

Narratives of the Body: Significance and Meanings of Tattoos of Selected Filipino LGBTs

Authors : Generoso Pamittan Jr., Freddielyn Pontemayor

Abstract : Through the years, the purpose of tattoos in the Philippines, has changed from being tribal and traditional-ritualistic to personal and individualistic. Hence it is interesting to know the stories and meanings behind tattoos of particular individuals. Using the frames of Anabela Pereira's concept of 'body art' as 'visual language', this paper scrutinizes the tattoos of selected Filipino LGBTs to (1) unfold the stories behind their body symbols, (2) describe the meanings and significance of their tattoos, and (3) determine the dominant themes that are common among the tattoos of the selected LGBTs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected respondents to obtain in-depth information about the tattoos. Photos of tattoos were also taken, with respondents' consent, to describe and analyze the details of tattoos' patterns/ designs. Based on the interviews and analysis, most of the immediate relatives of the selected LGBTs were initially against the idea of having tattoos because of social stigma. However, the LGBT respondents considered their tattoos as symbols of their penchant for something (arts, cooking, etc.), expression of their personality and life's aspirations, assertion of their identity amidst heteronormative tendencies and symbols that constantly remind them of the significant people and milestones in their lives.

Keywords : body art, body tattoo, gender, identity, LGBT, tattoo

Conference Title : ICGFWS 2018 : International Conference on Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : January 08-09, 2018