

Defining the Realities of Overseas Filipino Workers in the Filipino Film ‘Hello, Love, Goodbye’: A Semiotic Analysis

Marhada A. Hadjirul¹

¹English Language Studies Department, College of Arts and Sciences, Basilan State College, Philippines

ABSTRACT: This analysis is zeroed in on defining and dissecting the experiences of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), represented by Joy and Ethan, characters in the Filipino film ‘Hello, Love, Goodbye’, starred by Kathryn Bernardo and Alden Richards, respectively. Furthermore, this paper encompassed a comprehensive interpretation of Joy and Ethan through an analysis of different elements in the film and where they were parts of: characters, dialogues, colors, shot and editing techniques, and sound quality. Recommendations for further analysis were also included to further elaborate how a certain phenomenon can be dissected and represented in a narrative.

Keywords : ‘Hello, Love, Goodbye’, Overseas Filipino Workers, Semiotic Analysis, Signs.

I. INTRODUCTION

A narrative has been described by different scholars as the fundamental mechanism by which individuals understand one’s life course development (Bamberg, 2004; Bruner, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988; Halverson, 2010). According to Halverson (2010), people construct narratives as a way to understand themselves and their experiences in the world. Indeed, a narrative emerges to be a pervasive mechanism for sense-making. Further, according to Shirley Brice Heath (2000), “the narrative form of shaping the self, others, and events, often with highly elaborated and specific detail, appears to be universal” (p. 125). Narrative, then, is a principal tool by which people construct their own identities. Roger Schank (1990) contends that identity is not an abstract, psychological concept; rather, identity is embodied through the narratives people tell of their own lives. Given the role narrative plays in helping individuals explore who they are; narrative theorists have proposed a reciprocal relationship between narratives of personal experience and external presentations of identity (Bruner, 1990; McAdams, 2001, 2003; Mishler, 1999; Polkinghorne, 1988; Schank, 1990; Halverson, 2010). It is through telling the stories of one’s life that one builds notions of who they are across an array of social situations and interactions. In turn, the way people perceive themselves to be in these social situations shapes the stories they tell (McAdams, 2001). While there is no direct correspondence between the content of personal narratives and sense of identity, the sharing of narratives of personal experience with others provides opportunities for interaction around personal assumptions, beliefs, and presentation of self (Halverson, 2010). Keller-Cohen and Dyer (1997) account the significance of this link in social science research: “In contemporary scholarship, it has become common place to observe that speakers use the site of narratives to construct particular identities ... [where] each telling of a story [offers] the narrator a fresh opportunity to create a particular representation of herself” (p. 150).

In the Philippine context, portraying one’s self in narratives, specifically in films and television shows, has dramatically influenced and shaped Filipino’s concept of one’s reality. The fluidity of these platforms has squared the possibilities of mirroring society’s norms and how an individual is viewed within those norms. According to Young Critics’ Circle (2009), films have the capacity to create a discourse that can change society and history which entails that when the viewers distinguish that what they are watching is analogous to the events in their lives, they could possibly live by the messages expressed in the films. As such, film viewing gives value to its audience taking into consideration the reality it heightens through the varied elements of the film. It likewise provides hope due to its capacity to put together meaningful messages and exposes realities that are not apparently present by revealing veiled truths.

Moreover, Lumbera (2011) stated that film viewing is not just for entertainment, but for education as well. Each film contains values, implicitly or explicitly, or hinted at through selected situations. It shapes one’s worldview and sets cultural values or norms by providing symbols, myths, and resources through which individuals obtain a common culture (Dates & Barlow, 1993; Kellner, 2003). To that end, media products such as film help create people’s perceptions of social reality and influence how they understand the world in which

they live and inform how they react to others within it (Gorham, 1999). It specifically represents aspects of social reality that are the constructs of race, gender, class, and other factors. Moreover, it introduces and replicates society's dominant ideologies, which are often invisible to the media consumer, reinforcing what the consumer already "knows" to be true as a result of constant exposure to and repetition of these images (Hall, 1997).

Consequently, in the study of communication, numerous scholars have contributed theories of meaning that examine the relationship between the object, the symbol, and the meaning (Barthes, 1972; Eco, 1976; Morris, 1938; Peirce, 1958; Saussure, 1959). In the late 1960s, semiotics became a major theoretical and methodological approach adopted by critical cultural scholars. Simply stated, semiotics is the study of how meaning is created and realized (Barthes, 1972). In semiotics, signs are the conceptual tools and building blocks of communication. A sign (e.g., a word, a sound, an image) is a meaningful unit that "stands for" something other than itself. Signs usually consist of two elements, the meaning or that which is signified and the signifier or the symbol itself (Chandler, 1999; Hall, 1997). Thus, the sound or image is the signifier and the concept for which it stands is the signified (Saussure, 1959). Semioticians are concerned with the signification process or the ways in which linguistics and symbols operate to associate meanings to various signs (i.e., words, visual images, objects). In other words, they are concerned with how language and symbols work together to create meaning for various signs. Furthermore, the signification process is understood to be culturally, socially, and politically situated as systems of meaning reveal systems of power and domination (Barthes, 1972; Eco, 1976; Hall, 1997). Therefore, "a semiotic analysis typically works to interpret how this signification process inherently communicates the values and themes of a society (Saussure, 1959), and ultimately affirms the ideological system of the status quo as natural and inevitable (Barthes, 1972)" (Orbe & Hopson, 2001, p. 164). The goal of many semioticians then is to deconstruct a selected text (e.g., books, song lyrics, photographs, or film portrayals) to reveal the dominant ideological systems that are hidden within the text.

Peirce's model of signification is based on linguistics and symbols; Saussure's notion of representation is similar and refers to the construction of aspects of reality such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities, and other abstract concepts in any medium (speech, writing, photos, film) (Chandler, 1999). In the semiotic analysis of film content, Chandler (1999, 2002) and Hall (1997) describe the signifying practice of representation. Further, Hall (1997) argues that representation connects meaning and language to culture. Representation as a signification process in film constructs identity markers that are socially, culturally, and politically marginalized, and ultimately creates and/or perpetuates ideologies of power and domination (Hall, 1997).

This semiotic analysis demonstrated that it is through the process of telling, adapting, and performing narratives of personal experience that people engage in positive identity development. Specifically, this practice of constructing public performance pieces from true-life stories as a process facilitates the development of a "viable social identity" (Côté & Levine, 2002), a reconciliation of the way people see themselves, the way others see them, and the way they fit into the communities to which they belong. Notably, the earliest significant moves to consider film semiotically were made in the 1960s and 1970s accompanying the general "linguistic turn" and advances in structuralism that took place at that time (Bateman, 2013). Semiotic accounts were developed both by semioticians such as Umberto Eco (1977) and by film theorists and practitioners, such as Pier Paolo Pasolini (1971) and Christian Metz (1964; 1974). In recent years, Halverson (2007; 2008) has shown that the adaptation of individual narratives of personal struggle into scripted scenes for personal performance is a powerful venue for the development of individuals' viable social identities.

Furthermore, this analysis considered a film as a specific exemplum of the artistic representation of narratives of one's experience and how filmic texts can be analyzed as multimodal representations of self that demonstrate the construction of a feasible social identity. Specifically, this analysis is zeroed in on defining and dissecting the life of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), represented by Joy and Ethan, in the Filipino film, 'Hello, Love, Goodbye', starred by Kathryn Bernardo and Alden Richards, respectively.

II. OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The objective of this paper is to scrutinize the lead characters of the highest Filipino grossing film, Hello, Love, Goodbye – Joy and Ethan – and how they portray the realities of Overseas Filipino Workers.

Moreover, this paper entailed an interpretation of Joy and Ethan through an analysis of different elements in the film and as to where they were parts of: characters, dialogues, colors, shot and editing techniques, and sound quality. However, the researcher did not further analyze and criticize how the writer wrote the story.

Specifically, this analysis answered the following questions:

1. How were Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) portrayed in the characters and dialogues of the film?
2. How do the following film elements delineate the emotions portrayed in the film?
 - a. Color
 - b. Shot and Editing Techniques
 - c. Sound Quality

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Charles William Morris's *Writings on the General Theory of Signs*

'Writings on the General Theory of Signs' (1971) by Charles William Morris is an investigation of the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic relations of linguistic and non-linguistic signs, and is an in-depth analysis of the parts that different kinds of signs may play in influencing an individual's behavior. Morris introduces a terminology that describes sign phenomena, and he lays down a theory of signs that defines signs as stimuli to patterns of behavior. He explicates the ways "semiotics" (the science of signs) may develop within the context of "science of behavior". He also delineates the role that semiotics may play in bringing together the biological, psychological, social, and humanistic sciences (Morris, 1971).

In scrutinizing the role that a science of signs may play in the analysis of language as a social system of signs, Morris elucidates that language may be driven by syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic rules. Syntactic rules may determine the combinations of signs that function as grammatical statements; semantic rules may determine the conditions with which signs signify objects or events; and, pragmatic rules may determine the conditions with which sign vehicles function as signs. Morris further discusses the role that semiotics may play in the development of a theory of language, and he expounds that language may be defined not only by the rules that govern the combinations of its signs, but also by the rules that govern the signification of its signs, and by the rules that govern the origin, uses, and effects of its signs (Morris, 1971).

B. *Theory of Semiotics*

A central theme in contemporary semiotics is to uncover the process of meaning making and to answer the question of how reality is represented (Chandler, 2007). According to semioticians, people live in a world full of signs, and as Chandler (2007) puts it, "we have no way of understanding anything except through signs and the codes into which they are organized" (p. 11). Through the lens of a semiotician, all things can be perceived as a sign: words, images, sounds, gestures, and even objects. On this basis, filmmaking can be assumed as the practice of organizing codes, and therefore, film can be understood as a system of organized codes or a system of signs. Hence, narratives communicate or represent given realities through signs or codes.

C. Roland Barthes' *Semiotics*

This paper is likewise guided by the Barthesian semiotic reading of signs. In his 'Elements of Semiology', Roland Barthes argued that meaning is confirmed linguistically. By looking into the relationship of the signifier and the signified, denotation and connotation, signification is produced. This process of meaning-making is, according to Barthes' interpretation of Saussure, arbitrary, a result of social convention. The sign can be deciphered as the value of the expression, and is a result of exchange and comparison among varying words and ideas (Lara-De Leon & Miguel, 2015).

Connotation and denotation are often delineated in terms of levels of representation or meaning. Roland Barthes espoused from Louis Hjelmslev the idea that there are disparate orders of signification (Barthes, 1957; Hjelmslev, 1961; Lara-De Leon & Miguel, 2015). The first order of signification is that of denotation by which there is a sign consisting of a signifier and a signified. Connotation is a second order of signification by which the denotative sign (signifier and signified) is employed as its signifier and affixes to it an additional signified. In this framework, connotation is a sign which gleans from the signifier of a denotative sign (so denotation leads to a chain of connotations). This suggests that denotation is a basic and primary meaning. Barthes later gave priority to connotation, and in 1971, he noted that it was no longer easy to separate the signifier from the signified, the ideological from the "literal" (Barthes, 1977). In passing, this formulation underlines the point that what is a signifier or a signified depends completely on the level at which the analysis operates: a signified on one level can become a signifier on another level (Paul, 1994). This is the mechanism by which signs may seem to signify one thing but are laden with multiple meanings (Lara-De Leon & Miguel, 2015).

The characters, dialogues, colors, shot and editing techniques, and sound qualities of the Filipino film 'Hello, Love, Goodbye' were analyzed in this paper. As such, Roland Barthes' logical framework and Mark Knapp's nonverbal concept were used in analyzing the characters; Barthes' semiotic model were also adopted in analyzing the dialogues; colors presented in the film were analyzed following Anders Steinvall's (2007) Colors and Emotions in English; shot and editing techniques were analyzed using Arthur Asa Berger's (2004) interpretation; and, sound qualities were analyzed using Theo van Leeuwen's (1999) and David Machin's (2010) observations.

The main leads' characterizations and dialogues, that is, Joy and Ethan, were the focus of this analysis. The researcher translated some of the dialogues, and some were extracted from the subtitles available in Netflix. Moreover, for the analysis of the association of color and emotion, scenes where Joy and Ethan are involved, which also in some points include other characters, were carefully investigated. The analysis of the shot and editing techniques and its association to the film's atmosphere were mirrored in the entirety of the film. Finally, the sound quality involved the analysis of the film's official soundtracks and background music, which include its instrumentations.

D. Mark Knapp et al.'s (2013) Nonverbal Concept

Mark L. Knapp explicated that the term 'nonverbal' is typically used to describe all communication events other than spoken and written words. In this definition, nonverbal events and behaviors are not really nonverbal in nature (Gibraltar, 2014). The nonverbal field is an area which emphasizes the importance of phenomenon which is empirical, factual and concrete in nature, without speech and language. It means that the nonverbal field is related to concrete and real matters which can be proven through human senses (Wibowo, 2011; Gibraltar, 2014).

E. Anders Steinvall's (2007) Colors and Emotions in English

From a linguistic point of view, etymology can manifest a connection between color and emotions. Melancholy, for example, contains a reference to black bile which indirectly links blackness and depression. Moreover, many expressions in English combine colors and emotions, for instance, green with envy, and occasionally a color term has come to stand for an emotion without an unconcealed tie, as in to feel blue (possibly motivated by Romanticist emotional loading of the color blue, cf. Pastoureau, 2001). Notwithstanding such well-known relations, it would appear that no study has systematically described collocations of color terms and emotion terms (Steinvall, 2007).

In his study, Steinvall (2007) attempted to resolve this lack. He analyzed firmly the color-emotion collocations found in a large English corpus. Where a pattern emerges, its motivation was discussed within the framework of cognitive and cultural models (e.g. Holland & Quinn, 1987; Lakoff, 1987). Using the general corpus picture as a springboard, he explored the collocations of emotion and color categories from two perspectives, investigating which color categories are conspicuous from the viewpoint of emotions and vice versa.

Table 1. Association of Basic Color Categories and Basic Emotion Categories based on Steinvall's (2007) Study on Color and Emotion in English

Color (Signifier)	Emotion (Signified)
Pink, red	Love
Yellow, blue, red, orange, white, green	Joy
Red, green, purple, black	Anger
Black, grey, red	Sadness
White	Fear

F. Arthur Asa Berger's (2004) Shot and Editing Techniques Interpretation

Diverse forms of media carry diverse genres of the popular arts. Each medium, due to its nature, imposes specific limitations on any popular art forms or genres it carries. Because of the small screen and the nature of the television image, for example, television is not the ideal medium for presenting huge battle scenes. Television is a "close-up" medium, better suited to unveiling character than to capturing action (Berger, 2004).

In applying semiotics, according to Berger (2004), it makes sense to concern oneself with aspects of the medium that function as signs, as distinguished from carrying signs. What is interesting, from this point of view, are the kinds of camera shots employed in the medium. Shown in Table 2 and 3 are the lists of some of the most important kinds of shots and editing techniques which function as signifiers, and what is usually signified by each.

Table 2. Kinds of Shots and What is Usually Signified by each Shot

Signifier (shot)	Definition	Signified (meaning)
Close-up	Face only	Intimacy
Medium shot	Most of the body	Personal relationship
Long shot	Setting and characters	Context, scope, public distance
Full shot	Full body of person	Social relationship

Table 3. Camera Work and Editing Techniques

Signifier	Definition	Signified
Pan down	Camera looks down	Power, authority
Pan up	Camera looks up	Smallness, weakness
Dolly in	Camera moves in	Observation, focus
Fade in	Image appears on blank screen	Beginning
Fade out	Image screen goes blank	Ending
Cut	Switch from one image to another	Simultaneity, excitement
Wipe	Image wiped off screen	Imposed conclusion

The above material represents a kind of grammar of television and/or film as far as shots, camera work, and editing techniques are concerned. Viewers learn the meanings of these phenomena as they watch television or film, and they help them to understand what is going on in particular programs (Berger, 2004).

G. Theo van Leeuwen's (1999) and David Machin's (2010) Observations of a Film Sound Quality

The researcher drew on and adapted van Leeuwen's (1999) observations on voice quality and Machin's (2010) observations on sound quality in popular music. These observations drew also on the work in speech qualities and meaning in linguistics (Hodge & Kress, 1988) and on the work in psychology linking voice quality to emotional meaning (Juslin&Laukka, 2003). Here are the five sound qualities, further elucidated by Bouvier and Machin (2013):

Tension. This delineates the extent to which the voices speak or sing with an open or closed throat. When people become tense in everyday situations, their throats tend to close up; when they are relaxed, their throat is open and sounds can resonate. Punk singers often use tight, tense vocalization, whereas a female jazz singer like Julie London opens throat and lingering notes. They can also apply this idea of tension versus openness to the instrument sounds. In case of a keyboard, one can ask whether the keys are struck in a tense way that controls the way the notes resonate, not allowing them to ring out, or the opposite, allowed to ring out.

Breathiness. This communicates the degree of intimacy suggested by a voice or an instrument. To bring out the meaning potential here, people can think of the contexts in which they hear people's breath, which can occur when they are out of breath and panting because of some physical or emotional exertion or strain. It can also be in moments of intimacy and sensuality. When one hears a person's breath when they speak, this may be a moment of confidentiality as they whisper in their ear, or share their thoughts with them when they are experiencing emotional strain or euphoria. For instruments, they may hear the full, delicate texture of the note, the breath on a wind instrument or vibration of strings or these may be much less vivid.

Loud/soft. Louder sounds can mean weight and importance. Such sounds literally take up physical and social space – they can be used to suggest power, status, threat or danger, although they can also be overbearing and unsubtle. Softness, in contrast, can suggest intimacy and confidentiality, although softness can also mean weakness.

Distortion/degrees of raspiness. Sounds can be rough and gravelly or very smooth. Raspiness can mean contamination of the actual tone so that it seems worn or dirty. It can also bring along a sense of aggression as in growling, or suggest something machine-like as in a roaring engine. One can hear some of these meanings in rock music with distorted guitars, which can suggest excitement as opposed to the well-oiled warm soft sounds of an acoustic guitar in a folk song. Distortion can also mean pure emotion and authenticity where there is no pretended purity but rather a wish to reveal the world in all its gritty lack of order, wear and tear.

Reverb. Doyle (2006) suggests a number of meanings for echo. Since they are normally experienced in large empty spaces such as churches or valleys between rocky mountains, echoes can suggest something on a large epic scale or something sacred. National anthems are often recorded with reverb to bring about this sense of scale and sacredness, but given the way that reverb can mean epic spaces, it can also be used to communicate isolation.

Vibrato. Van Leeuwen (1999) relates vibrato to one's physical experience of trembling. Its meaning in music will depend on its speed, depth and regularity: high regularity can suggest something mechanical, while an increasing and decreasing vibrato can suggest changing levels of emotion, excitement or stress.

Table 4. Summary of Meaning Potentials for Sound Qualities

Sound quality	Meaning potential
Breathiness	Intimacy
Loud/soft	Taking up social space
Raspy/smooth	Grittiness/energy vs naturalistic and sensual
Reverb	Sacred or isolated

IV. ANALYSIS

A. Synopsis of 'Hello, Love, Goodbye'

The film centers on the love story of Joy (Kathryn Bernardo) and Ethan (Alden Richards), Filipino workers based in Hong Kong. Ethan, a bartender, is keen on romantically pursuing Joy, a domestic helper who is wholly dedicated to providing for her family (Wikipedia).

In the bustling high of cramped Hong Kong, two Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are destined to change each other's lives forever. Joy is a spunky poor millennial who works as a domestic helper in Hong Kong. While she excels in her job and enjoys the friendship of many other empowered domestic helpers, she plans to leave the city soon. Hong Kong is only her stopover. Determined to live a greater life far from her deprived childhood, Joy has big dreams of succeeding in Canada or wherever her dreams may take her. In her journey to achieving her goals, Joy meets Pinoy bartender Ethan. Ethan is a sweetheart playboy already building a permanent life in Hong Kong. In a few years, he will officially become a resident in the city. After escaping responsibilities all his life, Ethan now wants to commit to a career and to his family (who also reside in Hong Kong). Joy and Ethan soon develop a friendship. The two become each other's joy against the grime and grind of Hong Kong. So much so that when lonely nights come, they fully surrender to each other's comfort. Still, they warn each other: "this is just 'for now', we are not permanent". Nonetheless, as they overcome more and more problems in Hong Kong together, Joy and Ethan's love deepens. They become each other's savior – helping one another mend their lifelong wounds and realize their ambitions. They wonder, can their 'for now' turn to 'for ever'? But what happens when Joy's dreams take her away from Hong Kong? How can their love possibly survive? (Star Cinema).

B. Characters and Dialogues

To answer the first question, the lead characters and selected dialogues of the film were analyzed. Roland Barthes' framework and Mark Knapp et al.'s nonverbal concept were used in the analysis of the characters through the concretization of signifier and signified shown in Table 5 and 6. The focus of this analysis is Joy and Ethan. The film revolves around their story, their struggles as overseas workers and as individuals chasing their dreams; thus, it is more appropriate and feasible to analyze their portrayals and dialogues in the film.

Table 5. Concretization of Signifier and Signified in Joy's Character

Signifier	Signified
Joy	The film's female lead character who has a nursing degree in the Philippines but has taken a job as a domestic helper in Hong Kong to help support her family.
Streetwear outfits (Jeans, T-shirts, Caps, and Sneakers)	Casual; ordinary
Sling bags	Workers
Ponytail	Chic personality; doing different jobs
Messy hair	Put others first
Shawl	Life; comfort
Alarm clock, watch necklace	Importance of time

Table 6. Concretization of Signifier and Signified in Ethan's Character

Signifier	Signified
Ethan	The film's male lead character; a charismatic playboy who works as a bartender to help support his invalid father and younger brothers while waiting for his permanent residency in Hong Kong.
Streetwear outfits (Jeans, T-shirts, Caps, and Sneakers)	Casual; ordinary
Sling bags	Workers
Tattoos	Self-expression; memory
Piercing	Daring; sexuality; attempting to rebel
Alarm clock, watch necklace	Importance of time

Joy and Ethan, as mentioned above, are the main characters of the film. Joy, as what her name depicts and as Ethan describes her, brings joy to other people like Ethan. It was delineated in one of the scenes – when Joy shares her anger and frustration to Ethan. Moreover, as Bruzzi (1997) puts in, clothes are not mere accessories, but are key elements in the construction of cinematic identities. Fashion plays a crucial role in complementing a character's entire form in film, functioning as a conciliator between character and narrative.

Adding up to the character's cinematic presentation, fashion provides insight about the wearer, implying that the exterior façade gives enlightenment to the character's emotional core. By facilitating this, the character's fashion establishes link between the character's identity and the story of the film. Streetwear outfits worn by Joy and Ethan represents their casual and ordinary life as Filipino workers in Hong Kong. Joy's pony tail and messy hair delineates her chic personality and her characteristic as someone who puts others first before herself and her hardwork of doing different jobs to earn money, that is, to achieve her dreams of going to Canada and for her responsibility to her family. Ethan's tattoos and piercing signifies self-expression and his sexuality, as well as the memory of his past love.

The whole story consciously involved the importance of time in every scene: from Joy's alarm clock, the fast-paced life in the streets of Hong Kong, to them holding a watch necklace.

Moreover, the following dialogues were extracted from the film (Table 7). As stated, those dialogues are of Joy and Ethan. They are arranged chronologically, from the first to the last scenes, where their struggles as overseas workers are portrayed.

Table 7. Dialogues Extracted from the Film

Speaker	Dialogue
Joy	"You arrive, stay a while, then leave."
Joy	"May mgalugarnapangmatagalan. May mgalugarnadinadaananlang, parang Hong Kong. Kaya bawatoras, bakasyon man yan o trabaho, dapatsulitinmodahilwalangnagtatagaldito. Hong Kong is a place where no one stays still." <i>Translation:</i> There are places we stay in longer. There are places that are mere stopovers, just like Hong Kong. So every hour, whether that is for vacation or for work, you have to make the most of it because no one lasts here. Hong Kong is a place where no one stays still.
Joy	"Ditosa Hong Kong, hanggangumagalawka, mabubuhayka. Kapagtumigilka, magugutomka. Kaya bawalhuminto. Tuloy-tuloylangdapatanggalaw." <i>Translation:</i> Here in Hong Kong, as long as you are moving, you will live. Once you stop, you will starve. So you cannot stop. You have to keep moving.
Ethan	"Kabayan!" <i>Translation:</i> Comrade!
Ethan	"Sabi ng ibasa akin, patapondawako." <i>Translation:</i> Some people call me loser.
Joy	"Minsan gusto konalangmaging selfish at iwananlahat ng responsibilidadko. Nagagalitakokasiparangwalaakong choice; nakailangankonggawinitokasikailanganko ng trabaho, kasiwalakamingpera, para sapamilyako. Kaya lahat, kahitnaayawko, lulunukinkonalang. Ang choice para langsa may pera." <i>Translation:</i> Sometimes I just want to be selfish and forget all my responsibilities. It angers me that I do not seem to have a choice; that I need to do this because I need a job, because we do not have money, because my family needs it. So everything, even if I do not like it, I just have to do it. Choice is only for the rich.
Joy	"Alamniyobayungnilulunokkosatrabaho para langsuportahan kayo? Graduate ako ng college, anoangginagawako? Naglilinis ng inidoro. Kung anolangyungbinibigaysa akin, yunlangyungkinakainko." <i>Translation:</i> Do you know what I go through in this job, just so I can support you? I am a college graduate, but what am I doing? I clean toilets. I settle for leftovers.
Ethan	"Ikawnga at least alammo kung anoyung gusto mo. Eh, akosaedadkongito, hindikoalam kung anoang gusto ko. Siguronga tama sila. Walangatalagaakongsilbi." <i>Translation:</i> Well, at least you know what you want. Me, at my age, I do not know what I want. Maybe they are right. I am indeed useless.
Ethan	"Walangimposablesataongnaniniwala." <i>Translation:</i> Nothing is impossible for someone who believes.

The first dialogue encapsulates Joy's mindset regarding her two-year contract in Hong Kong. It shows a sequence of events where Joy first arrived in Hong Kong, stays there as a domestic helper, and eventually leave to follow her dream. Moreover, it shows how impermanent her stay in Hong Kong is, which is also delineated in the next lines. For Joy, Hong Kong is just a stopover on her way to achieving her dream of moving to Canada. The next lines (Here in Hong Kong, as long as you are moving, you will live. Once you stop, you will starve. So you cannot slowdown. You have to keep moving.) delineate how an overseas worker lives in Hong Kong – their struggle to survive each day.

Furthermore, ‘kabayan’, as stated by Ethan, represents Filipinos living or working abroad. It means fellow Filipino, countryman, or townmate. Literally, ‘ka’ means co- and ‘bayan’ means town. In the narrow sense, kabayan means a fellow from the same town. However, it is often used in a much broader sense to mean countryman or compatriot, especially by overseas Filipino workers and connotes respect for each other’s commitment to unity because of their common cultural, political, and religious milieu from the same ‘bayan’, extensively defined.

Joy’s next dialogue depicts her predicament of having no choice, but to work. She feels the rage of needing to have a job because they are poor and her family needs money. She emphasized in those lines that she cannot do anything because choices are only for rich people. She is a college graduate, but in Hong Kong, she is a domestic helper who cleans people’s toilets and does multiple part-time jobs. She settles for what is given to her, be it leftovers. And, regardless of what she achieved in the Philippines, she ventured and faced the struggles of working away from her family just to provide for them. This shows her perseverance, hardwork, and resilience which embody an overseas Filipino worker. Joy, and thousands of other OFWs, endures these hardships to provide for their family back home — a message that the film strongly reinforces.

Like Joy, Ethan also has his share of struggles. He compares himself with Joy (Well, at least you know what you want. Me, at my age, I do not know what I want. Maybe they are right. I am indeed useless.). It shows how indecisive he is of his choices and goals in life. He also affirms others’ perceptions of him that he is useless. He feels that he is worthless, which means he has no good qualities or skills to succeed. Further, when Joy shared her frustrations, he affirmed her that anything is possible for someone who believes in their dreams.

The line, “Choice is only for the rich”, is a pure representation of Filipino working abroad just to provide a good life for their loved ones back home. True to this statement, overseas workers have to work with ‘great effort’, walk themselves on a tightrope to survive, albeit it means taking away what they truly value. In contrast to filmic victimization of domestic workers, Filipino feminist writers and activists also emphasized the liberating aspects of working abroad. Despite the potential threat of violence, women who work abroad are considered to have unknown freedom (Javate de Dios, 1992; Piquero-Ballescás, 1992).

C. Colors

The analysis of colors and emotion dominantly presented in the film is anchored on Steinvall’s study on Color and Emotion in English as summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of the Association of Color and Emotion as Portrayed in the Film based on Steinvall’s (2007) Study on *Color and Emotion in English*

Color (Signifier)	Emotion (Signified)
Pink	Love
Red	Passion
Yellow, blue, red, orange, white	Joy
Green, white	Hope and optimism
Red, green, purple, black	Anger and rage
Black, grey, red	Sadness
Black	Embarrassment and shame
White	Fear

In Steinvall’s (2007) study, two color categories have almost equal strength in the *love* category – pink and red. In this, *love* and *passion* collocate more often than five times with color terms. In the case of *love*, pink has the most; whereas with *passion*, red is the frequent collocation. Co-occurrence of red and *passion* is often explained by a metaphorical model of *heat* (cf. Kövecses, 2000): ‘passion is heat’. Red-hot *passion* occurs most. In the film, these emotions are dominantly portrayed. Joy and Ethan’s love for their family is depicted on different scenes such as: when Joy was pleading to her employer not to terminate her contract, her willingness to do part-time jobs – putting herself at risk where she might get caught by the Hong Kong police through the metropolis’ dingy alleyways for working illegally; her sacrifices to fulfil her responsibility to provide for her family; and, Ethan’s sacrifices to atone all his bad decisions and his utmost care for his paralyzed father and two younger siblings. Moreover, Ethan’s love for Joy was portrayed throughout the film. He helped Joy with her part-time jobs, selling merchandises, and even getting loans to build his own bar to cease Joy from going to Canada. On the other hand, *passion* is immensely portrayed by Joy – how she thinks of a better life for her family and for a fulfilling career. She wants to be more than just a domestic helper. She worked hard in Hong Kong to earn for her dream of going to Canada. Joy cried frustratingly at the Victoria Harbour with Ethan as she wants more in her life – if only she was provided with the right opportunity.

The *joy* category manifests a more evenly distributed pattern of collocations (Steinvall, 2007). This pattern co-occurs with a collection of different color terms: yellow, blue, red, orange, and white. *Hope* and *optimism* belong to the same sub-cluster of *joy – optimism* – in the taxonomy of Shaver et al. (1987). Two patterns emerge for *hope*: a direct link between green and *hope* is pointed out, but the most frequent collocation is between white and *hope* (Steinvall, 2007). These emotions are manifested in the film. Joy, as what her name stands for, as stated by Ethan, brings joy to people, especially to Ethan. Her immense joy was shown when she and Ethan became a couple, when they had their first sweet moments in the central, a place where Filipinos in Hong Kong gathers. Right there, she wore a yellow shirt and Ethan wore white. Furthermore, Joy's hope and optimism to have a better life for herself and her family, amidst the struggles she encountered, are well depicted in the film. She often wears white, thus showing her great sense of hope and optimism.

Anger is the category that collocates most often with color terms of emotion-color collocations (Steinvall, 2007) wherein red and green dominate. This category includes rage, fury, hate, irritation, agitation, frustration, envy, and jealousy. The *rage* sub-cluster collocates most with color terms. *Rage* is usually regarded as the stronger emotion (cf. e.g. Strongman, 1996, p. 36), and it collocates more with darker shades (purple and puce) than *anger*. Steinvall (2007) has a scale by which *pink withanger* implies low pressure, whereas *black or purple withanger* or *withrage* means high pressure, in turn, enhancing anger. Anger was portrayed in Joy and Ethan's conversation at the Victoria Harbour where she cried frustratingly as she had no choice despite of wanting to be more. It was also shown in Joy's confrontation with her mother. Joy wants her mother to divorce her Chinese husband and leave Hong Kong where they can live happily, with Joy's father and siblings; however, her mother does not like the idea despite her being abused by her Chinese husband. She expressed her anger and grief towards Joy's father for letting her suffer in such situation. Rage was also depicted by Ethan's younger brother, Edward, manifested in one scene at the bar where Ethan works. Ethan's past decisions of leaving them for Tanya, his former flame, spurred Edward's anger. He blames Ethan for the sufferings that their family experienced. The mood of those scenes is enveloped with dark and melancholic colors such as green, red, and black.

Furthermore, black, grey, and red dominate the *sadness* category (Steinvall, 2007). Shaver et al. (1987) divide *sadness* into eight sub-clusters – depression, despair, hopelessness, gloom, sadness, grief, sorrow, and misery – in which 11 terms have more than five collocations with color terms. In *depression* and *despair*, black is predominant. With both, the color term modifies the emotion term. Kikuchi and Lichtenberk (1983) noted that the association between *sadness* and *blackness* is widespread and cross-cultural. The collocation of *sadness* and black may also have been motivated by humoral theory, wherein overproduction of black bile caused sadness and melancholy (Geeraerts and Grondelaers, 1995). *Gloom* and *misery* collocate most with grey. On the other hand, the frequent collocation of *sadness* and red may seem surprising (Steinvall, 2007). However, the connection is natural; in Shaver et al.'s (1987) analysis, the sub-cluster of *neglect* belonged to *sadness*. Under *neglect*, terms that collocate with red are *embarrassment* and *shame*. The latter also collocates with black. These emotions under *sadness* category can be seen, almost entirely, in the film; portrayed by an overworked domestic helper, Joy, who is pushed to grieve at the world quite seamlessly. Likewise, by Ethan who lost himself and his worth because of the woman he was madly in love with. He was hopeless, clueless of what he would become. Moreover, *embarrassment* and *shame* was felt in this scene: after Joy witnessed her mother glossing over her Chinese husband's physical abuses, she met her old flame in a tram. He told her he is on vacation with his wife and is going back to the Philippines after spending years as a nurse abroad. Joy, who is also a nurse, stomachs the embarrassment of telling him that she has ended up a domestic helper, just like her mother.

The last category is *fear*. In Steinvall (2007), *fear* has only two sub-clusters, and its pattern reveals that *fear* collocates most with white. This emotion was shown in Ethan and Joy's last scenes, their fear of losing each other in the process of chasing their dreams. It was also shown at the beginning of the film where Joy was chase by the police in the alleyways of Hong Kong.

D. Shots and Editing Techniques

The film as mode of communication possesses certain peculiarities through which its functions are manifested. These peculiarities are aspects of the medium that function as signifiers such as the shots and editing techniques. These codes which form the grammar of the film are herein decoded and interpreted following Berger's (2004) interpretation as shown above in Table 2 and Table 3. Table 9 below shows the summary of the camera works, editing techniques, and shots that are herein discussed as shown in the film.

Table 9. Summary of Camera Works, Editing Techniques, and Shots shown in the Film

Signifier (shot)	Signified (meaning)	Scenes
Close-up	Intimacy	Storage scene
Medium shot	Personal relationship	Roof top scene
Long shot	Context, scope, public distance	Scenes at the bar and Central
Full shot	Social relationship	Scenes at the bar and Central

Pan down	Power, authority	Hong Kong police chasing Joy
Pan up	Smallness, weakness	Joy and Ethan's first encounter
Fade in	Beginning	Airport scene
Fade out	Ending	Airport scene
Cut	Simultaneity, excitement	Last scene at Victoria Harbor to Ethan and Joy holding the watch necklace
Wipe	Imposed conclusion	Ending scene

Those shots and editing techniques help viewers understand more the meaning, emotion, and concept portrayed in the film. For the most part, Joy and Ethan's emotional connection and interaction are close-up and medium shot which show their intimacy and personal relationship; for example, the storage scene where they were stuck and almost touched each other's body, and the rooftop scene where they shared a memorable moment together. Moreover, one specific scene where power and authority was portrayed, in which the angle of the camera focused downwards, was when Joy was chased by the Hong Kong patrol police. Second, where her smallness and weakness was delineated through which the camera angled upwards, was when Joy met Ethan. There, she was fumed with fear of getting caught by the police. She thought that Ethan, who mimicked a police voice, was definitely a police. She cried with fear, asking for her life to be saved.

A long shot and full shot in which the full body of a character is shown, that signifies social relationship, context, scope, and public distance, are delineated in most of the scenes at the bar and Central where Filipinos gather. Fade in, fade out, cut, and wipe are common shots that can be seen in every film as they signify beginning, ending, simultaneity, excitement, and imposed conclusion.

E. Sound Quality

For the analysis of the film's sound quality, van Leeuwen's (1999) observations on voice quality and Machin's (2010) observations on sound quality in popular music are adopted. These observations also draw on the work in speech qualities and meaning in linguistics (Hodge, Kress 1988) and on the work in psychology linking voice quality to emotional meaning (Juslin&Laukka, 2003) as explicated above.

a. Breathiness

For instruments, one may hear the full, delicate texture of the note, the breath on a wind instrument or vibration of strings or these may be much less vivid which can be heard in the official soundtrack of the film, *Ikaw at Ako*, sung by Moira Dela Torre and Jason Hernandez. This was played on the last scenes of Joy and Ethan. There is therefore a sense that the film is much more personal and intimate, emphasizing textures of experiences. Moreover, softness overpowered suggesting something more hidden and confidential.

b. Raspy/Smooth

One of the soundtracks of the film, *DitoKa Lang SaTabi* by YengConstantino, uses smooth and cleaner sounds of guitar and drums which is opposite to the distorted grunge guitar sounds. Thus, it depicts more about hidden dangers and emotional threat. This was played when Ethan was pursuing Joy, helping her with her part-time jobs, despite of being ignored by Joy multiple times.

c. Tension and Reverb

The film guitar theme has notes that are held tightly under control and do not ring out. There is a sense of tension, although this is kept dynamic by the pace of the riff. This was played on scenes where Joy and Ethan had their first long conversation, when they were stuck in the storage room, and when they had their last date in the remaining days of Joy in Hong Kong. The guitar riffs also create a sense of loneliness and isolation – loneliness as portrayed in their last scene at Victoria Harbour when they gave their promises, and isolation in Ethan's scene after his confrontation with his brother.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hello, Love, Goodbye depicts the plight of Filipino migrant workers – the struggles they fortuitously encounter, the desolation of being away from home, and the sacrifices they have to unceasingly make in order to give their families back home a better life and a grandeur future. Because of the backdrop of the predicament of OFWs in Hong Kong, the film rises from the clichéd and ordinary to something relevant and relatable to Filipinos. The characters, dialogues, colors, shots and editing techniques, and sound quality mirrors the different emotions of the film which dominantly centered on relationships and melancholy.

Joy and Ethan's characters and their dialogues communicated the undivided spectrum of sacrifices that overseas workers have to endure. It puts effort in bringing to the fore the complex social structures and personal sufferings that define the domestic helper experience. The film divulges the sheets of the OFW experience with thorough intensity. While a movie following the circumstances of domestic helpers and OFWs does not certainly need a romance or love story, this still has a purpose. While Joy is hardworking, determined, and undoubtedly knows what she wants in her life, Ethan is a free and easy guy who jumps from one relationship to

another and does not really know what he wants in his life. But his character's nonchalant life also reflects Joy's introspection of whether choosing herself over her family makes her a disappointment or selfish. Joy bemoans the lack of choice she has in life.

The association of color terms and emotions were delineated in the film. It was discussed that positive emotion categories, love and joy, are associated with bright and warm colors. With anger and sadness, dark colors are associated; whereas fear is linked with white color. The cinematic portrayal of such emotions in the film correlates with associations of colors. Heavy scenes are shown in dark and melancholic images and/or backgrounds, while light scenes, when the characters are at their happy selves, bright colors surround the screen. The colors associated in the film blends drama and clarity in portraying the varied emotions of Filipinos working abroad.

Additionally, the camera shots and editing techniques give more intensity and clarity to the emotions portrayed in the film. It started with a voiceover of Joy standing in the middle of the airport, gazing at the board showing flight statuses. It orchestrated a robustly edited montage of Joy's life in Hong Kong over her narration of all her frustrations. The camera works come in, shifting from one scene to another, showing the connections of each scene, and setting back to Joy's scene in the airport.

Lastly, the sound quality of the film fits well with the kind of emotion it tried to portray; from Joy's frustrations and sentiments as a domestic helper, her and Ethan's romance story, and to finally fulfilling her dreams. It reflects intimacy, relationships, loneliness, and isolation.

Indeed, the emotions and feelings that the film desired to portray were mirrored in its various elements such as the characters, dialogues, shot and editing techniques, and sound quality. The portrayals of the characters, their exchanges of thoughts, the camera angles, and the soundtrack have indubitably reflected and defined the plight, struggles, and tribulations of Filipinos working abroad.

Furthermore, this paper can be further extended to the analysis of other aspects of the film such as the cinematography and mise-en-scene, and/or other relevant portrayals such as the life of immigrants, women empowerment, and gender equality.

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