribbean region. It is this sense of historicity and cultural specificity that not only generates a sense of critical consciousness and identity (both personally and professionally), but that also make possible their attempts to strategically deconstruct and breach the walls of academe. When, how and to what extent they successfully breach that space become that of their academic position within the university, whether or not they are tenured, length of time there, professional network that they tap into or sense of self that they adopt. Often, the latter provided safe spaces wherein they were able to retreat, return and in some cases, resist the marginalisation that they faced.

These women have to speak back to being marginalized as Black women and Afro Caribbean within the ivory tower. They are doubly bound to race/color in a way that forces them to re-identify as such in a middle space, a space of liminality (Collins, 2000; Alfred, 2001). It is this space, the acknowledgement of difference and struggle that we centre their stories to explicate the unique perspective of Afro-Caribbean women and the stories of success and survival in academe (Esnard & Cobb-Roberts, 2018). This is particularly important for how we begin to disrupt socially constituted notion of difference. In some ways, we see these cultural navigations of institutional oppression as a way of speaking back to dominant conceptualizations of race and ethnicity in the United States (Butterfield, 2004). However, such findings are also critical to how we begin to strategize or make critical interventions around the professional development of immigrant groups, such as these Afro-Caribbean women who are included within the study. On a basic level, the call is for expanding and/or reimagining career development programs within institutions of higher education that promote issues of diversity and inclusion (Alfred, 2001; Bass & Faircloth, 2011). In such cases, a suggestion is for the use of multicultural professional development

programmes for early career academics (Stanley, 2010) and for multicultural counselling framework to address the challenges around identity development and sustenance for Afro-Caribbean migrants (Richardson, Bethea, Hayling, & Williamson-Taylor, 2010). In advancing the legacies of Black women (Grant, 2012) therefore, these findings strengthen the need for further considerations of how Black leaders promote the inclusion of tenure earning Black women in academe (Davis & Bertrand Jones, 2011; Davis-Maye, Davis, & Bertrand Jones, 2013).

Conclusion

Social justice requires a reorganization of wealth, privilege, power and advantage in a broader context. These women, through their narratives have introduced their social justice agenda and activism, by operationalizing their individual experiences with disadvantage, lack of privilege, to one where their work and presence benefit the entire community. This group of women, through community (personal and professional), tenacity, grit and strategic alliances have demonstrated their ability to not only carve out a space but to dismantle their invisibility within the academy. They have exposed the limited ways in which they are viewed (identity) and expected to engage professionally and align politically. Through their stories we learn how Black immigrants shun the category of being silent and docile and reject being forced into a racial/ethnic dynamic that would require them to become solely “Black” and not allow the space for them to be Afro-Caribbean, or to self-identify. This work provides a lesson for others that are at the margins by force or choice. These Afro-Caribbean women chose to push back against all forms of hegemony and “isms” and made it clear that their presence and work was not to be ignored or reimagined through unrealistic and unwanted lenses. A rejection of an unwanted lens replaced with corrective vision provides higher education with a foundation of authentic displays of difference. Where difference is unique, valued and appreciated.

Highlighting the voices and experiences of Afro Caribbean women in academe opens the door for other marginalized groups to find their space and connection to a broader network. It is through the voices of these women that we can begin to understand the impact their identity

has on them personally and professionally. That impact, visibility, then can ameliorate the value the university places on all faculty members and by encouraging its constituent population to “see” all of their faculty members as integral members of the academy. An initial benefit is this study adds to literature by making a seemingly invisible population visible. A large part of the visibility of these women is exhibited through their adherence to their cultural scripts and patterns for adaptation beyond their native contexts. In spite of the challenges associated with claiming their Afro Caribbean culture, these women opted to remain true to their identity. They engaged in work that was important to them and sought out strategic alliances within the academy. In the efforts to connect with allies they were purposeful in those interactions and surveyed their landscapes. In some instances, they found allies in African American women and in other cases they were connected to a Caribbean group. In each space these women understood the dynamics and interfaced accordingly without feeling circumspect. This required them to know their audience and with whom they were interacting, which meant they could be their authentic selves without judgement and as such their visibility and support increased.

More is also needed on the culturally induced scripts, practices, and meaningful ways in which these provide important pedagogies of Afro-Caribbean women faculty. More research is required to explain the variability that exists for Afro-Caribbean women in public US institutions, across race, ethnicity, gender and other forms of identity and the roles these identities play within the halls of academe and structures of power within. Findings from this study can inform Universities and Colleges on how to create inclusive cultures/environments for these women, by incorporating culturally specific strategies and professional interventions to sustain both an authentic sense of self at the personal level and professional success for these women in academe. Afro Caribbean women in higher education bring to bear a unique perspective and as such should be able to contribute without feeling as though they must morph into an idealized notion of being in this space as defined by the power structure. In addition to entering a dialogue on how these Afro-Caribbean women have created an inclusive space for themselves within their departments,

academic colleges and within the larger university, it's a lesson in the tenets of social justice.

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229 *Esnard & Cobb-Roberts – Afro-Caribbean Immigrant Women*

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Mirando Hacia Afuera: la Interrupción de la Trayectoria Educativa de Varones Adolescentes desde la Perspectiva de Género.

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Mirando hacia Afuera: la Interrupción de la Trayectoria Educativa de Varones Adolescentes desde la Perspectiva de Género

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Abstract

La interrupción de las trayectorias educativas de los adolescentes uruguayos es un tema de preocupación nacional por los efectos negativos que tiene en sus trayectorias vitales. La literatura nacional e internacional muestra que estas interrupciones son más frecuentes en varones que en mujeres, la utilización de la perspectiva de género contribuye a explicar esta brecha. Este artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación cuyo objetivo fue indagar la relación entre la construcción subjetiva de masculinidad y las trayectorias y percepciones educativas de adolescentes varones residentes de Montevideo. Se trató de un estudio cualitativo, con una muestra teórica cuyo criterio de selección combinó características de homogeneidad (varones, de 15 a 17 años, residentes de Montevideo, que hubiesen interrumpido su trayectoria escolar al menos hace un año) con criterios de heterogeneidad (zonas con mejores indicadores educativos y nivel socioeconómico y zonas con características opuestas). Se hicieron 29 entrevistas semiestructuradas, del análisis de estas se concluye que los varones se auto perciben con menores posibilidades para completar su trayectoria educativa debido a características propias de su género, especialmente en tres áreas: el vínculo familiar, su visión y vínculo con el sistema educativo y la relación de los varones con el consumo de sustancia.

Keywords: trayectorias educativas, secundaria, varones, género, masculinidad

Looking Outward: the Interruption of the Educational Trajectory of Adolescent Boys from a Gender Perspective

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Resumen

The interruption of the educational trajectories of Uruguayan adolescents is a matter of national concern because of the negative effects it has on their life trajectories. The national and international literature shows that these interruptions are more frequent in men than in women; the use of the gender perspective contributes to explain this gap. This article presents the results of an investigation whose objective was to investigate the relationship between the subjective construction of masculinity and the educational trajectories and perceptions of male adolescents living in Montevideo. It was a qualitative study, with a theoretical sample whose selection criteria combined characteristics of homogeneity (males, aged 15 to 17, residents of Montevideo, who would have interrupted their schooling at least one year ago) with criteria of heterogeneity (areas with better educational indicators and socioeconomic level and areas with opposite characteristics). Twenty-nine semi-structured interviews were conducted; the analysis of these shows that men perceive themselves as having fewer possibilities to complete their educational trajectory due to the characteristics of their gender, especially in three areas: the family bond, their vision and link with the educational system, and the relationship of men with substance consumption.

Keywords: educational trajectories, secondary, boys, gender, masculinity

El proyecto “Los varones y la escuela. La exclusión escolar en secundaria desde una perspectiva de género y masculinidad” indagó acerca de la relación entre la construcción subjetiva de masculinidad y las trayectorias y percepciones educativas de adolescentes varones residentes de Montevideo urbano. Fue financiado por el programa de iniciación a la investigación de CSIC y ejecutado entre los años 2014 y 2017.

Motivó el proyecto el hecho de que, en los últimos años, ha sido creciente la atención que se ha prestado a la educación en el Uruguay. Investigaciones académicas, informes de la sociedad civil organizada, de sindicatos vinculados a la enseñanza, de Asambleas Técnico-Docentes e incluso pronunciamientos y políticas gubernamentales han versado sobre diferentes aspectos del sistema educativo.

Dos de las principales motivaciones para esta producción de discurso son: a) la coincidencia acerca de la importancia fundamental que tiene este sector para el desarrollo social y económico del país y; b) la visualización de persistentes problemas del sistema que obstaculizan el cumplimiento de las funciones sociales que se le atribuyen a la educación. En el marco de la elaboración de la Estrategia para la Infancia y Adolescencia (2010 – 2030) se señalaron tres desafíos principales que el sistema educativo debe afrontar: 1) la ampliación de la cobertura de las escuelas de tiempo completo (en virtud de su influencia positiva en la disminución de las tasas de repetición y el éxito escolar de sus estudiantes en general); 2) la inequidad en el logro de la adquisición de competencias y aprendizajes (evidenciada a través de los resultados de las pruebas PISA) y; 3) la disminución de la deserción escolar en la enseñanza media (De Armas, 2008).

Si bien en Uruguay se constatan importantes logros en cuanto a la universalización de la educación primaria, también se pueden observar graves deficiencias respecto de la permanencia de las/os jóvenes en la educación media.

El análisis de los datos de la encuesta de hogares ampliada (ENHA – INE, 2006) muestra que, dentro de la población en edad de cursar secundaria (adolescentes de entre 12 y 17 años), sólo el 70 % de las mujeres y el 58, 6 % de los varones asisten sin rezago a la educación media. Cuando se analiza la trayectoria escolar a los 20 años, se corrobora

que sólo el 25,3 % de los varones y el 38,4 % de las mujeres han completado los 12 años de estudio esperables para esta etapa del ciclo vital. (Katzman y Rodríguez, 2007)

Diversos estudios han indagado acerca de las causas de la exclusión de los jóvenes del sistema educativo. En un completo estado del arte en la materia, Aristimuño (2009) agrupa los antecedentes en la materia en dos conjuntos de estudios:

- a. Los que analizan especialmente el ordenamiento institucional del sistema y sus elementos estructurales. Los trabajos de Cardozo (2008) y Fernández (2009) pueden ubicarse aquí.
- b. Los que hacen foco principalmente en las condiciones de los estudiantes (coyunturales y subjetivas). Estos estudios abordan uno o varios aspectos del problema, analizando variables de contexto (como la situación socioeconómica de los estudiantes, clima educativo familiar, ubicación del centro de estudios), subjetivas (propensión a abandonar los estudios, motivación de los estudiantes) y de trayectoria vital (repetición en primaria, relación con el mundo laboral). A este segundo grupo corresponden, por ejemplo, los trabajos de De Armas (2008), ANEP/MESyFOD (2000) y ANEP/TEMS (2003).

Más recientemente, la misma autora (Aristimuño, 2017) repetía el diagnóstico, 8 años después del primer trabajo citado. Sobre el “abandono” (término que utiliza para referirse a la interrupción de la trayectoria educativa), comentaba: “En Uruguay es un problema creciente a pesar de la escala del sistema educativo: 180.000 estudiantes en toda la EMB es una cifra pequeña en el marco de los países de la región” (p. 53).

Los resultados de estos estudios previos y el análisis de los datos permiten hacer algunas afirmaciones acerca del fenómeno de la exclusión escolar en la enseñanza media en Uruguay. Es posible afirmar que no se trata de un fenómeno nuevo ni coyuntural. Desde hace más de una década el tema de la exclusión escolar en secundaria ha sido objeto de indagaciones. Por otro lado, Katzman y Rodríguez señalan que los relativamente bajos porcentajes de la población de 25 a 59 años con primaria incompleta ubicaban a Uruguay en tercer lugar entre el pequeño grupo de países que son considerados pioneros en la educación en América Latina. Sin embargo, en 2005 se ubicaba en el décimo lugar de la

región en cuanto a la población del mismo grupo de edad con más de 13 años de educación. Cuando se comparan los logros uruguayos con los de aquellos países con quienes compartió en el pasado el liderazgo educativo regional, se evidencia que el país ha quedado muy rezagado en los niveles altos de la educación (2007, p. 25). En el período post dictadura Uruguay ha pasado por situaciones de expansión y crisis económica, por índices mínimos y máximos históricos de desempleo, por gobiernos de todos los partidos y por reformas educativas de diversos alcances. Ninguna de estas variables de contexto ha afectado decidida y sostenidamente en las estadísticas de exclusión en la enseñanza media.

A partir de los datos también se puede concluir que, si bien la exclusión escolar tiene mayor impacto en los jóvenes que viven en situación de pobreza, no es un problema exclusivo de este sector. En el análisis de la Encuesta Continua de Hogares Ampliada (ENHA) realizado por Katzman y Rodríguez (2007) se observa que, si bien un joven en situación de pobreza tiene 5 veces menos posibilidades de haber completado secundaria a los 20 años que uno no pobre, apenas un 40 % de estos últimos logran completarla a esa edad.

La tercera apreciación también se desprende del análisis de las cifras de exclusión desagregadas por sexo y constituye el centro de atención de este proyecto de investigación. La exclusión escolar en Uruguay afecta de forma claramente diferenciada a mujeres y varones.

Si se analizan los datos de la ENHA antes mencionada, existe una notable brecha entre la cantidad de mujeres y varones que, a los 20 años, han completado los seis años de secundaria. En efecto, cualquiera sea la condición económica y lugar de residencia, las mujeres tienen más posibilidades de completar este ciclo que los varones de su misma condición.

Congruente con estos datos, la Encuesta Nacional de Juventud (MIDES, 2014), al porcentaje de jóvenes mayores de 18 años que finalizaron secundaria por sexo establece que sólo el 53 % de las mujeres y el 39,4 % de los varones logra este objetivo. Una vez más se aprecia una brecha entre varones y mujeres que acompaña, según la encuesta, a todos los clivajes analizados en el capítulo educación (p. 20).

No se trata de una situación exclusivamente uruguaya. En los países latinoamericanos más urbanizados (CEPAL, 2003), así como en los países

de la OCDE, la tendencia a que las mujeres tengan mayores logros educativos se ha vuelto una constante (aunque con matices según cada realidad). En el informe de la OCDE de 2006 se observa que los porcentajes de varones y mujeres que completaron la educación media superior en el tiempo previsto son un 77 y 86 respectivamente. Lo interesante de este punto es que, si bien se ha comenzado a investigar por qué esta situación se repite, aún resulta un campo de indagación poco explorado.

Con respecto al sexo del estudiante, aunque todavía no se han desarrollado teorías satisfactorias para explicar el fenómeno, lo cierto es que en los países latinoamericanos más desarrollados se observa que los logros educativos de las mujeres jóvenes son superiores a los de los hombres jóvenes. Como se verá, esas diferencias son particularmente marcadas en el caso uruguayo.

(Katzman y Rodríguez, 2007, p. 31)

La repetida constatación estadística de la brecha entre varones y mujeres que completan secundaria debería ser una señal para detenerse a investigar los por qué. Ante esta evidencia el estudio se planteó como objetivo general indagar acerca de la relación entre la construcción subjetiva de masculinidad y las trayectorias y percepciones educativas de adolescentes varones residentes de Montevideo urbano. Se plantearon también 3 objetivos específicos: a) Explorar los significados asociados al ser varón y su relación con el modelo hegemónico de masculinidad en los adolescentes; b) Establecer posibles relaciones entre las distintas maneras de vivir la masculinidad de los adolescentes con sus formas de concebir la educación y sus vivencias en el sistema educativo y; c) Contrastar las percepciones y opiniones de los adolescentes con las consideraciones de los docentes respecto a las trayectorias educativas de los varones en la educación media. En el presente artículo se presentan los resultados de los dos primeros objetivos específicos, sin incluir la mirada de los docentes.

Método

Respecto al tipo de estudio se trató de un trabajo exploratorio que indagó acerca de la relación entre la construcción subjetiva de la masculinidad y

las percepciones y vivencias de los jóvenes varones acerca de la educación. En tanto exploratorio buscó acercar elementos conceptuales previamente desarrollados a una realidad concreta para establecer la pertinencia y posibilidades de abordajes más profundos y específicos. Para la consecución de los objetivos se propuso una metodología de carácter cualitativo. Al decir de Denzin y Lincoln (2012):

La investigación cualitativa es una actividad localizada en un cierto lugar y tiempo que sitúa al observador en el mundo. Consiste en una serie de prácticas interpretativas y materiales que hacen al mundo visible. Estas prácticas transforman el mundo. Convierten al mundo en una serie de representaciones, incluyendo notas de campo, entrevistas, conversaciones, fotografías, grabaciones, y memorándums personales. (p. 3)

En este estudio la intención fue observar cómo es puesto en juego el modelo de masculinidad hegemónica por parte de los adolescentes y qué implicaciones tiene en sus trayectorias educativas. De ahí la pertinencia de este tipo de análisis para los objetivos propuestos.

Se investigó a nivel micro, sin pretender abarcar el campo de la masculinidad y la exclusión escolar en su globalidad. Se buscó generar información de relevancia teórica y comprender los procesos subjetivos a partir de un número limitado de casos: “los hallazgos generados en estudios cualitativos dan cuenta de procesos y relaciones sociales; permiten aproximarse a la comprensión del universo de significados que determinados acontecimientos tienen o generan en las personas; contribuyen a la reconstrucción del contexto social histórico y cultural donde adquieran sentido los datos” (López, 2006, p.15).

El proyecto correspondió a un diseño flexible de investigación cualitativa. Se definió una muestra teórica con criterios de homogeneidad (adolescentes, varones, de 15 a 17 años, que hubiesen interrumpido su trayectoria educativa hacía más de un año) y un criterio de heterogeneidad. La heterogeneidad tomo en cuenta la fuerte correlación entre residencia y escolaridad (Informe ENIA “Sustentabilidad Social”, De Armas 2008). Por ese motivo se entrevistó a adolescentes residentes de barrios que representan dos extremos de la realidad educativa de Montevideo: Casabó, Casavalle y Gruta de Lourdes (adolescentes residentes de la periferia [RP], con los peores indicadores de rendimiento

y terminalidad) y Pocitos, Punta Carretas y Malvín (adolescentes residentes de la costa [RC], con los mejores indicadores de rendimiento y terminalidad). Si bien el proyecto original preveía 20 entrevistas en total, finalmente se hicieron 15 a RP y 14 a RC, completando 29 entrevistas.

La recolección de la información se realizó mediante entrevistas en profundidad semiestructuradas. En el caso del grupo de residentes de la periferia, todos los entrevistados asistían a Liceos públicos antes de la interrupción de sus trayectorias educativas. Para acceder a los adolescentes se apeló a establecer contacto con programas socioeducativos, anclados en los barrios mencionados en el estudio de De Armas (2008). Los programas con los que se generaron contactos fueron: Jóvenes en Red, Centros Educativos de Capacitación y Producción (CECAP) y Centros Educativos Comunitarios (CEC). En el caso de los adolescentes de la costa hubo entrevistados que asistían a Liceos públicos y otros a privados previo a la interrupción de sus trayectorias educativas. Para acceder a ellos se apeló a la difusión del proyecto en redes sociales (Facebook y Twitter). Especialmente Facebook fue una vía para publicar convocatorias -en muros de grupos cerrados sobre temas de interés general para los adolescentes- lo que facilitó una difusión masiva. Asimismo, en ocasiones, integrantes del equipo de investigación iban a sitios como Punta Carretas Shopping, Montevideo Shopping y plazas de los barrios seleccionados (lugares donde se concentran adolescentes) y se les presentaba el proyecto oralmente pidiéndoles su colaboración en caso de que conocieran a alguien que cumpliera con las características para ser entrevistado.

Para el análisis de los datos se utilizó la codificación, apoyada en el software AtlasT. Como mencionan Ryan y Bernard (2000):

La codificación es el corazón y el alma del análisis de todo el texto. La codificación obliga al investigador a hacer juicios sobre el significado de los bloques de texto contiguos. Las tareas fundamentales asociadas con la codificación son el muestreo, la identificación de temas, la creación de libros de códigos, el marcado de textos, la construcción de modelos (relaciones entre códigos) y la comprobación de estos modelos con datos empíricos. A continuación describimos cada una de las tareas. (Traducción propia del original en inglés, p. 780).

Resultados y discusión

A partir de la codificación surgen 4 categorías de análisis de las cuales, por razones de espacio, sólo se presentarán 3. Conviene hacer algunas precisiones acerca de cómo deben ser leídos los resultados. El proyecto no buscaba entender los motivos por los cuáles los adolescentes interrumpen sus trayectorias educativas, sino identificar diferencias entre varones y mujeres que permitan comprender la brecha de género existente. En ese sentido, cuando aparece, por ejemplo, el “uso de sustancias” como categoría de análisis con un resultado como “El consumo de sustancias (sobre todo alcohol y marihuana) es visto como una competencia frente al liceo”, no quiere decir que todos los entrevistados identifiquen como una causa principal de la interrupción de la trayectoria escolar esta situación (si lo es para algunos). Lo que si se quiere afirmar es que, en general, perciben y declaran (y como se verá más adelante es consistente con las estadísticas), que este factor facilita la interrupción y los afecta más a ellos que a las mujeres, porque suelen tener un consumo más alto.

En el mismo sentido, en la categoría “Vínculo con la familia y mercado de empleo”, en general los entrevistados coinciden en que es más importante para las mujeres completar el liceo a la hora de conseguir un trabajo. Pero eso significa que una razón principal para dejar el liceo de los varones sea que no es importante en términos de empleo futuro. Al contrario, la inmensa mayoría señaló que el liceo mejora sus propias perspectivas de futuro, pero son afectados por esa situación diferente que las mujeres. Se presenta a continuación un análisis de los datos obtenidos.

Vínculo con la familia y mercado de empleo

La preocupación general por la universalización del egreso en la escuela secundaria (objetivo aún muy lejano para los países de América Latina), es habitualmente explicada por la fuerte relación que hay entre los ingresos y los niveles de escolarización. En 2006 la CEPAL señalaba:

“Los ingresos laborales, particularmente los salarios, constituyen la principal fuente de ingresos de los hogares y, por lo tanto, son un elemento preponderante en la configuración de la desigualdad

distributiva en la región. Entre los factores que determinan el nivel de los salarios, la educación sigue siendo el más importante.” (p. 97)

Como se mencionó antes, esta idea es compartida por los entrevistados, y por eso se señala en los resultados que perciben el liceo como un medio para conseguir mejores trabajos en el futuro, “ser alguien en la vida” y poder hacer otros cursos de su interés en otras instituciones, como UTU.

Llega un momento que dicen: “pah como gilié estando en el Liceo que lo dejé y no lo hice, me jodí yo y mirá fulano de tal ahora, tremendo trabajo, tremenda camioneta tiene y yo acá trabajando en un supermercado. (Sujeto A RP)

La que sí es porque el estudio para mí es importante porque en algún momento voy a tener que conseguir algún trabajo y eso me va a servir, algo que quiera estudiar y de ahí partir a que me vaya bien para profundizar. (Sujeto 9 RC)

En 2001, Rumberger publica un artículo que se pregunta acerca del porqué de la interrupción de los estudios de los adolescentes en Estados Unidos, repasando algunas de sus principales teorías. En el artículo discute dos posibilidades de interpretación de esta correlación. Basado en la teoría del Capital Humano, puede entenderse que son los padres quienes en función de sus preferencias sus posibilidades, deciden cuántos recursos y durante cuánto tiempo invierten en la educación de los hijos, afectando la disposición y habilidades cognitivas de sus hijos. La segunda interpretación, basada en los argumentos de Coleman (1988), sostiene que este argumento basado sólo en el capital humano y financiero de los padres es insuficiente, y adiciona las relaciones de los padres e hijos, los vínculos sociales de la familia y las interacciones con las escuelas. Rumberger (2001, p. 15) comenta:

Los estudios empíricos han encontrado que los estudiantes cuyos padres controlan y regulan las actividades de sus hijos, proporcionan apoyo emocional, fomentan la toma de decisiones independientes (conocidos como estilo de crianza de autoridad), y en general, se involucran más en su escolarización, son menos propensos a abandonar la escuela.

Como se señala en los resultados, el principal argumento que identifican como desencadenante de la interrupción es la búsqueda de interacciones entre pares fuera de los espacios del liceo asociados al aburrimiento.”

Porque son vagos. No hacen nada en la clase, se empiezan a aburrir y empiezan a faltar (...) Pasan en la calle, pasan callejeando (...) Se juntan con los amigos, fuman (Sujeto F RP)

Porque capaz que el varón a esta edad está más para la joda, todavía no piensa en su futuro, después, más adelante se va a dar cuenta que no es así pero ta, en vez de estudiar se van a salir, a jugar, algo de eso. (Sujeto 12 RC)

No obstante, mencionan la presión familiar para continuar estudiando.

Me dieron el pase de la Escuela y mi madre quería que estudiara, me dijeron que teniendo secundaria hecha o sea tenés un trabajo, o sea tenés trabajo. En la mayoría de los trabajos te piden tener secundaria terminada, toda completa hasta 6to. (Sujeto A RP)

Porque tengo que hacer el Liceo por obligación. ¿Quién te obligaba? Mi madre (Sujeto D RP)

Lo que se desprende de las entrevistas no es la falta de presión familiar ni la no visualización de la importancia del liceo, sino la ineficacia de esa presión, quizá por el tipo de relaciones familiares que se establecen (eso no se desprende directamente del análisis, pero es una hipótesis plausible desde la perspectiva de Rumberger (2001).

Por otra parte, del análisis de las entrevistas adolescentes se desprende otra idea, que aporta a los efectos de comprender las brechas en la interrupción de las trayectorias educativas: consideran que la presión familiar es más efectiva en el caso de las mujeres.

Yo creo que las que más estudian son las mujeres, como que los hombres cuando están en la casa les dan poca bola a los padres ¿entendés? Es como que les importa menos lo que les dicen los padres, en cambio la mujer no es tan rebelde. (Sujeto 7 RC)

A veces las mujeres por las madres y los padres. Las mujeres como que son más de entender a los padres que los hombres...” “Si, a las mujeres le insisten más los padres que a los hombres.” “Los hombres no dan corte...” (Sujeto B RP)

En un modelo de análisis más centrado en el capital social, podría asociarse al horizonte educativo de la familia en general, operando de la siguiente manera. Según Buchmann et al (2008, p. 20) “Algunos estudiosos sostienen que el modelado de roles es específico del sexo, de tal manera que las niñas se parecen más a sus madres y los niños más a

sus padres a medida que desarrollan sus aspiraciones educativas y ocupacionales”. En este sentido, las opiniones de las madres sobre el valor de seguir estudiando operan con mayor fuerza sobre las mujeres que los varones. Asimismo, el alto número de familias con jefatura femenina generaría una mayor predisposición de los varones a ignorar el mandato familiar. Esta perspectiva parece ser útil para el análisis de estas entrevistas.

Visión y vínculo con los centros de enseñanza

La “vagancia”, el “gusto por la joda”, el “consumo de sustancias”, son las ideas más repetidas cuando se interroga a los varones acerca de por qué interrumpen sus trayectorias más que las mujeres. Es importante aclarar que la pauta de entrevista no les informaba a los adolescentes que hay una brecha de género. Se los interrogaba si les parecía que dejaban el liceo más varones y mujeres y por qué. Salvo en dos entrevistas, que contestaron por igual, todos contestaron que interrumpen su trayectoria más los varones. Las respuestas al por qué eran en su inmensa mayoría de este estilo:

(...) los varones ahora en la juventud de ahora son muy vagos
(Sujeto A RP)

(...) hay algunos que se ponen a fumar, se enganchan con la joda y no quieren saber nada con la Escuela ni los estudios (Sujeto E RP)

(...) a veces por problemas, a veces porque quieren estar ahí, con los amigos, sin hacer nada (..) A los varones les llama la atención la joda
(Sujeto 10 RC)

Por otra parte, las características que suelen identificar en los estudiantes que son exitosos se asocian a lo construido socialmente como “lo femenino”. Ante la pregunta de qué estudiantes eran exitosos se encontraban respuestas como esta:

Empecemos por los super dotados, digamos que la mayoría son mujeres, son las que siempre tienen buenas notas, porque los profesores cuando miran a un pibe no lo miran como al santo, lo miran como diciendo este por ahí es tremendo pillo y me va a hacer la clase imposible durante todo el año, pero sí, las mujeres son la mayoría. (Sujeto 3 RC)

Le va bien a las mujeres, ellas son exitosas (...) Los hombres se aburren o algo y ya dejan... no siguen... las mujeres como que la piensan más que los hombres. Los hombres, corte que van y ya no le gusto y ya no van más, las mujeres como que van y corte que... no se... como explicar... pero... como que le interesa un poco más que a los hombres. (Sujeto B RP)

Parry (2004), encuentra que el imaginario construido por la sociedad caribeña en general, y las instituciones escolares especialmente, de que el éxito escolar es un atributo femenino explica el fenómeno. Este estereotipo colectivo (sostenido por varones y mujeres) podría estar contribuyendo al fracaso escolar de los niños. Encontró que se asocia el éxito académico con lo blando, lo afeminado, características que los adolescentes podrían querer evitar para ser considerados verdaderos hombres. Los propios varones no quieren cumplir con los requisitos del “buen alumno” porque se asocia a lo “looser”, lo “nerd”, “lo feo”, característica que quitarían prestigio a los varones. Esto aparece en las entrevistas de los adolescentes, incluso con las mismas palabras que el estudio citado. Las respuestas a la pregunta de cuáles eran los estudiantes estudiosos iban por ese lado.

Los losers (risas), son los feos, nunca falta el maricón estudioso, las mujeres que su vida es solo el estudio y eso, a ver, si tenes un poco de vida no perdés tu tiempo con los libros (Sujeto 1 RC)

Yo que sé, los que tienen un horario para cada cosa, tienen una rutina organizada, tienen horas de sueño, no pasan tanto en las redes sociales ponele. Son los más feos (risas) y los nerds. (Sujeto 8 RC)

Por otro lado, Lomas (2007) comenta lo siguiente:

El patio (y el aula y la escuela en su conjunto) se convierten así en lo que Pierre Bourdieu (1982) denominaba un mercado simbólico de intercambios, en el que la moneda con mayor valor de cambio es el prestigio que se conquista imitando los estereotipos de la masculinidad dominante y ejerciendo el poder y la opresión contra las chicas y contra los chicos que no tengan el capital simbólico que se obtiene a través de la adhesión inquebrantable a los arquetipos viriles de la masculinidad tradicional.

Sostener una trayectoria escolar desde esta lógica supone una posibilidad de fracaso mayor y una tendencia de las instituciones educativas a

expulsar esta clase de comportamientos. La rebeldía, el desafío a la autoridad, claves en la demostración de masculinidad, operan enfrentando a los varones con las instituciones educativas.

Los directores, los que están al mando, siempre creen que son más o que pueden hacer más cosas que nosotros y no se generalmente se creen que somos estúpidos. ¿Por qué pensás que se da eso? Por el simple hecho de que yo soy repetidor, a mí siempre me tienen como alguien que está un poco atrás, pero en realidad no tiene nada que ver, yo repetí por motivos personales y va en mí no va en ellos y ta. (Sujeto 3 RC)

(P) ¿Qué no te dejaban hacer? Nada. (P) ¿Qué es nada? Nada, no me dejaban hacer nada, adentro de la clase no me dejaban, ¿sabes lo qué? Ni moverme. (P) ¿Cómo querían los profes que vos estuvieras en la clase? Como un santo! (P) ¿Cómo es “como un santo”? ¡Yo que sé! Todo pacífico, todo así, ¡¡todo sentado en el banquito quédate quietito y no!! (Sujeto L RP)

La cuestión de la disciplina se indagaba también en una pregunta acerca de cómo se hacían respetar en el liceo. En esta pregunta si se observan distancias claras entre los dos grupos de varones. En los discursos de los adolescentes aparece que, para ser respetados en el liceo, su actitud tiene que ser sobria (ser sociable pero no dar mucha confianza), ir a hacer “lo que se tiene que hacer”, ser buen compañero, respetar a los demás, quererse a sí mismo y “tener personalidad”. No obstante, los discursos varían en función de los estratos socioeconómicos pues, los varones de contextos descendidos ponen foco en la necesidad de “hacerse respetar”, “responder seco”, “no dejarse meter ninguna”, no dejar “que te agarren de bobo”.

Ser serio, responder medio seco y pum, sino ya sabés como es, hay que pelear porque si hoy no peleas sabés lo que... Si te dejás pegar después te agarran y pah. (Sujeto E RP)

No sé, yo los respeto y ellos me respetan. ¿Y si eso no funcionaba? Van a tener que aprender por las malas ¿Qué es aprender por las malas? Pelear. (Sujeto C RP)

Yo iba light, iba tranqui, vas bien, o sea, yo que sé, si no los descansas, no te descansas, si vos los respetas, ellos te respetan. Hay

veces que no te respetan y bueno, ta, yo que se... ahí surge la violencia. (Sujeto L RP)

Esta es una de las cuestiones donde la intersección género y clase marca más la diferencia. En los residentes de la costa las respuestas iban en otros sentidos, hablan de “ser honestos”, “no ser falsos”, “dejar clara tu personalidad”, “dignidad” y “valorarse a sí mismos”.

Para empezar, quererte a vos mismo, eso es lo principal y después decir lo que pensás, ser sincero, creo que ya está, va en eso. ¿Y en el Liceo valen las mismas cosas para hacerte respetar o cambia un poco el panorama? En el Liceo es ir y hacer lo que tenés que hacer y no joder a nadie, si vos no vas a molestar no te van a molestar y directamente no hacer nada, no es que te pasen por arriba pero estar tranquilo. (Sujeto 8 RC)

Para hacerse respetar yo creo que lo principal es ser buen compañero, buena persona, compartir las cosas, no ser falso, la verdad que no sé, pero yo me siento bastante respetado con la gente porque soy buena persona, pienso en todo el mundo y creo que más que nada me respetan por eso, por los valores que uno tiene y creo que tenés que tener valores para que te respeten en cualquier lado (Sujeto 2 RC)

No obstante, a pesar de las diferencias en lo que respecta a lo que se entiende por hacerse respetar de acuerdo con el lugar de residencia, lo que menciona Lomas (2007) aparece en varios otros puntos en este mismo apartado. Los propios varones se identifican a sí mismo como transgresores de las normas escolares más que las mujeres e incluso dimensionan como eso puede conspirar contra su propia carrera escolar. Finalmente, la gran mayoría de los entrevistados considera que el liceo es aburrido y asocian eso con un progresivo ausentismo que termina en la interrupción de la carrera escolar. Sin embargo, esta noción se complementa con otra, la declaración acerca de lo más disfrutable de la secundaria: todos los entrevistados destacan que lo más placentero de ir al liceo era la posibilidad de relacionarse con sus pares generar nuevas amistades, hacer deportes y la posibilidad de conectarse a las redes sociales. Los espacios como el patio o los alrededores del liceo son los más elogiados y los recreos y horas libres son sus momentos destacados.

Las respuestas a que era lo que más les gustaba del liceo tienen como hilo común este concepto:

Lo que más me gustaba era para ver a mis amigos y socializar
(Sujeto 2 RC)

Y no sé, el recreo, por juntarme con mis compañeros, ir pa todos
lados, quedarnos sentados en un banco. (Sujeto C RP)

Este punto se comprende mejor, a los efectos de este estudio, si se los asocia a las ideas que surgen en la anterior categoría y en este mismo apartado. Probablemente, si se entrevistara a las mujeres que interrumpieron sus trayectorias educativas, también mencionarían el aburrimiento como una motivación para abandonar, y los espacios de socialización como lo más disfrutable. No obstante, como se vio en el apartado anterior tienen más presión para continuar, y como se mostró en este, más condiciones favorables para tolerar mejor las exigencias escolares. Esto puede ayudar a comprender la brecha a su favor en la continuidad de los estudios. En el mismo sentido, De Melo, Failache y Machado (2015) comentan:

En lo que refiere a las razones para el abandono, surgen como principales motivos las dificultades en el aprendizaje y el interés por aprender otras cosas. Este patrón es más marcado en el caso de los varones. (p. 33)

Masculinidad, educación y consumo de sustancias

Es importante aclarar una cuestión para presentar este punto: no se desprende de las entrevistas que el consumo de sustancias sea una causa principal de la interrupción de las trayectorias educativas. Si se observa, en las declaraciones de los adolescentes, que se trata de un facilitador para esa decisión que afecta más a los varones que a las mujeres. En la entrevista que se les hizo a los adolescentes, se les mencionaban ciertas acciones y se les preguntaba, en una escala del 1 al 5, si determinadas acciones eran propias de los varones o no. Esa escala servía como punto de partida para que ampliaran sus argumentos. Una de las acciones propuestas era “varón consumiendo alcohol y otro fumando marihuana”. Las reacciones frente a este punto fueron casi unánimes, y llevaron a comentarios como los que se transcriben a continuación:

Pasa que los varones lo usan como una escapatoria del estudio, es una excusa al estudio, tipo me fumo ese porro y quedo re loco y no entro a clase, entonces se vuelve común ver adolescentes consumiendo en la calle, pasa que termina en vicio y es un pase libre a faltar a cualquier compromiso que tengas, o sea, Liceo o CECAP faltan compañeros o se van echados por eso mismo (Sujeto A RP)

Las mujeres se comportan un poco más en ese sentido, o sea, tienen más conciencia de lo que hacen, puede ser. Los veo más inconscientes por eso de los amigos viste... Uno te dice “che vení para acá, vamos a fumarnos uno” y claro aceptás, porque si no te dicen que sos un cagón, entonces vas y lo hacés de one. (Sujeto 9 RC)

A diferencia de las demás explicaciones, este tema no aparece con fuerza en la literatura sobre diferencias de género en la interrupción de las trayectorias escolares. No obstante, es un tema que ha sido investigado en general en los estudios sobre masculinidad. Ya en 1995, Kaufmann apuntaba:

Al perder el hilo de una amplia gama de necesidades y capacidades humanas, y al reprimir nuestra necesidad de cuidar y nutrir, los hombres perdemos el sentido común emotivo y la capacidad de cuidarnos. Las emociones y necesidades no confrontadas, no conocidas y no esperadas no desaparecen, sino que se manifiestan en nuestras vidas, en el trabajo, en la carretera, en un bar o en el hogar (...). Por otra parte, los hombres podrían dirigir su dolor escondido contra sí mismos en forma de autoodio, autodesprecio, enfermedad física, inseguridad o adicción. (p. 132).

Más allá de la declaración de los adolescentes y de las ideas teóricas de Kaufmann, se estima que, en Uruguay, un 21% de varones comprendidos en la franja etaria 13-17 consume drogas, habiendo una diferencia de 7 puntos a favor de los varones. Esto no tiene por qué ser un factor determinante, pero sí un motivo que puede explicar, en parte, la brecha a favor de la interrupción de los estudios en contra de los varones.

En el discurso de los adolescentes aparece la idea de que la “barra” y la “esquina” compite con la presencia en la institución educativa.

Porque van para la esquina, están en la droga, el alcohol, fuman porro. Yo nunca vi una mujer así que dejé el estudio por ir a una esquina (Sujeto D RP)

Porque ahora prácticamente todos los pibes fuman marihuana y es como que dejan el Liceo por eso incluyéndome... Amo la marihuana y a ellos les interesa más joder que estudiar, obviamente no todos, pero la mayoría” “Drogas, alcohol, música, eso falta en un salón y que no haya reglas, pero ta eso obviamente que no va a pasar nunca (risas). (Sujeto 3 RC)

Este resultado, que no estaba incluida en los supuestos del estudio, requiera mayor indagación para incluirse, o no, en los factores que la literatura internacional marcan como diferenciales predisponentes en los varones para la interrupción de sus trayectorias educativas frente a las mujeres.

Conclusiones

El estudio se proponía indagar la relación entre la construcción subjetiva de masculinidad y las trayectorias y percepciones educativas de adolescentes varones residentes de Montevideo urbano. Los resultados muestran que los propios protagonistas identifican factores asociados a su construcción subjetiva de masculinidad que van en contra de las posibilidades de éxito educativo. Tanto la ineficacia de la presión familiar, como la percepción de mayores facilidades para insertarse en el mercado laboral operan desestimulando la continuidad de la carrera escolar. Asimismo, la demostración de masculinidad se enfrenta con las reglas del sistema, lo cual los predispone al fracaso más que a las mujeres. Finalmente, el consumo más pronunciado de sustancias psicoactivas que sus pares mujeres y la influencia de su grupo de pares compite con la asistencia a los centros educativos. Estos condicionantes podrían explicar, al menos en parte, la brecha a favor de las mujeres en la terminalidad de secundaria en Uruguay. Los datos que surgen de este estudio permiten pensar en políticas educativas que apunten a favorecer el egreso de los varones, con el objetivo de cerrar esta brecha. No obstante, no puede perderse de vista que el principal desafío del país en términos de educación es la universalidad del egreso de secundaria, objetivo

consagrado por ley, del cual se está muy lejos tanto para los varones como para las mujeres.

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“I don’t care” or “It’s their fault”: System justification and the lack of empathy as complementary obstacles to dealing with the modern sexism

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“I don’t care” or “It’s their fault”: System justification and the lack of empathy as complementary obstacles to dealing with the modern sexism

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Abstract

In this paper, we analyzed college students’ perceptions of their experiences with sexism through the frameworks of the ambivalent sexism theory and the theory of system justification. These theories describe the complexity of sexism and explain obstacles of dealing with it in the modern Western world. We qualitatively analyzed students’ responses to an open-ended question about sexism on their campuses. While many informants did describe sexism as a problem, others indicated that it is not important. Respondents displayed negative emotions that often took the form of blame directed both ways. There were almost no responses describing complexity of the modern sexism, which the theories of system justification and ambivalent sexism highlight. We conclude that the subtle nature of the modern sexism combined with people’s reluctance to empathize with the other side (whether they are negatively affected by sexism or not) contribute to the persistence of sexism in the modern world.

Keywords: modern sexism, ambivalent sexism, system justification, empathy

"No me importa" o "es su culpa": la justificación del sistema y la falta de empatía como obstáculos complementarios para lidiar con el sexismo moderno

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Abstract

En este artículo, analizamos las percepciones de estudiantes universitarios sobre sus experiencias con el sexismo a través de los marcos de la teoría del sexismo ambivalente y la teoría de la justificación del sistema. Estas teorías describen la complejidad del sexismo y explican los obstáculos para enfrentarlo en el mundo occidental moderno. Analizamos cualitativamente las respuestas de estudiantes a una pregunta abierta sobre el sexismo en sus campus. Mientras que muchos informantes describieron el sexismo como un problema, otros indicaron que no es importante. Las personas encuestadas mostraron emociones negativas que a menudo tomaron la forma de culpa dirigida en ambos sentidos. Casi no hubo respuestas que describieran la complejidad del sexismo moderno, que las teorías de la justificación del sistema y el sexismo ambivalente destacan. Llegamos a la conclusión de que la naturaleza sutil del sexismo moderno combinado con la renuencia de las personas a empatizar con la otra parte (ya sea que se vean afectados negativamente por el sexismo o no) contribuyen a la persistencia del sexismo en el mundo moderno.

Keywords: sexismo moderno, sexismo ambivalente, justificación del sistema, empatía

Scholars note that, as we are moving further into the twenty-first century, sexism (usually understood as a gender-based discrimination affecting women) remains a problem in the United States (Fouad et al., 2016; Gill, 2011; Grunspan et al., 2016; Leaper & Brown, 2008). The prevalence of sexism suggests that most Americans are bound to witness or experience it on a regular basis. However, scholars note that our experiences can create misunderstanding of sexism, especially due to the fact that in the modern Western society sexism often takes subtle forms (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Swim, Mallett & Stangor, 2004). Subtle forms of sexism might be difficult to combat because of people's tendency to justify the status quo (Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay et al., 2007). The modern sexism appears not to create disadvantages for women; therefore, both men and women do not feel that the relationship between the genders needs to be changed.

There appears to be a connection between one's level of empathy, defined as the ability to take the Other's perspective, and willingness to fight discrimination (Shih et al., 2009). It has been argued that men's endorsement of the modern sexism can be reduced if their emotional empathy towards women who experience discrimination is encouraged (Becker & Swim, 2011). It is assumed that women have more empathy towards other women because they are members of the same social group. However, the notion of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) implies that this assumption may not always be valid. Moreover, considering the theory of system justification, it is possible that to battle the modern sexism empathy should go both ways. For example, although men engage in sexist actions, it is important to take into consideration social pressures to perform masculinity in a certain manner (Pascoe, 2011; Pascoe & Diefendorf, 2019).

As part of this study, we analyzed 2461 responses to an open-ended survey question that asked undergraduate students in two U.S. Midwestern universities to describe their experiences with sexism. We obtained five main findings. First, many informants did describe sexism (especially overt) as a problem on the campuses where our research was conducted. This finding is in line with the literature that describes hostile sexism as widespread on U.S. college campuses (Van Brunt et al., 2015). Second, answers of a substantial number of respondents indicate that they do not see

sexism as a problem. We interpret these respondents' reluctance to admit the existence of sexism or its seriousness as an indication of their lack of empathy towards victims of sexism. Third, many answers displayed informants' negative emotions, such as anger and resentment (whether respondents believed that that sexism is a problem, or not). Fourth, expressions of these emotions were deployed for blame which was directed both ways (women blaming men and men blaming women), thus serving to essentialize gender differences and divide each other into battling groups along the gender line. Finally, there were almost no responses describing the complexity of the dynamics of the modern sexism, which the theories of system justification and ambivalent sexism point to.

Many Faces of Sexism

Although in the United States overtly hostile sexism is tolerated less, it would be premature to celebrate its disappearance (Sharp et al., 2017). At the same time, subtle forms of sexism are much more prevalent as they are considered socially acceptable (Swim, Mallett & Stangor, 2004). In fact, subtle forms of sexism are claimed to be better predictors of gender discrimination than blatant ones. Manifestations of modern sexism include microaggressions and sexist language (Fouad et al., 2016). Calling a female co-worker's ideas "cute" but not using the same adjective to describe suggestions of a male co-worker implies slight belittling of the former. When accumulated, such utterances and actions can result in reinforcing stereotype threat (Steele et al., 2002) and surreptitiously feed into expectations about gender differences, naturalizing them.

The theory of ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001) posits that sexism can be hostile or benevolent. Glick and Fiske (1996) described three components of benevolent sexism: protective paternalism (women should be protected by men), complementary gender differentiation (women possess domestic qualities that men lack), and heterosexual intimacy (women fulfill men's romantic needs). The theory of benevolent sexism suggests that gender discrimination can exist through actions interpreted as positive by all parties involved.

This leads to blurring of boundaries between sexist and non-sexist behaviors. If a man holds a door for a woman, does it mean that he is sexist? The answer lies in analyzing his often-unconscious motivations and fleeting

thoughts, a task which is difficult to accomplish. As women experience what appears to be “special” treatment from men and feel themselves indispensable to them, they might be less likely to notice that seemingly positive manifestations of benevolent sexism are often mixed with gender-based microaggressions – covert and disrespectful behavior that is motivated by the target’s gender (Levchak, 2018).

The fact that our interactions with others are shaped by the gender binary (Butler, 1990)—the idea that all people are divided into two genders that are complimentary and do not overlap—might be one of the key reasons for the existence of sexism. Yet some scholars argue that dominant ideologies of gender are reinforced by men and women, and harm both (hooks, 2004). It is noted that some women are privileged more than others (McIntosh, 1988). Importantly, theorists have also suggested that women who are more privileged can contribute to the existence of sexism by oppressing other women as illustrated in Collins’ (2000) concept of the matrix of domination. In particular, she notes that an individual can simultaneously be oppressed and an oppressor. This paradox is also illuminated in the concept of horizontal oppression, which describes how individuals of a particular social group (e.g. women) can cause harm to members of their own group (Hardiman & Jackson, 2007).

According to the system justification theory, disadvantaged social groups can contribute to their own subordination by accepting the unjust social system and contributing to its existence (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). The concept of benevolent sexism explains how women can contribute to the persistence of sexism by justifying the social system that disadvantages them: “exposure to benevolent sexism may be experienced as conferring individual and group advantages and may lead women to incorporate these representations as self-stereotypes and thus to endorse characterizations of their group that contribute to their lack of power” (Becker & Wright, 2011, p. 64). Research reveals that exposure to benevolent sexism increases system justification (Jost & Kay, 2005), and decreases the urge to challenge the status quo through social action (Becker & Wright, 2011).

Although it is essential to acknowledge the existence of sexism despite its subtle nature, it is also crucial to recognize the nuances outlined above. Sexism is not only or simply men oppressing women and refusing to

let the status quo change in order not to lose their privilege. Rather, sexism is people of both genders contributing to unequal social relations, on purpose or unconsciously, whether they benefit by the status quo or are hurt by it. In order to properly deal with sexism in the modern society, these nuances need to be taken into consideration.

The lack of understanding of sexism might be one of the main reasons why it is so difficult to eliminate. The theory of ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001) sheds the light on these difficulties by describing the subtle nature of the modern sexism. Behaviors that can be classified as benevolent sexism are usually not perceived as sexist, despite their contribution to gender inequalities (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Swim, Mallett & Russo-Devosa, 2005). Hostile sexism, although it is more overt and traumatic, creates stronger reactions from the general public. In contrast, benevolent sexism is often not perceived as harmful either by those who engage in it, or by those who are put at a disadvantage by gender inequalities.

Research shows that raising awareness about different forms of sexism, their roots, and impact helps decrease people's motivation to engage in discriminatory behaviors (Swim, Mallett & Stangor, 2004). Unfortunately, raising awareness about sexism through education is a challenging task (Case, 2007). Sexism remains a controversial topic, and people who are exposed to awareness-raising discussions about it often distance themselves, become oppositional, or experience strong emotions that prevent them from learning (Young, Mountford & Skrla, 2006). Raising awareness about sexism is associated with resistance and conflict. The prevalence of benevolent sexism might make the task especially daunting.

Furthermore, research on implicit biases and system justification (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013) reveals that, paradoxically, being aware of sexism might not be enough to fight it effectively. For example, Banaji and Greenwald (2013) use results of their Implicit Association Test and relevant studies to argue that implicit biases held by the majority of people might make them contribute to the status quo even if they want to challenge it.

In order to find more effective ways of dealing with subtle sexism in the U.S. society, people's (mis)understanding of sexism should be further explored. In this paper we discuss findings of a qualitative study that aimed to shed light on possible obstacles to dealing with sexism stemming from people's perceptions of this complex social phenomenon. Our analysis of the

obtained data was guided by the theory of ambivalent sexism and the system justification theory. More specifically, we wanted to find out what our informants' answers implied about their (mis)understanding of different kinds of sexism, and about the way they might reinforce the status quo by justifying it and rationalizing their own actions. Our research question was: What do college students' perceptions of their experiences with sexism on college campus reveal about obstacles of dealing with sexism?

Method

The data for this study came from a sample of undergraduate students enrolled at two U.S. Midwestern universities. The first university (F1) was located in a predominantly White college town and has a dominant sports and fraternity culture. The second university (F2) was located in a diverse large urban area and does not have a dominant sports and fraternity culture. At the time of data collection, F1 had over 30,000 enrolled students and F2 had over 27,000 enrolled students. In total, 1466 students were surveyed at F1 and 995 students were surveyed at F2 using an open-ended prompt: "Please describe your experiences with sexism on your campus."

Undergraduate students from diverse racial and gender backgrounds, as well as students from diverse majors and programs were sampled. Descriptive statistics of the sample is presented in Table 1. It reflects the relative lack of racial and ethnic diversity in F1 compared to F2.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

F1	F2
63% women	65% women
37% men	35% men
4% black	12% black
7% Asian	22% Asian
7% Latino	28% Latino
82% white	38% white
20.01 average age	20.59 average age

The sampling plan involved listing all undergraduate programs within the university and college. Courses in which the survey was administered were selected using random numbers. Course listings and schedules as well as requested permission from instructors to enter their classes on specified dates were obtained. After securing permission, a schedule of class times to collect data was created. The instrument was pretested before distributing it.

The research was conducted in compliance with the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at both universities. Students were told that the purpose of the survey was to examine campus climate. The survey was collected immediately after the completion.

The open-ended prompt “Please describe your experiences with sexism on your campus,” was used to generate in-depth responses, with the anticipation that informants would share firsthand and vicarious experiences with sexism and gender-based microaggressions. The obtained data consisted of verbatim quotations that the respondents wrote.

Data Analysis

Describing coding techniques, Strauss (1987) recommended rereading data several times and analyzing it into emerging conceptual categories. We started by going through the students’ answers and looking for repeating patterns. Our goal at this stage was to find themes that would reflect possible obstacles to understanding sexism and/or to dealing with it. As we were using the theory of ambivalent sexism and the system justification theory as our theoretical frameworks, we were especially interested in finding out what manifestations of hostile and benevolent sexism our informants noticed, how they interpreted them, and how they tried to justify their understanding (or misunderstanding) of sexism.

Having formulated emerging themes, we used them for further coding. The rest of the data analysis consisted of looking for examples that would align with or contradict the themes that we had previously found. In the following sections we outline the main themes and subthemes we found, focusing on informants’ perceptions of sexism.

Qualitative methods are based on interpretation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The main limitation of our analysis is that it consists of the authors’ interpretations of the obtained data through the chosen theoretical

framework. Informants' replies that we encountered were complex and rich with meanings. It is possible that other researchers using different theoretical frameworks would perform the analysis differently and focus on different findings.

We provide quotes that contain informants' race, gender, and age if/as they were indicated. If this information was not included, we add "n.i." – "not indicated."

Seeing Sexism

Guided by the theory of ambivalent sexism, we wanted to see whether our informants have noticed manifestations of sexism, and whether they were able to discern between hostile/overt and benevolent/subtle sexism. A number of replies revealed that some informants on both campuses have experienced or witnessed what can be classified as hostile sexism. Such testimonies usually came from women.

Hostile sexism was often described as verbal manifestations that included crude jokes ("So many 'rape' jokes. So terrible" (white, female, 20)), lewd comments ("Men yelling lewd comments at me and my friends, for example: 'I'd fuck you,' 'Nice tits,' 'You have dick-sucking lips' – really disrespectful things" (white, female, age n.i.), insults ("I get called things like 'whore,' 'slut,' 'bitch,' 'sorostitute' without justification" (white, female, 19)), and catcalling ("There isn't a night where I've walked home from an evening out with friends where I haven't been yelled at, or received rude statements from males" (white, female, 23)). Women who experienced this kind of treatment felt uncomfortable and unsafe. They often noted that this is something they have to face on a regular basis.

Some women felt that they were positioned as inferior to men. This manifestation of hostile sexism took the form of "jokes" ("I have overheard jokes about why women shouldn't be allowed in colleges" (white, female, 21)); in statements related to coursework ("When working on a group project I was told by a male member in the group that I was unable to do a certain task because I was female" (Black, female, 23)); and in relation to recreation ("Some of the guys at the rec [sic] told a girl she couldn't join a game of basketball because she was a girl" (n.i.)). An argument can be made

that such comments are intended to remind women to stay away from activities and spaces traditionally associated with masculinity.

It was not uncommon for informants to complain about stereotyping that came in the form of limiting expectations. Some of those were again described as hurtful jokes (“Male students joking, saying that women are the best when they bring sandwiches to them etc.” (race n.i., female, age n.i.); “People tend to joke around about women stereotypes, ‘stay in the kitchen’” (Asian, female, 18)). However, sometimes things that our informants heard, even if they were intended as jokes, made these women feel excluded and humiliated (“People have asked me if I am on the two-year plan here to find a husband” (white, female, 20)). Limiting expectations were experienced in the classroom (“A professor said women shouldn’t go to college” (n.i)) and outside of classroom, in bars, on campus, and the nearby city (“Guys mistreated girls who they believed were too ‘fat’ to dance on the platform of a bar. They kicked those girls out of the bar” (n.i.)).

Some informants also described sexism as being objectified and sexualized (“Guys making sexual remarks on girls’ attires and body language and rating them” (white, female, 19)). Sexual harassment and assault experienced by women was mentioned by a number of informants. Several female informants described feeling unsafe because of men’s veiled or direct sexual advances, as the story below illustrates:

I had experienced an uncomfortable situation with 2 male janitors. I was peeling a banana and they were both staring at me. When I gave them a “dirty” look they asked me if I would like to join them on the couch. It felt like there was a sexual connotation and I felt disturbed. (Latina, female, 22).

Most students who talked about having experienced or witnessed sexism focused on its overt and negative forms. However, several informants also talked about subtle forms that sexism can take (“Sexism seems kind of taboo nowadays, when it happens, it’s usually subtle, so people just walking around campus wouldn’t really see it” (n.i.); “[Sexism is] existent but subtle” (Asian, male, 24)). We found only one comment that implied an understanding that sexism can take both negative and positive forms: “I am a woman so I feel that I have been treated differently because of that

(sometimes in a good way, but mostly bad) by staff and students” (white, female, 20).

According to the informants we quoted above, sexism was part of life on campus, and it often made their lives uncomfortable. They described it as a persistent (though sometimes hidden) problem. As one transgender male informant put it: “You can hear it everywhere you go on the campus if you listen closely enough” (white, trans, 19). Our findings were consistent with the scholarship on ambivalent sexism, as it was easier for informants from both campuses to notice hostile rather than benevolent sexism. The findings were also consistent with the literature that describes the prevalence of sexism in the U.S. society.

Not a problem

Despite the responses described above, informants’ replies revealed that the majority of students did not perceive sexism as a problem: they either did not notice it or downplayed its impact. These replies were so different from the ones listed above that sometimes going through the answers we felt as if informants were living in two different worlds – one where sexism exists and the other one where it has stopped being an issue.

Almost one half of the respondents did not provide any answer to the survey prompt: “Please describe your experiences with sexism on your campus.” We interpret this in unwillingness to engage with the prompts, and possibly as an indication of the informants’ conviction that sexism is not important enough to be discussed. Among the respondents who did provide an answer, many gave what we describe as contradictory answers. We defined an answer as contradictory when it contained a misinterpretation of sexism while at the same time acknowledging its existence.

Some students mentioned witnessing what can be called hostile sexism and yet denied that it is a serious problem (“Not much [sexism], other than sexual language/objectification towards women” (white, male, 19)) or doubted that it can be defined as sexism (“I have been assaulted because of my gender but I don’t think it has anything to do with discrimination against women” (white, female, 18)). Downplaying sexism sometime took truly paradoxical forms:

Sexism on campus from my point of view isn't too bad. In some classes, such as my science and math classes, I do feel left out as a woman because I feel like male professors treat women as unequals. (Asian, female, 21)

It seemed that some participants did not want to see sexism even as it was staring right into their faces.

Answering the question of whether they encountered sexism on campus, some informants used such words as “just” and “only” to downplay the importance of overt sexism:

[Sexism is] not a big issue. Only when working on group projects males seem to think their opinion is always right...that's in every class. (black, female, 21).
There has been some, just people saying women don't work as hard as men, they don't deserve to get paid the same amount. (white, female, 21).

Sexism was often described as “just jokes,” and thus “nothing really major.” Informants who used this language seemed to perceive jokes as harmless by definition: “People make jokes about how women should be homemakers – that's about it” (white, female, 18).

We also found the lack of empathy in answers that downplayed instances of sexism, especially those that portrayed it as “just jokes” or “just” verbal harassment. Both male and female informants who used this language were oblivious to the fact that words can hurt and denied that somebody else can be hurt by sexist comments that did not affect them personally.

Just the name calling of girls like whores, hoers. (Asian, female, 20).

Jokes about women being for sex and sandwiches – prevalent; seriousness about these jokes – minor. (white, male, 20).

The theory of system justification appears appropriate for explaining these cases of cognitive dissonance. Some informants (both male and female) appeared to be trying to rationalize instances of gender discrimination to prove that they were living in a just world. They did not

seem ready to acknowledge that they have experienced sexism or perpetuated it through their actions.

Since many informants' comments displayed misunderstanding of overtly hostile sexism, it is not surprising that confusion about more subtle benevolent sexism was also present. More specifically, students talked about "special" treatment (paternalism) that women received as a strictly positive thing, contrasting it with "real" sexism: "Sexism is never an issue. Most of the time, men do the lady-first thing but no sexism" (Asian, female, 20). Another informant talked about gender norms (complimentary sexism): "[I have encountered] gender norms but not extreme aspects of sexism. Think chivalry for example" (Asian, female, 19).

The misunderstanding of benevolent sexism also came in the form of being disappointed when men did not treat women as special or try to protect them. This sentiment is exemplified in the following quote: "Sometimes guys don't open doors for women" (Latina, female, 18) which shows that for this informant not being treated as special meant sexism.

Focusing on reverse sexism is itself can be considered a form of subtle sexism. Some male (and a few female) informants described what can be called reverse sexism – discrimination against men. An example of mistaking benevolent sexism for reverse sexism came from a male student: "Women are expected to perform less than men in class, even in classes run by women instructors" (white, male, 29). This male student interpreted the situation as disadvantageous to male students. However, this can be also seen as a form of benevolent sexism (paternalism): if instructors indeed "protect" women from hard work that might mean that they do not see female students capable of studying as hard as male students do.

If we take into consideration answers of informants who said that they did not see sexism and those who did not answer this question at all, it appears that students who see sexism/see it as a problem are a minority on the campuses where the survey was administered. This finding is consistent with the literature that describes low levels of awareness about the persistence of sexism in the modern world.

Prioritizing Personal Experiences

To the question of whether they have experienced sexism on campus many informants gave terse negative answers: “I haven’t had any experience with sexism, at least that I’ve noticed” (multiracial, female, 19); “I don’t notice it much” (Indian, female, 17); “I have not experienced sexism” (multiracial, male, 19); “I haven’t dealt with any” (Asian, male, 21). Explanations, such as in the following quote: “People treat everyone fairly I believe since it is college” (Asian, male, 19) – were seldom provided. In addition, many informants did not answer this question at all. We believe that they had nothing to say because they similarly did not see sexism as a problem worth discussing.

The prompt the informants were answering was “Please describe your experiences with sexism on your campus” (Emphasis added). Thus, it is not surprising that most informants focused on their personal experiences.

I’ve never felt that an individual was being sexist towards me. (black, female, 20). I don’t see much. I’ve always been treated fairly. (White, female, 21).

I have not been looked down based on my gender. (Latina, female, 19).

However, these answers might suggest that many informants generalized their experiences and that because they have not experienced sexism, they did not see it as a real problem. The following comments exemplify this interpretation more clearly:

I have not had any bad experiences with sexism on my campus. I think everyone has accepted everyone’s views. (Latina, female, 22).

I haven’t seen any, I feel like men/women are treated the same. (white, male, 20).

Exercising empathy means seeing beyond one’s personal experiences. Students whose answers we quoted in this section based their claim that sexism does not exist on their experience. They thought that there no sexism because they did not see it. Therefore, we might connect their denial of the existence of sexism to the reluctance of using empathy for understanding how somebody else might feel.

Negative Emotions

Replies of informants who saw sexism as a topic worth discussing (as opposed to those who gave terse yes/no answers) often displayed negative emotions that we describe as resentment (i.e., indignation at having been treated unfairly) and blame. These sentiments had different sources for different students. In some instances, negative emotions were connected with having experienced or witnessed sexism. In other instances, informants seemed to be angry or irritated by the very claim that sexism exists. The negative emotions often took the form of blame and contrasting of the two genders.

Those who have experienced sexism (these were often female students) resented the fact that sexism exists and that they have suffered from it. This resentment at times took the form of essentializing the gender binary by contrasting men and women.

“Men on campus... treat women like animals” (white, female, 20);

“Men use women” (white, female, 20);

“Men expect women to be their slaves” (white, female, 19). Strong language was sometimes used to express these sentiments;

“Guys are dicks!” (white, female, 19).

Essentialization was especially strong when informants used the word “always.”

Men are men, they always think their opinions are more valuable and correct than women’s. (Latina, female, 19)

Men will always look down upon women in some way. (Asian, female, 18)

Men will always brush off opinions of women in class and argue with opinionated women. (Asian, female, 21)

In contrast, some male students talked resentfully about what they perceived as reverse sexism, and blamed women for creating it: “I feel sometimes men are used as a punching bag in classes where females dominate the class” (white, male, 18). In some cases the resentment also took the form of reinforcing the “men vs. women” or “us vs. them” binary (“Females being disrespectful because we can’t do much against

it” (Latino, male, 20) [Emphasis added]. Several comments revealed male informants’ resentment about being constantly perceived through negative stereotypes (“There are some quite strongly opinionated females who believe males to be stupid and insensitive” (multiracial, male, 18)), e.g., sex-crazed predators (“Men are treated as assaulters everywhere you look” (black, male, 21)). There was also resentment about the perceived privileging of women for the sake of increasing diversity: “I’ve personally seen leadership positions go to women when there are more qualified men also vying for the job, just because they want to convey a feeling of diversity” (n.i.).

In a few cases, male informants expressed resentment because they felt that that people who talk about sexism make a problem out of nothing: “I don’t think [sexism and racism] are a problem. Minorities make it a bigger deal than it is. It’s B/S (white, male, age n.i.)” In these replies, women were blamed for playing the card of sexism to mask their own incompetence: “I believe some people overreact and think they’re being discriminated against due to gender when it’s really due to lack of skills” (white, male, 19). Feminists were mentioned as a cause of the hatred and confusion associated with the debates about sexism: “Most sexism comes from feminists in my opinion” (white, male, 20); “[Sexism] exists as long as someone wants it to exist” (Native American, male, 18).

Sorority girls [are] easy – not necessarily true but when you put yourself out there like that... (white, male, 19)

What do girls expect when they go out wearing literally nothing. They are going to be called sluts but I’m not complaining because they look sexy as fuck. (white, male, 21)

These resentful and blameful comments took a disturbing form of victim-blaming targeted at women and could be themselves interpreted as sexist. In some instances, women were also engaging in victim-blaming targeted at other women:

271 *Friesem & Levchak – System justification and the lack of empathy*

[The campus is] very sexist, largely due to a large population of women submitting and dressing/behaving anticonservatively/desperately. (white, female, 20)

Complicating the Picture

Only a handful of answers indicated more nuanced understanding of sexism. Some students did make an effort to avoid blame and generalizations. These respondents appeared to be more empathetic, acknowledging the existence of sexism even when they personally did not experience it.

In contrast with the negative emotions brought up by the question about sexism, only a very small number of informants chose language more carefully in order to avoid blaming and resentment. They tried to complicate the binary (“There are expectations of certain ways certain people should act. People are judged by others if they don’t act a certain way” (white, female, 20) and disrupt the essentialization (“I think in certain classes certain male students do feel superior to female students out of ignorance but not the majority” (Latina, female, 19)).

Resentment is defined as a bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly; blame is intrinsically connected with resentment as we often feel the need to find those responsible for our mistreatment. The opposite of resentment and blame is empathy, which can be defined as an ability or willingness to understand others within their frame of reference (de Waal, 2010). When we are empathic, we try to understand why people who we think have treated us unfairly acted the way they did. Being empathic also means acknowledging our own flaws. In this section we speculate that denying that sexism is a problem, expressing resentment, and blaming the other side meant the lack of empathy displayed by the majority of informants.

In the above sections we offered evidence that sexism is indeed present on the campuses we studied, which is consistent with the vast literature on the prevalence of sexism in the modern U.S. society. Sexism is

a topic that is widely discussed in the U.S. culture so it is unlikely that our informants have never heard about sexism at the time of the survey. Considering this, it is telling that some informants thought it is not important to talk about sexism, and believed that if they did not experience sexism it is not such a big problem.

In contrast, several informants specifically indicated that although they themselves have not experienced sexism, they knew that it is still a problem. In this sense, they displayed more empathy towards those disadvantaged by gender inequalities. For example, some female informants noted that even though they are not suffering from sexism, it is because of their personalities and people they surround themselves with, or simply because they have been lucky.

I have not had any serious problems yet. However, I saw that some people were judged for their choices. (white, female, 18).

I'm a pretty strong woman. I like to hold my own. Yet that doesn't mean that sexism still doesn't exist. I just haven't experienced it too much. And if it does happen I will point it out especially if it's someone I know. (Asian, female, 22).

I haven't witnessed any sexism towards women personally, but I also am academically oriented (I don't go out). (White, agender, 21).

Although most male students did not see sexism as a problem, some displayed empathy by noting that it does exist. For example: "I overhear conversations where women are being verbally sexually objectified all the time, mostly from groups of all-male students. I haven't personally witnessed much sexism beyond this, but I'm sure it's there" (white, male, 19). However, it was less common for male than for female students to describe sexism as a serious social issue. This is consistent with the literature on male privilege which suggests that men are often not aware of the social capital associated with masculinity. Very few men noted that they did not personally experience sexism because they are men: "As a male, sexism hasn't really happened to me, but I have seen women not treated fairly" (black, male, 19). Female students who did not display awareness of sexism or did not see it a problem might have been protected from it by their emphasized femininity (Connell, 2005).

Same as male students displayed little empathy about hurdles experienced by women, very few female students' answers suggested that

they have ever considered that the complexity of the modern sexism might prevent men from understanding how they might engage in sexist behaviors, or how social pressure to perform their masculinity contributes to sexism. According to the system justification theory, both the privileged and the underprivileged contribute to social inequalities, but most students' answers did not imply that they understand these complex dynamics.

By blaming men (and, sometimes, other women) for essentializing the gender binary many female informants who saw sexism as a problem displayed their lack of awareness of how they themselves might contribute to the status quo even if they want to change it. There were few indications that informants (both male and female) understood the complexity of gender inequalities described by the system justification theory.

Overall, we discovered that it was uncommon for our informants to display empathy towards people whose experiences were different from theirs. The controversial nature of sexism prevented female students from trying to imagine why male students might engage in what can be classified as sexist behavior. Male students, in their turn, seldom discussed why female students might complain about sexism. Both male and female students who did not experience the negative side of sexism (or were not aware of these experiences) denied that people different from them might be criticizing sexism for a reason. Informants who either noted that they personally have not experienced sexism or avoided answering the question altogether might have failed to put themselves in the shoes of people who claimed to have encountered the negative impact of sexism.

Discussion

It is undeniable that many men and some women benefit from the unequal social system. According to the system justification theory, both those more and less disadvantaged by the status quo contribute to its existence. While the question "Who is to blame for the prevalence of sexism?" is tempting, it might distract us from searching for the hidden and thus most insidious roots of sexism.

Instead of seeing gender inequalities as a way for dominant social groups to oppress subordinated social groups, the system justification theory

can help us describe sexism as the pressure imposed by the social system on individuals regardless of their gender. For women it is the pressure to conform to standards of femininity, which include being different from men and complimentary to them. For men, it is the pressure to perform their masculinity in a certain way, which often manifests as subtly or violently reinforcing women's place in society. Considering this complexity, instead of looking for villains and victims it might be more productive to engage in an empathy-based dialogue between those advantaged and disadvantaged by the social system that supports sexism.

Unfortunately, the controversial nature of sexism often makes it difficult to start such a dialogue. When people are ready to discuss sexism (as opposed to when they ignore the question), they often express negative emotions, such as resentment—either towards those who create sexism, or towards those who overreact about it. Conversations about sexism often result in reinforcing the gender binary, as it is not uncommon to contrast men's and women's experiences to explain how sexism functions (we ourselves have not been able to avoid the language of the gender binary in this article).

To makes the matter worse, the subtle nature of benevolent sexism creates a vicious circle: when subtly sexist behaviors are labeled as sexist and criticized, those who engage in such criticism are often dismissed as being overzealous. This in turn might drive women's rights and gender equality activists to continue criticizing modern sexism with doubled zeal, which then makes those who disagree with them double their resistance. Although benevolent sexism might seem less harmful, misunderstandings that it creates leave little room for a productive dialogue. This dynamics can explain challenges that educators who teach about gender inequalities regularly face (Carillo, 2007; Crabtree & Sapp, 2003; Young, Mountford & Skrla, 2006).

Clearly, the most essential obstacle to dealing with sexism is the basic misunderstanding of what it entails, and of its negative impact. Our informants' answers reveal that this misunderstanding concerns not only subtle benevolent sexism but also very overt and hostile manifestations of sexism such as harassment and cat-calling. The key step to dealing with sexism as a social problem still appears to be raising awareness about it through education among people of all genders. However, these awareness-

raising efforts should take into consideration people's tendency to engage in blaming and essentializing genders when the topic of sexism comes up.

The lack of awareness does not mean informants' intrinsic inability to see sexism, but rather their rationalization of sexist behaviors consistent with the theory of system justification. If male students in our sample were justifying the social system because their gender provided them with certain take-for-granted privileges, female students might have similarly ignored or misunderstood sexism because of their privileged position. At the same time, resentment and blame that we found in answers of informants who did see sexism as a problem reveal people's tendency to ignore how they can contribute to the status quo even when they are against it.

Apathy about sexism, as well as resentment and blame can be seen as different aspects of system justification that allow gender inequalities to remain in place. These subconsciously chosen strategies deepened the rift between different subsets of our informants: those who saw sexism and those who did not, those who believed that sexism is a problem and those who denied it, as well as students placing themselves on different sides of the gender binary.

We believe that healing the rifts associated with sexism is essential for tackling this persistent and highly controversial issue. Increasing empathy that was so rare in our informants' answers can provide a solution. Empathy might help to break the wall between the worlds that currently exist apart when it comes to the conversation about gender inequalities.

We believe that understanding sexism and dealing with it requires an ability to overcome the polarization and empathize with those whose experiences lie across the rift. This means not only that people who have been privileged by gender ideologies need to imagine themselves in the place of those disadvantaged by sexism. It also means that people who have suffered from sexism should be able to see the framework of reference of those who seem to be ignoring their suffering. It is essential to acknowledge the hidden nature of the modern sexism, but also to take into consideration how social pressures may lead people to engage in hostile sexism. In addition, each party needs to raise their self-awareness and learn about their own hidden biases that can reinforce the status quo.

Many scholars attest that sexism remains a serious problem in the United States, and our findings are consistent with this literature. Based on our qualitative analysis of comments about personal experiences with sexism, we argue that blaming and pushing back might not be the most effective strategies of dealing with this insidious problem, especially considering the hidden nature of the modern sexism. Using the system justification theory, we propose that raising awareness about sexism should include raising self-awareness of all parties involved, even those who feel that they are disadvantaged by sexism and fight against it. Dealing with the modern sexism should be based on an empathy-based dialogue that will help people see what they have failed to notice and take perspectives of those whose experiences are different.

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279 *Friesem & Levchak – System justification and the lack of empathy*

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Salomé en el cine, un Weibermacht a la sombra de Wilde

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Salome in cinema, a Weibermacht overshadow by Wilde

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Abstract

The Salome of Oscar Wilde became one of the fundamental ways of construction and access to a myth with nineteenth-century explanation and connotations and a perpetuated vigor in the cinema. The Salome of Oscar Wilde was an aesthetic vehicle of late Victorian gay emancipation as Ken Rusell knew how to denounce and explain. Access to the subject condition that was apparently achieved with the will to revenge was impaired by the instrumental interest of the author. Nevertheless, women artists saw in that wildeana drift of the myth a capital to resignify that it could be framed in a Weibermacht or genre of Power of Women. This operation of providing Salome with the status of a woman subject endowed with the power to act for her own benefit and that of her gender is paradoxically torpedoed by the vigor of Wilde's own text. But some titles that started from some later text or from the personal contribution of the director have opened up possibilities for that film Weibermacht of Salome. This is the case of *Salome where she danced* (Charles Lamont, 1945) whose analysis will use the methodology proposed by Sulbarán Piñeiro that combines semiotics and film narrative.

Keywords: Weibermacht, filmic, construction, imaginary, misogyny

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Abstract

La Salomé de Oscar Wilde se convirtió en una de las vías fundamentales de construcción y acceso a un mito con explicación y connotaciones decimonónicas y un vigor perpetuado en el cine. La Salomé de Wilde fue un vehículo esteticista de emancipación homosexual tardo victoriana como Ken Russell supo denunciar y explicitar. El acceso a la condición sujeto que en apariencia se conseguía con la voluntad de venganza se veía menoscabado por el interés instrumental del autor. No obstante, las mujeres artistas vieron en esa deriva wildeana del mito un capital a resignificar que cabría enmarcar en un *Weibermacht* o género de Poder de las Mujeres. Esa operación de dotar a Salomé de la condición sujeto mujer dotada de poder para obrar en su propio beneficio y el de su género se ve paradójicamente torpedeada por el vigor del propio texto de Wilde. Pero algunos títulos que partían de algún texto posterior o de la aportación personal del director han abierto posibilidades para esa *Weibermacht* fílmica de Salomé. Es el caso de *Salome where she danced* (Charles Lamont, 1945) para cuyo análisis se empleará la metodología propuesta por Sulbarán Piñeiro que aúna semiótica y narrativa fílmica.

Keywords: *Weibermacht*, fílmica, construcción, imaginario, misoginia

La construcción cultural del mito de Salomé partió de la Biblia, la literatura simbolista, luego modernista y la definición madura en Óscar Wilde que hizo del personaje bíblico, en expresión de Edward Morgan Forster, un personaje redondo con entidad y propósito.

En los evangelios sinópticos Salomé es la hija de Herodías que embelesa a Herodes Antipas, hermano de su difunto padre Filipo y ahora padrastro, con una danza a cambio de la cual pidió la cabeza del Bautista que se hallaba encarcelado por él por denunciar la bigamia de Herodías. En *Mateo 14: 1-12* Salomé pedía la cabeza del Bautista inducida por su madre. En *Marcos 6: 14-29* se ofrecían detalles de esa persuasión. En su aniversario Herodes juró a Salomé ante representantes romanos ofrecerle lo que quisiese a cambio de su danza y ésta, previa consulta materna, demandó la cabeza de Juan el Bautista en una bandeja de plata. Obligado por su palabra el rey se la concedió por respeto a sus invitados. Salomé la entrega a su madre y los discípulos de Juan honraron el resto de su cuerpo con un monumento. En Lucas 9, 7-9, Herodes admitía haber degollado a Juan.

En la Biblia es una princesa sin nombre ni descripción de aspecto que ejecuta una danza de carácter desconocido que su madre usa para vengarse. Es Flavio Josefo en *Antigüedades Judías* de (93-4 ac) quien la nombra Salomé por derivación de *salom* o paz en hebreo. Cicerón, Plutarco y Séneca también la mencionan.

Orígenes de un mito y primeras representaciones artísticas

Salomé en ciclos iconográficos primitivos

Hay representaciones plásticas desde el siglo VI bien en ciclo iconográfico propio o ligado al Bautista. La medievalista Mónica Walker Vadillo señaló su representación marginal en tímpanos y capiteles (catedrales de Rouen, Tudela, Colegiata de Sta. María la Mayor de Alquézar en Huesca), bronce (Donatello), vidrieras de San Juan de Lyon, manuscritos (Evangelios de Liuthar en Aquisgrán, Salterio dorado de Munich) y pintura mural (Giotto en la capilla Peruzzi de Florencia). Del Renacimiento al siglo XIX contabilizó más de tres mil obras. Las representaciones medievales coinciden con la condena de Ambrosio de Milán, Agustín de Hipona y Juan Crisóstomo que

indican la introducción del demonio en la danza de Salomé. La tradición occidental la representa con brazos de jarra en el norte y cuerpo de acróbata arqueado en el sur; la Oriental en Bizancio y Mediterráneo con el plato y la cabeza del bautista sobre su cabeza y la italiana guiada por demonios. Aumentan los ejemplos a partir del siglo XVI destacando Lucas Cranach el Viejo, Jacob Cornelisz y Bernardino Luini (Walker, 2016: 89).

Salomé literaria, desarrollo de Herodías y trasvase hacia Salomé hasta la síntesis de Wilde

Salomé fue una anécdota en Gregorio VIII, Aurelio Prudencio, el Góspel de Héliand o la *Leyenda dorada*. Pero es el texto latino *Ysengrimus* (1148) del monje Nivardus de Gante, hallado por Jacob Grimm en 1814 en la Biblioteca Nacional de Francia e incluido en el capítulo 13 de su *Mitología Alemana* (1835) el punto de partida de este mito cultural. Nivardus construyó la historia de amor con el beso de la cabeza decapitada. La cola cortada a Ysengrimus prefigura la decapitación (Ogane, 2011: 151-3). Nirvadás fusionó en Herodías a Frau Hulda, Fru Helle, Fru Helde, la antigua diosa germánica de la tempestad y su patrona Santa Verelda (Pharaildis en latín). De Grimm pasó a Heinrich Heine en *Atta Troll. Ein Sommernachtstraum* (1847) que veía en ella una esposa desaprovechada (Navarro, 2010; 135). Herodías era un espectro que sale de cacería con Diana y el hada Abunde la noche de San Juan y una Salomé errante trataba en vano de besar la cabeza del Bautista (Domínguez, 2017: 91) Heine inspiró a su vez a Mallarmé.

Wilde va a aprovechar esa potencia cruel propia de femme fatale debida al binomio eros-thánatos atribuida a las diosas lunares ya presente, como señalan Ogane y Domínguez, en *Die Braut von Corinth* de Goethe (1798), la *Belle Dame sans Merci* (1819) de John Keats y *La Mort Amoureuse* (1836) de Théophile Gautier.

Oscar Wilde recoge esa carga semántica de diosa lunar de Mallarmé de forma indirecta. Fue a través de la influencia de la *Hérodiades* (1862) de Mallarmé en la *Salomé* (1867) de Joseph Converse Heywood. Eso redundó en el protagonismo de la propia Salomé y el motivo del beso de la cabeza muerta del Bautista. Y lo enlazó con la virginidad narcisista de ésta (Domínguez, 2017: 106-113).

La importancia de la danza se encontraba en Yeats, el Eugene Sue de *Le juif errant* (1845) o *Images of Good and Evil* (1899) del poeta galés Arthur Symons. Esa danza se alinea con el deseo escapista del Romanticismo (*l'ennui, die Sehensucht*) que Moreau cristalizó en dos principios que evitaban la infiltración de lo literario en la pintura: el Principio de la bella Inercia (común a profetas, sibilas y alegorías de tumbas de Miguel Angel) y el Principio de la Riqueza necesaria que convertía el cuerpo de Salomé en una mujer-joya.

Son la pintura de Moreau y la escritura de Flaubert las que logran una descripción eficaz. En 1876 Gustave Moreau reapareció en el Salón de Bellas Artes con *Salomé bailando ante Herodías* tomando la idea de arqueología emocional de Rembrandt como fondo sobre el que avanza Salomé con la flor de loto (emblema femenino de virginidad y fecundidad) en gesto similar al pater familias del *Juramento de los Horacios* (1784) de Jacques-Louis David (Coocke, 2016). Su cuerpo seguía la ley de frontalidad egipcia y la hacía vértice de todas las miradas. Moreau impuso la mujer-joya carnal, tatuada de henna de terrible mirada. Joris-Karl Huysmans elogió en el capítulo V de *À Rebours* (1884) la obra de Moreau, su realismo “óptico” y comprensión como la deidad de la Lujuria o la Histeria, una belleza maldita dotada de catalepsia. (Huysmans, 1984: 177-183).

Gustave Flaubert proporcionó en *Herodías* (Tres cuentos, 1877) el contexto histórico, la caracterización de personajes y la descripción de la danza. El cruce de piernas en tijera o *contrapposto* de Moreau se convertía en la coreografía voluptuosa de una mariposa, Psique y un espíritu flotante en una danza del vientre acompañada de campanillas indias y flautas fenicias, con pantalón de velo negro bordado de mandrágoras plateadas y zapatillas con pluma de colibrí. Esa danza era estrategia de poder para Herodías, expresión de la belleza satánica con sinestesia (pintura, sonido y perfume) y ambigüedad de sexos y roles pues Salomé blande la flor de loto como un lirio (símbolo masculino) ante el voyeur, padre fálico Herodes (Salvador, 2005: 618-9). Gustave Flaubert es, a criterio de Charles Bernheimer, Elizabeth Grosz y Amanda Fernbach, el primero en connotar en Salomé un fetichismo reproductivo. Herodías adopta el rojo de la diosa maternal Cibeles y facilita la penetración ocular de los asistentes al ver a Salomé *go pink* (mostrando al doblarse el rosa vaginal) (Devereux, 2017: 126).

Los ecos por repetición estaban en *La Princesse Maleine* (1889) de Maeterlinck o la estructura retórica del Cantar de los Cantares. De Ernest Renan en *La Vie de Jesus* (1869) tomó la visión poética de Cristo (Ballesteros, 2014:75).

Otra de las fuentes de Wilde, *Moralités legendaires* (1887) de Jules Laforgue permite un tratamiento mitocrítico desde la parodia por colusión con la ironía, la condensación y expansión del texto por la inclusión del yo narrativo como diferidor del texto y por la reutilización didáctica de fórmulas (Rodríguez, 1994: 93-97). Laforgue recoge la historia previa entre Salomé y el Bautista, la muerte de Salomé y la importancia de luna.

Wilde consolidó entonces el simbolismo de la luna, la sangre, el deseo, el decadentismo del arte por el arte y el orientalismo de los mantras (Lapeña, 2014: 175, 177). Insistió en la centralidad de la mirada. Mirar es ominoso (a la luna, como Acteón a Diana o Semele), o a Medusa, significa ser destruido (Ballesteros, 2014: 81).

La Salomé de Wilde

La *Salomé* (1891) de Wilde tropezó con leyes antiguas británicas y prusianas que prohíben la representación de personajes bíblicos. Se estrenó en París en el Théâtre de L'Oeuvre en 1896 gracias a Aurélien Lugné-Poë. En Wilde Salomé deja de ser instrumento, venga una ofensa propia y construye una mujer fatal de enérgica capacidad de destrucción masculina con la perversidad añadida del beso necrofílico a su trofeo, la cabeza del Bautista (Rodríguez, 1996: 411). El beso que la Salomé virgen y despechada se cobra del Bautista se eleva en el imaginario e incentiva las producciones simbolistas. A partir de 1850 se dispara la iconografía artística de Salomé en Henri Regnault, Max Slevogt, Édouard Toudouze, Hugo von Habermann, Otto Friedrich, George Frédéric Watts. Después de Wilde aumentará desde las ilustraciones de Aubrey Beardsley a Max Klinger, Wilhelm Trubner, Lovis Corinth (1899), Edward Burne-Jones y Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (1896), Pierre Bonnard, Franz Von Stuck (1906), Leopold Schmutzler, George Olivier Desvalieres, Gustav Klimt (1909), Max Oppenheimer, Hans Unger, Francesc Masriera, Beltran Masses, Francis Picabia y muchos otros.

Donde Dorian Gray era objeto de deseo, Salomé era una persona con energías que si no se desarrollan tienen potencial destructivo. Salomé

rechazaba ser el fetiche de Herodes que ansía su boca, diente, sus pies de paloma, en definitiva, lo que Elliot L. Gilbert llamó la taxonomía del solipsismo. Su deseo incontrolable y sin supervisión termina consumiéndola y provocando su muerte (Walkowich, 2004: 93-99).

Después de Wilde Jean Lorrain empleó a Salomé como puente para sublimar la mujer como obra de arte, en *Monsieur de Bougreton* (1897) y *Monsieur de Phocas* (1910) bajo los rasgos de Izé Kranile, la nueva bailarina de Folies Bergères. Salomé contribuye a construir una mujer moderna, flor venérea, azul y verde, cortesana pelirroja que accedía a la ósmosis amorosa por decapitación. Lorrain tomó de Las tres novias de Jan Toorop lo andrógino que inspiraba la mujer mítica sublimada, ambos *images-repoussoir* sobre las que volcar un ideal (Ferrety, 2015).

Repercusión en letras iberoamericanas

Rubén Darío en *La muerte de Salomé* (1891) empleaba el collar en forma de serpiente que se muerde la cola para significar eternidad, ambivalencia sexual y auto decapitación cuando cobra vida y la estrangula. Luego está el fetichismo de los cabellos de matiz animalizado (la leonada melena); los velos con los que Wilde alude al “desvelamiento sexual”, la isotopía del fuego (luz bermeja, antorchas, incendio), la seducción por la danza y el sadomasoquismo o algolagnia. Delmira Agustini empleó esa asociación mujer-serpiente en *Serpentina* junto a la mirada fatal, cuerpo enjoyado y muerte o trascendencia por unión con el amado (Sánchez, 2016: 629).

Entre 1891 y 1918, tras su presencia marginal en Lope de Vega y Calderón, la literatura hispánica registró tres etapas de abordaje de este mito. La primera de 1891 a 1918 de construcción del arquetipo donde Rubén Darío y Emilio Carrère imaginan para ella una muerte por decapitación. Otra etapa de abandono progresivo del mito hasta 1936 con la interpretación misógina de Ortega y Gasset y la caricatura esperpéntica de Valle Inclán. Y una tercera etapa de reescritura desde la Salomé de Lourdes Ortiz en *Los Motivos de Circe* (1988) (Rodríguez, 1996-7). *La cabeza del Bautista* (1924) de Valle es la más estudiada pues la había incluido en la *Sonata de verano de 1903* y la retomó por arte de segundo grado (Amado Alonso), intertextualidad (Melchor Fernández Almagro) o caricatura degradadora de Wilde (Guillermo Díaz Plaja). Descompuso sus unidades elementales para

reorganizarlas por refracción como hacía el divisionista Seurat convirtiendo la princesa oriental en princesa criolla dentro de la “simetría viejo-niña” de la *Tristana* de Galdós (González, 1996: 251).

Valle mira a Goya y el gran guiñol desde su estética del esperpento. Aparece así lo macabro, el tema de la muerte y la doncella (Aszyk, 2012). Le atrajo de Wilde el uso de los actantes supermarionetas propuestos por Gordon Craig (Bonilla, 2003: 164). Heredó de él la mitología de la luna que continuaron el *Romance de la luna*, luna de Federico García Lorca y el madrigal dramático *Ardiente-y-fría* de Rafael Alberti (Navarro, 2010: 140). La mirada esencial al rito alucinatorio que fuerza a Herodes a cumplir su promesa fue clave a imitar de los filmes de Theda Bara y Alla Nazimova. (Bonilla, 2003: 166, 170).

Salomé en el siglo XX: Weibermacht potencial intuido en la escena

La Salomé cinematográfica es directamente deudora de la teatral y operística. Las mujeres de la escena identificaron el potencial como *Weibermacht* o género artístico de exaltación de su poder abierto por la obra de Wilde. E intentaron explotarlo para su exaltación personal (Ballesteros, 2015: 5).

En Alemania, tras levantarse la ley prusiana se realizaron 111 representaciones entre las que destacaron las producciones de Max Reinhardt con las actrices Gertrude Eysoldt y Tilla Durieux. El crítico Rainer Kohlmayer vio en Salomé la combinación del problema de la sexualidad fin de siglo y la Nueva Mujer. Salomé se percibía animalizada, mujer y tigre, paradigma de lo enfermizo, la homosexualidad, el judaísmo y la histeria. Salomé es perversa porque persiste en su deseo por el Bautista. Burckhard alabó en Wilde el astuto intercambio de la venganza materna por la pasión de la hija. Ernst Heilborn resaltó la progresión genérica en Wilde de la épica a la balada y el cuento de hadas que resuelve por ensalmo sin explicar el contexto histórico (Eugene, 2001: 152-163).

En 1905 Richard Strauss consagraba su popularidad con la adaptación operística de la que era precedente *Erodes* (1825) de Mercadante y a la que sucedería la de Florent Schmitt en 1907 y Antoine Mariotte en 1908 y *La danza di Salomé* (1952) de R. Lupi (Lapeña: 2014: 177).

Las mujeres de la *belle époque* se apropiaron del personaje creado por la mirada escópica androcéntrica en términos de Laura Mulvey (Ruiz, 2013: 3). Empresarias, coreógrafas, guionistas, bailarinas, diseñadoras y actrices quisieron añadirla a su repertorio. Entre ellas Sarah Bernhardt, intérprete ansiada por Wilde, Loïe Fuller (*Serpentine Dance*); La Bella Otero (1901), Blanche Walsh (1902), Gertrud Eysoldt y Tilla Durieux en la ópera de Max Reinhardt (1903), Adorée Vilany en sus *Spoken Dances* (1905), Ruth St Dennis (1906), Mata Hari (1906), Mademoiselle Dazié (1907), Ida Rubinstein (1908) Carmen Tórtola Valencia (1908), Edith Lambelle Lagerfeld conocida como La Sylphée en *The Remorse of Salome* (1908), Miss Lotta Faust (1908), Mary Garden (1908,1913), Gertrude Hoffman (1910), Tamara de Svirsky (1910) y Alisa Koonen (1917) con escenografía de Alexandra Exter (Trav S.D., 2017).

La balletómana Carmen Tórtola Valencia apreciada por Carmen de Burgos y la Condesa de Pardo Bazán “personificó el Oriente, la seducción perversa de la mujer que ondula” en su montaje mejicano de 1918 con música de Strauss (Cavia, 2001: 34-35).

Y sobre todas ellas Maud Allan, la bailarina canadiense que en 1906 estrenaba *Vision of Salomé* en Viena que representó 250 veces en el Palace Theater of Varieties londinense en 1908 ganándose el apelativo *The Salomé dancer*. Estaba respaldada por sus conocimientos de estética modernista, simbolismo, fotografía e iluminación escénica adquiridos en 1895 en Berlín, la danza descalza de Duncan, las poses grecolatinas y la técnica de François Delsarte. Tuvo el apoyo de Margot Asquith, mujer del Primer Ministro Liberal y árbitro del gusto. Ella misma diseñaba sus trajes que remataba con perlas sus formas. Allan expresaba interioridad emocional, estados de consciencia transitorios y autoerotismo. En el ataque a su carrera por la ejecución de su hermano Theodore convicto de asesinato y la acusación de lesbianismo en titulares como *El culto del clítoris* las historiadoras feministas vieron un golpe ejemplarizante a mujeres fuera de norma. Allan extendió los límites entre virtud y vicio femeninos y el acceso a la propia mirada erótica (Walkowitz, 2003: 340-5).

Se creó así lo que Lawrence Kramer llama complejo Salomé: un cóctel de degeneración, decadencia, perversión sexual, antisemitismo, narcisismo, exotismo y femme fatale (Caddy, 2016: 164).

Salomé en el cine

El cine habría de ocuparse de Salomé desde la filmación de Fuller por los Lumière. La primera película conocida es alemana, *Tanzder Salome (La danza de Salomé, 1906)*, del director Oskar Messter y la bailarina Adorée Villany (Ruiz, 2013: 5).

Lapeña ha contabilizado unas setenta películas sobre Wilde o grabaciones de ópera de Strauss, una veintena de las cuáles son adaptaciones fieles de Wilde para televisión.

En la cinematografía italiana destacan las dos Salomé de Ugo Falena con Vittoria Lepanto (1910) y Nazia Napierkowska (*La figlia d'Erodiade, 1916*). En la cinematografía francesa *L'inconsciente Salomé* (Louis Feuillade, 1908) y en la británica los dos musicales de Warwick Cinemaphone Films en 1909 (*Oh Salomé Oh, Oh, Oh* y *The Salomé dance Music*). En Norteamérica son relevantes la *Salomé or The Dance of the Seven Veils* (J. Stuart Blackton, 1908) con Florence Lawrence, la Salomé de Theda bara (J. Gordon Edwards, 1918), y *Salomé* de Charles Bryant 1923 de estética *queer* como expresión de deseos normativizados (Suárez, J.A., 2002 citado en Lapeña, 2014: 180)

Entre estas primeras Salomé de cine están Florence Lawrence, Gertrude Hoffmann, Lotta Faust, Olive Ann Alcorn, Eva Tanguay, la bailarina de la ópera Yvonne Daunt, Julane Johnston, Aida Overton Walker, Greta Nissen o Vilma Banky (Kendall, 1984: 73-90). Destacó entre ellas la francesa de origen polaco Stacia Napierkowska que comenzó su carrera en el vodevil del Folies-Bergères e interpretaría el papel de Salomé en tres filmes de 1908, 1916 y 1926 dirigidos por Albert Capellani, Ugo Falena y Fred Leroy-Grandville respectivamente. La solidez de su actuación que inspiró a los cineastas futuristas se basaba en la formación balletística que revelaban determinadas posiciones y saltos (Catanese, 2018: 98-9).

Salomé en el cine dependiente de Wilde

En las artes cinematográficas la dependencia del texto de Wilde ha sido predominante yendo de la anécdota, a la adopción estética, la écfrasis actualizada del texto y su explotación metaficcional.

La *Salomé* (1910) de Ugo Falena con Vittoria Lepanto, luego notoria tras *Lucrezia Borgia*, se condensa entre el rechazo del Bautista a Salomé y la venganza de ésta en tres sets de decorado. Su actuación de femme fatal es ante el banquete estructurado como *tableau vivant* donde Herodes y Herodías tienen los ropajes coloreados de rojo. Los movimientos de madre e hija se espejan en los sucesivos rechazos a las ofertas del tetrarca hasta la señal del brazo extendido con la que anuncia su intención de bailar. Lepanto recorre posiciones más o menos dancísticas y tras un giro derviche final disfruta de su trofeo eludiendo la muerte.

La *Salomé* (1918) de J. Gordon Edwards con Theda Bara trataba de capitalizar el éxito obtenido con Cleopatra y es uno de los títulos perdidos por combustión del celuloide. Las fotos conservadas muestran una femme fatal remozada en “vamp”, categoría acreditada a Bara tras *A fool there was* (1915). El atuendo oriental de esta sex-symbol pionera motivó las protestas de varias iglesias en St. Louis (Missouri) y la prohibición de su visionado por niños (Embla, 2014). En dos ocasiones, en el desierto desde su palanquín y en el calabozo, Salomé trató de seducir al profeta y consumaba su victoria con el gélido beso a su cabeza muerta antes de que Herodes ordene su propia muerte. (Mary, 2015).

En 1923, el británico Charles Bryant se sirvió del encuadre, montaje, fondos encadenados y sobrepresiones para crear un producto heredero de las *reveries* en la *Salomé* de su entonces esposa (Grünberg, 2011) Alla Nazimova quiso representarla dirigida por Orlean en el Bowery Theatre neoyorkino dentro de su gira de 1906. La obra fue censurada en Rusia hasta el montaje en 1917 de Alexander Tairov. Peter M. Winters siguió fielmente el texto del autor irlandés que incluía la erradicación de la maldad de las mujeres matrilineal, que Herodes ve en Salomé por herencia de Herodías. La sangre del suicidio del príncipe Narraboth de Siria enamorado de Salomé ejerce de augurio fatal. Nazimova y Natacha Rambova unieron lo teatral y lo cinematográfico, pantomima y danza con influencias de Beardsley, Klimt y Moreau en el vestuario (Ruiz, 2013: 6). En los figurines Natacha Rambova se sitúa entre los artistas influidos por Aubrey Beardsley como Georges Barbier, Manuel Bujados o John Vassos. Nazimova rechazó unos primeros diseños de Rambova por un estilo que destacaba su figura sin curvas (Freedman, 2013: 107). Destacaba así la diferencia entre Herodías y el erotismo *flapper* de Salomé y se desviaba la capacidad de seducción a la

mirada. Ninguna didascalía de Wilde describía el baile ni prescribía una Salomé de volúmenes rotundos. Tan solo perfumes, siete velos y que le retiren las sandalias (Morales, 2014: 81).

En 1972 Carmelo Bene dirigió una *Salomé*, influida por la moda y el op art, que entendía como una partitura en celuloide donde cada personaje es un sonido. Bene como Herodes, sigue los diálogos de Wilde, elimina la danza y el fetiche de la cabeza decapitada. Los protagonistas aparecen desdoblados en personajes de una obra anterior de Wilde, *La Sainte Courtisane* (1894). Así Herodes en Onorio que se comunica con Salomé a través del espejo. Las uvas, vino y muerte desollado le emparenta con Dionisos. Salomé (Donyale Luna) está desdoblada en Myrrhina (Verushka). Carmelo Bene realizó dos adaptaciones teatrales anteriores y en ésta pretendió irritar deliberadamente con 4.500 encuadres que suponen las teselas de un banquete de péplum con gobernante infantil y caprichoso, los temas del doble y el precio de satisfacer el deseo (Lapeña, 2014: 183-188). Las nuevas femme fatales son las modelos Veruschka von Lehndorff descubierta en Italia e impulsada gracias a *Blow up* de Antonioni (1966) y Donyale Luna, activa participante de los *swinging sixties* londinenses y que acentúa con el cráneo rasurado el parecido que Dalí le había atribuido a Nefertiti. Hay en esta versión un abundante empleo del cuerpo desnudo y del cuerpo-joya. La Última cena se confunde con una bacanal y Jesucristo aparece como vampiro que opta por crucificarse a sí mismo. Salomé, imponiendo su cuerpo sobre un prostrado Herodes le ciega en un desierto metafísico con los velos de colores que son metonimia de su danza.

Filmes más allá de la cuarta pared con o sin Wilde

En 1988 Ken Russell en *The last dance*, combina cine y montaje teatral de una representación privada para el propio Óscar Wilde (Nicholas Grace). Imagina su estreno londinense futurible con una pantomima en un burdel de lujo y el arresto policial posterior. Convierte a los verdugos en guardianas sádicas y duplica a Salomé (Imogen Millais) en la figura de un efebo al final de la danza de los velos que pretende ser una indemnización póstuma por la persecución a Wilde por su homosexualidad, pero en esencia mantiene el texto y su mensaje. La escena azulada, el contracampo anaranjado, el recurso barroco de la obra-dentro-de-la-obra, una mise en abîme, lo lleva a su terreno visual excesivo (Van Eecke, 2012: 5).

En *Wilde Salomé* (2011) su director, Al Pacino, encarna a Herodes y a un director que sería la reencarnación del propio Wilde a mayor gloria de su Sara Bernhardt (en este caso Jessica Chastain). Recupera la tradición de *strip tease* de los espectáculos teatrales y de vodevil de la primera década del siglo XX. Dedicamos mucha atención a la pasión por Iokanáam que motiva el paso de la virginidad adolescente a la sexualidad en la princesa, así como la ofensa a su dignidad y orgullo y la necrofilia de ese beso final. Sin embargo, la Salomé de estas versiones fieles a Wilde, sea Alla Nazimova, Imogen Millais-Scott o Jessica Chastain nos devuelven la imagen de princesas infantiles carentes de tolerancia a la frustración de sus deseos.

Otras Salomé posibles a partir de Wilde

En este último apartado consignamos otro grupo de filmes que aprovechan sólo ciertos elementos del texto de Wilde o se apartan de él de forma decidida. Son películas al servicio de intereses distintos.

Salomé como ilustración bíblica

En la película *Salomé* (1953) dirigida por William Dieterle ésta es una princesa de Galilea criada en Roma que desea casarse con Marcelo, sobrino de Tiberio. Éste, contrario al enlace, la expulsa de Roma. La envía en una galera con Poncio Pilato y el comandante Claudio (Stewart Granger) que durante el lustro de servicio en Galilea abrazó el cristianismo y va a proteger al Bautista. Salomé está agradecida por haber crecido en Roma libre de la lujuria de su padrastro Herodes (Charles Laughton) y preocupada por la lapidación de su madre Herodías (Judith Anderson) por las acusaciones de Bautista. Herodes teme matarle y Herodías fuerza la gratitud de su hija con un baile que equivale a convertirla en concubina. Salomé aparece atrapada, influida por la fe de Claudio danza pensando que salvará al Bautista para descubrir horrorizada que la usaron para precipitar su muerte. La cristianización de la trama, en línea con *Quo Vadis* (1951) de Melvin Leroy, es el rasgo distintivo de esta versión. *King of Kings* (1961) de Nicholas Ray enfatiza el trono desde el que Salomé (Brigid Bazlen) realiza su petición y la gran jaula de pájaros del salón real, símbolo del cautiverio del que la danza de velos es fuga.

Salomé migrante

El mito de Salomé y la *Salomanía* fue aprovechada en la escena y el cine por intérpretes que pertenecían a minorías migrantes y, en ocasiones, también a comunidades judías asentadas en Estados Unidos.

La suspensión de la *Salomé* de Strauss en el Metropolitan en 1907 motivó a la bailarina Bianca Froelich para llevar la Danza de los 7 velos al Lincoln Square Variety Theater. Varios empresarios compitieron por el número y en octubre de 1908 había 24 espectáculos de *Salomé*. El director del Teatro Victoria, Willie Hammerstein, envió a Gertrude Hoffman a Londres a estudiar a Maud Allan para montar el suyo. Florence Ziegfield añadió una parodia a sus *Follies* en 1907. La actriz Fanny Brice (inmigrante húngara llamada Fania Borach) aceptó interpretar el rol de Salomé con la canción *Sadie Salomé: go Home* que le brindó Irving Berling para dar el salto a las *Ziegfield Follies* (1908). Pero fue Mademoiselle Dazie (antes conocida como La Belle Dazie, Daisy Peterkin y Le Domino Rouge) quien incendió en las *Follies* la *Salomanía* rematando su *Jiu-jitsu Waltz* con un número de *Salomé* tan popular que le permitió abrir una escuela que graduaba cada mes ciento cincuenta alumnas que inundaron Norteamérica de especialistas en *strip tease*.

Hubo pronto una identificación entre *Salomé* y la mujer judía, por la relevancia de Sarah Bernardt e Ida Rubinstein convertida en icono estético decadente apoyada por el dinero de Sir Walter Guinness y los retratos de Romaine Brooks. Fue Gustave Moreau quien asoció a *Salomé* a una nueva representación del cuerpo judío erotizado extraído de su estudio en Venecia de Bellini, Giorgione y la pintura bizantina. Ese cuerpo pervivía en la artista lesbiana de origen judío Lucy Schwob, sobrina del corrector de francés de la *Salomé* de Wilde Marcel Schwob y conocida como Claude Cahun. (Freedman, 2013: 96-7).

La judía polaca, Anzia Yezierska, escribió en 1922 la novela adaptada al cine con título homónimo *Salome of the tenements* (Sidney Olcott, 1925). En ella la heroína de esas corralas, Sonya Vrunsky (interpretada por Jetta

Goudal), responde al tipo que Pam Morris llama 'la tentadora'. Se basa en las propias experiencias de la escritora criada en *settlements* reformistas que cambia la carrera de Ciencias domésticas por Magisterio tras falsificar el título de secundaria y donde asiste desde 1918 a seminarios de Dorothy Scarborough y el reformador John Dewey que le anima a escribir (Vargas, 1998: 11, 228).

Vrunsky capitaliza su etnicidad exótica, el *Oriental mystique* mezcla de paganismo, inconsciencia, histeria y marginalidad asociada a la danza, actividad liberadora del destino de cuidadora nutricia. Yezierska utilizó los credos americanos de individualismo, autoconfianza y persecución agresiva de un destino feliz que feminiza para romper barreras sociales como Nueva Mujer americana. La heroína transforma su aspecto gracias a la moda. Yezierska se inspira en su amiga Rose Pastor que se casó con el millonario filantrópico J.G. Phelps Stokes y en su propio amor platónico por John Dewey. Influyen también el cine de Griffith y Eisenstein y las películas realizadas para el guetto judío de narrativa linear y también elíptica como *The Jew's Christmas* y *The romance of a Jewess* que continuaban las representaciones de Bessie Tomashevsky en el *Yiddish theater* en 1908 (Coklin, 2006: 138-140).

Salomé ménade

Salomé comparte con otras femme fatale la danza como arma de seducción sea en la Carmen de Pola Negri (Ernst Lubitsch, 1918), la *Salomé* de Wilde, *Lulú* de Wedekind o Conchita de *La mujer y el pelele* de Pierre Louÿs (Poyato, 2006: 163).

El elemento central a Salomé era esa danza de catarsis, dionisiaca, que hacía de ella una bacante o ménade. Es la acción principal que lleva a cabo como poder primitivo, ser neurótico finisecular que oficia de chivo expiatorio o individuo-síntoma en expresión del psiquiatra Eric Daviller que preserva la idea de normalidad del grupo. Danza que admite análisis aplicando las fases de la histeria del modelo de Jean-Martin Charcot: epiléptica, danza de los velos de movimientos largos y alucinatoria con actitudes pasionales y delirio tras la satisfacción del beso (Gomes, 1997: 62, 65). La danza forma parte de su poder como princesa, le permite adoptar la "soberanía performativa" en terminología de Judith Butler. Esa imposición

casi mágica de la autoridad busca la “Implantación”, en expresión de Michel Foucault, que fuerza por el discurso un cambio psicológico en otro. Con su lenguaje de la Danza de los Siete Velos logra comunicar la perversidad de sus deseos (Kramer, 2014: 103, 105, 108).

En la *Salomé* (1973) que el escritor Clive Barker adapta de Wilde para televisión lo más llamativo aparte de la experimentación en fotografía, sonorización e iluminación es la danza vengativa rodada en cámara lenta y posterizada que sigue al intento de estrangulamiento por el Bautista.

Pero es la danza filmada en la *Salomé* (2002) de Carlos Saura (2002) el título que hizo de ella el elemento central. La primera media hora se sirve del formato documental y entrevista. Pere Arquillué como trasunto del director proporciona en off los datos bíblicos, la premisa del film sobre la pasión amorosa y la venganza como sinrazón de toda la tragedia. Nos muestra la inspiración en Julio Romero de Torres, las decisiones escenográficas con iluminación binaria solar (amarilla) y lunar (azul). Inserta fragmentos de entrevistas a Aida Gómez (*Salomé*), Paco Mora (*Herodes*) y Javier Toca (*Bautista*), conversaciones con el compositor Roque Bolaños y el figurinista Pedro Moreno. El resto describe sin palabras la lucha entre lo carnal y espiritual que lleva a la destrucción del ser amado. Aquí Bautista parece tentado a ceder ante la corporalidad de *Salomé* hasta la irrupción de la llamada espiritual. Herodías fuerza la entrega de *Salomé* a Herodes y es *Salomé* la que horrorizada tras la muerte que la satisfacción de su propio deseo ha provocado se amortaja.

Salomé como agente de cambio para el bien

El potencial trasgresor y de desplazamiento de poder hacia la mujer de *Salomé* lo había advertido José Ortega y Gasset en 1921 en *Esquema de Salomé* por el intercambio en ella del instinto natural de entregarse femenino por el masculino de apoderarse convirtiéndola en una “Mujer de presa” (Ortega, 1969: 102-4). Las estudiosas de género Mary Ann Doane, Julie Grossman y Angela Martin vieron el potencial empoderador de la mujer fatal pero también su ambivalencia. Virginia Allen, Bram Djikstra y Elizabeth K. Menon, coincidieron en señalar en *Salomé* una fantasía proyectiva masculina de mantenimiento del control ante la independencia económica, política y sexual de la mujer (Jackson, 2015: 50, 52).

El origen del sesgo misógino estaba en Flavio Josefo y su fuente Nicolás de Damasco. Salomé había figurado en la Edad Media y el Renacimiento en un género literario y artístico llamado *Weibermacht* o Poder de las Mujeres junto a Salomé, Dalila, Judith, Betsabé y Jael (Lassley, 2017: 10).

En la filmografía de Salomé es posible identificar ciertos títulos con un hipertexto más notorio que permiten plantear una *Weibermacht* cinematográfica que explotara el potencial de Salomé como imagen-signo empoderadora de la mujer que superase la cadena Mujer=sexo=pecado=muerte prevalente en los siglos XV y XVI por una secuencia Mujer=sexo= deseo satisfecho= poder. Una Salomé libre de la condena a muerte patriarcal que pueda disfrutar de su propio deseo, del arte y cuya subjetividad autónoma no se vea como amenaza.

Para esa reapropiación es preciso deshacer la asociación decadente de la Nueva Mujer con aberración, inversión sexual, dedicación al conocimiento inútil, artificialidad, deshumanización híbrida, malditismo, histeria y transformación por el arte en objeto fálico sustitutivo (Escaja, 2008: 43).

Pueden rastrearse varios ejemplos que permiten superar la satanización de Salomé. En *El Palacio de las Maravillas* (The Show, 1927 de Tod Browning) se desarrolla un vodevil circense de la historia del Bautista. Salomé (Renée Adorée) y Bautista (John Gilbert) son antiguos enamorados, aunque ahora ella salga con el gánster El Griego y él tontee con la hija de un tratante de ovejas llamada Lena. Tras un desarrollo criminal él logra separar a la Salomé actriz de la hija abnegada de un ciego y la revelación de su bondad le inspira a elegir la buena senda y una nueva feliz con ella.

La *Salomé* (1978) que Pedro Almodóvar realizó en 16 milímetros previo a su primer largometraje plantea el encuentro por unas colinas de Abraham (Fernando Hillbeck), Isaac (Agustín Almodóvar) y Salomé (Isabel Mestres). Mestres acababa de interpretar ese papel en *Jesús de Nazareth* (1977) de Franco Zeffirelli donde danzaba rodeada de antorchas y sostenía un duelo de miradas con Herodes (Christopher Plummer) que incluía planos detalle de que Almodóvar replicó. Se combina el sacrificio de Isaac con el del Bautista. Salomé accede a bailar con las trompetas, el pasodoble *El Gato Montés* y velos que entrega al viento emulando a Loïe Fuller y la Victoria de Samotracia. Tras la danza Dios comunica a Abraham que ha sido probado

para recordarle que es humano y debe pecar. Recogerá los velos negros que servirán para que las mujeres respeten la misa. Salomé era una manifestación divina que orientaba al bien.

En la versión que dirige Charles Lamont, *Salome Where She danced*, se produjo una reapropiación nacional de la historia a cargo de Michael J. Philips.

Si se aplica en ella el análisis propuesto por Eugenio Sulbarán Piñeiro (2000) que incluye diez puntos donde la identificación de secuencias, puntos de giro, caracterización, leyes de repetición, conflicto y premisa e interpretación son los principales podemos extraer del título que se aparta más de las premisas iniciales de Salomé una nueva vía de exploración del mito.

La protagonista es una bailarina austríaca llamada Anne-Marie (interpretada por la actriz originaria de Vancouver Yvonne de Carlo) que ejerce sucesivamente su poder de fascinación sobre Von Bohlen (Albert Dekker) la mano derecha del Conde Von Bismarck, que la persigue hasta América, un corresponsal de la guerra civil norteamericano convertido en espía llamado Jim (Rod Cameron), un jovencísimo oficial austríaco llamado Kurs que pierde la vida en la guerra franco-prusiana, un excombatiente confederado virginiano desencantado de Grant metido a bandido llamado Cleve Blunt (David Bruce) y un empresario ruso llamado Dimitrioff. Von Bohlen sería el equivalente de Herodes, Jim es quien propone que ella le seduzca primero a él y luego en el salvaje Oeste a todo el pueblo de Drinkman Wells donde la referencia del topónimo (well, pozo, sea de condenación o celda del bautista) no parece casual. En esta localidad pasará de la Venus surgiendo de la venera del teatro vienés a encarnar a Salomé con ayuda de Madame Europe (Marjorie Rambeau), una antigua cupletista antaño exitosa en cabarets germanos, suerte de Herodías sobrepasada por los encantos de la juventud. La Salomé de pantomima y vodevil es así superada por la cinematográfica. Asistimos por fin a una Salomé que combina sabiduría dancística con coreografía de baile del vientre que desafía al bandido reanudando su actuación con actitud concienzuda de profesional de la danza añadiendo el baile de la cobra y un giro en espiral derviche redondeando una completa sugestión oriental.

Las secuencias clave están a su vez seguidas de puntos de giro en el guión y son las interpretativas. Así la Venus balletística la convierte en espía

y provoca su exilio norteamericano. La larga performance de Salomé, cuya coda final persigue la rendición del bandido Cleve provoca en inicio su secuestro y luego el comienzo de regeneración de este como su enamorado; una secuencia de canto acompañada de piano le reporta el apoyo del filántropo de las artes Dimitrioff que pone a su disposición un Rembrandt y un teatro en San Francisco. Allí la voluntad de cambio de Cleve parece flaquear y con ayuda del asistente chino de Dimitrioff Anne Marie le tiende una trampa para probar su afecto y reforzar su seducción por vía de una danza ritornello de nuevo exótica y asiática con atavíos tailandeses. Luego vemos que se cumplen en el filme la ley de progresión continua y la de repetición. El clímax final se produce antes de ese estreno en San Francisco donde Von Bohlen da caza a Anne Marie y muere tras un duelo de esgrima con Cleve que devuelve a este último a la vía criminal. Dimitrioff como *deus- ex machina* facilita el last-minute-rescue y el final feliz, dentro de la ley, de la pareja rumbo a Virginia.

En este título Salomé se reapropia del control de su cuerpo, voluntad, sexualidad y elección afectiva desvinculada de condena o pecado. Ejerce su poder de fascinación para el bien y, si bien paga el precio de la renuncia a la carrera artística en favor de su pasión amorosa (la renuncia al reino), nadie toma esa decisión por ella.

Conclusión

En *Woman and the Demon: the Life of a Victorian Myth*, Nina Auerbach (1982) señaló 4 tipos de mujer presentes en la literatura del XIX: 1) el ángel doméstico; 2) mujer con pasado (y dentro de ella la mujer fatal, New Woman, la mujer salvaje, la actriz); 3) La prostituta y 4) la nueva mujer presente en Thomas Hardy, Bram Stoker, Oscar Wilde, Henry James y en autoras como Mona Caird, Menie Muriel Dowie, Ella Hepworth Dixon, George Egerton, Netta Syrett, Evelyn Sharp, Olive Custance, Victoria Cross.

La irrupción de los tres últimos tipos se debía al paso de una economía de producción a una economía de consumo que suponía a su vez la transición de la sexualidad de reproducción a la sexualidad unida al placer. Esta última se percibió como energía invasiva, caos y amenaza de una sociedad feminizada por la que la Salomé de Wilde debía morir restaurando el orden patriarcal (Martínez, 2010: 4-7).

Después del recorrido expuesto sobre la construcción del mito cultural de Salomé se ha identificado en la Salomé de Wilde la doble responsabilidad de su vigencia y de su misoginia. Gran parte de los topoi simbolistas (crueldad, mujer-serpiente, perversidad, virginidad narcisista, histeria, binomio eros-thánatos, la muerte y la doncella) deben desmontarse.

Salomé debe retener con orgullo su medio de expresión artístico (la danza) y la formulación del cuerpo (sea cuerpo-joya, estetizado, animalizado y dotado de gracia que aúne belleza y movimiento). Puede preservar su poder lunar y la mirada con toda su carga de subjetividad. Debe estar en posesión de su deseo y voluntad realizando un ejercicio similar a Delmira Agustini desmontando la condición de fetiche fálico, usar la propia voz para transformar el eros y experimentar sin temores el éxtasis de su satisfacción (Escaja, 2008: 56-58).

El poder de fascinación de su danza, de la comunicación asertiva de la propia voluntad, de su deseo de ósmosis con otro sujeto de deseo, con el amado es un motivo que mantiene su fuerza. Como intuyeron las bailarinas exóticas y actrices de comienzos del cine y sus últimas intérpretes el mito mantiene un gran potencial como *Weibermacht* tanto para ellas como para sus audiencias.

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The pimping of prostitution. Abolishing the sex work myth

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Review

Bindel, J. (2017). *The pimping of prostitution. Abolishing the sex work myth*. Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN-13: 978-1137558893

Julie Bindel is an investigative journalist that has performed huge research on prostitution. Bindel considers prostitution as the highest expression of gender violence and the root cause of sex trafficking. In her book, “The pimping of prostitution. Abolishing the sex work myth”, the author describes a well-assembled sex trade industry, with many ramifications in political power, but surprisingly also in some academic research and feminist approaches as well as in several social movements and NGOs. The author reviews the role of the client, the traffickers, the NGO, and academia. Bindel complements this review incorporating the stories of sexual trade survivors, that are very different from what certain researchers, traffickers, and clients tell.

The author explains that in society is frequent to find a social imaginary of the prostitute as a woman who exercises the right to use her body freely. According to Bindel's contributions, the reality is far from this: prostituted women are commonly girls who are forced into prostitution maybe at 13 years old, they are physically, psychologically, ideologically or legally prevented to leave it. They are at severe conditions of exploitation, such as having to perform 30 or 40 services per day during six or seven days a week; compelled to perform sexual practices that they do not desire with whom they do not want to; coerced to have sex without condom; they are exposed to suffer physical and psychological abuse by clients and pimps, they can be even murdered; they only keep a small part of the money since they must give most part to traffickers and brothel owners.

Bindel explains that all this happens regardless of the legislation model in which victims are, decriminalization, legalization, abolition, or prohibition. This generates many questions for Bindel which attempts to

answer in the book. For instance, how can an NGO as Amnesty International and international organizations like the United Nations defend decriminalization, which favors the interests of the lobbies? To what extent the powerful trafficking lobby influences all of this? Is there some kind of theoretical disorientation? Raising these relevant issues justifies the work of the author.

The author states that some pro-prostitution or pro-decriminalization academics are powerful activists who use their position to influence politics on prostitution. This leads the readers to ask what systems, university departments, research groups, thesis supervisors and research tutors, thesis tribunals, founding foundations..., what kind of academic knowledge, in the end, allows or encourages this?

The author maintains that feminism has led to great advances in many fields but not in prostitution and that human rights do not stretch to women in prostitution (Bindel, 2017, p. 166). Despite the growing number of survivors, there is a predominant speech that presents prostitution as a matter of choice and women's agency. Bindel argues that the pimp lobby plays with the argument that doing what you want is freedom and that it is feminist. Regardless of whether this "doing what you want" harms you or not, it is fair or not, it is repeatedly the only option given the lack of alternatives.

The current abolitionist movement is formed by many prostitution survivors and other forms of sexual violence, as well as women and some men who recognize the damage that the sex trade causes to society. Frequently, abolitionists suffer from bullying, defamation and even ostracism of many organizations that claim to be feminist and left-wing. Bindel asks how is it possible that the liberal left supports sex trade when it is based on the inequality and the absence of rights of the poorest and most vulnerable women and children in the world? Following an analysis that would remind readers of Marx's contributions, Bindel describes a patriarchal elite who easily agrees to present prostitution to women as the only alternative to poverty, while at the same time that sells it as a right, freedom and a milestone. To conclude, Bindel's book is a work worth reading.

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