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Be real black for me.  
The representation of African American Women in the television series She's Gotta Have it

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## Abstract

Thirty-one years after the release of the movie *She's Gotta have it* (1986), Spike Lee releases a long-format version of the movie with the same title through *Netflix*. This series format still presents an interesting depiction of the black female sexuality on which this research is based. Gender, race and class stereotyping is a stock feature of sitcoms but *SGHI* centers its plot in the life of the African American community in Brooklyn. This study analyzes the transmission and reproductions of stereotypes in the female characters of the show in order to demonstrate the prevalence of historical and emerging stereotypes in the twenty-first century.

Based on a review of the traditional depiction of African American sexuality, this analysis surveys the negative gendering that the film industry gives to the society by spreading discriminatory and sexist attitudes towards women and more concretely to African American women in the 2010s

In order to develop this argument, three female characters of the series are tested using a qualitative content analysis to interpret the evolution or obsolescence of traditional stereotypes.

**Keywords;** Qualitative Content Analysis; Stereotypes; Black Female Sexuality; Television Series. *She's Gotta Have It*

## Abstract

Treintaún años después del estreno de la película *Nola Darling* (1986), Spike Lee lanza una versión serializada de la película bajo el mismo título a través *Netflix*. La serie todavía presenta una descripción interesante de la sexualidad femenina Afroamericana en la cual se basa este estudio. Género, etnia y estereotipos de clase son rasgos comunes en las series pero, *Nola Darling* se centra concretamente en la vida de la comunidad Afro Americana en Brooklyn. Este trabajo se centra en analizar la presencia de estereotipos en los personajes femeninos de la serie para demostrar la prevalencia y la evolución de las etiquetas aplicadas en el siglo veintiuno.

Basándome en las críticas que ha tenido la representación tradicional de la sexualidad negra, este análisis investiga la difusión negativa que la industria del cine vende a la sociedad a través de actitudes discriminatorias y sexistas hacia la mujer y más concretamente, a la mujer Afroamericana en la década del 2010.

Para explicar esta idea, tres personajes femeninos de la serie son testados usando un análisis de contenido de tipo cualitativo. Posteriormente, se interpretan para observar la evolución u obsolescencia de los estereotipos tradicionales y la aparición de categorías contemporáneas.

Palabras clave; Análisis cualitativo; estereotipos; Sexualidad Afroamericana; Serie de televisión; Nola Darling.

**DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y ORIGINALIDAD DEL TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO**

Yo, Natalia del Mar Moisés Azize Fernández, con documento de identificación 54122082T, y estudiante del Grado en Estudios Ingleses de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Granada, en relación con el Trabajo Fin de Grado presentado para su defensa y evaluación en el curso 2019 / 2020, declara que asume la originalidad de dicho trabajo, entendida en el sentido de que no ha utilizado fuentes sin citarlas debidamente.

Granada, a 27 de Mayo de 2020

Fdo.: Natalia.M

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## 1. Introduction

In 1986, the Afro-American director Spike Lee released the film *She's Gotta have it*. With only twelve shooting days production and a low budget of 175,000\$ donated by The New York State Council of the Arts, the Jerome Foundation, the Brooklyn Arts and Cultural Association and finally the University of New York, Lee released one of his most critically-acclaimed films. (Rizov, 2013, par 2)

The story of a young woman who enjoyed her sexuality with three different lovers and did not choose any of them as boyfriend was shocking for the audience of the late eighties, especially, because the main character was a black woman.

After its debut, the character of Nola Darling became a heroine and with her, a new radical wave of depicting the female sexuality in cinema was born. However, this representation of women was not equally accepted by the feminist movement that considered the film only fed the privileged view of male on the screen and consolidated the false image of female sexuality. (Foote, 2007: 212)

The present research is focused on the representation of black women not in the movie but in the TV show *She's Gotta have it* (2017). The reason why I decided to analyze the show instead the movie, is mainly because the show is a contemporary version of the movie and it has not been fully studied yet.

The first season of the show follows the plot of the movie with the same title but adding new perspectives such as the friends of Nola, her parents and gives more information about her artistic work. Throughout this adaptation of the film into a TV series, the audience has the chance to learn more about the characters since they are more developed and also, engage with them. The long form offers as well the chance to know more details of not only Nola's lovers but also about Nola herself, her artwork, her family and her friends.

Serialized television offers the development of the character but that is not the only benefit of this format. Television series perform a constant process rather than only produce a product. The end of a season, or series finale, is a good example of the result of a constant work, during the season or seasons, along which the viewer creates a bond with the character. Then this last episode would represent the answer of all the questions or conflicts and would make the audience feel part of it. (Jaramillo, 29, 2014)

The recent release of the show has not allowed to have detailed analyses comparable to those of the movie such as the article of Felly Nkweto Simmonds (1988) or the essay of

Thelma Wills Foote. (2007) In any case, the show displays researchable themes such as the female objectification, self-esteem disorders or attitudes such as *victim blaming* that are the order of the day. The main objective of this research is to answer these researchable questions;

- Are African American female characters still stereotyped in a late 2010s television show?
- Does the representation of female characters challenge the image given of them in the movie from the eighties?

Those questions are going to be solved in the study conducting a qualitative research to gain in-depth insight into; how are characters created, how they are represented and how the audience engages with them.

## 2. Methodology

Content analysis is the method chosen since it allows the analysis of messages visual material produce to the audience and also elaborate statements. As Suki Ali (2012, 289) stated, content analysis can be applied to visual material since it represents a kind of text which reflects social processes and help to construct perceptions of the social and cultural world.

More concretely the method used is a qualitative content analysis using as subjects of analysis, the female characters of the show mentioned above. Content analysis has been defined as a quantitative analysis of messages relying on the scientific approach (regarding objectivity, intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability and hypothesis testing) which can be applied to any variable since it is not conditioned by type or context in which the messages are created or presented. (Neuendorf, 2002, 10)

As has been previously clarified, this type of analysis can be applied in different fields although, in this case, the focus is on films and media. For that reason, the steps and the methodology used vary from the standard one.

The procedure followed in the content analysis of texts consists in a quantitative study of the text looking for the presence and frequency of specific terms, narratives or concepts. Due to its quantitative character, it is going to involve listing items such as specific words or categories, or measuring the lines or space devoted to the different themes. The design of this kind of research will consist first in formulating a topic, the researcher defines the relevant

text and then, an appropriate sample is obtained. The sampling will be based in three criteria: manageability, relevance and representativeness (Seale & Tonkiss 2012, 460)

In the case of analyzing visual material, it can be illustrated through soap operas. First of all, the researcher will have to make questions like: “*How are women depicted in soap operas as mothers, as opposed to sex objects, workers or mainstays of the community?*” Then, the analyst will try to identify the *sexist images* or the role the women portrayed and count the cases in a well-defined sample. Finally, after counting the elements, it should allow the comparison and generalization across a field so the one that has been studied could speak about the role of women within a clearly defined population. (Ali, 2012, 289)

The topic of this research is the depiction of black women in the TV series *She’s gotta have it*. The questions about how they are depicted will be related with their physical aspect (e.g. hair straightened or curly), their political status (married or single), and their economic status (if they are economically independent or someone have to maintain them) among others.

With the use of these questions, twenty items are created and tested in each of the female characters of the show. I have chosen the main character, Nola Darling, her friend Shemekka and her boss Raqueletta Moss. In the process of testing, each chapter of the show should be seen again, in order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the study. Subsequently, an elaboration of a table with all the twenty items and the female characters will be made. Instead of marking each character with a tic if she fulfills the item or with a cross if not, the categories will be evaluated throughout a numeric scale. The number one is going to represent not attainment or little attainment to the category, number two is going to perform partial attainment and finally, number three is going to show complete fulfillment of the item.

Once the table is completed, the results need to be interpreted. According to Clive Seale and Fran Tonkiss (2012, 465), the interpretation of the results represents the link between the coded data and the assignation of content to those codes. The interpretation of the items has to take into account not only if the character fulfills that condition expressed in the item but also make a comparison between this character and the others on the show. By making this assessment, the analysis goes beyond simply listing the responses and that is what makes this research qualitative.



The idea of choosing more than only one female character in the show is in an attempt to have different contexts taken into account and have more complete conclusions before make any statement avoiding generalizations. At the same time, the analysis of only three female characters and not studying as well the male characters of the show limits the results. Due to the extension of the research, the study of African American men in the show will involve the elaboration of another independent research.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The image of women in films has always been a matter of interest to the feminist movement for decades. Nonetheless, the approach of how women were depicted and especially, how women were represented in films by the men perspective was carried by the psychoanalytic feminism in the early mid-eighties. (Carroll, 1990, 349)

The representation of women had evolved since then over time, particularly with the huge rise of the feminist movement. The field of feminism in film studies had branched out to several directions at the feminist movement was growing up. The movement, started to take into consideration, for instance, the relationship between girls and media, the study of television shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the reception it had on female audiences. Furthermore, the importance of the LGBT representations and audiences became a matter of interest as well as, the rise of gay visibility in media. (Douglas, 2017, 71)

Otherwise, one of the most important challenges feminist studies had to deal with in the twenty-first century is the called “post-feminism”, the framework which assumes that the equality for women has been already achieved, and therefore, feminism is unnecessary. Unfortunately, feminist media analysis still has challenges to face up, the fragmentation of the audience or the ongoing war between feminism and antifeminist are a threat to gender identity, performance, relationships and the still elusive hope for gender equality. (Douglas, 2017, 71)

Returning to the mid-eighties, the most significant psychoanalytic feminist work is Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema* (1975). In her essay, Laura Mulvey sets out how the Hollywood cinema manipulates the visual pleasure of the audience. The visual pleasure generated when the audience watch a movie, reflects also the bases in which the society itself is constructed, that in this case, is a patriarchal one. In order to enquire into

visual fascination, Mulvey embraced the theory of scopophilia or visual pleasure from the psychoanalysis to create her theoretical framework. (Mulvey, 1999, 58)

Following the bases of psychoanalysis, Mulvey (1990, 62) considers men as active participants and women as passive ones who slow down the rhythm of the action, with the only purpose of women to be contemplated. Male characters make meaning and female characters are the ones who carry that meaning, they signify sexual difference, which for the male spectator foretells castration, a threat to them.

The idea of castration, lead to two psychic strategies to abolish the intimidation of castration. One of them is through *fetishism*, denying the female lack of pennis by turned the female form into a fetish object. The second one is *voyeurism*, recreating the original discovery of the claimed castration of the woman. (Mulvey 1990, 65)

The psychoanalytic approach to film analysis was strongly contested by cognitivist scholars, notably Noel Carroll (1990, 350) who defends the study of the image of women in film approach with no commitment to psychoanalysis. The essay of Laura Mulvey meant the introduction of the psychoanalytic theory into the field of film studies. However, the reason why the article by Noël Carroll has been used previously is to highlight the weaknesses of the model proposed by the psychoanalysis when it is applied to the female film approach and present another theory related with the female approach on films.

In the first place, one important flaw in the psychoanalytic analysis is the lack of testing the data and the result obtained then, would be a set of conjectures and hypothesis based on the point of view of a film critic, in this case, Laura Mulvey. (Carroll, 1990, 353) These set of conjectures tend to be generalized statements. Generalization is represented through the idea of women being portrayed as passive and object of the gaze and male as the active part. This idea is considered a conjecture due to the existence of counterexamples that call it into doubt. Action films starred by male actors such as, Sylvester Stallone or Arnold Schwarzenegger are characterized for being films which represent virility and put the spotlight into their muscular bodies. Without forgetting also, movies in which actress were great active doers like, Rosalind Russell in *His Girl Friday*. (Carroll, 1990, 353)

Similarly, psychoanalysis loses again its empiricism when it hypothesizes *voyeurism* as a model for all filming viewing. *Voyeurism* requires trusting victims for the intrusive gaze of the *voyeurs*. Knowing in what voyeurism consists about its application into the film industry does not fit to the data. (Carroll, 1990, 354)

Lastly, as has been explained previously, the approach of Laura Mulvey is the visual pleasure obtained throughout the female form in cinema. Nevertheless, as Carroll (1990, 359) concludes his essay, there are male viewers who do not feel threatened or are simply skeptical about the “laws” formulated by psychoanalysis of Laura Mulvey. For those male spectators, Laura Mulvey did not solve the assumed issue of Visual Pleasure, primarily because there was no problem to solve in the first place and therefore the competition between theories to address this issue has not an objective.

In view of the weaknesses detected in the psychoanalytic approach, the fundamental conclusion extracted, from my point of view, is the overgeneralization with no reliable proof. In order to accomplish a justified development of this study, we should proceed by formulating testable hypotheses. Accordingly, this study will proceed in a more empirical direction that allows making researchable questions with reliable data that can be tested, the alternative that better fits to my interests is cognitivism.

Nevertheless, cognitivism is not a unified theory but instead is a viewpoint for film research. This stance promotes the exploration of hypothesis about film reception based on, cognitive and perceptual processes of spectators rather than in terms of the unconscious processes. (Carroll, 1996, 48) The advantage of a cognitive approach as that advocated by Carroll and Bordwell is the guidance of empirical evidence. Through empirical research on factors like attention and comprehension, we can acquire a more detailed portrait of spectatorship than does psychoanalysis. (Prince, 1996, 78)

The different theories within film studies, try to identify and explain regularities or common patterns in the responses of viewers to films. However, for the cognitive perspective or also named empirical-experimental, those evennesses are commonly processes of perception, comprehension, emotional responses and more abstract appropriation. (Bordwell, 2010, 6)

The empirical-experiential families of theories exhibit some closeness with other theoretical trends like signification theorists, who agree spectators can construct meanings that the filmmaker never intended. And the other way around, empirical-experiential family assume that learning plays an essential role in understanding some of the regularities the spectators detect in films, like conventions of storytelling. (Bordwell, 2010, 6)

Cognitive perspective, concentrates on the cinematic experience of the spectator. David Bordwell (2010, 6) illustrates this idea through the example of the suspense; in order to

boost suspense, the researcher will design features that evoke this feeling of anticipation like, the use of tense music. Then, thanks to those features, the researcher is able to specify what perceptual, cognitive and affective activities support the central purpose of enhancing suspense.

The concept of experience is considered by cognitivism as being connected to non-filmic capacities and skills, which many of them are part of our ordinary experience. The reason why the spectator is able to perceive when a character is unhappy, for example, is because we apply our natural abilities to make sense of space, facial expressions, causal sequence and social exchanges. For that reason, cognitivism, it is also called “naturalistic”, all our experience is used to understand the film is in front of us. (Bordwell, 2010, 7)

Even though the spectators rely on natural experience, it does not mean that they are going to be always right in their suppositions. We tend to associate the causes of a behavior to personality character rather than to circumstances. That is a great opportunity to storytellers to create a narrative surprise by tricking the audience with the introduction of a character who later turns out to be a rather different sort of person. (Bordwell, 2010, 8)

All things considered, Bordwell (2010, 10), portrays films as messages of experiences or a systems of signs to be decoded by the spectators. In some cases, the filmmaker is going to predict what the audience will interpret, but in other cases, some viewers infer things that were not intended. Thus, cognitive film studies, is the survey of the regularities and the exceptions (i.e. those spectators who perceive things that were not planned), convergences and divergences, through rational, empirical inquiry. (Bordwell, 2010, 10)

As has been illustrated previously, the cognitivist theory focuses on the experience of the spectator, particularly the reactions that the film evokes to the audience. In order to survey the reception and try to be the most objective possible, the cognitivist approach relies on empiric methods that allow as well, the interpretation of the subjective like the responses of the viewers. In this study, it is needed an empiric method that converts the field of the inner experience, (i.e. the interpretations of the audience) and also allows this subjective data being measurable. For that reason, the method that better fits with these requirements is content analysis.

Within the qualitative content analysis itself, Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah E.Shannon (2005,1278) identified three different approaches of analysis depending on its purpose, these are; conventional content analysis, directed content analysis and summative content analysis.

Qualitative content analysis is a widely used method to analyze text data. Its methodology consists in “*the subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns*”

The three different approaches of content analysis are said by Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah E. Shannon (2005, 1285) to follow the same analytical process; formulating a researchable question to be answered, selecting a sample to analyze, defining the categories to be applied to those samples, delimiting the coding process, implementing the coding process, determining veracity and analyzing the results of the coding process. Whereas, the central difference between these types of analysis resides in how the initial codes are developed.

The conventional content analysis is generally used in studies which its main aim is to describe a phenomenon whose existing literature and data is limited. As consequence, the researcher is who by the familiarization and repetition of the data creates the categories. (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, 1279). In this study, the literature related with the topic chosen is extensive since, the role of women in television and cinema is still subject of analysis. Not only is this literature and data what facilitates the outlining of categories and codes but also, it allows the extension and the creation of new codes, making the analysis of the program more affordable. Therefore, my choice is a combination of the directed content analysis and the summative content analysis.

First of all, the directed content analysis model is based on relying on prior theory in order to helping focus the research question. At the same time, that theory can give another perspective about the variables of interest or the relationship between variables thereby, helping to establish the initial code scheme. (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, 1281) The steps followed in a directed content analysis, begin with the identification of key concepts from the existing theory as initial coding categories. In my case, there is a wide variety of articles, books and other resources based on the representation of women in television. Then, definitions of these categories are given by the use of the prior literature. If the data is collected primarily, for instance through interviews, the researcher will have to reread or transcript for the process of coding. (ibid)

There is also the possibility of coding directly using the predetermined codes. In my research, since the data is a from a television program, the option is to watch again the episodes, writing down the characteristics that might be a possible item to test in the female

characters and also use the information directly as predetermined codes. Finally, the results and findings from this type of analysis, offer supporting or non-supporting evidence for a theory (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, 1282)

On the other hand, as stated above, this study is a combination of both types of analysis. The reason of including the summative content analysis as well is because of the role of interpretation. Despite the fact that summative content analysis focuses on counting words, the study pay attention to the underlying context for the use of that term. By counting, the patterns in the data are identified and the codes are contextualized which allows the interpretation of the context in which it was used. The closely inspection of that terms, guarantee the trustworthiness and credibility of this study. (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, 1285)

The application of the summative content analysis into my study is not related with the idea of looking for common words in the episodes of the program. Instead, it is related with the clichés or stereotypes mentioned by the characters themselves. From my point of view, the analysis of those terms would help for the better understanding of the context in which the characters interact and how they faced with it.

#### 4. Analysis

The unit of analysis for the present study was the first season of the television show *She's gotta have it*. The research surveyed three female characters of the show, Nola Darling, Shemekka and Raqueletta Moss along its ten forty minutes. The study of these characters has as main goal, to find explicit allusions to sexism, inequalities between men and women and the presence of stereotypes of the female figures on television.

As has been expressed in the methodology, the analyses of the characters consisted in testing on the characters the twenty categories chosen and evaluate them from one to three, according to the level of agreement. A table representing the analysis is included in the appendix.

The categories encompass different aspects of the female figure that can be grouped into three higher level categories. There are eight categories related to the traditional stereotypes applied to African American woman in films and in television. These stereotypes are suggested by Kelli An Fritsche (2017). The second group of categories is associated with personality and physique of the women of the show. This set of categories addresses issues

related with self-esteem, identity and the image these women project. Finally, the third group covers the sexist attitudes towards women by the men of the show. The order of the dimensions will be the following one;

- In the first dimension we can group categories from 1 to 8.
- In the second dimension I have included categories 9,10,11,12,13,14,15 and 16.
- The third dimension I deal with 16,17,18,19 and 20

To begin with, from the twenty items chosen, there are eighteen of them in which at least one character completely fulfills the category (i.e. those marked with number three). These categories are going to be divided in the ones which have less representation (i.e. those marked with lower numbers) and the ones which have more representation to study afterwards the reasons of it.

The group with less representation includes eight items; *body shaming, natural hair, sapphire stereotype, capricious, damsel in distress, jezebel stereotype, crazy lady stereotype, icon of sexual freedom, and progressive sexual politics*. While, the group with more representation or higher degree of consistency comprises twelve categories; *strong black woman stereotype, crazy lady stereotype, leading work position, self-serving, victim blaming, troubled daughter-parents relationship, economically independent, objectified by men, emotion squelcher, mammy stereotype, against other women and public image*.

The first category is the *strong black woman* stereotype (Fritsche, 2017, 101) or also named *Superwoman*. As its name indicates, this stereotype denotes the figure of a woman who is able to overcome adversities and who is also a role model for other women. The first name that came to the mind after reading this category is Raqueletta Moss.

In the fifth episode Raqueletta tells Nola about her difficult childhood. She was prostituted by her mother, a crack addict until she was adopted. Now she is the principal of a school and help kids with similar family backgrounds to hers to succeed. In a second level would be Nola and her friend Shemekka. Nola is an independent passionate artist who works hard to live off her art and Shemekka is a mother who is raising her daughter alone after her breakup and a character who only wants her daughter to be proud of her.

The second category is the *jezebel* stereotype (Fritsche, 2017, 101). By this stereotype, black women are depicted as hypersexual. Nola is represented as a hypersexual woman since she has multiple relationships. Her friend Clorinda Bradford, explains in the first episode what it was like sharing her apartment with Nola and finding a different man

every day. On the other hand Shemekka and Raqueletta Moss remain unrepresented by this category.

The most common stereotype of African American woman in movies and television is the role of the *mammy* (Fritsche, 2017, 101). An example of this is Octavia Spencer in the movie *The Help*. (2011) In this show, Nola is not represented in this category since she does not perform any protector role. As has been said before, Shemekka is a single mother who works hard to be a model for her daughter. Although she works as waitress in a club, she represents the mammy stereotype partially. Raqueletta Moss, again, is a clear representation of the mammy stereotype she takes care of the children of her school but also there is an affective friendship with Nola

The following stereotype applied in African American women is *sapphire* (Fritsche, 2017, 101). This category describes an African American woman who is uneducated and use vulgar vocabulary and bad manners. In this show, the unique connection between this stereotype and the female characters is Shemekka. Nola describes her in the second episode as the “special brand of Brooklyn brown” while the mother of Nola thinks Shemekka is so “basic”. Shemekka is unlike from her group of friends; she embodies the values of the Brooklyn hood.

The fifth category is women *against other women* (Fritsche, 2017, 99). It is a self-explaining category; it describes the competition between women regarding a men. During the show Raqueletta Moss stays away from this dispute but Nola, Shemekka and Clorinda have some arguments. For instance, the resentment of Clorinda since Nola started dating Mars who was the ex-boyfriend of Clorinda. This issue is recurrent during the first season but as a “friendly” joke until episode eight when, Clorinda published Nola was behind the campaign *my name isn't* without consulting her and Clorinda compares it with Nola breaking the “code” between friends. This category is also fulfilled by Nola and Shemekka. In the sixth episode, it is the debut of Shemekka in *Hot n' Trot* and also the art exhibition of Nola. Nola completely forgets about the show of Shemekka and only calls her to talk about her exhibition. Then Shemekka feels disappointed, “it is always about you, Nola”.

The sixth and seventh categories are related with emotions and feelings. The first one is the *crazy lady stereotype* (Fritsche, 2017, 100) and the second one the *emotion squelcher stereotype* (Fritsche, 2017, 101). The *crazy lady stereotype* is based on the judgment, mainly by men, against women opinions, actions or emotions. This is a clear label used against Nola



for dating three different men. Just in the first episode Greer, one of her lovers, claims Nola is a *sex addict*.

The *emotion squelcher* stereotype (Fritsche, 2017, 101), is connected with the previous one but, in this case, the woman hides her feelings in order to give the image of a strong woman. The most representative character of this character is Raqueletta Moss and her tragic childhood. Then, Shemekka is also part of this category. In episode six, when she is in the hospital, Nola and Shemekka's mother are talking and she says "She thinks she is hard but she is mush inside". Finally, Nola, in a fewer degree, also hides her feelings after the attack on the street until she decides to face the problem and go to a therapist.

Continuing the line of usual stereotypes in movies and television, the next category is not specifically applied to African American women but to women in general, it is the *damsel in distress* stereotype. In this case, Raqueletta Moss is not represented in this category and neither does Shemekka. So the most related with this category is Nola.

In the second episode, Nola talks about her street assault with her three lovers and all of them ask her why did she not call any of them, as if they were rescuers. Another example is the eighth episode when the wife of Jamie discovered the painting of Nola and she cancels the check. Nola calls Jamie yelling at him since she is not able to pay her rent and makes emotional blackmail to him. Finally he gives back the painting and the money to Nola.

The second group of categories is the one formed by features of personality and physical appearance.

To begin with, the first category to be tested is related to a moral quality, in this case being an *exploiter* or a *self-serving person*. Raqueletta Moss and Shemekka present no references to this category. This category might be related with the *Gold Digger stereotype*, this category describes a person who only dates somebody mainly to extract money from them (Fritsche, 2017, 101) Again, Nola is the most represented in this case and there are several examples to justify this statement.

The relationship between Nola and Jamie is based in the stability that Jamie gives to Nola. Part of this stability is the economic stability. For instance in episode five, Jamie buys a box of art supplies to the children of the school since the school does not give funds to Nola for the material. Moreover, in episode six, she does not invite any of her lovers, but she wears the dress Jamie buys for her for that day. In the same episode as well, Nola takes advantage

of Mars kindness and he helps her taking her paintings to the art gallery but she does not even invites him.

Secondly, the next category is also related to a personality feature and connected with the previous category; it is being *capricious or self-centered*. The only character connected with this category is Nola. The previous examples, the sixth or the eighth episode, can also be applied in this case; she dates these three men since each of them gave her something but she is not able to pick one and plays with them during the whole season.

Thirdly, this category deals with the physique of the characters concretely, in the fact of being ashamed of their bodies; the name of the category is *body shaming*. As it has been explained above, in the second episode Shemekka talks about her body insecurity, specifically her lack of butt. Her obsession leads her to get butt injections on a motel and ended with a blood infection that almost kills her. Raqueletta Moss makes no comments about this issue and Nola, in the second episode too, makes clear that she accepts her body and she would not change anything of it.

Related with the physical appearance, the hair is a matter of concern in African American Women that is why I chose *natural hair* category. The consideration of black hairstyle as unprofessional is an issue that the African American community fights to avoid. In the show, the only character who wears natural hair is Nola. She is a woman who is proud of her origins and wants to reflect that to the world. However, Shemekka and Raqueletta Moss, wear straightened hair. In the second episode, the mother of Nola describes Shemekka as “basic” and “not natural” for straighten her hair and finally Nola paints her with the afro hairstyle in order to “liberate” her.

To continue with the stereotypes of this second group the next category is *public image*. What it is interesting in applying this category to the show is the contradiction between what they say and what they actually do. Shemekka is described by Nola in the second episode as someone who is never going to apologize for her nature or actions. Nevertheless, she changes her body because she does not fit in the prototype of the girls in the club and nobody pays attention to her. The same happens to Nola, she insists in her idea of everything has to be on her rules and no men is going to condition her but, in the end what she does is regarding others opinions.

Related to the idea of what is projected to the society, there is another category, *icon of sexual freedom*. This category is principally embodied by Nola since the whole show is

about this topic. She is a woman who has three male lovers and one female lover, but she does not want any kind of commitment with them. As she says in the last episode, she is a lady who acts like men and that is why they cannot stand this.

However, her sexual freedom has not to be confused with polyamory, mainly because in polyamory everybody is in agreement with the conditions of the relationship and in this case they are not. Polyamory relationships are based in respect and Nola clearly does not take into account this fact. For instance, talking in the phone with one of them while she is on a date with other of them is not very polite.

Furthermore, another stereotype connected with sexuality of the characters is *progressive sexual politics* (Simmonds, 1988). The main concern of this stereotype is the idea of being shocking or modern to the time the series started. This stereotype is more connected with the film than with the television show since in the eighties this plot broke all the rules. Anyway, it is still represented by the bisexuality of Nola and her relationship with Opal.

The last category of this group is not influenced by the attitude of somebody towards the characters but, with the effect of *troubled daughter and parents' relationship* has on them. The tragic relationship between Raqueletta Moss and her mother during her childhood is one of the hardest moments during the first season. She might seem distant at first but it is simply her defense mechanism. It can be appreciated by the way she refers to herself in third person.

Partially represented is Shemekka, her mother is only introduced in the sixth episode. There are no references to her father but what is clear is that Shemekka hides information to her mother and lies her about what is actually her job. On the other hand, the one who presents a more healthy relationship with her parents is Nola. Both are artists and live in Brooklyn as well, they advise Nola when she needs and also help her with her financial problems.

The final set of categories is which represents clearly the inequality between men and women and the sexist attitudes towards women during the show. The first category of this group is the fact of being *objectified by men*; it is the only category that the three female characters are completely represented. The third episode, in which Nola wears her new black dress, represents clearly how the three of them objectified Nola simply because she wears that dress. Shemekka is clearly objectified by the work she displays, she is waitress on a striptease club, the more ideal body you have, the more men are going to like you and then,

the more money you are going to earn. Finally, Raqueletta Moss, as explained above, was prostituted by her mother when she was only a child since has a drug addiction problem.

The second category is the blaming attitude taken by somebody of against a victim after an attack. It is labeled as *victim blaming*. In this case, Nola is the only character who fulfills completely the category. Again, the third episode of the black dress has explicit comments from the three lovers using the dress as the cause of the problem. Firstly, Jamie tries to cover her with her coat in the restaurant for being too provocative and then he justifies himself by saying that this dress wants attention, so if she does not like that she should not wear it. Secondly, Nola wears the dress with Mars for going to a concert; there they have a fight with another guy who tries to flirt with Nola. His response is the same as Jamie, it is the fault of the dress, concretely he uses the words “*that black dress is like black on black crime*”. Finally, Greer did the same, “*most men can’t handle this dress*” and made Nola feel uncomfortable while he took pictures of her. Even her friend Clorinda when she was going to buy the dress considered that dress as provocation and indirectly judges Nola for the attack.

Thirdly, traditionally women were economically kept by their husbands or partners, so they do not have to look for a job. For that reason I suggest the application of the *economically independent* status as a category for the female characters. Both Shemekka and Raqueletta Moss are hard workers who have their own jobs. In the case of Shemekka after her incident in the club, once she is out of the hospital she started to look for a new job. That is why Shemekka and Raqueletta are ranked at industrious women and Nola as less productive than them.

Withal, as has been illustrated with the previous categories, Nola is not completely independent financially. She turns to her parents or to Jamie when she is not able to pay her rent. In the eighth episode the spectator can see her doing several works like painting lessons, dog walker and selling her art on the street. She is a person waiting for a lucky strike which solves all her problem, in this case a grant, the Catlett Prize.

Finally, the last category is *leading work position*. As its name indicates, this category wants to demonstrate if there is presence of women in a high-position. The only character who achieves a leading work position is Raqueletta Moss as principal of the school. Shemekka is a waitress so she does not fulfill that category. Nola tries to be her own boss by living of her art but, as explained before, she hardly has money to pay her rent. This category is relevant if we compare it with the jobs of the males characters Jamie, a rich entrepreneur

and Greer a famous photographer. The female figure is then represented as aspiring only to ordinary jobs without standing out in anything.

## 5. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to describe and evaluate the image of black female characters in the show *She's Gotta have it* checking them against a set of categories. These stereotypes were a combination of traditional stereotypes applied to African American women and new ones that emerge by myself during the visualization of the episodes. The final goal of this study was to analyze the sexist stereotypes that could be in the show and explore the evolution and introduction of new stereotypes in the twenty first century.

The discussion will follow the three higher-level categories established above: (1) traditional stereotypes on African American Women, (2) personality and physique categories and (3) sexist attitudes of men towards women in the show.

As Patricia Hill Collins contends (2000, 69) the portrayal of African-American women as *mammies*, *matriarch*, *welfare recipients* and *hot mommas* only contributes to the U.S oppression to Black women. By the use of these stereotypes, a discourse of racism, sexism, poverty and other inequalities is hidden and becomes normalized for the audience.

The first controlling image applied to African American women is the *mammy* (Fritsche, 2017); the loyal domestic servant, the poor caretaker of children of a white family. (Collins, 2000, 72) Nevertheless, despite the definitions given by Fritsche (2017) and Collins (2000), the representation of this stereotype has evolved into a new figure. In the show the stereotype is embodied by Shemekka and Raqueletta Moss but the audience does not receive the image described above. Instead, they display the role of women who are helpers and empathize easily with people. This modern representation changes the physical aspect and leaves the subordination to whites apart without transforming these characters; in fact, they still bare the attitude of caretakers and protective mothers. Moreover, this renewed depiction of the mammy is similar to the *strong black woman* category.

Another historical stereotype is *Jezebel* (Fritsche, 2017). This image emerged under slavery times and black women were depicted with inappropriate sexual appetite, insatiable and in some cases considered as *freaks*. (Collins, 2000, 83) In the opening scene of the movie and the series, Nola explains that she hates labels and being called *freak* for having several

lovers. Fritsche (2017, 65) considers this stereotype has being created for the benefit of white men and contrasts with the image of white women described as pure and modest.

From my point of view, I do not consider the *Jezebel* stereotype represents the subordination to men that Fritsche (2017) describes in this show. I consider Spike Lee took this derogatory stereotype used in African American women and applied it to the movie and to the series to deconstruct it. In both formats, the image produced of Nola is one of sexual freedom; she is the one who decides. Lee renewed the image of *jezebel* on an attempt to normalize women enjoying their sexuality and through the series it can be appreciated that this normalization is not yet achieved, that is why this show is still significant nowadays.

Similarly, another stereotype which follows this pattern of being considered freak is *the crazy lady* stereotype. In this category, the female feelings, emotions and actions are not taken seriously by men who, in fact, are the ones generally call this to them. (Fritsche, 100, 2017) This description by Fritsche is actually made clear explicitly in the last episode when Nola says her lovers are only against her because she acts like a men. As I have mention before, during the show Nola is described as *insatiable woman*, a *freak* and even a *sex addict*. It is true that the show follows the plot of the movie of 1986 but thirty four years later, women still have to tolerate such comments just for doing what they want and that is why I consider the plot of this show is still accurate to the twenty first century.

In the case of the *sapphire* stereotype (Fritsche, 2017) it is personified in the character of Shemekka. The name of this stereotype emerges from the name of a character in the show *Amos' n Andy*. *Sapphire Stevens* was distinguished by being aggressive, rude, and dominant with her husband and for having exaggerated moves. (West, 2017, 149)

Shemekka bears the values of the Brooklyn hood, her moves the way she talks is something that we can see in famous singers like *Nicki Minaj* or *Cardi B*. In fact, both singers are mentioned during the show like role models. As Reggie says in the fifth episode “being a hoe can be a great business”. The aggressiveness and vulgarity described by West (2017, 149) are no longer part of this stereotype making *sapphires* now not a negative figure but to considering them as as urban models that represent the neighborhood culture.

All the show revolves around the Brooklyn hood and Spike Lee shows devotion to it not only in this show but also in the movie, the opening images of each episode reflect his affection to this neighborhood and his interest to preserve it. On a try to keep those values,

Spike Lee includes at least one female character that represents them and a masculine counterpart, Mars.

On the contrary, a stereotype that projects the hard work that black women have been facing since slavery to be considered equal in the society is that of *Strong Black women*. This category has its origins since slavery when black women were forced to take part in works that were typically held by men. (Wright, 2014, 29) This idea connects with *emotion squelcher* stereotype suggested by Fritsche (2017, 56). If you want to uphold the superwoman image, you cannot show any sign of fragility. The characters pick different ways to cover her emotions, Raqueletta uses the third person to address herself, Shemmeka still uses her sense of humor to talk about what happened and Nola starts therapy.

Similarly, Spike Lee tries to break up with the typical female stereotype of *damsel in distress*, and to focus more on characters who have to overcome obstacles and represent strength. However, despite the fact that the category of *damsel in distress* is only represented by one character, it is still present on the show. The most curious thing about this category is that is represented by the main character, Nola.

In my opinion, the fact that Nola who is against dependence is the one more represented in this category is done totally in purpose by Spike Lee as if Nola has two faces, the one she wants to show the world of a strong, independent woman and the hidden one in which she is partially what she criticizes. In contrast, the emotions of the male characters do not play an important role during the show and they are neither hidden from Nola and they are not considered fewer masculine for that.

The second group of categories is the one related to the personality of the female characters which conveys very remarkably aspects of the show.

Firstly, the *capricious* and *self-exploiter* category are selfish features used commonly to describe immature women in movies. As has been explained in the analysis Shemekka and more concretely Nola, are pictured as independent women but, when they are in a difficult situation ask for the help of a men. Progressively, during the first season as more aspects of Nola appears, the spectator starts to feel sympathy for the male characters and feel more distant about the way Nola behaves. At the beginning Nola is represented as the figure of female freedom but gradually, Spike Lee illustrates a childish and self-centered character that breaks the bond with the audience.

Another aspect that creates this distancing between the spectator and Nola is her attitude towards her friends, concretely with Shemekka. This attitude is represented under the stereotype of *against other women*. (Fritsche, 2017)

Fritsche (2017, 66) substantiate her definition of this stereotype in the competition between women for a man. However, this category covers more connotations than only a competition between women for a man or for money. The reason of the fight between women in this case is for the attention and jealousy; men do not take part of it. The friendship between Nola and Shemekka is affected by the competition of being the center of attention, especially by the fault of Nola. The combination of being against one of her friends, being selfish with her male lovers projects the image of a childish woman who does not know what she really wants and only hurts people around her.

A separate set of stereotypes that are key for the discussion are the ones related with the public image. The effects of the opinions of others affect Nola in the way her acts but in the case of Shemekka affects her body and more importantly her health. *Body Shaming* stereotype is basically included in the content analysis after the shocking scene of Shemekka in the sixth episode when her butt “explodes”. It was commented previously the importance the opinion of others has in a character such Shemekka. Shemekka does not represent the prototypical fat character; she is not fat in deed.

Her problem is that she does not fit in the standards of black bodies sold by Nicki Minaj or Kim Kardashian. Shemekka is ashamed of her body because of people like Winny, who does not want she on the stage because nobody will give money to see that body, her friends do not take the problem seriously and like Nola, suggests her to do some “squats”. Everybody around her knows about her insecurity but none helps her.

From where I stand, I consider Spike Lee not agrees with the idea of changing the body and surgery and the scene of the explosion might be interpreted as a lesson to her. It gives a bittersweet emotion to the audience and tries to leave a message of the consequences of being obsessed with the body. Apart from being unbelievable, the spectator does not know if it is a funny scene or a creepy one.

Finally, another interesting fact about the physical image of African American female characters in television and films is the hair. Two of the three characters of analysis do not wear her natural hair; mainly this is due to the previous discrimination African American women and men suffered for wearing their natural hair. The reason why African American



people changed their hair was on a try to “normalize” their aspect and have the same looks as white people. As Sonia Thompson (2019) points, the hair discrimination is not something from the past, she collects accounts of people who suffer hair discrimination in their works, it is still a matter of fact in many brands. Actually, it was not until 2019 when New York City banned hair discrimination by employers, schools and other public places. (Thompson, 2019)

Lee wants to address issue in sixth episode during the art show of Nola, there is an artist named Zora who tells how her mother boils the comb in order to tie her hair back, leaving in her head a burn and now she creates sculptures made of combs. At the same time, Lee chooses a main character that is proud of her afro hairstyle.

The last aspects of this second group of categories are the topic of *icon of sexual freedom* and its relation with the *progressive sexual politics* that Simmonds (1988) points in her essay about the movie. What these two ideas have in common is that both are aspects more accurate for the film than for the show though it does not mean that they are not relevant in the current analysis.

The depiction of black sexuality as more active than whites has its roots in the history of slavery in which black women were objects to take advantage from. However, black male also are a threat to black female sexuality, which is why characters as Nola were needed and actually they are still needed. (Simmonds, 1988, 14-15) The label of *icon of sexual freedom* bared by Nola in the film was needed for redefining the sexual politics of African American women by black women and not by anyone else despite the representation of Spike Lee was innovative. (Simmonds, 1988, 20)

In the show, Nola is still considered as sexually free but after all the things discussed above, the truth is that she wants to give an image of freedom she is not as free as she claims. The same happens with the idea of *progressive sexual politics*. In the eighties polyamory relationships and the possibility of bisexuality was contemporary for the twenty century. Nowadays this idea is still useful and helps to normalize the fact that women or men are able to date several people at the same time and not being considered sex addicts. What is remarkable of the show is the visibility of bisexuality through the relationship of Nola and Opal like other shows are doing like; *Euphoria* (2019) or *Sense8* (2015).

In the movie, Opal and Nola do not have a relationship like in the series, Opal is simply interested in Nola and Jamie is jealous about her. Simmonds (1988, 17) argues that Opal and the other female characters around Nola are a threat to her and her sexuality. In my

opinion that was not a threat to her sexuality but simply she is not interested or comfortable with a girl. In the case of the show it is completely the opposite; the only relationship in which Nola is more involved and interested in commitment is the one with Opal.

The last set of categories is the one which involved sexist attitudes during the show. The objectification of female characters is the only category of the analysis in which the three characters are fully represented. It has been explained during the analysis the main reasons why this stereotype is achieved but what is curious is the way women are treated after this objectification. This time, Spike Lee chooses to remove the controversial rape scene from the show and shed a light in the importance of *victim blaming*.

*Victim Blaming* is a phenomenon based in the judgment of victims making them responsible of their own fate. (Grubb & Turner, 2012, 444) Spike Lee represents this idea in the third episode throughout a black dress used as a test by Nola to demonstrate the real thoughts of their lovers. From a personal perspective, the episode was one of the most enjoyable episodes of the whole season. In this episode Spike Lee illustrates how all of the male characters blame Nola for using that dress and how an old woman, the landlady of Nola, is more open minded than three young men. The ending of this episode leaves a good feeling in the spectator and give positive comments to Spike Lee compared with the rape scene of the movie.

Finally, the last aspect to be discussed is the labor field. As it was mentioned in the analysis there is only one character working in a leading position and in the aspect of being economically independent, again is the main character the only one who is partially able to take care of her economic life. In the United States in 2018, white women held nearly the third of management positions at 32.6% within this percentage; black women represent only 3.8%. (Catalyst, 2019).

What it is curious about this fact is that the male counterparts of the show are fully successful, except Mars. The depiction of Greer as someone who lives off his art and who is actually a wealthy and famous photographer contrasts with the image of Nola, a painter whose artistic career does not succeed. The combinations of those aspects make the audience to consider Nola as not good painter as she is, when she is actually pretty fantastic and also to associate Shemekka only with temporal and not qualified jobs, as if she none of them were able to aspire to a better job.

## 6. Conclusion

After analyzing the portrayal of three female characters through a qualitative content analysis, it is apparent that although they present new qualities that empower the figure of African American women, they are still stereotyped. In the results, we find how traditional stereotypes such as the *mammy* or the *sapphire* stereotype are still present in a television show of 2017.

Nevertheless, as it was examined in the discussion, these stereotypes are alive in the show deconstructed or illustrating new connotations from the twenty first century. The evolution of these stereotypes entails a big step of the African American politics of representation.

At the same time, the progressive disuse of some stereotypes which were well extended in the past reflects as well, shows an evolution in the depiction of African American women. For instance, stereotypes of *Hoochie Mamma* or *Welfare Queen* (Fritsche, 2017, 101-103) have no place in this television show. Additionally, the assertion of Fritsche (2017, 90) by which the presence of traditional stereotypes in current shows damages the image of African American women has been as well contrasted in the analysis. These categories have evolved leaving behind the negative connotation as in the case of the *sapphire* or *jezebel* stereotype in this show. Simultaneously, the presence of these stereotypes also serves to represent the contrast between two different centuries and also to not forget the historicity of these racist stereotypes.

On the other hand, by the removal of the movie rape scene, Spike Lee added instead a set of quotidian scenes of male chauvinism that women have to suffer on their daily life. As result, the message produced to the audience is a more complete one and also, shed a light on aspects that maybe are not understood as sexist behavior like, being catcalled on the street or being blamed by the clothes you wear.

Furthermore, in the movie the bisexuality of Nola was considered an issue that threatens the independence and sexuality of Nola and it was not developed. (Simmonds, 1988, 17) In the show instead, the bisexuality is addressed by Lee in an appropriate way. In this case the threat disappears and in fact, the bisexual relationship between Nola and Opal is the healthiest of the show.

It should not be ignored the fact that the three characters chosen fulfill categories that embody sexist attitudes and to consider the show and Nola as the most outstanding feminist work in television.

As argued in the discussion, the main character expresses an internal battle between what she would like to be and what she actually is. For that reason, the portrayal of a character that embodies clear and favorable values to the female representation is more noticeable in the secondary character, Raqueletta Moss.

We can also conclude that the representation of the female characters of the show is by far more beneficial to women than to men. The prototypes by which the male characters are constructed, are more prominent than the female ones and especially, more negative. Simmonds (1988, 20) affirms that the sexuality of black women should not be defined by anybody but black women but, this definition of sexuality does not have to include the attack or mockery of the male figure in any terms.

My application of content analysis to television discourse reveals the potential for a closer insight to the topic of study facilitating then the extraction of categories. Likewise, this direct interaction helps to reach easily to the issues of debate and to find the implications of each category in the episodes without trouble. The elaboration of a table with the different categories and their evaluations made this research more affordable to me since the subject of study was complex and intricate.

In the same way, this method also presents limitations. The application of a content analysis is a thorough and delicate method thus, only three female characters of the show were chosen and it was only analyzed the first season of the show. I was also the only person involved in the evaluation of the characters, which affects the level of objectivity of the research. As mentioned above, content analysis facilitated the study by its capacity of compressing the information, what can make this method leave important information out of the framework of study. Aspects such as staging of the scenes were not studied.

The election of the subject of analysis was conditioned by the extension that this paper should accomplish. Characters such as Opal, the female lover of Nola or Clorinda Bradford, friend of Nola, are also interesting figures that could be studied together with the other three characters. Likewise, the study of how the male figure is addressed in the show in comparison with the female one, would have led to formulation of a separate research.

All in all, the show gives a more complete vision about the female black sexuality than the movie does mainly because of the long version format. Additionally, the show moves a step forward to the positive portrayals of black women and it signifies the possibility of new shows to be created illustrating every time a more accurate vision of African American Women.

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## 8. Appendix A

<b>Characters</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Nola Darling</b>	<b>Shemekka</b>	<b>Raqueletta Moss</b>
<b>Categories</b>				
1. Against other women (Fritsche, 2017)	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
2. Crazy Lady (Fritsche, 2017)	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
3. Damsel in distress	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
4. Emotion Squelcher (Fritsche, 2017)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
5. Jezebel (Fritsche, 2017)	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
6. Mammy (Fritsche, 2017)	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
7. Sapphire (Fritsche, 2017)	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
8. Strong Black Woman (Fritsche, 2017)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
9. Body Shaming	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
10. Capricious	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
11. Natural Hair	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
12. Progressive sexual politics (Simmonds, 1988)	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
13. Public image	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
14. Represented as icon of sexual freedom	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
15. Self-serving	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
16. Troubled daughter-parents relationship	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
17. Economically independent	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
18. Leading work position	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
19. Objectified by men	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
20. Victim Blaming	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

## 9. Project Report

Este Trabajo de Fin de Grado (TFG) constituye un análisis de contenido de carácter cualitativo sobre los personajes femeninos de la serie *Nola Darling* (2017). El trabajo consta de seis apartados; introducción, metodología, marco teórico, análisis, discusión y conclusiones. A su vez, incluye un apéndice con la tabla donde aparecen los elementos fundamentales del análisis.

La elección de este tema como trabajo se debe a mi interés por el ámbito audiovisual y las teorías de representación, concretamente, en la representación femenina y la masculinidad tóxica. Tras debatir estas ideas junto a mi tutor, él fue quien me sugirió la visualización de la película *Nola Darling* de Spike Lee de 1986 y a la primera temporada de la serie bajo el mismo nombre de 2017. Tras ser visualizadas, debatimos los aspectos generales de cómo estaba la mujer representada en ambos formatos y establecimos los objetivos del trabajo. El tema central del trabajo captó rápidamente mi atención debido a que la información que había leído sobre el papel de la mujer afroamericana en la gran pantalla era escaso. Antes de comenzar el trabajo no estaba familiarizada ni con la película, ni con la serie, y tampoco con la filmografía del director.

Para llevar a cabo el trabajo, se estableció como metodología el análisis de contenido cualitativo. Debido a que no había cursado la asignatura de “Cultura y Discursos en Lengua Inglesa” en la cual se estudia ese tipo de análisis, así como, los diversos tipos de discurso en lengua inglesa, la metodología a emplear era desconocida hasta entonces para mí. Por ello, mi tutor me facilitó documentos con explicaciones sobre este tipo de método para conocer su correcta aplicación en un texto audiovisual. Se acordó, de esta forma, la creación de una tabla con una serie de categorías u estereotipos que iban a ser aplicados a los personajes femeninos del programa. Posteriormente, esas categorías fueron evaluadas de uno a tres dependiendo el nivel de concordancia con cada personaje. Finalmente los resultados fueron comparados, analizados y discutidos para llegar a las respuestas de la hipótesis creada al comienzo del trabajo.

Las fuentes en las que han utilizado en este trabajo son de dos tipos, audiovisuales y textuales o escritas. A pesar de que el trabajo se centra en la primera temporada de la serie, la visualización de la película ha sido importante dentro del trabajo. A partir de la visualización de la película y la serie se pudo establecer un análisis comparativo entre las distintas épocas en las que ambas fueron grabadas y así estudiar la evolución de los estereotipos. Ambos formatos han supuesto una fuente primaria en este trabajo facilitando

la elaboración de las categorías que iban a ser testadas en cada personaje en el análisis. Para garantizar la veracidad y objetividad del trabajo la serie fue vista dos veces. Una primera vez como introducción al trabajo y una segunda vez más detalladamente, pausando para tomar notas en cada episodio.

Por otro lado, las fuentes textuales han sentado las bases y guiado el desarrollo del trabajo, ya que, como he comentado anteriormente, mi conocimiento sobre los tipos de discurso y las teorías de la representación no eran extensos. La bibliografía empleada me ha ilustrado las distintas teorías dentro de la interpretación audiovisual, como por ejemplo la psicoanalítica o la cognitivista. De esta forma, el trabajo abarca distintas áreas dentro del campo audiovisual y no se centra simplemente en el análisis de los estereotipos que aparecen en los personajes femeninos. Asimismo, libros como el *Pensamiento Feminista Negro* de Patricia Hill Collins (2000) me acercaron a la figura de la mujer afroamericana y me dieron la posibilidad de aprender más sobre su historia y recorrido en la gran pantalla.

Durante la elaboración del trabajo, el aprendizaje ha sido constante desde diferentes perspectivas. Este trabajo ha supuesto la oportunidad de aprender a investigar, empleando diferentes fuentes para contrastar la información. De esta forma, plataformas como *Jstor*, *ProQuest* o *Researchgate* y la propia Biblioteca Electrónica de la Universidad de Granada han sido fundamentales para la elaboración del trabajo. Dichas fuentes han sido referenciadas usando el estilo MLA (*Modern Language Association*) sugerido por mi tutor. Esto implicó que ampliara mis nociones sobre dicho estilo, que en el momento de comenzar a trabajar eran básicas.

Finalmente, a nivel personal, durante la realización del TFG considero que he aprendido a gestionar mejor mi tiempo ya que, he tenido que combinar su realización con el estudio y actividades de otras asignaturas. Al mismo tiempo, he tenido que poner en práctica estrategias de planificación de mi tiempo semanal y de esta manera he podido conocer mis capacidades de asimilación de información y posterior selección de lo que es relevante y lo que no para mi tema de investigación. Para concluir, a lo largo del periodo de investigación previo a la redacción del trabajo también he podido comprobar mi interés por otras películas del mismo director como por ejemplo *Haz lo que debas* (1989) o *Malcom X* (1992).