

Transcontextualizing Contemporary Filipino Gay-themed Movies: a Filmographic Education

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Abstract

This study focused on transcontextualizing contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies as vehicle for filmographic education. Utilizing Content Analysis as a qualitative research method, this study deciphered the underlying message of each contemporary Filipino gay-themed movie and its social relevance to the LGBT community. As an approach and analytic strategy, content analysis enables a systematic examination of forms of communication to document patterns objectively (Marshall and Rossman 1995:85). Content analysis is a method for summarizing any form of content through classification, tabulation and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning. Results revealed that the different contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies have become instruments in creating new opportunities of respect and acceptance because of the reality they depict in a wide range of viewers. This denotes that with the increasing number of gay-themed movies in the Philippines, the barrier and discrimination will become less than the previous years. It is therefore recommended that transcontextualization should be utilized by students in literary analysis because it dilates ones' eyes to discern realities in the context of filmography.

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Introduction

During the 1960s in the Philippines, the issue of homosexuality was rarely discussed (Foe, 2014). People have been afraid to talk about it because they are either ignored or mistreated. People who fall in love and commit into a relationship with others of the same gender are often seen or treated as ill, insane, or even dirty. This general apathy has forced gay people to live in the shadows, afraid to speak out (Zhang, 2014). Considered as a highly conservative country, Philippines has hardly ever opened the topic of homosexuality to public discussion or debate, a far cry from many western countries that can be said to have already experienced some kind of a revolution with respect to the equal treatment of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals.

Mass media pave the way for the LGBT acceptance in all different aspects in Philippine society. Motion pictures can create images of certain people affecting the audience's evaluation of a specific group or situation. And it has clearly created the possibilities of seeing homosexual roles in everyday television and film.

For example the movie *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* 2005, which was directed by Auraeus Solito, is a Filipino coming-of-age film about a gay teen who is torn between his love for a young cop and his loyalty to his family. This movie made the rounds of international film festivals, Best Film in Asian Festival of 1st films, Singapore and Golden Zenith Award for Best Picture in Montreal World Film Festival 2005.

Now that movies are distributed as DVDs and through the Internet, there are more avenues by which films with gay characters can be disseminated and seen by a wider audience. Following what happened in Hollywood, gay characters who used to be invisible now take on multi-dimensional roles—as heroes, villains, victims, or as neighbours next door. Observers say these turn around in portrayals seem to mirror society's more relaxed attitudes about gay characters in general (Zhang, 2014).

This study revolved around contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies and aimed to unravel its message to the LGBT community since they are slowly becoming more popular nowadays. This study aimed to fill a research gap in terms of explaining and elucidating the message of the gay-themed movies in the mass media in a nation known for its conservative stance on homosexuals. In the process, it hopes to shed light on Filipino media's depiction of this minority group that has long been marginalized in mainstream. This study focused on transcontextualizing contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies as vehicle for filmographic education.

Specifically, it sought to obtain the following objectives:

1. Differentiate contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies;
2. Identify the social relevance of the contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies;
3. Determine the themes of the transcontextualized movies based on cinematic elements through transcontextualization; and
4. Decipher its message to the LGBT community.

Conclusions and Implications

The different contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies have become instruments in creating new opportunities of respect and acceptance because of the reality they depict in a wide range of viewers. This denotes that with the increasing number of gay-themed movies in the Philippines, the barrier and discrimination will be lesser than that of the previous years.

With this, the contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies set the need for an individual to identify himself because it roots to better understanding of him as a person and people surrounding him. Having a better view of oneself affects the way people see him as an individual.

Furthermore, the roles portrayed by the characters in the movies are parallel to that in real life. They represent the members of the LGBT community particularly the gays. They portray the reality of the world and it shows how gays are treated and judged differently by the society.

These movies bring an important message to the viewers especially the LGBT community. These movies encourage self-acceptance among the members of the LGBT community. These movies also suggest that gays should not easily give in to adversity. They should stand firm and fight against discrimination and not let others take advantage of them just because of their sexuality.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived from the findings and conclusion.

1. LGBT community should encourage themselves to watch these different contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies and it will make them enhance their confidence to face any challenges.
2. Media should continue in making movies that gives awareness about the LGBT community.
3. Viewers should be open in watching various gay-themed Filipino movies and in some instances, they will learn to understand the situation of the LGBT community and so the tendency is to lessen the gender discrimination especially to the LGBT community.
4. Future researchers should conduct more study and delve deeper on how to transcontextualize Filipino gay-themed movies concerning LGBT community.

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