

# LGBT-TV (Part 8): We are your allies, but...

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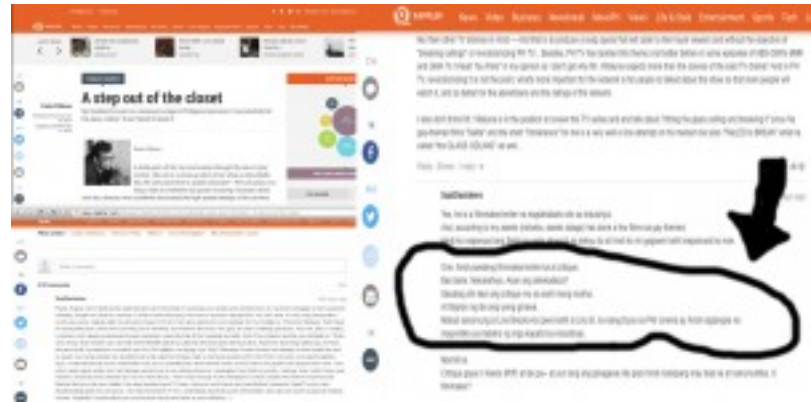
Surveying the local Filipino television landscape — and occasionally including film within this quick study of the queer-oriented visual culture — I have identified six current problems that still beset mainstream media today when it comes to queer representations and portrayals:

1. Media mainstreams only the mainstream concept of us.
2. Mainstream has relatively increased queer representation, but it's not that diverse.
3. The “real alternative” is seen only in alternative venues, still.
4. Philippine media generally ignores global progress regarding SOGIE issues.
5. Well-meaning Filipino media practitioners still struggle with the political economy of media.
6. Supposedly well-meaning media practitioners unknowingly alienate their real audiences.

I have expounded on the first five problems in this series as I tried to dissect what still needs to be done to achieve gender and SOGIE equality in local TV. I've hinted at some reasons and identified structures within media itself (See Part 7) that have been stumbling blocks in presenting a humane framing of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. However, I believe we also have to analyze the intentions of the people who supposedly try to help us from within. Yes, we have queer allies and we have hetero allies. But what kind of allies are they, in

the first place?

It is truly ironic when people have this basic impression that local media and showbiz are open-minded industries merely because many LGBTQs work there. But pointing to the political economy of media again, like I did for the essay prior to this one in the series, sometimes queer and non-queer allies are primarily focused on putting food on the table and clothes on their backs, first and foremost, before putting forth any kind of social justice issue in their pitched film and TV concepts. Yes, we get it, people need to eat and buy stuff; but please, don't do it at our expense by creating LGBTQ characters as caricatures in your storylines for the audiences to laugh and jeer at.



I have written numerous times about how queer-identified creative people in the media industries are sometimes the ones who take charge in creating these false notions of us. My favorite story is still about this gay scriptwriter who wanted to change my shortlisted screenplay in the Cinemalaya semi-finalist selection process into one of his poverty porn-like narratives when my story is about middle class yuppie lesbians. My second not-so-favorite favorite story finds me at the other side of the digital indie film fest spectrum in Cinema One where a gay coordinator spat vitriol at the lesbian-identified actors I wanted to cast in my shortlisted screenplay entry, for reasons unknown to me. Yes, I get it now: some gay men hate lesbians, and I've learned how to deal with it.

But what about heterosexual women who write about queer lives and shoot out catty missives at the watching queer audiences who try to criticize her writings?

Such was the case I encountered in this space when I wrote about the GMA-7 lesbian-themed teleserye *The Rich Man's Daughter* and how I was setting up a series of analysis articles by writing the first article in a humorous countdown style. However, the show's creator seemed to have lost her sense of humor and saw the article as merely a negative attack on the show. She even resorted to ad hominem attacks about me, the writer of the article, while putting forth the disclaimer that "she doesn't know me." Yes, before attacking me, she says she doesn't know me. Very strange.

I would have dismissed this defensiveness as just a kneejerk reaction of someone who has the typical Pinoy “ang pikon talo” mentality, for she was merely defending what appeared to her as her baby, her work of art which she loves so much, so everyone who doesn’t see it that way is automatically her enemy. However, perhaps someone should remind her that Google has already eradicated the notion of ignorance when traversing the information superhighway. So perhaps, instead of saying she doesn’t know me before attacking me as “nagdudunung-dunun-



over the rainbow, and landed in black-and-white stereotypes of us. Hello, we're not in Kansas anymore, right?

However, regardless of negativities and shortcomings, we queers still find ourselves very permissive (somehow) and welcoming (of sorts) of portrayals that come and go. For in the bigger scheme of things, we still secretly wish for — and openly shout out to the universe — for the arrival of proper LGBTQ portrayals to grace our local silver screens and boob tubes. And this is the reason we dialogue with content creators, reach out to media gatekeepers, or participate in creating such products even if it appears hopeless most times: Because change — and revolutions — will not happen if we merely sit here and do nothing.

So let's all do something.



See [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#), [Part 5](#), [Part 6](#) and [Part 7](#) here.

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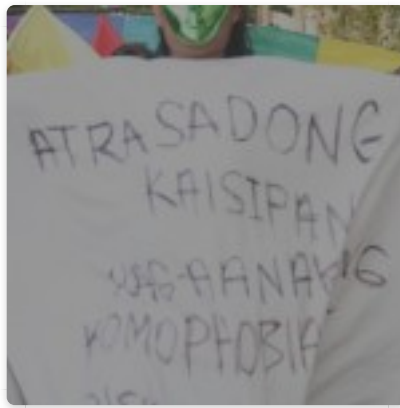
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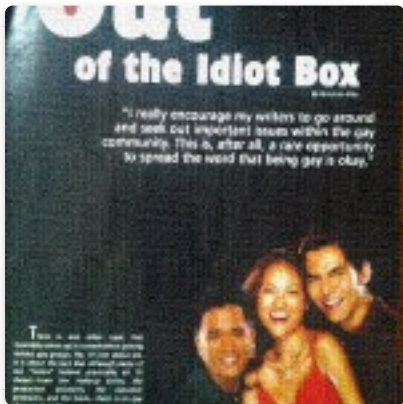
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