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Re-signifying the vulnerabilities of academic writing in women[1]

Resignificando las vulnerabilidades de la escritura académica en mujeres[1]

Ressignificando as vulnerabilidades da escrita académica nas mulheres[1]

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Abstract

This study reviews how female academics confront the effects of academic capitalism and patriarchal structures, which impose pressures on productivity and competitiveness, leading to silencing and self-censorship. The aim is to explore the narrated experiences of female academics regarding academic writing within a high-pressure, capitalist academic context. The research follows a qualitative methodology based on memory work, analyzing personal and collective experiences of five academics at a public university in Chile. Kintsugi is a metaphor to reframe “fractures” in narratives, integrating vulnerabilities and strength. The results are organized in two phases. The first presents

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[2] The practice of first authorship contradicts the logic of resistance proposed by this methodology, which we yield to out of a need to accommodate ourselves to hegemonic styles. We order the authorships without this being coherent with the idea of

fragments of experiences of silencing and self-censorship. The second phase shows an integrated narrative that reinterprets these moments as a network of mutual support and resistance against power structures in academia. The participating academics transform their experiences of exclusion into collective knowledge, revealing how patriarchal and neoliberal structures impose barriers while highlighting the capacity to generate resistance and support. This work contributes to making feminist-situated writing visible as a form of resistance to the hegemonic norms of academia.

Keywords: feminism, writing, gender equality, university, resistance to oppression.

Resumen

Este estudio revisa cómo las académicas enfrentan los efectos del capitalismo académico y las estructuras patriarcales, que les imponen presiones de productividad y competitividad, conduciendo a silenciamientos y autocensuras. El objetivo es explorar las experiencias narradas de mujeres académicas en torno a una escritura académica que se da en un contexto de altas presiones y capitalismo académico. La investigación sigue una metodología cualitativa basada en memory work, analizando experiencias personales y colectivas de cinco académicas en una universidad pública chilena. Se usó el kintsugi como metáfora para resignificar “fracturas” en narrativas, integrando vulnerabilidades y fortaleza. Los resultados se organizan en dos fases. La primera presenta fragmentos de experiencias de silenciamiento y autocensura. La segunda fase muestra una narrativa integrada que resignifica estos momentos como una red de apoyo mutuo y resistencia frente a las estructuras de poder en la academia. Las académicas participantes transforman sus experiencias de exclusión en conocimiento colectivo, revelando cómo las estructuras patriarcales y neoliberales imponen barreras, pero también destacando la capacidad de generar resistencia y apoyo. Este trabajo contribuye a visibilizar la escritura feminista y situada como una forma de resistencia frente a las normativas hegemónicas de la academia.

Palabras clave: feminismo, escritura, igualdad de género, universidad, resistencia a la opresión.

Resumo

Este estudo revisa como as acadêmicas enfrentam os efeitos do capitalismo acadêmico e das estruturas patriarcais, que impõem pressões de produtividade e competitividade, levando ao silenciamento e à autocensura. O objetivo é explorar as experiências narradas de acadêmicas em relação à escrita acadêmica em um contexto de altas pressões e capitalismo acadêmico. A pesquisa segue uma metodologia qualitativa baseada no memory work, analisando experiências pessoais e

collective writing that we carry out in this paper, and this is, in itself, a first renunciation.

coletivas de cinco acadêmicas em uma universidade pública no Chile. O kintsugi é usado como metáfora para ressignificar “fraturas” nas narrativas, integrando vulnerabilidades e força. Os resultados são organizados em duas fases. A primeira apresenta fragmentos de experiências de silenciamento e autocensura. A segunda fase mostra uma narrativa integrada que ressignifica esses momentos como uma rede de apoio mútuo e resistência frente às estruturas de poder na academia. As acadêmicas participantes transformam suas experiências de exclusão em conhecimento coletivo, revelando como as estruturas patriarcais e neoliberais impõem barreiras, mas também destacando a capacidade de gerar resistência e apoio. Este trabalho contribui para tornar visível a escrita feminista

Palavras-chave: feminismo, escrita, igualdade de gênero, universidade, resistência à opressão.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the narrated experiences of academic women within the context of academic capitalism and its effects on scientific writing. Drawing on personal experiences and a feminist perspective, the authors analyze how pressures of productivity and competitiveness, along with patriarchal structures, create a scenario of silencing and self-censorship. This study employs the methodology of memory work and the symbolism of kintsugi, aiming to re-signify academic "fractures" as opportunities for resistance and the collective construction of knowledge in a hostile environment.

Debates on Academic Writing in Academic Capitalism

Neoliberalism has transformed academia by reconfiguring university work according to the logic of commodification, commercialization, and privatization of current scientific praxis conditions (Arboledas-Lérida, 2021). Based on various neoliberal reforms, several authors have highlighted the advancing loss of meaning in academic work, which has become overburdened by excessive administrative tasks, unproductive and decontextualized research, and the growing demand for numerous productivity metrics (Gibb, 2024; Hostler, 2024; Pomares-Cintas & Álvarez-García, 2020; Rogošić, 2024). This phenomenon, known as academic capitalism, is defined as the organization of university work under market principles, prioritizing productivity and competitiveness in research (Hostler, 2024; Shore, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). The productivity culture dehumanizes the academic sphere (Gatto et al., 2024), which reproduces colonial hierarchies in Global South countries (Borsani, 2024). Thus, academic capitalism transforms teaching, labor dynamics, and the valuation of academic work (Dolgaleva, 2024; Knipp, 2024; Montes et al., 2023), intensifying competition among faculty (Zhang et al., 2024).

Academic capitalism has promoted a form of academic writing valued more for its publication potential than for its communicative capacity, although research on this topic has focused primarily on the

difficulties faced by university students rather than on faculty writing (Coronado, 2021; Ortiz Casallas, 2011; Rossi-Peralta, 2023; Zárate, 2017). In this regard, university faculty often perceive student academic writing negatively (Sagredo-Ortiz et al., 2023), despite evidence that writing is a complex task for students and their instructors (Hernández & Marín, 2018). Thus, in a context where writing is commodified, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT has proliferated, allowing for improvements in writing but also raising questions about originality, ethical use, and its impact on learning and professional development (Baek et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024; Waltzer et al., 2024).

In academic capitalism, market-oriented writing has been shaped around a particular hegemony. Standardized practices in scientific writing frequently result in uniform expression and constrain opportunities for discursive innovation (Parada, 2020), concealing the author's own voice, which obscures the interaction between writer and reader (Castelló et al., 2011). However, some studies have shown that universities still offer "spaces of hope" to resist this model, manifesting in aspects such as student interaction and actions aimed at rethinking the university's role to reclaim its critical and social purpose (Gibb, 2024; Hostler, 2024; dos Santos de Macedo et al., 2019; Rogošić, 2024). Along these lines, various authors advocate for a collaborative approach to writing, underscoring the importance of interactions and the influence of contextual factors in the success of these processes (Shulgina et al., 2024; Peterson & Husu, 2023).

Women in Academia: Academic Capitalism Counter-Feminism

A study by Rawat et al. (2024) shows that only 44.8% of leadership positions in scientific journals are held by women, highlighting a persistent gender gap that affects their recognition and professional development in academia. Women have access to limited networks and face greater family responsibilities, which combine with lower citation rates and publication frequency, and fewer senior authorships in their careers (Alkhatib et al., 2024; Sinclair & Clark, 2024; Wu, 2023). Moreover, structural barriers and academic institutional practices that disproportionately impact women are intensified in the context of ethnic and racial minorities (Alvero et al., 2024; Dahmen-Adkins & Peterson, 2021). Thus, neoliberalism and patriarchal structures affect women's lives in academia, emphasizing expectations and pressures that shape their experiences. Female academics internalize neoliberal and patriarchal norms, leading to workload overload and a tension between the desire to belong in academia and the resistance to its power dynamics (Jones & Floyd, 2023; Mackinlay, 2023).

Academic capitalism and gender structures impose challenges such as gender inequality, expressed through specific barriers in male-dominated fields. Women are disadvantaged by the excessive emphasis on productivity and the biases they face in science and technology disciplines (Araneda-Guirriman & Sepúlveda-Páez, 2021; Johnson & Taylor, 2019; Martínez-Labrín & Castelao-Huerta, 2023). For example, the feminization of academic management does not necessarily empower

women; on the contrary, it places them in precarious situations during times of organizational crisis, with an increased risk of failure (Peterson, 2014). Continuing with this example, women often struggle to balance administrative duties with research, which negatively impacts their academic careers (Peterson, 2015).

Gender inequalities in academia are deeply intertwined with other structures of oppression, and academic capitalism exacerbates these disparities. The additional burden of invisible tasks and the exclusion of certain groups from academic innovation perpetuate these inequalities, making it essential to address and transform these issues through an intersectional perspective and collective resistance (Mickey & Smith-Doerr, 2022; Sümer & Eslen-Ziya, 2022). This challenge persists even in societies recognized internationally for gender equality approaches—such as Norway—where a "gender blindness" environment is evident in universities (Thun, 2019).

The global landscape of structural inequality is reflected in women's academic writing. Kociatkiewicz and Kostera (2023) explore ways to write differently in academic research, arguing that style is also an epistemological issue. With a feminist approach, they critique patriarchal norms that privilege coherence over complexity, asserting that an alternative style can more faithfully represent fragmented and challenging experiences of reality. However, Ma et al. (2023) show that many articles with female lead authors have less impact than those authored by men, partly mediated by writing style. For example, women's articles use fewer positive words, indicating lower confidence, negatively affecting their research's reception. This context is described as a hostile and sexist environment, known as the "chilly climate in academia" (Sharp & Messuri, 2023). It represents forms of marginalization of women in academia, defined as the "symbolic annihilation" of women's academic writing and production (Abdellatif et al., 2021).

Far from accepting political defeat, women's academic writing and scientific production have sought innovative and resistant strategies to subvert the social, political, and educational effects of these forms of marginalization. Through a collaborative approach to writing and reflection, Abdellatif et al. (2021) aim to subvert dominant patriarchal narratives, proposing an ethic of care that connects experiences of marginalization through a collaborative and reflective perspective. Similarly, Robinson and Del Rio (2023) explore paths of resistance against colonial violence in academia through restorative justice and counterstorytelling, challenging colonial narratives that marginalize racialized communities. Authors like Van Hilten and Ruel (2022) and Ridgway et al. (2024) have employed memory work methodology to document countercultural feminist forms of writing. Van Hilten and Ruel (2022) used it to investigate the experiences of older women in academia, marked by systematic exclusions. Ridgway et al. (2024) employ the kintsugi technique to demonstrate that sharing vulnerabilities in collaborative research can heal and resist the neoliberal academic system. This metaphor suggests that women's academic "fractures" are not weaknesses but opportunities to create

something valuable. Like in Kintsugi, where cracks are highlighted, women's "broken" experiences can transform into resilience and resistance against academia's patriarchal norms.

This study explored the narrated experiences of academic women who write in the first person, seeking to make visible—and subvert—an academic writing culture that has subjected us for decades within the high-pressure context of academic capitalism. Inspired by the memory work methodology and the kintsugi technique, we will expose our vulnerabilities, hoping to inspire and be collectively inspired as we reflect on our experiences of pain and injustice, as well as of resistance and hope.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a feminist approach and utilizes the memory work methodology to analyze personal experiences through collective memory and reflection. Inspired by the kintsugi metaphor, it highlights how "fractures" in academic women's lives can transform into sources of power and knowledge. This approach values reconstruction and resilience, creating situated knowledge that emphasizes these experiences' significance and challenges. The methodological procedure followed the stages proposed by Van Hilten and Ruel (2022) and Ridgway et al. (2024): (1) Identification of "fragments" of experiences: Five testimonial stories were collected, representing moments of rupture in the lives of five academic women currently working at a public university in Chile. This study's "fragments" include personal narratives of vulnerability and resistance. (2) Repair and re-signification: As in kintsugi, these fragments were assembled through an analysis aimed at re-signifying them, with attention to how these experiences contribute to collective knowledge. (3) Application of connections: Aspects of these experiences that transform the narrative were highlighted by identifying strengths, support networks, lessons, and elements that revealed added value after the rupture, illustrating how women re-signify our experiences. (4) Creation of an integrated narrative and visualization of scars: A narrative was constructed that does not conceal difficult experiences but presents them as a fundamental part of the story.

The authors of this article are the women who participated in the study. In this paper, we collectively share and analyze our experiences. The results of this article are presented in two phases. First, fragments of personal experiences are displayed, followed by a global section with a single integrated narrative that articulates repair, re-signification, and the application of connections. The discussion and conclusion sections present a phase of reflection and critique based on the methodology used. As this is a situated study, our names and identities are disclosed, serving as an invitation to learn from our stories and not to fear them. Below, we introduce ourselves to provide context for readers of this research.

Cecilia is a Chilean clinical psychologist between the ages of 50 and 60, an associate professor, and holds a PhD in Psychotherapy from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. She researches

mentalization in psychotherapy and early trauma and collaborates with the MIDAP Institute. She is actively involved in mental health ethics.

Claudia is a Chilean psychologist, naturalized Spaniard, aged 40 to 50. She has a PhD in Educational Sciences from the University of Granada. Her research includes school violence, teacher development, and educational policies. She will soon be joining a university in Spain.

Yanina is a Chilean psychologist between 50 and 60 years old. She serves as director of the Department of Mediations and Subjectivities at UPLA. With a PhD in Latin American Studies, she focuses on feminist gerontology and participates in activities that take a feminist and decolonial approach.

Pamela is a Chilean journalist and researcher between 30 and 40 years old, holding a PhD in Human Sciences. Her work focuses on social representations, discourse, and gender in media and includes research on social movements and gender.

Tabisa is a 30 to 40 years old Chilean psychologist trained in psychoanalysis. She is pursuing a PhD in Málaga while continuing her work in Chile. She focuses on the feminization of teaching and caregiving in emergencies, promoting social justice in education.

RESULTS

Phase 1. Fragments of Personal Experiences

Cecilia. "You look prettier when you're quiet."[3]

Telling, here, is not just any telling. It is part of a sequence of micro-accounts with a world of knowledge that silences and cages me to indicate where my place should be while paradoxically compelling me to develop spaces of resistance so as not to feel so alone. I carefully choose two of them to present here, in an academic article, right into the lion's den. And that fear emotionally registers how my history places me in a position of self-censorship to which I yield unwillingly. The first involves identifying who instructed me on what I shouldn't read, how I shouldn't respond, which attitudes were unacceptable, and the arguments I shouldn't use to defend my ideas. I point this out in the negative since this is a renunciation I have become accustomed to since school days, in discussions with uncles over Sunday lunch, and in choosing university interests. Those who taught me where to situate myself "femininely" regarding the world of knowledge were precisely those who could have accompanied and cared for me—close and essential people, my family, my beloved teachers—not those I identified as authoritarian or dangerous, but those I respected and trusted. I look back and

[3] This is a phrase used in Spanish, of unknown origin, that suggests that women are more attractive

recognize myself participating in naturalized but inappropriate customs: yielding authorships and prominence in projects, keeping silent about using my texts without being cited, or being excluded from scientific productions in which I had been involved. The second aspect, even more difficult, concerns the women who were witnesses or confidantes in some of those moments when I have "broken down" with guilt and shame, like falling in the middle of a party. "It's better not to say anything," "it wasn't that bad," they say, and we hide together, perpetuating the logic of fear. Daily practices of silencing -learning that 'we must avoid causing discomfort,' 'we should be cautious because the consequences could be worse,' and that 'it's better to stay quiet'- become ingrained as ways of relating to one another and to the worlds we inhabit, eventually turning into self-imposed restraints. Breaking free from this is indeed possible; writing this serves as clear evidence. Together, we can create spaces of care where we reveal and confront these norms collectively, fostering an interwoven voice that challenges the cold, accommodating logic of the academic marketplace. But we must do it together. Or rather, I need to do it with you.

Claudia: The other side of achievement and the aspiration for a new affidamento

From an early age, I understood that being a woman in academia would be a challenging journey. I am a woman, young by the standards of this world, Latina, and a single mother. My skin, my features, and my accent always give me away, and, although I try to broaden my horizons, my identity becomes tangled between geographies and expectations. In Chile, I found an intellectual and emotional refuge within a team of extraordinary women who taught me what truly matters in this sphere. With them, I learned about affidamento, a spirit of affection and shared trust, a legacy of Italian feminism that binds us in a relationship of support and knowledge-sharing among women. However, my journey continued to Europe, where the realities of colonialism and gender biases revealed themselves in many forms. I was fortunate to find an invaluable mentor, first as a thesis advisor and later as a friend. Even so, academic capitalism has its gatekeepers, and in my doctorate, postdoctoral studies, and my first competitive project, metrics became a measure of legitimacy. Learning the “tricks” of this “high-impact” writing was a hard-won process, and I always tried to open spaces for those who, without this guidance, might struggle to access them. My greatest pains, however, do not stem from the heteropatriarchal and colonial world that once labeled me “the South American girl” during an international stay. It is often my peers who fail to see my fractures, who perceive my achievements as effortless successes devoid of struggle and vulnerability. To write an article, I forgo time with my daughter, sacrifice sleep, eat poorly, and confront the same doubts and insecurities as many others: imposter syndrome, the lingering question about the validity of my ideas, and the fear of rejection. Despite everything, I do not give up. I pursue every publication, even amid rejections, yet I long for those around me to see beyond that façade of “success.” I hope that the affidamento I experienced 18

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and pleasant when they do not speak.

years ago can be replicated, with the same critical warmth, for those who also walk this path. I hope they understand that academic writing is a cycle and that, from time to time, I, too, need a friendly hand, an invitation to continue writing and exploring.

Yanina: Thinking that everything is already written and that what I think is of little importance

Writing in the third person is difficult for me; it feels so unnatural that it drains the writing of emotion. When I discovered Black feminists who write biographically, I felt deeply identified, but I don't write enough because I feel that so much has already been written, and surely someone has already thought the same things I think and, moreover, has written about them. My academic journey has been out of sync, as I didn't believe this was a place I should occupy. I've always seen the university as a space where I don't feel entirely comfortable, primarily due to an absurd idea that I wasn't sufficiently qualified to remain here. Of course, there's a story behind that, a history of denial and suppression of my ability to think, which traces back to a working-class family where women couldn't appear smarter than men, even if those men hadn't finished their studies or didn't know how to read. Simply by being men, they were expected to be more intelligent than women. So, I was always labeled "stupid" or "crazy." My mother didn't see me that way, but I was in the eyes of the men in my family. There was always this male gaze that either disapproved of or praised me for behaving like a "proper" woman, socially compliant, discreet, with little opinion or room for conversation. For me, writing back then was an escape from the oppression I felt—a way to find relief and capture painful emotions. I rarely shared those writings. In my academic experience, writing is challenging, and I doubt myself. This insecurity is rooted in a long history of structural silencing, marked by the fear I felt during my university years under a hetero-patriarchal dictatorship, which had not yet taken on the trappings of academic capitalism but instead embodied an objective, detached, universalist scientism—devoid of gender, race, or age, dictated by experts who tell us how things should be done. At that time, I thought I didn't want to be an academic "like that." Now, I am an academic, and though I feel embarrassed to call myself one, it feels like a foreign concept. This is a contradiction I haven't overcome, and it binds me. These are ties that carry the labels "stupid" and "crazy." We must cut those knots and untangle the threads to give value to our words.

Pamela: Breaking the silence—invisible barriers of a woman in academia

Throughout my career in research and teaching, I have faced various challenges that reflect a hierarchical structure in which women often occupy disadvantaged positions. These experiences not only impact me personally but also reveal structural barriers that limit women's professional development and active participation. One of the first challenges in my trajectory was the lack of female role models in academic leadership positions. The absence of women mentors during my training influenced how I approached certain aspects of the academic role, with my development

shaped around paradigms and expectations built under male influence. This lack of female role models deprives young female researchers of an example that reflects their own experiences and challenges in academia. An early experience with authorship exemplifies how these obstacles impact the recognition of women's work. Unclear on authorship norms, I assumed that author order should follow a hierarchical approach, giving the first position to a higher-ranking figure. Although this decision was due to my lack of knowledge, it weakened my standing in terms of academic merit and visibility as a researcher. The absence of guidance and support during these initial stages leaves many women in secondary roles, limiting their potential to gain the recognition they deserve and to establish a leadership presence in their field. Access to research funding represents another significant barrier. Job insecurity and the lack of a contractual relationship with institutions significantly limit many researchers' ability to apply as principal investigators, as many grants require a formal institutional affiliation. On one occasion, this situation led me to cede the leadership of a project to a colleague who met the stability requirements. Such situations reflect how job precarity disproportionately affects women, restricting our leadership and visibility opportunities in major projects and reinforcing a structure where academic recognition tends to be concentrated among men with more secure positions. Sharing these experiences with other women researchers has fostered a strong sense of resonance and empathy. In our conversations, we reflected on how many of us face the challenge of positioning ourselves in an environment that is not always willing to acknowledge our contributions and efforts. Many of us agree that these barriers, though subtle, demand an extra effort rarely required of our male colleagues.

Tabisa: I am an academic if you grant me that place

I remember when I decided to apply for a teaching assistant position at the university. Although I had always wanted to try, it took me until my final year to gather the courage because I didn't feel worthy of that role. It seemed like a space that needed to be "granted" by others, that I needed to be "chosen" to belong there, especially as a woman. So, for 13 years, I built my academic path in a compliant way, seeking approval and validation, particularly from other female academics. For some reason, I interpreted that access to this professional world would only be possible through the recognition of "someone like me," a woman who had also received approval from another. In this pursuit, my self-worth became subject to others' judgment. In academia, everything seems to revolve around "external approval": projects, grants, and articles all depend on the evaluations of others. The issue is not the evaluation itself but the way the evaluator's role has been configured and the weight their judgment carries in determining our professional value. These especially impact women. In my case, I grew up shaped by a stereotypically feminized education that reinforced this dependency and insecurity. I tend to think my ideas are absurd until another woman validates them. Perhaps I seek their approval because, in my experience, they listen more attentively and connect more deeply with what I share, which makes their feedback valuable. However, this isn't always the case; a few women have shown

me poor treatment, although they are the exception. Still, I remain dependent on validation from "others" to feel my work has value. This dependency has become a constant barrier, creating inhibitions and blocks when I try to write an article, prepare a presentation, or even teach a class. My mind doesn't stop, generating constant doubts: Do I really know what I'm talking about? Should I have read more to say something valuable? Is my interpretation of the material valid? Shouldn't I have reviewed more sources before daring to present this idea? What will the reviewer think when they read my work? I still feel that many people might think, "She doesn't know anything about the topic, and on top of that, she has the audacity to apply or write about it."

Phase 2. An Integrated Narrative: From Fragmentation to Collective Power

In tracing our academic life stories, a common thread of fragmentation and silencing emerges. Throughout each testimony, we—academic women—describe the wounds and fractures we face along our journey, marked by systems that restrict and shape our aspirations and voices. From questioning our place in academia to confronting structural barriers that limit our participation, these experiences reflect a set of scars that, rather than being erased, we have reclaimed and transformed. Through repair, re-signification, and the application of connections, our stories reveal how we are reconstructing a space where our scars are visible and powerful, challenging and reimagining what it means to inhabit and resist within the world of knowledge.

First, our repair process begins with accepting our own vulnerability. By confronting the patterns imposed by academic structures, we cease to view our insecurities and blocks as personal failures, recognizing them instead as effects of an exclusionary system. This understanding allows us to approach our wounds without shame, viewing them as symbols of resistance against the persistent challenges of an environment that validates knowledge from positions of power and hierarchy, relegating our experiences to the margins. Repairing these "scars" thus becomes a way to dignify our journey and acknowledge the value of the steps taken, even amid adversity. Second, through re-signification, we transform our experiences of exclusion and doubt into sources of situated knowledge. Re-signification is not merely an individual act but a collective process that gains strength as our stories are heard and mutually acknowledged. By exploring the deeper meanings behind our experiences of self-censorship and reliance on external approval, we unveil the invisible layers of a system that oppresses us through subtle control mechanisms. Instead of concealing our fractures, we present them as valuable lessons that challenge the normalization of gender subordination in academia, inviting a more human and complex understanding of what it means to produce knowledge from the Global South. Finally, the power of our stories lies in their ability to generate connections, both among ourselves and with those who have yet to find a voice to express themselves. By re-signifying our experiences, we build networks of support and collective learning that blur the boundaries imposed by structural isolation. Each narrative becomes a thread within a tapestry that

challenges the cold, fragmented logics of academic capitalism, promoting an “interwoven dialogue” in which our scars are seen not only as symbols of resistance but as anchor points for new forms of care, empathy, and companionship. We hope these connections transform our individual experiences into a collective body of wisdom that not only denounces injustices but inspires other women to recognize and reclaim their journeys.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study underscore that memory work and the use of kintsugi can serve as tools of resistance against the academic capitalism and patriarchy that coexist within contemporary academia. Rescuing and bringing visibility to our experiences, despite homogenizing standards, enables building a support network and the development of a collective voice that overcomes self-censorship and silencing. As Claudia’s story suggests, we hope that these shared narratives not only reveal the complexities of being a woman in academia but also inspire other female academics to recognize and value their journeys, thereby fostering a transformation in current institutional logics and an appreciation for the beauty of the scars that shape us. This research provides insight into the impact of neoliberal and patriarchal structures on the experiences of female academics from a feminist perspective rooted in the Global South. As Pamela’s experience illustrates, academic women, through our narratives, make explicit the marks left by a system that, under the logic of commodification and competitiveness, relegates our experiences and voices to marginal positions (Arboledas-Lérida, 2021; Gatto et al., 2024). This study aims to confront, at least in part, academic capitalism and its prioritization of productivity with little meaning in highly competitive environments for academic research (Dolgaleva, 2024; Hostler, 2024; Knipp, 2024; Montes et al., 2023; Shore, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024).

The demand for metrics and the pressure for constant productivity within academic capitalism have profoundly altered work practices in universities, prioritizing quantifiable research in terms of published results and obtained funds (Castelló et al., 2011; Gibb, 2024; Hostler, 2024; Parada, 2020; Pomares-Cintas & Álvarez-García, 2020; Rogošić, 2024). Academic capitalism thus transforms teaching, labor dynamics, and the valuation of academic work. Analyzing our narratives, we find that the results of this study align with Sharp and Messuri’s (2023) “chilly climate” metaphor in academia, which adds an additional barrier for those, like Tabisa and Yanina, who face insecurity stemming from the need for expert approval. As Cecilia illustrates, the fear of failing to meet imposed standards leads to a self-censorship that limits the expression of our voices in academia. These fragments, as seen in Yanina’s story, reveal how neoliberal and patriarchal norms are internalized, generating a sense of inadequacy and, as Claudia shows, even leading to work overload (Araneda-Guirriman & Sepúlveda-Páez, 2021; Johnson & Taylor, 2019; Jones & Floyd, 2023; Mackinlay, 2023; Martínez-Labrín & Castelao-Huerta, 2023). Additionally, the lack of discursive innovation and the trend toward homogenization in scientific

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texts result in a detachment from personal experiences, diminishing the value of situated knowledge and dissenting voices (Castelló et al., 2011; Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2023; Ma et al., 2023; Parada, 2020). Pamela and Cecilia highlight how dominant writing styles promote the invisibility of emotions and experiences, reinforcing a universalist epistemology denying women's subjectivity. The practice of memory work in this study serves as a countercultural tool that challenges these structures, as it allows for the recovery and re-signification of personal experiences within a context of exclusion (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2023; Ridgway et al., 2024; Van Hilten & Ruel, 2022).

The research also reveals how structural gender barriers and institutional practices differentially impact women in academia (Alvero et al., 2024; Dahmen-Adkins & Peterson, 2021; Mickey & Smith-Doerr, 2022; Sümer & Eslen-Ziya, 2022; Thun, 2019). In particular, Cecilia mentions how her history positions her and leads her to self-censor and engage in normalized practices within the academic world, while Tabisa confirms how societal expectations of success in academia intersect with what we expect of ourselves. As illustrated by Pamela, Yanina, and Claudia, this phenomenon of “symbolic annihilation” (Abdellatif et al., 2021) that academic women face—a marginalization of both our contributions and our capabilities in a space dominated by masculine paradigms—is intensified by job insecurity and the lack of female role models in leadership positions. These factors limit the development of professional identity and self-confidence (Alkhatib et al., 2024; Johnson & Taylor, 2019; Martínez-Labrín & Castelao-Huerta, 2023; Páez, 2021; Rawat et al., 2024; Sinclair & Clark, 2024; Wu, 2023).

Despite these adversities, the integrated narrative emerging from these fragments also reveals forms of resistance. Writing from the margins and using kintsugi as a metaphor allow academic women to unveil and re-signify our experiences, thereby creating a countercultural feminist epistemology. This “writing from the margins” acts as a subversive strategy that, far from resigning to defeat, transforms individual narratives into a collective fabric of knowledge that challenges dominant power structures (Abdellatif et al., 2021; Ridgway et al., 2024; Van Hilten & Ruel, 2022). As Cecilia asserts, these shared spaces for storytelling and reflection enable us to fortify an “interwoven dialogue” in which our experiences are neither hidden nor silenced but valued as central components of situated knowledge. As Tabisa and Claudia emphasize in their proposal, it is essential to intentionally promote collective support among women in academia. Finally, the authors underscore that this goal becomes achievable only through joint action, upheld by a shared sense of solidarity.

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