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Narratives of Compulsory Heterosexuality Struggles of Filipino Lesbians in the Selected Poems from Tingle: Anthology of Pinay Lesbian Writings

Strand 1: Literary Studies

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Abstract

Utilizing Adrienne Rich's concept of compulsory heterosexuality, this research investigates narratives and struggles of Filipina lesbians as depicted in selected poems from "Tingle: Anthology of Pinay Lesbian Writings." Rich's theory, which describes heterosexuality as a social imperative and not an option available to women, can serve as a critical lens to understand Filipino literature more fully. This research exposes the profound effect of Rich's conception of society on the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ community members in the Philippines. Through careful investigation, themes of social pressure, economic dependence, and compulsory heterosexuality become evident. The findings underlined the urgency of acknowledging and challenging these deeply entrenched struggles, drawing attention to the potential damage imposed by societal norms and perceptions that persist over time. The conclusion of this research calls for greater inclusivity, representation, and support of the LGBTQIA+ community. Institutions across various sectors should actively foster understanding, acceptance, and celebration of diverse narratives to enrich the human experience.

Keywords: Filipino Lesbian Poems, Compulsory Heterosexuality, Lesbian Writings

INTRODUCTION

In the rich selection of Filipino literature, poetry has always been a powerful medium for self-expression of the most profound emotions, societal observations, and cultural narratives. While much of the country's literary history has been dominated by traditional themes, a growing body of work that delves into marginalized communities, particularly LGBTQIA +, is fast emerging. Literary works like *Ladlad Anthologies*, *Philippine Gay Culture*, *Riverrun*, *Bagay Tayo*, and *Wildfire* have made rounds to educate the masses in upholding the rights of the gay community in the Philippines (Escalante, 2023).

According to Erlita et al. (2017), ¹¹ three themes are present in the first published book about gay literature in the country, namely, (1) *Life in the Closet*, (2) *Coming Out*, and (3) *Living in the Life of a Gay Person*. The ideas presented in *Ladlad Anthology* have encapsulated the struggles of the LGBT community in their day-to-day living. The work of Jhoanna Lyn Cruz: "Tingle: Anthology of Pinay Lesbian Writing," on the other hand, is a collection of narratives expressed in stories and poems that brings women loving women into the open by making them visible in their terms. The word tingle prompted writers to define their terms and enactment of lesbianism. Most of the pieces were about the sparked recognition that one loves a woman as a woman. There is a growing need to analyze the background of these problems in the status quo.

Analyzing the circumstances undergone by the LGBTQIA+ community, discrimination and bullying are always on the list, especially for those who openly declare themselves. (Tang & Pou ¹², 2018). These settings are usually circulated among families, communities, and schools. Though ¹³ the Philippines is

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