



**Universitat de les
Illes Balears**

Facultat de Filosofia i Lletres

Memòria del Treball de Fi de Grau

Invisibility and Exclusion of Bisexuality: An Analysis of Bisexual Women's Poetry

Magdalena Mairata Moreno

Grau d'Estudis Anglesos

Any acadèmic 2018-19

DNI de l'alumne:43211537B

Treball tutelat per Patricia Bastida Rodríguez
Departament de Filologia Espanyola, Moderna i Clàssica

S'autoritza la Universitat a incloure aquest treball en el Repositori Institucional per a la seva consulta en accés obert i difusió en línia, amb finalitats exclusivament acadèmiques i d'investigació	Autor		Tutor	
	Sí	No	Sí	No
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Paraules clau del treball:

Bisexual women, invisibility, exclusion, non-heterosexual communities, bisexual poetry

Abstract

The invisibility and exclusion of bisexual women has been present since the origins of the LGBT+ community, and they have been fighting for visibility and inclusion for almost as long. These struggles and the stories behind them are reflected in writings by different bisexual women. In my dissertation three poems written by bisexual authors will be analysed as illustrations of the female bisexual experience of invisibility and exclusion, as well as the battling against these issues in order to accomplish visibility and inclusion within the non-heterosexual community.

Key words: bisexual women, invisibility, exclusion, non-heterosexual communities, bisexual poetry

Contents

Introduction 1

Analysis of Bisexual Issues in Poetry by Bisexual Women..... 2

Conclusions 12

Works Cited..... 13

Introduction

Bisexuality is one of the sexual identities conforming what is nowadays referred to as the LGBT+ community. The first example of social protest by what was then known as the gay community in North America took place towards the end of the 1960s, starting with the Stonewall riots of 1969 (Rust 1995, 30), together with other social movements such as the civil rights movement, which emerged in the previous decade or the anti-Vietnam War movement that started a few years earlier. The name of this group was changed to LGBT community in the mid-1990s, in order to make it more inclusive, which is also the reason why nowadays it is also known as LGBT+, LGBTI, LGBTQ or LGBTIQ. These different variations of the name symbolise the inclusion of a diverse number of sexual and gender identities. Before that change in name, bisexual people, specifically women, were often victims of invisibility and exclusion, and there are still some traces of those struggles even nowadays. The main aim of this paper is to examine the ways in which the invisibility and exclusion of bisexual female identities is portrayed in several poems by bisexual women in North America written in the late 1980s and early 1990s, those poems being “Hapa Haole Wahine” written in 1989 by Lani Ka’ahumanu and published in the 1991 anthology *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*, “Bisexual Lesbian” and “We Claim Our Own” by Dajenya, both written in 1991 but copyrighted in 1995. My analysis will reveal how these women experienced and reflected on the issues about their bisexuality, as well as how they claimed for inclusion in the non-heterosexual community.

One of the two authors whose poems will be analysed in this paper is Lani Ka’ahumanu, a bisexual woman of multiracial descent who, among many other things is an author, poet, feminist, activist, editor and educator. She was born in 1943 in Canada and has lived in the United States for most of her life. Coming from a Japanese, Hawaiian and Irish background with Catholic and Jewish influences, Ka’ahumanu describes herself as multicultural and multiracial in her autobiographical poem “Hapa Haole Wahine”, the title of which means ‘mixed Hawaiian and white woman’ in Hawaiian (Ka’ahumanu 1991, 16). In this poem, the author connects the issues involving her ethnicity with those involving her bisexuality, successfully comparing how her appearance makes her pass as white even though she is multiracial and how her relationship with a man makes her pass as a heterosexual despite being bisexual. As narrated in the poem, Lani Ka’ahumanu was raised in the United States and got married to her high school boyfriend, with whom she had two children. However, the doubts and curiosity she felt about her own identity and the world that surrounded her, along

with the encouragement of her husband, convinced her to move to San Francisco, where she would develop her passion for writing, social activism and her newfound sexual identity. Ka'ahumanu describes the process of finding herself in the lesbian community of San Francisco to later redefine herself as a bisexual woman while maintaining her position in a non-heterosexual community. Throughout her life, Ka'ahumanu has been involved in a multitude of social movements, and she co-founded different bisexual activism groups, the first being the BiPOL, a "feminist bisexual political action group" (Lani Ka'ahumanu, n.d.) founded in 1983. She also co-founded the San Francisco Bay Area Bisexual Network (BABN) in 1987 and organized "the first national bisexual rights organization" (Lani Ka'ahumanu, n.d.), the BiNet USA formed in 1990. She co-edited the anthology *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out* with Loraine Hutchins, which was published in 1991 and includes her poem "Hapa Haole Wahine". Ka'ahumanu is still an activist, and she continues to write about her sexual and ethnic identity.

The second author whose poems will be studied is Dajenya, who is also a multi-ethnic activist, poet, writer bisexual woman raised in the United States (Dajenya, 2009). She was born in 1953 and, as an activist, she has been part of different social movements like "the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement and the movement for LGBTIQ rights" (Dajenya, 2009). As of 2017 she was the Secretary of Richmond Rainbow Pride, an activist group of LGBT+ people and allies created in 2014. A lot of Dajenya's poetry deals with racial issues and LGBT+ issues, and two of her works were included in Ka'ahumanu and Hutchins' anthology *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*. Most of her poems are currently available in her official website Dajenya.com.

The poems of both of these authors will be analysed as illustrations of the different issues that worried bisexual women in the second half of the 20th century, more specifically in the 1990s. The first issue to be examined in the poems will be the invisibility of bisexual identities, particularly that of bisexual women. The second point will be that of the exclusion of bisexual women from the homosexual community, specifically the lesbian community. Lastly, a final point to be analysed will be the claim for inclusion and acceptance made by these bisexual women through their poetry.

Analysis of Bisexual Issues in Poetry by Bisexual Women

In the second half of the 20th century bisexual identities were invisible because they could not be placed within a dichotomy. Bisexual people do not fall under the category of

homosexuality nor under the category of heterosexuality, and since they are not on either side of the division they were simply ignored as a sexuality or assumed to be part of either the homosexual or the heterosexual community. While gay and lesbian people claimed their rights as members of society, bisexual identities were ignored, since “the dichotomization and essentialization of sexuality provided a new identity for individuals whose experiences were either homosexual or heterosexual, these processes did not create the same opportunity for those whose experiences were bisexual” (Rust 1992, 367). This lack of acknowledgement of bisexuality as a sexual identity is explicitly stated in Lani Ka’ahumanu’s poem “Hapa Haole Wahine” when she states that “there were no bisexual / role models” (1991, 8). The absence of bisexual representation led women who felt attraction both towards women and towards men to conform to either to the heterosexual identity or, in a lot of cases to the lesbian identity, and it was understood that the attraction towards women prevailed over the attraction towards men, for “if an individual display[ed] any evidence of homosexuality, the individual’s essence must [have been] homosexual since there [was] no other credible explanation” (Rust 1992, 369). Therefore, bisexual women were made to assimilate to the lesbian community, as Ka’ahumanu also reflects in her poem:

women’s sexuality
was
lesbian sexuality
or nothing (1991, 8)

This discourse defined these women’s attraction and relationships towards and with men as simple inconsistencies within their homosexual way of life. Ka’ahumanu describes those inconsistencies in terms of how they were perceived in the lesbian community she was part of, as “unfinished business” (1991, 8) and “‘some issues’ to work out” (1991, 8).

However, while one of the factors that contributed to the invisibility of bisexuality was the inability to place it on either side of the dichotomy of sexualities, its definition as an articulation of the two main sexualities on either side of a binary opposition also strengthened that invisibility. Bisexuality has very often been described “as a hybrid form of sexuality” (Rust 1992, 367) or “as a combination of heterosexuality and homosexuality” (Rust 1995, 32), once again suffering the dichotomisation of identities and being described in relation to other opposed sexualities that heavily depend on gender instead of being defined by its own characteristics: “women who have adopted the culturally ambiguous ‘bisexual’ identity category are positioned within the terms of the dominant gender structure” (Ault 1996, 450). This concept of bisexuality as both homosexual and heterosexual emerges from “the difficulty

of describing ambiguous categories as between or beyond margin and center, as multiply located, or as alternating between oppositional categories” (Ault 1996, 450), and it contributed to the labelling of some bisexual women as either heterosexual or lesbian. Dajenya and her poem “Bisexual Lesbian” reflect the question of labelling; as the title very explicitly suggests, her definition of her own sexuality is characterised by the union of bisexuality and homosexuality instead of the typical merger of heterosexuality and homosexuality:

I am not just bisexual

I am a lesbian.

I am not just a lesbian

I am a bisexual lesbian (1995, 1)

Dajenya addresses how the matter of her labelling may be seen as “a contradiction” (1995, 1) or as her “trying to confuse terms” (1995, 1), but she is simply providing the definition of her own sexuality through the combination of two sexual identities, as it was done with bisexuality, but with a more unconventional blend. Aside from giving her sexual identity a label, Dajenya also illustrates the experiences that have led her to embrace this particular label, putting an emphasis on her love for women which specifically connects her to lesbianism:

I love women.

I am a lesbian.

I am bisexual.

...

I have loved girls and boys.

I have loved women and men.

I have sought love

where it offered itself (1995, 1)

Despite her favour for relationships with women and the predominance of her feelings towards women over her feelings toward men, Dajenya does not dismiss the attraction and love she feels and has felt towards men in the past, thus adopting both the lesbian identity and the bisexual identity and defining her sexuality as “[her] love for beautiful people / regardless of gender” (1995, 2).

In addition, one of the main reasons behind the assimilation of bisexual women into lesbian communities, which contributed to the invisibility of bisexuality, was the absence of a

bisexual community in itself. The sense of community is very important to minorities, as it gives “a sense commonality: of a common identity, a common purpose, or a shared set of beliefs” (Sullivan 2003, 136); therefore, a community is a safe space. However, the lack of a bisexual community led bisexual women to seek acceptance for being women being attracted to and loving women in lesbian communities: “Until the late 1980s, bisexual women lacked a community of their own, and to the extent that they desired social support for and the expression of their interests in other women, were largely dependent upon the institutions and networks established by lesbians” (Rust 1993, 216). Aside from embracing homosexuality, these communities were linked to the feminist movement and radicalism. Lani Ka’ahumanu reflects that social concurrence in which she found part of her identity:

I was a woman loving woman

I was a feminist

I was a radical

I was a lesbian (1991, 8)

The lack of a bisexual community she could relate to and the strength of the lesbian community in San Francisco, her location at the time, guided her to join that community and adopt the lesbian identity:

There was a lesbian feminist movement

with strong lesbian role models

with strong lesbian voices

with strong lesbian visions

who inspired me to be all I could be

and to trust my woman loving woman

feelings and experience (1991, 8-9)

Therefore, this “hot bed of feminism / ... [and] lesbianism” (Ka’ahumanu 1991, 8) she found in San Francisco gave her a new identity, one which made her feel empowered and connected to other women and influenced her to disregard her attraction towards men.

Consequently, this assimilation of bisexual women in lesbian communities started a conflict within them, mainly consisting of the exclusion of bisexual women by lesbians, an exclusion that was fuelled by many misconceptions of bisexuality. The first of many misconceptions was bisexuality’s existence in itself, as it had been virtually invisible until then, and it became “a heated controversy in which lesbians vehemently disagree[d] among themselves and with bisexual-identified individuals on the question of whether bisexuals actually exist[ed], and if so, who they [were]” (Rust 1992, 368). Despite the questioning of

bisexuality as an existing sexual identity by lesbians, it could not be denied “bisexual women [had] been present in lesbian spaces and worked alongside lesbians for lesbian rights throughout the history of the lesbian feminist movement” (Stone 1996, 102). Therefore, although invisible, bisexual women conformed a substantial fraction of the lesbian community, and they had been part of it since the beginning. Dajenya and her experience are a clear example of this, as she describes the lesbian community as one she has “worked with / ever since Stonewall” (1995, 2) in her poem “Bisexual Lesbian”. It is in the same poem that she also alludes to this community as “the only world / [she] ever belonged in” (1995, 2), in spite of the lack of bisexual representation. Nevertheless, Ka’ahumanu shares the experience with a different tone when referring to the lesbian community she was part of as “a lesbian closet” (1991, 10), implying that her hidden identity as a woman who was attracted to and loved men, as well as women, was important to her and that she intended to come out of that closet in order to reveal herself as a bisexual woman to that community. Her usage of the word *closet* suggesting a repression of her true identity.

In addition to the matter of lesbians’ exclusion of bisexual women, another misconception that is closely related to the invisibility of bisexuality as a valid sexual orientation springs from the experience of many women who had once considered themselves heterosexual as a consequence of heteronormativity and had come to terms with their homosexuality. This experience was based on their process of becoming lesbians, which consisted of adopting bisexuality as an intermediary sexual identity in their transition from heterosexuality to homosexuality: “a woman who has recently begun to come out is allowed to call herself bisexual because she is assumed to be in transition to a lesbian identity” (Rust 1993, 216). For most lesbians who had gone through a change of sexual identity, bisexuality was merely a transitional sexuality to make the change from heterosexuality to homosexuality less drastic and more gradual. Sharon Dale Stone, a lesbian woman, explains this from her personal experience: “like most former heterosexuals turned lesbian, I had gone through a bisexual period. I knew that it had been a way for me to cling to some semblance of normalcy” (Stone 1996, 108). As a result, they did not believe bisexuality was a viable sexuality that could be permanent, and they assumed women who kept identifying as bisexual were simply refusing to give up a connection to men and heterosexuality that maintained their ties to the dominant discourse. Once again, Stone recalls her own experience on the matter: “I could not approve of women who hung around lesbians for years on end and still insisted on saying they were bisexual, still refused to give up men. It didn't occur to me that bisexuality was really possible, could be experienced as anything other than a stage on the road to ‘true

lesbianism” (Stone 1996, 108). Conversely, in Ka’ahumanu’s autobiographical poem the complete opposite is narrated. Throughout the poem we find that in the poet’s journey to define her sexual identity, lesbianism functioned as the intermediary sexuality (Ka’ahumanu 1991). However, in her case, that transitional state was not a strategy to soften an identity change, since it was rooted in the lack of bisexual representation.

Furthermore, one of the causes of most lesbians’ distrust of bisexual women was the assumption that they were not willing to give up the privilege of heterosexuality, as previously mentioned, while also taking advantage of what the lesbian world had to offer; namely, bisexual women were perceived by lesbians as “women who wanted to take all the goodies that lesbians had to offer but were unwilling to pay the price of giving up heterosexual privilege and make a total commitment to women” (Stone 1996, 108). Therefore, instead of respecting bisexuality as a viable sexual identity, a lot of lesbians just considered it a way for what they believed to be homosexual women to deny their “true self and [their] political obligation to the lesbian community to avoid stigma and preserve [their] privileged position in a heterosexist society” (Rust 1993, 216). These beliefs aggravated the invisibility of bisexual women in non-heterosexual communities, despite the constant participation and collaboration of bisexual women in the lesbian movement, resulting in the exclusion of these women due to their participation and experience in what most lesbians considered heterosexual relationships. This exclusion from the sphere of lesbian and feminist politics is expressed in Ka’ahumanu’s poetry:

The personal was political
and fundamentally correct
unless you slept with men (1991, 9)

Additionally, Dajenya also discusses this topic in “Bisexual Lesbian”:

I have been bashed
for loving women
and isolated
for loving men.
You speak of privilege –
let me tell you:
the isolation
was much worse than the bashing (1995, 1)

When describing the different reactions to her sexuality from both the lesbian community and a dominantly heterosexual society, she explains how she was attacked for loving women as much as lesbians were, while also denouncing the exclusion she felt from the lesbian community she had been part of for expressing her identity as a bisexual woman, thus denying that alleged privilege provided by so-called heterosexual relationships and feelings: “I have paid the price / of both lifestyles” (1995, 1).

In addition, the exclusion of bisexual women from lesbian communities springs from the mistrust of bisexual women by a majority of the lesbian population. One of the possible causes behind that mistrust would be bisexual women’s “closer relationships with two dominant outgroups, men and heterosexuals” (Rust 1993, 216). This relationship with two groups that represent hegemony and, probably, the main source of their oppression as a minority, are in complete opposition to the lesbian identity, making bisexual women potential oppressors or sympathisers of oppressors. These ideas fostered the main belief “that bisexuals [did] not share lesbians’ interests” (Rust 1992, 368). This point is contested by Ka’ahumanu in her poem after reciting her coming out as a bisexual woman to the lesbian group she was part of: “even if I was with a man / I knew I wasn’t the enemy” (1991, 10). The notion of bisexual women as “the enemy” of lesbians, as Ka’ahumanu states it, is also expressed in Dajenya’s poem “Bisexual Lesbian”, where she denies that her identification as a bisexual woman, or bisexual lesbian as she calls herself, is “trying to make lesbians / less visible” (1995, 1). Moreover, Ka’ahumanu recounts her journey from calling herself a lesbian to coming to terms with her bisexuality in the 1980s, describing it as a decline, as most lesbians perceived it: “I was a public lesbian / who fell from grace” (1991, 9).

Additionally, another misconception a lot of lesbians had on bisexual women was that, ultimately, they would prefer to build a stable relationship with a man rather than with a woman, if given the chance, so they “assumed that because heterosexuality was socially approved, whereas lesbianism was not, then all bisexual women would in the end choose to take the easy road and make their lives with men instead of women” (Stone 1996, 109). This conception then, is closely related to bisexual women’s closeness to men and to the supposed heterosexual privilege mentioned earlier, since that is what would allegedly prompt bisexual women to choose a man as a definitive partner instead of a woman, passing as heterosexuals, since the privilege that impression provides would be safer and easier in a heteronormative society. Therefore, it was “the ‘received wisdom’ generated by lesbian feminists that if a bisexual woman could leave you for a man, then she would” (Stone 1996, 109). However,

Dajenya explicitly expresses the contrary in “Bisexual Lesbian”: “Today I choose / to choose a woman” (1995, 2), saying she desires to ultimately have a relationship with a woman:

I had had love for woman
deeper than for any man.
I desire a woman
to be my partner in life (1995, 1).

Furthermore, this assumption fuelled the conception of “bisexual women in lesbian relationships as the ‘good’ bisexuals, in opposition to the ‘bad’ bisexual women who [were] in heterosexual relationships” (Stone 1996, 112), a distinction made by lesbian women who supposedly “occupi[ed] a higher moral status than bisexual women” (Rust 1993, 216) in non-heterosexual communities.

Therefore, all the mentioned conceptions of bisexual women that were constructed within non-heterosexual communities constitute the different reasons behind the exclusion of bisexual women from lesbian spaces. This exclusion was carried out by most lesbians because, although it was based on wrong assumptions and misconceptions of bisexual women, it was a way for them to protect the community that was so important to their group as a minority. As Sullivan illustrates: “being a secure member of a community necessarily entails policing the community and its boundaries, making sure that those who are on the inside really are members of your ‘tribe’ and that those who are not, remain outside” (Sullivan 2003, 144). Subsequently, this exclusion was added to the pressures and oppression of a heteronormative society and resulted in the “social censure from both heterosexuals and lesbians” (Ault 1996, 450).

As a consequence of the systematic erasure of bisexual identities and the exclusion from both heterosexual and non-heterosexual spaces, bisexual women began to speak up and vindicate their visibility and their right to be a part of the queer community from the 1980s onwards. One of the ways to claim that visibility and inclusion was writing and describing their experiences: “in the writings of bisexual women, story after story tells of being made to feel unwelcome in lesbian circle” (Stone 1996, 110). The poet Dajenya expresses her explicit intention of “trying to make [herself] / more visible” (1995, 1) in “Bisexual Lesbian”, in the poem she also claims her right for inclusion in the community: “I won’t be shut out from my community ... / I won’t be told I don’t belong” (1995, 2) . Ka’ahumanu was one of those women who vindicated visibility and inclusion through her writing as well, and she reflects her claim for inclusion in the community she was part of when she considered herself a

lesbian in “Hapa Haole Wahine”, saying she “refused to be kicked out” (1991, 10) even though she was in a love with a man, coming out as bisexual and rejecting the idea of treating those feelings as inconsistencies of her lesbian identity as she had done in the past; she “refused / to be in the lesbian/gay closet” (1991, 10) and to keep her bisexual identity hidden simply because it was perceived as inexistent, confusing and hurtful:

I never want to hear
that I am not a bisexual
that there is no such thing
that if I haven't been with a man for a while,
I should call myself a lesbian
that I am hurting lesbians
that I am confusing
an already confusing situation for heterosexual society (1991, 14)

Ka'ahumanu's poetry fits into a “bisexual discourse [that] work[ed] to legitimize bisexual identity and bisexuality as ‘queer enough’” (Ault 1996, 457), a good example being her identification as a woman who “love[s] women as fiercely and passionately as any woman can” (1991, 14), as well as in her statement that “bisexuals jeopardize the foundation of a heterosexist culture” (1991, 15).

In addition, this new bisexual movement intended to claim a deserved inclusion in the non-heterosexual community through different processes, one of those processes was the eradication of the notion of bisexual women as “political risks” (Rust 1993, 226). This belief was conceived from bisexual women's alleged closeness to heteronormative discourse that supposedly made them less likely to commit to the lesbian movement: “the belief that bisexuals lack loyalty to the lesbian movement and the beliefs that this lack of loyalty is reflected in a greater propensity for passing as heterosexual” (Rust 1993, 226). However, these beliefs were unfounded, since bisexual women had taken part in the lesbian feminist movement since the beginning. Dajenya makes several references to the struggle for non-heterosexual rights as a woman loving women in “Bisexual Lesbian”:

I love women.
I love woman kind.
I am woman-identified.
I study our hidden past.
I struggle in the present.
I work hard for our future. (1995, 1)

Furthermore, she also discusses this topic in one of her other poems, “We Claim Our Own”, in relation to influential people who were, and still are, considered gay symbols, this time including not only bisexual women, but bisexual men as well:

If you claim bisexual cannot mean gay,
then purge your history books
of so many names
that swell your breasts with pride —
names of people who have also loved
both sexes (1995, 1)

In the poem Dajenya claims distinguished historical figures and famous people, who were traditionally perceived as homosexual, as bisexuals. In doing so she denounces the invisibility of their bisexuality, thus defending that bisexual people have always been working alongside homosexual people for non-heterosexual rights:

Count me in your history books
fighting side by side
for the right
to love a same-sex lover
and not be persecuted for it (1995, 1)

Because the poet expresses the idea of bisexual people working alongside homosexual people for equality rights, she suggests that homosexual people can also claim bisexual figures as role models and representatives of non-heterosexual figures, just like bisexual people had done in the past with homosexuals, when bisexuality was practically invisible, as a way of uniting both communities: “you’re welcome to them / as you are to us” (1995, 1)

One of the many approaches used by these poets in order to include bisexual identities in non-heterosexual female spaces is the use of labels, as “the use of ‘lesbian,’ ‘dyke,’ and even ‘gay’ offers bi women the possibility of incorporation/assimilation into women's communities” (Ault 1996, 456). Several examples of this strategy have been discussed through the analysis of Dajenya’s “Bisexual Lesbian”, where she expresses the right “to claim [her] lesbianism / And [her] bisexuality” (1995, 2) as two non-contradicting parts of her identity that define her non-heterosexuality. In her other poem, “We Claim Our Own” she uses the term *gay* to refer to bisexual people, as an umbrella term that describes non-heterosexuality: “you claim bisexual cannot mean gay” (1995, 1). The use of this term, along with others, eases the inclusion of bisexual women in the non-heterosexual community. However, there are other terms, that are not as traditionally homosexual, which started to be

used in order to maintain the visibility of bisexual identities and to not assimilate into the homosexual identity, such as *queer*, a word that “underwent a process of reclamation in the early 1990s” (Ault 1996, 456) and it “signifies not only those who mark themselves as gay or lesbian” (Ault 1996, 456), therefore defying the binary of non-heterosexual identities.

Conclusions

My dissertation has covered various issues that particularly affected bisexual women in the 1970s and 1980s, and they have been studied through the analysis of poems written by bisexual female authors. This analysis has served the purpose of illustrating the conflicts faced by bisexual women through the experiences of two specific bisexual poets, Lani Ka’ahumanu and Dajenya, who personally endured those struggles, battled against them, and incorporated those problems and battles into their poetry. The three poems chosen for my analysis were written at the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, reflecting the issues involving bisexual women that had taken place in the previous decades. The paper has included the examination of these poems in reference to three particular points in female bisexual politics. Firstly, the problem of the invisibility of bisexual women has been studied and exemplified with fragments from the poems, this invisibility was generated from the difficulty in defining bisexuality within the dichotomy of heterosexuality and homosexuality due to its non-binary nature, instead of defining it outside of that dichotomy. Bisexual invisibility was intensified by the lack of bisexual representation and communities, leading bisexual women to assimilate into lesbian communities. Secondly, the exclusion of bisexual women from lesbian spaces has also been scrutinised and illustrated through Ka’ahumanu and Dajenya’s poetry. The issue of exclusion has been analysed through the beliefs and misconceptions lesbians had of bisexual women, which constituted the main reasoning behind that exclusion. Those misconceptions start with the doubting of bisexuality’s existence as a real sexual orientation and the belief that it was simply a transitional sexuality for women who turned from heterosexuals into lesbians. This exclusion was aggravated by the false belief that bisexual women had a sense of heterosexual identity and that they were not oppressed by heteronormativity, thus refusing to acknowledge their lesbian identity in order to maintain that privilege, for that same reason most lesbians also had the misconception that bisexual women would ultimately chose to have a stable relationship with a man instead of a woman. Thirdly, the paper includes the analysis on the claim for visibility and inclusion made by the two poets in response to the two previous issues, as reflected in the selected poems. These claims include the vindication for the right of bisexual women to be included in non-

heterosexual spaces, since they were agents in the fight for the lesbian movement, as well as the use of labels as a form of inclusion. The claims of these poets are an illustration of the beginning of the bisexual movement, which is still ongoing nowadays.

The bisexual movement and the situation of bisexual women is still a work in progress and there are many improvements that can be made. Bisexuality is still not completely visible, and bisexual women in particular are constantly invalidated in our society. However, the fight for visibility and inclusion continues, a good example of bisexual activism is the establishing of Bisexuality Day, as well as Bisexual Awareness Week. Bisexual Awareness Week is celebrated on the week containing the 23rd of September, which is the day assigned to Bisexuality Day, and they are promoted through social media, with the hashtags “#BiWeek” and “#BiVisibilityDay” on twitter and instagram, for instance. Moreover, there are several female celebrities who identify as bisexual that have openly discussed their bisexuality, partially fulfilling the need for representation of bisexual women. Some of these celebrities are famous actresses like Angelina Jolie, Drew Barrymore, Megan Fox and Cara Delevingne; some of these openly bisexual figures are singers and songwriters who reflect their bisexual identity in their music, such as Lady Gaga, who proclaimed that her 2009 hit “Poker Face” “was all about her love for ladies ... and she always labelled herself as bisexual” (Szymanski, 2013), and biracial singer-songwriter Halsey, who constantly discusses bisexuality, as well as social, racial and gender issues in her social media: “I’m a mixed race, bisexual woman in a white male dominated industry and I have a moral responsibility” (@halsey, February 22, 2015).

Works Cited

- Ault, Amber, 1996. “Ambiguous Identity in an Unambiguous Sex/Gender Structure: The Case of Bisexual Women”. *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Summer, 1996): 449-463.
- Dajenya. 2017 (1995) “Bisexual Lesbian”. Dajenya.com. Accessed May 25, 2019. http://dajenya.com/pb/wp_1c8af5cd/wp_1c8af5cd.html
- Dajenya. 2017 (1995) “We Claim Our Own”. Dajenya.com. Accessed May 25, 2019. http://dajenya.com/pb/wp_e1535cae/wp_e1535cae.html
- Dajenya. 2017 (2009) “About Dajenya”. Dajenya.com. Accessed May 25, 2019. http://dajenya.com/pb/wp_c2861cbb/wp_c2861cbb.html

- Halsey (@halsey). 2015. "nah I'm going 4 it bc I'm a mixed race, bisexual woman in a white male dominated industry and I have a moral responsibility". Twitter post, February 22, 2015. <https://twitter.com/halsey/status/569330047670038530>
- Ka'ahumanu, Lani. 2019 (1991) "Hapa Haole Wahine". lanikaahumanu.com. Accessed May 25, 2019. <http://lanikaahumanu.com/hapahaole.shtml>
- Lani Ka'ahumanu. N.d. "Lani's bio". lanikaahumanu.com. Accessed May 25, 2019. <http://www.lanikaahumanu.com/bio.shtml>
- Rust, Paula C.. 1992. "The Politics of Sexual Identity: Sexual Attraction and Behavior among Lesbian and Bisexual Women". *Social Problems*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (November, 1992): 366-386.
- Rust, Paula C.. 1993. "Neutralizing the Political Threat of the Marginal Woman: Lesbians' Beliefs about Bisexual Women". *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (August, 1993): 214-228.
- Rust, Paula C.. 1995. "'Experts''s Voices: Lesbianism, Bisexuality, and the Social Sciences". In *Bisexuality and the Challenge to Lesbian Politics: Sex, Loyalty and Revolution*, 25-35. New York: New York University Press.
- Stone, Sharon Dale. 1996. "Bisexual Women and the 'Threat' to Lesbian Space: Or What If All the Lesbians Leave?". *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1996): 101-116.
- Sullivan, Nikki. 2003. "Community and its Discontents". In *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*, 136-150. New York: New York University Press.
- Szymanski, Mike. 2013. "Why Does Lady Gaga Have to Prove Her Bisexuality?". Bisexual.org. Accessed May 25, 2019. <https://bisexual.org/lady-gaga/>