

Reading among youth

[Life](#), [Adolescence](#)



Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.” (Groucho Marx). Upon reading this quotation from Marx, I felt that he is trying to make technology sound as the mortal nemesis of reading. If I were to choose between watching T. V. and reading a book, I would choose to watch T. V. right away.

But if I put more thought into choosing, I would prefer reading a book. I just came to this realization that when I read a book, a novel for example, my mind is free to imagine. If I want to make myself the leading lady in the novel I am reading, and the leading man to be Zac Efron, I could do that. When we read novels, everything in the story is in our favor, but when it comes to the story itself, we cannot change anything. This capability of us to freely imagine is not present when watching T. V. It is because when watching T. V. , images that we see directly sinks in into our minds.

In a soap opera, if you see that the leading man is Jericho Rosales, can you easily replace the leading man with Zac Efron by just using your imagination ? You cannot since the image of Jericho Rosales is stuck in your mind. In a fight between television and reading, obviously, I am now in the side of reading. But it does not mean that I am against technology. People always say that technology took away reading from the youth. But is technology that of a big hindrance to reading? Has technology done nothing to somehow influence the youth into reading?

If I compared the youth today from the youth before, I can say that the youth before is more into reading than the youth today. Before, when radio was the only device as the source of entertainment in every household, when only rich people had televisions in their homes, and when average children only

peek from the windows of other houses to watch television, reading Filipino comics was the favourite past time of young people. The Pinoy superheroes and famous characters that we know today such as Panday, Darna, Zuma, Dyesebel, and Captain Barbel I came from these comics.

These comics were very affordable that even a kid who only has a few coins in his/her pocket as allowance can buy it. When youngsters had finished their comics they rented it to other comic readers. They did not only enjoy reading but they also made profit from it. But those are not the only advantages that comics have on the youth before. The common story in Filipino comics before was about losers who became superheroes. These types of comics give young readers that shining hope that someday they will be as admirable as these superheroes.

In the modern times, I can say that reading among the youth is indeed lessened but I do think that reading is not dead among us. Youngsters may be very attached with the technology but many are still interested with reading novels, especially the teenagers. Novels like “ A Walk to Remember”, “ Harry Potter”, “ Percy Jackson and the Olympians” , “ The Hunger Games” and “ The Vampire Diaries” are famous among teenagers. Reading these English novels is beneficial for young readers in terms of vocabulary. They learn new English words through context. Some modern novels also have disadvantages in terms of content.

Some novels have contents that may be inappropriate for young readers. The erotic novel “ 50 Shades of Grey” and the epistolary novel “ The Perks of Being a Wallflower” have parts that may be too sensual for teenagers. Some novels can also have contents expressing brutality. The young adult

novels like “ The Hunger Games” and “ The Vampire Diaries” have parts in it wherein the piercing of flesh and splashing of blood are explained in clear detail. But it is not only the English novels that are loved by teenagers. They also read books by Filipino writers. One great example of a famous Filipino writer among teenagers is Bob Ong.

His works are famous for being humorous. I think that is why teenagers like his books. I have also read one of his books. The one I read was titled “ Lumayo Ka Nga Sa Akin”. Indeed, the book was humorous—you can tell just by the title and cover of it , but behind that, it has content that criticizes the arts in the Philippines. It suggests that the quality of arts in the Philippines is poor in terms of the movies, songs, and artists that we produce. There were also parts of the book implying that Filipinos are dumb for being too shallow to buy these low-quality movies as suggested in the book.

For me, having teenagers read these kinds of books is good for them. It is good for them in a way that at such young age, their eyes are opened to the real problems of our country. I think Bob Ong’s main purpose is not to make a fool out of Filipinos. I think his purpose was to wake Filipinos up. He wants Filipinos to know their mistakes and the things around them that need correction. That is why I recommend these kinds of books to teenagers since we are the people of tomorrow and as people of tomorrow, it is good that we already know the things that we should fix in ourselves and in our surroundings for a better country.

Comics have images in them while novels only have texts. Considering this, I would prefer reading novels than comics. It is because reading without seeing any graphical representation of what you are reading will let you

freely imagine and form in your mind your own picture of what you are reading. Contrasting Filipino comics from novels, I would say that Cabral 3 one difference between them is the age group of their readers.

Unlike reading today, teenagers before were not the only ones who enjoyed reading comics but children of very young ages were able to enjoy them also since Filipino comics before covered a wide variety of stories and were written in Filipino. Today, kids are not able to enjoy reading as much as teenagers do. It is because kids prefer seeing pictures rather than texts. That is why kids before were able to enjoy comics because it has images in it. Also, most of the children today watch cartoons as their past time. Because of technology, some of the youth of today lost their interest in reading.

Aside from technology, another factor why some of the youth today are taken away from reading is that the prices of books today are not very appropriate for young people. Before, Filipino comics were more or less 5 pesos each if you will buy it firsthand. If you will rent it from somebody, it costs about 2 pesos each. Nowadays, teenagers have to save money for months in order to buy a novel. One novel today costs more or less 300 pesos. Because of this, not all young people have access to these kinds of books. Despite that fact, many teenagers, who are avid readers, still find means to gain access to the novels they like to read.

They may try to borrow books from their friends. They may also download e-books from the internet —and this is where the advantage of technology in reading comes in. Technology may have lessened reading in the modern times, but we cannot deny that it also helped young people to access any novel they like to read. Nowadays, teenagers have e book readers in their

phones wherein they can read the ir downloaded e-books. If you do not have an e-book reader, you could just search for the pdf forms of the novels you like on the internet and then download it through different file sharing sites.

These methods make reading more convenient and affordable for teenagers. Through downloading e -books and pdf files, they do not Cabral 4 have to spend money to be able to read novels. With just one click in their phones, t hey could read novels whenever and wherever since novels are stored in their phones. Aside from technology, another thing that made teenagers closer to reading is moviebased novels. Before, stories in Filipino comics that became very famous were made into movies. This trend before can also be observed today. As far as I know, this trend started with “ Harry Potter” which is a series of fantasy novels.

Every novel in this series was made into a movie and every movie turned into a success. The same goes for “ Twilight” which is a series of vampire-themed fantasy romance novels. These kinds of movies are famous among teenagers nowadays. As to what I have observed, fans of a typical novel-based movie are divided into two: those who have read the novel before watching the movie and those who became fans upon watching the movie. Because of these kinds of movies, teenagers who are non-readers of novels suddenly become interested in reading.

The fact that novel-based movies are often in series also helped in promoting reading among non-readers. Let us take the Twilight series as an example. When non-readers watch the movie “ Twilight”, which is based from the first novel in the series, and they liked it, they w ill be enticed to read the book itself. They will continue to read up to the fourth book which is “ Breaking

Dawn” because they will be eager to know about the happenings in the succeeding novels in the series. So, it turns out that technology is not a nemesis of reading after all.

Actually, it helps to promote reading by rendering the youth free access to their favourite novels via e-book. Despite that fact, we cannot deny that reading from a book is still better than reading from an e -book. Scrolling an e-book from your phone or tablet is nothing compared with flipping the crisp pages Cabral 5 of a book. What is important is that there are still many youth today who appreciate the greatness of reading a book. They do not only give importance to the knowledge they can get from reading, but they also appreciate the beauty of it and the fulfilment of reading wonderful stories.