

Out of the Closet: Transgressive Representations of Queer Intimacy in Filipino Mainstream Media

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Abstract : This study argues that media representations of queer intimacies can be transgressive. Representations of queerness in local and international media can be a reflection of the culture where the media product belongs to and these representations can be peculiar and intolerable to different communities. Since these representations of queerness in any media product are rare and unacceptable it can be seen as transgressive in a way that it goes beyond the norms of a particular community and violates the common perceptions about gender and sexuality. Examining media representations of the queer community in a predominantly Catholic country means breaking the religious belief, principles, and stereotypes about homosexuality and same-sex relationship. Using a mainstream media and gender theory this study examined whether and how one particular Filipino mainstream media representation of queer intimacies can enact such transgression. Over the past years Original Pinoy Music (Original Filipino Music) or OPM has produced chart-topping and controversial hit songs which includes: This guy is in love with you pare (pare refers to a guy or men) released in 2002: Nagmahal ako ng bakla (I fell in love with a gay) released in 2009: and lastly Pare mahal mo raw ako (Man, you love me?) released in 2014. By examining these songs, this study outlines tropes on how OPM songs present transgression in queer intimacy including the image of love for money only to gaiety and satisfaction which presents how an openly gay man makes a cisgender man falls in love for him by satisfying him through his humorous antics, this is one way of showing transgression in queer relationship in Philippine context by going beyond the common stereotype of a cisgender man falling in love to a gay man for his wealth to falling in love genuinely because of gaiety and satisfaction in the relationship. This study also identifies how media created a new way of presenting gay and homosexual relationship - from the stereotypes of gays having illnesses and mental health problems, mainstream media continues to present that queer relationship is not all about love and sexual desire but also it promotes acceptance and love towards people in the community. A queer relationship does not only revolve in the idea of having a same-sex relationship but the idea that queer relationship is also between friends and other people of the community by manifesting acceptance and love. Amidst the conservative culture of the Philippines, mainstream media continues to progress and develop ways on how to present gender and sexuality in different media products. These representations create a transgressive way of showing acceptance and understanding towards identities particularly homosexuality and queer relationships.

Keywords : gender studies, homosexuality, media representations, queer intimacy

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