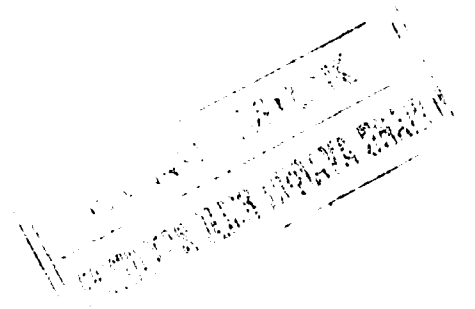


ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes how gay sexual stratification is portrayed in Gus Van Sant's *Milk* and how Harvey Milk as the key gay character breaks the gay sexual stratification. The study mainly applies the queer theory *Sexual Stratification* proposed by Gayle Rubin. The study is done by observing, selecting, and analyzing the film scripts and scenes which depict the gay sexual stratification and how Harvey Milk breaks such stratification. Since the main object is a film, both narrative and non-narrative film elements are analyzed as well. *Milk* is arguably feasible to analyse because the movie itself is rich of portrayals of gay sexual stratification.

Besides, Milk, who used to be at the bottom level in sexual stratification, gradually succeeds in breaking the gay sexual stratification. The main contribution of this thesis is to evoke further cultural sensitivity to any sexual minorities for empowering each individual unexceptionally. This study finds the portrayal of sexual stratification in *Milk* is in line with the notions suggested by Gayle Rubin. Heterosexuality stands high in the hierarchy, while gays are placed far below it. The conclusion reveals that both heterosexuals and Milk use the sexual stratification as the challenge to legally secure their own rights.

Keywords: *gay, homophobia, queer, sexual stratification*



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION