

Representation of LGBT Struggles in the Film “Bohemian Rhapsody”

By :

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Introduction

Background

The phenomenon of gender representation in media, particularly in films, is an increasingly engaging subject to study. Films, as a medium, use symbols, signs, and icons to represent reality and convey messages. They also provide insights by addressing issues so audiences can understand them.

Bohemian Rhapsody successfully reached various social groups, leading experts to predict that the film may have had an impact on audiences (Annissa, 2021). In this study, *Bohemian Rhapsody* becomes the main research object.

PHENOMENON

The phenomenon of gender representation in media, particularly in films, is an increasingly engaging subject to study. Films, as a medium, use symbols, signs, and icons to represent reality and convey messages. They also provide insights by addressing issues so audiences can understand them. *Bohemian Rhapsody* successfully reached various social groups, leading experts to predict that the film may have had an impact on audiences (Annissa, 2021). In this study, *Bohemian Rhapsody* becomes the main research object.

Research Importance

This research is important because it provides an understanding of how Freddie Mercury managed to maintain his identity as a bisexual individual amidst criticism from fans and media. The study collects data by carefully watching the film and noting key scenes that depict Freddie Mercury's struggle in defending his bisexual identity.

Research Question

“How is Freddie Mercury’s bisexual identity represented in the film Bohemian Rhapsody?”

This study investigates how the film represents gender identity by applying John Fiske’s semiotics theory, which consists of three levels: reality, representation, and ideology. Each level can be used to analyze moving images such as film and television.

Theory and Method

Main Theory

John Fiske's Semiotics – the study of meaning and sign systems, and how signs are interpreted as meaningful

Method

Approach : Qualitative, using content analysis.

Data :

Collected through in-depth viewing of Bohemian Rhapsody, identifying key scenes that represent Freddie Mercury's struggle to defend his bisexual identity.

Previous Studies

- **Andi Fathan Aljauzy (2021):** “Narcissistic Representation in Bohemian Rhapsody” – analyzing types of narcissism using semiotics.
- **Matthew Thiery Hidayat, Lukman Hakim, Judhi Hari Wibowo (2022):** “Narrative Analysis of Bisexuality in Bohemian Rhapsody” – exploring how bisexuality is portrayed.
- **Riikka Savela (2020):** “Male Friendship in Bohemian Rhapsody” studying male friendship

Previous Studies

- **Syifa Afiati Amatillah (2020):** “Representation of Freddie Mercury as Rockstar in Bohemian Rhapsody” – using Roland Barthes’ semiotics.
- **Muhiddin (2023):** “Between Rejection and Acceptance: Exploring Youth Perceptions of LGBTQ+ in Indonesia” – discussing acceptance and rejection of LGBTQ+ youth in Indonesia using thematic qualitative analysis.

Research Gap

From previous studies, none specifically examined the representation of LGBT struggles in Bohemian Rhapsody. This study aims to fill that gap by providing a deeper analysis of Freddie Mercury's struggle and his effort to affirm his identity as part of the LGBT community.

Research Benefits

By applying John Fiske's semiotic theory, this research uncovers hidden meanings behind film scenes through three levels of analysis: reality, representation, and ideology. This contributes to understanding how social messages are symbolically embedded in popular media.

Discussion

Overall, Bohemian Rhapsody not only portrays the journey of Queen's success but also highlights how Freddie Mercury, the lead vocalist, defended and affirmed his sexual identity as a bisexual individual.

Discussion

This research focuses on key scenes from Bohemian Rhapsody that depict LGBT support through Freddie Mercury's character. Out of 97 scenes, 7 were selected for deeper analysis. The level of ideology within John Fiske's "codes of television" is included in the discussion.

Research Findings

Based on John Fiske's semiotic analysis, the findings show that *Bohemian Rhapsody* presents Freddie Mercury's struggle to affirm his bisexual identity amid social pressure and public expectations. Several key scenes illustrate how media, social environment, and personal relationships shaped his identity journey.

Public and media reactions reflect how dominant ideologies influenced the acceptance of LGBT in

Conclusion

In conclusion, Bohemian Rhapsody contributes to the discourse of LGBT representation by presenting Freddie Mercury's complex and challenging story. Although criticized for not being explicit enough, John Fiske's semiotic approach reveals hidden meanings that still convey messages of courage, self-acceptance, and resistance against social norms that suppress individual identity. Thus, this research enriches understanding of how media represents LGBT identities and how symbolic interpretation uncovers deeper meaning in film narratives.

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