

An Assessment of Female Representation in Philippine Cinema in Comparison to American Cinema (1975 to 2020)

Authors : Amanda Julia Binay, Patricia Elise Suarez

Abstract : Female representation in media is an important subject in the discussion of gender equality, especially in impactful and influential media like film. As the Filipino film industry continues to grow and evolve, the need for analysis on Filipino female representation on screen is imperative. Additionally, there has been limited research made on female representation in the Philippine film scene. Thus, the paper aims to analyze the presence and evolution of female representation in Philippine cinema and compare the findings with that of American films to see how Filipino filmmakers hold their own against the standards of international movements that call for more and better female representation, especially in Hollywood. The participants selected were Filipino and American films released within the years 1975 to 2020 in five (5) year intervals. Twenty (20) critically acclaimed and highest-grossing Filipino films and twenty (20) critically acclaimed and highest-grossing Hollywood films were then subject to the Bechdel and Peirce tests to obtain statistical measures of their female representation. The findings of the study reveal that the presence of female representation in Philippine film history has been consistent and has continued to grow and evolve throughout the years, with strong female leads with vibrant characteristics and diverse stories. However, analysis of female representation regarding American films has shown an extreme lack thereof with more misogynistic, sexist, and limiting ideals. Thus, the study concludes that the state of female representation in Philippine cinema and film industry holds its own when compared to American cinema and film industry and even outperforms it in many aspects of female representation, such as consistent inclusion and depiction of multi-dimensional female leads and female relationships. Hence, the study implies that women's consistent presence in Philippine cinema mirrors Filipino women's prominent role in Philippine society and that American cinema must continue to make efforts to change their portrayals of female characters, leads, and relationships to make them more grounded in reality.

Keywords : female representation, gender studies, feminism, philippine cinema, American cinema, bechdel test, peirce test, comparative analysis

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