

[WEB RESISTANCE]
A STUDY OF FILIPINO MUSIC VIDEO PARODIES ON YOUTUBE

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DEDICATION

To my parents

Aleks and Marivic Pamatmat

Who are always supportive

In all my endeavors

To my aunt, Tita Oli

For supporting me in my studies

To my brothers

Who supported me all the way

To my friends, Mary Jocelyn D. Tarnate

And Jenevieve A. Iligan

Who were always there to guide me

And

To God

For everything

Thank you!

ABSTRACT

Pamatmat, G. K. M. (2011). *[Web Resistance] A Study of Filipino Music Video Parodies on YouTube*. Unpublished Thesis, University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication.

As a reader, I analyzed the local YouTube music video parodies as new media texts by addressing the theoretical inquiry: How is the new media used to challenge the dominant ideology of colonial mentality? I studied how resistance was perpetuated in the local music video parodies of Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy through the costumes, props, set/venue, technical aspect and actors. Moreover, I wanted to determine the themes covered through the analysis of these indicators of resistance in the videos.

This paper focused on the Filipino web video parodies on the online video uploading and sharing site, YouTube. This research used the framework of cultural hegemony of Antonio Gramsci to understand the interplay of some content in new media to oppose the dominant ideology. The study found that there are certain forms of resistance against colonial mentality present in different texts in the videos such as the use of the popularity of the original songs, costumes, props, set or venue, the technical aspect and even the actors in the videos. Consequently, the resistance formed in these texts coherently highlighted themes such as the videos' ongoing resistance against foreign enculturation, ideologic replacement, familiarity and locality, creativity and artistry, participation in the cultural aspect of globalization and '*filipinizing*' the colonial texts.

Key Words:

music video parodies, YouTube, resistance on the web, colonial mentality, dominant ideology, jesters

ABSTRAKT

Pamatmat, G. K. M. (2011). *[Web Resistance] A Study of Filipino Music Video Parodies on YouTube*. Unpublished Thesis, University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication.

Bilang mambabasa sinuri ko ang mga parody ng local na *music video* mula sa *new media* sa pamamagitan ng pagtatanong kung paano tinutunggali ng mga material sa *internet* ang isang dominanteng ideolohiya ng kolonyal na pagiisip? Kaugnay pa nito ay ang kaalaman sa mga uri ng pagtutunggali na pinakita ng mga parodya ng local na *music video* nina Lady Gagita at Moymoypalaboy. Nilayon kong tuklasin ang mga nilalaman ng mga parodyang ito sa pamamagitan ng pagaanalisa sa *hitlist*, kasuotan, *props*, ang set kung saan kinuhaan ang *video*, teknikal na aspeto at ang mga gumanap sa mga nasabing parody.

Ang pagsusuring ito ay nakatuon sa mga parodya ng lokal na *music video* na matatagpuan sa *YouTube*. Inaral nito ang ilan sa mga *channel* nina Lady Gagita at Moymoypalaboy bilang teksto ng pagsusuri. Upang maintindihan ang mga mensahe ng mga parodya, ginamit ko ang *cultural hegemony* ni Antonio Gramsci. Sa pamamagitan ng pagsusuring ito, nalaman ng pagaaral na may iba't ibang uri ng pagtaliwas mula sa makabanyagang kaisipan na makikita sa iba't ibang teksto sa mga *videos* tulad ng paggamit sa kasikatan ng orihinal na kanta, mga aksesorya, ang lugar kung saan ginawa ang produksyon, teknikal na aspeto at maging sa mga aktor mismo. Kaugnay pa nito, ang pagsasama-sama ng mga teksto ay naglunsaf ng mga tema tulad ng patuloy na pagtaliwas sa makabanyagang pagiisip, pagpapalit ng ideolohiya, pamilyaridad at lokalidad, pagkamalikhain, partisipasyon sa kultural na aspeto ng globalisasyon, at maging ang gawing Pilipino ang mga kolonyal na teksto.

Key Words:

Lokal na Parodya, YouTube, tunggali sa web, kolonyal na kaisipan, dominanteng pananaw, jesters

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Colonial mentality is a “form of internalized oppression, characterized by a perception of ethnic or cultural inferiority that is believed to be a specific consequence of centuries of colonization under Spain and the United States (David and Okazaki, 2006).” This mentality has been evident in the history of the Philippines and this has become prevalent in different sectors of society, including social institutions in the Philippines such as the media. The prevalence of this influence has affected how Filipinos identified themselves and formed their preferences on things that they use (e.g. brands of materials) and their beliefs. Furthermore, institutions such as the mass media or mainstream media reinforce this mentality as it is continually used in advertisements, television series and movies (Dy, 1994).

However, I argue that this dominant ideology is being challenged by forms of content on the web. It is being used as an alternative venue to oppose the mainstream media. Hence, I construct the theoretical inquiry of how the institution of new media is used to challenge the dominant ideology that is colonial mentality.

In this study, I argue that local YouTube parodies, specifically the music video parodies of Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy, challenge that dominant ideology. Both of their channels achieved a million views which featured music video parodies of different songs of certain artists from the United States. However, beyond the imitation, I argue that these parodies show resistance against colonial mentality. Mark G. E. Kelly (2009) summarizes Michel Foucault’s notion of resistance as:

“What opposes power, not simply diametrically but transversally, opposing by going off in a different direction to power’s strategies. If someone tells me to stand up, I could stand (obey), I could continue sitting (disobey), I could lie down

on the floor (disobey by doing something else), or I could stand up and punch the one who ordered me to stand (obedience with a supplement of resistance) or indeed any number of other responses: the point is in general to get the other to stop, which is to say, to act upon their actions, even if this manipulation may pale in comparison to that of the perpetrator (p. 109).”

Basically, I argue that resistance is present on the local YouTube parodies and what it does is criticize and oppose the dominant ideology which is colonial mentality. I also argue that there are themes and messages that these music video parodies convey. What the themes and messages are and how these forms of resistance oppose colonial mentality will be answered in the course of this research.

As objectives of this research, I will primarily observe how Filipinos behave online, more specifically, how they express themselves through YouTube. I initially argued that there are Filipinos who use this website to present their ideas and views on issues in the society. Then, I will analyze what this form of self-expression emulates. This is to say that the products of some Filipino YouTube channels exist to challenge a specific ideology, which I argue, is colonial mentality. Third, I will analyze how colonial mentality is being challenged through the themes purported by the YouTube channels. As I initially identified Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy as key players of this challenge, I will also identify the messages behind their music video parodies. Then, after identifying the messages, I will evaluate the music video parodies’ effect on me as a reader. Through this evaluation, I hope to offer a perspective on how the internet can be used to promote and challenge an ideology and specifically in this research, offer a perspective on resistance against colonial mentality.

A. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

To provide consistency, this section of the chapter will enumerate and define some of the terms that will be generally used and referred to in the course of this study.

1. Resistance:

The notion of resistance as summarized by Kelly (2009) looks at the act of resistance as not just as simple way of disobeying but actually a complex way of going against the order of someone or something in power.

2. Parody:

Parody is defined by Harries (2000 as cited by J. Gray, 2006) as a process where the original or the source text undergoes recontextualization through transformation of its elements and creates a new text. It usually uses satire and irony as its manner of representing the original text.

3. Dominant Ideology:

The dominant ideology is a concept developed by Antonio Gramsci in his theory of cultural hegemony where it is defined as,

“the set of common values and beliefs shared by most people in a given society, framing how the majority think about a range of topics (Martin-Barbero, 1993 p. 30).”

4. Foreign Enculturation:

Enculturation will be referred to as,

“the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that enable them to become functioning members of societies (Grunland and Mayers as adapted from Zondervan, 1998).”

Foreign enculturation refers to the process of enculturation by colonizers.

In this study, colonial mentality will be the reference or source of foreign enculturation in the Philippines.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As new media continues to be an arena where colonial mentality as a dominant ideology proliferates, it would be important to understand how foreign enculturation is challenged and resisted by content in the new media. This presents an alternative medium from which different materials oppose colonial mentality.

As a field of inquiry, “parody may be one of the most taken-for-granted and least-respected art forms, but it is also one of the oldest and potentially most powerful (Gray, 2006 p. 4).” It uses different forms of media to send its message and through artistic rendering, the message is presented and resistance is implied.

As this study will deal with music video parodies on the web, I hope that the results of this research will be able to aid future researchers in studying new media, specifically those related to YouTube. It is essential to understand the media content that can be found on YouTube because the identification of the themes and messages of the videos that this study will find may encourage other researchers to be critical regarding media content on the web, and realize a picture of resistance against colonial mentality on the web.

Because this research would identify indicators of resistance and eventually drive them, it would provide an understanding from one perspective of the forms of struggle that the music video parodies imply and how these struggles are presented.

Moreover, this research may encourage other researchers to probe the capacity of new media to challenge a certain ideology such as, in this study, colonial mentality.

C. RATIONALE AND SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This research will only look at two Filipino channels on YouTube, specifically Lady Gagita's channel (5 videos) and Moymoypalaboy's channel (5 videos). Ten of their videos combined will be used as units of analyses. Primarily I chose these channels because of the popularity they gained by achieving at least a million views on their channels. It made me curious as to why a lot of people viewed their music video parodies and after watching a number of them, I realized that all the videos expressed a message of contradiction from the typical mainstream music videos. Looking deeper, the videos actually expressed resistance against, what I deduced through repetitive watching, colonial mentality (patronizing American ideas) and this is what this study is all about – to look at some expressions of resistance on the web, specifically resistance against colonial mentality.

Through convenience sampling I will only look at five music video parodies for each channel. Using textual analysis as tool for interpreting the themes and messages of resistance, I will enumerate those I initially identified to be present in these online materials. Employing the reader-oriented concept of Roland Barthes' 'The Death of the Author' as framework, this research will only basically assume my role as the reader, and the producer/s as the author/s respectively. Hence, as the analyses of this research will be based on my interpretations of the texts, it will not cover the original intention/s of the producers of the music video parodies. This is because I recognize the fact that the producer/s had their own interpretation regarding the meaning and messages of their videos and is another topic that is beyond the objectives of this research.

As its limitation, this research will only look at colonial mentality as an assumed concept challenged by the music video parodies. Therefore, other issues not related to colonial mentality will not be discussed in this research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Discussing the different theoretical and applied concepts about my topic will lay the groundwork for this chapter of my research. It will cover six subheadings that will discuss both the theoretical and applied concepts of each. These subheadings will probe the previously done researches and studies about parody and topics related to it. Furthermore, this part of the research will provide a synthesis of the subheadings altogether and the gaps in research that my study hopes to fill.

A. Parody as a Discourse

Gray (2006 p. 4), in his study on parody, mentioned that it may be one of the most taken-for-granted and least-respected art forms mainly because on the surface, it seems to simply imitate an original text and copy its message. However, it may also be one of the oldest and potentially most powerful art forms because intrinsically, it questions the authoritative nature coming from the original texts.

The authoritative texts come to be seen as dictators of what should be important in the society – mostly coming from the capitalists and the industry that these capitalists dominate. This study is concerned with analyzing how parody undermines the authority and presents its own version as an aspect of reality.

According to Bahktin (1981) parody offers a spectrum of analysis of an original text because

“[It] rips the word away from its object, disunifies the two, shows that a given straightforward generic word [...] is one-sided, bounded, incapable of exhausting the object; the process of parodying forces us to experience those sides of the object that are not otherwise included in a given genre (Gray, 2006 p. 4).”

This means that parody as a form and discourse creates a new dimension of looking at and analyzing the materials from the original text because it recognizes the notion that these original texts are one-sided and does not provide a view (which may be bigger) about the things that we knew. Through parody we are able to see the ‘other’ side of things. Moreover it forms questions about how the authorities dictate our lives.

As authorities come from portrayal of different genres, parody paves the way in challenging these genres through its capacity of recontextualization. Gray took note of Harries’ (2000) definition of parody as a

“process of recontextualizing a target or source text through the transformation of its textual (and contextual) elements, thus creating a *new* text. This conversion – through the resulting oscillation between similarity to and difference from the target – creates a level of incongruity with an inevitable satiric impulse (2006 p. 4).”

This definition emphasizes that parody is more than its label as a genre, it is a process where other genres are challenged and through it, parody manifests as the ‘other voice’ of the original text where it questions the messages of the original text.

As a discursive process, parody lays the arena for questioning the authoritative voice and answers back by presenting its own voice. As I study the local music video parodies of Lady Gaga and Mo'Nique, this analysis will be my guiding principle when looking at the messages of colonial domination intrinsic to the original music videos of various popular artists from the United States.

B. Parody and its Functions

This part of the chapter is concerned with the functions of parody across history. Nil Korkut (2005) enumerated the different kinds of parody from the medieval period to

the postmodern era. According to his study, there are varying functions that parody essentially assumed in the society. In the medieval parody,

“[It] can serve a variety of functions. It can teach and entertain at the same time, and its relationship with its model may range from mockery to admiration (Korkut, 2005 p. 29).”

As a form, parody often uses entertainment as its foreground. But its defining characteristic relies on its ‘double-voicedness.’ As Korkut (2005 p. 29) puts it, parody works as a way of “imitating with a difference, parody inevitably juxtaposes its model with an alternative voice.” Moreover, this ‘double-voicedness’ comes as a challenge. In Bahktinian terms, “it constitutes a challenge to the authority of its target by refracting its target’s monologic voice and situating it in a dialogic context.” While the original text or the source text speaks its message monologically, parody works as a respondent, one which answers back to the message presented by the source text.

Gray (2006 p. 4) cited Laurent-Jenny who identified one of parody’s functions as a process that offers intertextuality, this means that it connects the original text to another text. It is defined as a technique that offers many meanings not by a single decoding of the original text but by more decoding through other texts questioned by the parody. It works as a system of criticizing not just the message of the original text but including the related messages of the text. In Gray’s study of *The Simpsons*, he noted the parody’s multiple references of the television show to other genres such as popular film, television, art and literature as related texts (Gray, 2006 p. 23)”

In medieval courts, parody was used as a tool for commenting on a given issue set by the powerful people or those who have authority. One such example is seen through the embodiment of the jester. According to a research made by Bahktin (1981) cited by

Gray (2006 p. 11), there were people who opposed the language of the powerful, identified as “the priests and monks, kings and seigneurs, knights and wealthy urban types, scholars and jurists (Gray, 2006 p. 11).” The jester, whenever necessity called for it, parodically opposed the prior statement of the powerful people while at the same time used ridicule to entertain the spectators. Even a smile from the jester sends the message of mockery and deception across the audience.

The embodiment of the jester then, is an image or the text of origin of the present form of parody. This is because parody serves as a genre’s ‘other’ while “responding to it, revising it, and drawing attention to its rhetoric, its ‘constructedness’, and to the audience’s role in allowing this construction to work with such stealth (Gray, 2006 p. 12).” As a genre’s other, parody works like a mirror, a text that reflects the original text but at the same time criticizing it.

C. Parody and Resistance

“The greatest enemy of authority is contempt, and the surest way to undermine it is laughter (Hull, 2000) as cited by Gray (2006 p. 4).”

This part of the research will tackle the nature of resistance that is present in a parody. It will discuss how resistance works in a parody and how it opposes an idea set forth by an authority or the powerful class.

Resistance as act of opposition serves as a venue to express criticisms against the authorities or those in power. Inherent in this resistance are the struggles of the common people against the authorities. These struggles are manifested through certain actions such as:

“the riots, the mockery of bourgeois virtues, the disorder, the letters, the obscene songs, even the ghost stories, acquire meaning and gain political coherence from the ‘forces of the class.’ They are all forms of combating the destruction of the ‘moral economy’ of the common people, politically symbolizing their force and challenging the hegemony of the other class (Martin-Barbero, 1993 p. 72).”

As these struggles against the powerful perpetuate in the society, new forms of protest arise which articulate new forms of struggle, and new forms of popular culture (Martin-Barbero, 1993 p. 94). These new forms represent resistance and the daily informal struggle of the people.

Korkut (2005 p. 43) cited Don Nilsen’s (1997) study of humor using parody in the Renaissance period. Nilsen classified it into two forms; the first is the humor of humanism produced and enjoyed by the “educated, courtly and aristocratic circles.” The other form is popular humor which was “widely diffused, [and] consisted of [...] shrewdness, raciness...and a down-to-earth reaction to life.”

The authorities tried to censure this kind of humor (by suppressing carnivals and popular customs and beliefs) but the popular humor survived and prevailed through festivities of the masses:

“Often these were anonymous and a part of oral tradition only, and they served a variety of purposes ranging from sheer entertainment to the mockery and ridicule of persons and/or discourses of authority (Korkut, 2005 p. 31).”

Parody is one of these forms of popular humor that survived and persisted. According to Bahktin (1981 as cited by Korkut, 2005), it possesses a ‘mask’ that reveals itself in an entertaining manner. This ‘mask’ may be shown in different forms as it is equivalent to its expression of “resistance against a system of authority which deems itself a higher body (Martin-Barbero, 1993 p. 66).”

Aside from the mask that it possesses, parody also manifests ‘victory over fear’

because:

“It emerges in the effort to make laughable and subject to ridicule all that causes fear, especially the holy with its power and its moral condemnation. It is the holy which is at the heart of the strongest censure. While solemnity is related to fear, prolonging and projecting it, laughter connects with freedom (Martin-Barbero, 1993 p. 66).”

This nature of parody to ridicule or laugh at text is its way of tearing the fear apart – the fear of going against the powerful such as in this study, the dominant ideology which is colonial mentality. This function of ‘victory over fear’ manifested in Gray’s study on *The Simpsons* as he noted that the television show constantly criticizes, for example, news programs and the US government, regardless of their dominant positions in the society, turning the imposed fear into ridicule.

D. Parody in the Philippines (Media Activism)

In the Philippines, parody also took off primarily as a satire against varying political events and issues in the country.

One such example is the television series, *Abangan Ang Susunod Na Kabanata* which aired for six years (January 7, 1991 – June 17, 1997).

The show was a satire that focused on politics of the Philippine government. Following the format of a situational comedy, the show made caricatures of politicians while they interacted with the common people. Beyond the funny theme of the show, it actually depicted a part of reality discussing what was happening to the country at that time (Telebisyon.net).

The characters in the said show impersonated popular politicians at the time such as former president of the Philippines, Fidel Ramos and former first lady to President Ferdinand Marcos, Imelda Marcos.

There are also other now-defunct shows that had a similar form of parodic language used as prevailing themes of its episodes such as *Onli In Da Pilipins* (1999), *Ispup* (1999) and *Sic-o-Clock News* (1985).

These shows, at least for a time in mainstream television, were venues of media activism and resistance against issues involving the authorities at the time such as corruption and “traditional politicking.”

The presence of these situational comedy television series across history proves that when those in power (mainstream) send out their message, there are always those (alternative) that question their message and provide a voice of opposition and resistance.

Such opposition and resistance still exist in society today. As I argue in this study, the availability and ease of access to media serves as one venue for the efforts of those who continue voicing out their resistance to issues in the society. YouTube is one of these venues as any internet user can upload his/her homemade videos containing themes of resistance. Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy are examples of those internet users who use YouTube as an alternative venue to express their voices in the society. Furthermore, YouTube also persists to relive even the mentioned situational comedy shows. As of today, there are YouTube users who upload their copies of *Abangan Ang Susunod Na Kabanata*, *Onli In Da Pilipins*, *Ispup* and *Sic-o-Clock News*. This in itself is a form of resistance against anti-sharing laws of commercial networks. As I see it, the

‘alternativeness’ of YouTube is one form of resistance as it is continually used by people to voice out their opinions, comments and critiques regarding issues in the society.

E. Online Activism

The internet, according to Rheingold (1994), has the potential to ‘revitalize citizen-based democracy.’ Every person with an internet connection can generate his or her own content according to his or her will and decisions.

Still largely uncontrolled by laws and constitutions, the internet serves as a venue for all kinds of activism and resistance. Such are hacktivism (hacking + activism) – a label invented by journalists that is theoretically defined by Critical Art Ensemble (pioneering theorists of tactical media online) as “hacking that is done primarily as a form of political resistance (Meikle, 2002 p. 141).” Hacktivism includes defacing web pages or altering the front page of a government website, web sit-ins or the act of hackers to make a certain website unavailable through denial of service and e-mail bombing or sending large files to certain mail addresses of the hacker’s target.

Notable examples of events related to hacktivism were the "Strano Network sit-in", defined "*Netstrike*, a strike action directed against French government computers in 1995” and “the modification of Indonesian web sites with appeals to "Free East Timor" in 1998 by Portuguese hackers (enotes.com/topic/Hactivism).”

Another is intercreativity or remaking a form of ‘old’ media to ‘new’ media. One example is reinventing newspapers into web publishing such as blogs; free software and downloadable materials and applications.

These are forms of tactical media which Meikle (2002) defined as:

“[The] critical usage and theorization of media practices that draw on all forms of old and new, both lucid and sophisticated media for achieving a variety of specific non-commercial goals and pushing all kinds of potentially subversive political issues (p. 19).”

This points out that the policies made by governments are contested by a number of people who deem that change is necessary to better the situation in their society. New media, specifically the internet, becomes their prime venue to express their reactions and more importantly, their advocacies to the government.

As such John Ralston Saul, an essayist who comments on issues of technocracy in governments, wrote that people use humor to oppose a certain policy or decision of the government, “In a technocracy, comedy remains one of the last weapons we have (Saul, 1994).”

He believes that the combination of humor and tactical media may be one of the most efficient forms of activism online. He further noted that humor matters because it is “the least controllable use of language and therefore the most threatening to people in power.”

Humor is injected in the new media as one form of tactic or strategy for activism. Alinsky (1971) declared that “the most potent weapons known to mankind are satire and ridicule.”

“It should be remembered that you can threaten the enemy and get away with it. You can insult and annoy him, but the one thing that is unforgivable and that is certain to get him to react is to laugh at him. This causes irrational anger (p. 134).”

With this analysis, parody online may be referred to as one form of tactical media used to challenge and resist some messages set forth by the authority. It is a medium

where activism takes place and opposition persists, happening on the web as its arena and using humor as its disguise. Similar to other forms of tactical media such as hacktivism, online parody extends the people's voice regarding issues in the society. I argue that it is also a form of activism, an extension of opposition and imparts certain statements of resistance to internet users. However, there are critiques against tactical media and all its forms. According to a famed Lebanese-American political activist Ralph Nader, "the Internet doesn't do a very good job of motivating action" citing that the United States Congress, corporations and the Pentagon do not necessarily "fear the civic use of the Internet." Ethan Zuckerman, director of the MIT Center for Civic Media, talked and discussed about "slacktivism," pointing out that the Internet devaluated certain currencies of activism (http://wn.com/Internet_resistance)."

F. Colonial Mentality

This part of the chapter looks at studies on colonial mentality as a dominant ideology or phenomenon. It will also look at some studies on colonial mentality in the Philippines.

According to a book posted online by David and Okazaki (2006), colonial mentality is rooted in the enculturation of former colonizers such as the United States,

"It involves an automatic and uncritical rejection of anything Filipino and an automatic and uncritical preference for anything American (p. 241)."

This state of mind or patronage of American ideas has been tolerated and remains unchallenged over the past years. This is similar to the arguments raised by Albert Memmi about the experience of colonized from the colonizers. According to Memmi (1965 as cited in David and Okazaki, 2006), "when an individual has adopted the belief

that the colonizer is superior to one's heritage, and when one has already begun emulating the colonizer because of their alleged superiority, the colonized might begin to view the colonizer in a positive light." As what had happened in the Philippines, the Americans were viewed as liberators from the Spaniards' colonization. This is, again, similar to Memmi's point that the American colonizers, were seen as "well-intentioned, civilizing, freedom-giving, unselfish, liberating, noble or sanctified heroes."

Furthermore, due to this admiration for the Americans as liberators, some Filipinos affected by colonial mentality believed that any 'maltreatment' from the Americans were necessary effects of 'progress' brought upon by civilization. Memmi mentioned that this uncritical admiration is the price that the colonized have to experience in order for them to become similar to the colonizers as they are viewed as the dominant group.

Memmi's as well as David and Okazaki's studies on colonial mentality analyzed that patronage to the colonizers' ideas is mainly due to colonial debt, leading the society to think that the colonized should be thankful and grateful to their 'liberators.'

David and Okazaki noted some effects of colonial mentality on Filipino-Americans, such as: Denigration of the Filipino self – the Filipinos deem themselves inferior as imposed by the colonizers; Denigration of the Filipino culture and body stating that the Filipinos deem their characteristics "involves the perception that anything Filipino is inferior to anything White, European or American," and Discrimination against less-Americanized Filipinos where Filipino-Americans are seen as inferior beings than pure Americans.

Maria Root (1997) analyzed the effect of colonial rule in the Philippines and described how it affected the minds of Filipinos:

“Centuries of this education primed the Filipino for vulnerability to internalize American rules of race. Colorism and then racism inculcated the notions of “White is beautiful,” “White is intelligent” and “White is powerful” in the psyches of many brown-hued Filipinos, thus inferiorizing the Filipino (p. 81).”

Suggestively, Root’s description on how colonial mentality affected Filipino thinking may also be related to the so-called “American dream.” One source points out that colonial mentality proliferated because of the so-called formation of the idea, ‘the American Dream.’ The image of America as a place where the grandest success happens was immortalized in the minds of the Filipinos indirectly due to the Filipino-American relations.

Kidlat Tahimik, in his movie, ‘*Mababangong Bangungot*’ (1977), tackled the complex relation between the Filipinos’ formation of the American Dream. It is actually considered as a postcolonial struggle because colonial mentality made a negative impact among the indigenous Filipinos. Brent Plate (2003) cited Antonio Sison (2003), in his essay on ‘*Mababangong Bangungot*’ noted of the effect on Filipinos,

“The impact of colonial trauma [...] is still felt by generations of Filipinos until the present. Centuries of living as an oppressed, colonized people in their own homeland ingrained a ‘colonial mentality’ among Filipinos in which things Western are almost always taken to connote superiority (p. 19)”

Filipinos migrate to America because they believed that they may have a chance to live the American Dream.

In a news article written by John Mangun of Business Mirror (2010), he mentioned that of the three colonized countries that he analyzed, namely India, Indonesia and the Philippines respectively, only the Philippines was the one that experienced

colonial mentality. This is politically linked to some of the Filipinos viewing the United States as their role model.

In the book, *The History of the Burgee* (1987) by Mariel N. Francisco and Fe Maria C. Arriola, they listed a number of signs that depict signs of colonial mentality. Such signs include specific symptoms such as having an “imitation of Louis Vuitton® bag and Gloria Vanderbilt® jeans; following the dictates of fashion magazines through spring, summer, fall and winter; preferring to be an American citizen (Hodel survey 1960) or wanting to have been born in another country (UP survey of schoolchildren) and; hoping the US will intervene in ousting a homegrown dictator (referring to then president Ferdinand Marcos) (<http://www.tribo.org>).”

Chris Cabuay (n.d.), a blogger on ‘Pinay Ngayon’ – a blog dedicated to issues in the Philippines, wrote about her observations of some signs that she noticed as indicators of colonial mentality in the country such as:

1. That most of the showbiz Pinoys are mestizo/mestiza
2. That the showbiz Pinoys who are darker are used only in comical situations
They always get made fun of about their color. For example Jinky Oda, Whitney Tyson, etc.
3. That so many Pinoys use skin whitening products to become whiter. There's an obsession to be white.
4. That so many Pinoys get their hair straightened. So that that they don't look like an Igorot.
5. That most of the rich Pinoys are mestizo/mestiza
6. That most of the Pilipino politicians are mestizo/mestiza
7. That the pictures of Jesus are of a white man. He even sometimes has blue eyes! Just go into any Pilipino home and you will see a picture of a white Jesus hanging on the wall.
8. That Pinoys are scared to get dark
10. That you never see pictures of African or Asian angels. There are no Pilipino, Japanese, Indonesian or African people in heaven.

She further mentioned that this mentality still exists today and it affected how Filipinos view themselves in different aspects of their lives physically, emotionally and mentally (newfilipina.com).

In another book by David's (2011), *Filipino-American Postcolonial Psychology*, he wrote about his experiences on how he developed his notion of colonial mentality, more specifically on how he became 'Americanized' through his daily activities since childhood. According to David, he was exposed to Cartoon Channel shows on television; watched advertisements of "light-skinned kids playing with the coolest toys [...]" and seeing those kids having the time of their lives in Disneyland or other theme parks (p. 9)."

He also mentioned collecting G.I. Joe toys (a popular American cartoon series) and making sure that they were "original" or manufactured in America and not locally made, before showing his toys to his friends. Similar to Cabuay's observations, David also noted his accounts on remembering his relatives and friends emulating "the celebrities or 'beautiful people' who were all light-skinned (p. 9)."

Moreover, he took note of how English language was considered by his school teachers, government officials, etc. as the "language of the educated, of the higher class, of the cultured, of the successful," and *Bisaya* and *Tagalog* as associated with a lower economic class and lack of education (p. 9).

Manuel Dy (1994), in his book on values in Philippine culture and education, noted how colonial mentality manifested in the Philippines. According to him colonial mentality is seen in the "alienation of the elite from their roots, and from the masses, as

well as in the basic feeling of national inferiority that makes it difficult for Filipinos to relate as equals to Westerners (p. 40).”

G. Synthesis

This chapter of previously done literature related to my research compiles information that pertains to the workings of parody and related subjects to it. Highlighted in the six subheadings are different foci about parody and related topics that I will discuss in this study. The first part discussed parody as a discourse where it gives way to criticizing not only the original text’s message but also other texts related to it. The second enumerated the different functions of parody theoretically discussed and applied by different scholars. The third highlighted and discussed the nature of resistance present and innate in parody. The fourth looked at the local forms of parodies in the Philippines and politics as its target text. With this line of criticism, the fifth looked at new media as a venue where forms of activism and resistance are present, hence defining online parody as one form of tactical media. Lastly, the sixth looked at studies on colonial mentality and some of its effects on the part of the colonized.

Delving into this information laid the blueprint for the current research. The research will offer one view on the nature of existing local YouTube parodies – resistance against colonial mentality. It will identify the different forms of resistance that I argue are ways of some Filipinos to voice out their opposition to the dominant ideology of colonial mentality for which I argue, Filipinos have found resourceful and creative ways to express.

CHAPTER III: METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Recognizing that parodies give birth to new texts (Gray, 2006) and YouTube serves as a venue for people to express themselves (Abubacar, Cristina, Lucia, 2009), I will discuss what these music video parodies on YouTube might subtly express using textual analysis and ‘Death of the Author’ by Roland Barthes.

As readers will notice, all the observations and analysis in this research are based primarily on my personal views about the music video parodies. This is due to the fact that the original producers of the music video parodies, namely Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy, had their own reasons when they produced and uploaded their materials online. By using Death of the Author as method, the texts’ meaning and intentions will not be limited to those of the original authors. According to Barthes (1992), “To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing (p. 147).”

Therefore, the free interpretations of the critic to the text are a natural phenomenon to enrich the meaning of the text. The critic makes himself/herself equally important as the author. Barthes explains that:

“Such a conception suits criticism very well, the latter then allotting itself the important task of discovering the Author (or its hypostases: society, history, psyche, liberty) beneath the work: when the Author has been found, the text is ‘explained’- victory to the critic. Hence there is no surprise in the fact that, historically, the reign of the Author has also been that of the Critic, nor again in the fact that criticism (be it new) is today undermined, along with the Author (p. 373).”

I will likewise use Antonio Gramsci’s concept of cultural hegemony to relate colonial mentality as the outcome of shaping the thinking of the colonized from the colonizers. According to Antonio Gramsci, “cultural hegemony is the philosophic and

sociological concept, that a culturally-diverse society can be ruled or dominated by one of its social class over all other classes. The ideas of the ruling class come to be seen as the norm; they are seen as universal ideologies, perceived to benefit everyone whilst only really benefiting the ruling class (Martin-Barbero, 1993).”

Through the concept of cultural hegemony, this study will relate the decoded text to resistance against colonial mentality. Using textual analysis, the new texts and meanings from the parodies will be critically observed. It will highlight the other possible forms of resistance (that will be derived in the results and discussions chapter) that challenge the dominant ideology of colonial mentality.

As this research will include the themes and messages that I will derive from the music video parodies, it will further delve into content of the music video parodies themselves giving emphasis to its elements and eventually giving one picture of resistance that I will try to decode. Textually, I will look at six indicators that I found to be common and present in all the combined ten music video parodies of Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy.

I deduced the indicators by combining my observations and employing Andrew Goodwin’s theory on how to analyze music videos. There are five key aspects that the audience should look out for in music videos, these are: thought beats, narrative and performance, the ‘star’ image, relation of visuals to song and the technical aspect (Frith, Goodwin, Grossberg, 1993).

I considered these key aspects and come up with six indicators that will be used to analyze the meanings of the music video parodies. These are:

1. Hit list or Hit songs:

Observing the ‘popularity’ of the songs used in the videos by looking at billboard charts in the US and other countries, the hit list or hit songs will be analyzed to understand the relationship of the original music’s popularity and the parody version.

2. Costumes:

Costumes have different functions as much as different languages have.

Hess-Luttich (1982 p. 92) quoted Bogatyrev:

“In order to grasp the social functions of costumes we must learn to read them as signs in the same way we learn to read and understand different languages (1971 p. 83)”

The costumes that the actors are wearing (including the color, the way they were worn and presented and its contrast against the original or the source text) will be used as an indicator to understand how the music video parodies express their resistance against colonial mentality.

3. Props:

Props will be identified as what the actors used in the music video parodies, the objects found in the foreground or background or as an accessory.

4. Set/Venue:

The physical look of the set/venue where the music video parodies were produced will be considered as a text.

5. Technical Aspect:

The editing, opening billboard, closing billboard, transitions and quality of the shots will be considered.

6. Actors:

The people, who starred in the videos, hence Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy, will be considered as indicators of resistance. Their actions, manners and lip-synching as a style in the music video parodies will also be considered as a form of resistance.

After identifying and observing these indicators from each music video parody, I will analyze the themes and explain how they resist the concept of colonial mentality. Through textual analysis I will interpret the meanings of the themes, hence identifying the messages in the texts.

For those not familiar with Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy, these YouTube personalities have become popular (at least on YouTube) through their channels, through self-produced/generated music video parodies. Lady Gagita, a Filipino artist, got his name from the Hollywood-based singer-writer Lady Gaga. Using the latter's name for recall, Lady Gagita parodies Lady Gaga's music videos and even recreates her props and costumes while producing the videos in a backyard. His version of Lady Gaga's music videos earned him features on national newspapers and made him popular in mainstream television shows (ladygagita.com).

Moymoypalaboy, meanwhile, is a collective online name of a Filipino duo (James Ronald and Rodfil Obeso) who parodies various artists from Hollywood – who may be considered popular mainstream icons. With songs from the Spice Girls, the Black-Eyed Peas, Justin Bieber, etc., Moymoypalaboy had sensationally created parodies of these various artists' hit songs, also producing their music video parodies usually in their own home or somewhere 'random' (www.facebook.com/Moymoy-Palaboy). As I write this

research, more and more online users visit their channels and add to the millions of hits on their respective channels. Though repeatedly removed from the site by the YouTube administrators (due to copyright issues) these producers continue uploading and reuploading their music video parodies and it seems that the hits continue to pile up again and again.

Here are short descriptions about each of the music video parodies:

1. **Bad Romance**

Bad Romance, as interpreted by Lady Gagita, is a 6-minute music video parody of Lady Gaga's Bad Romance. In this music video parody, Lady Gagita introduced her creativity in costume-making and using props to match Lady Gaga's from the original. There are even extra characters who exchanged dance moves with Lady Gagita.

2. **Alejandro**

Alejandro is a 9-minute and 30 second music video parody of Lady Gaga's Alejandro. It generally lifted a number of clips from the original music video and were combined with Lady Gagita's production. In this music video parody, Lady Gagita also displayed her creativity in making costumes and props while showing complex choreography based from the actual music video. There is also a notable creativity in editing the shots using different techniques such as multiple layers and effects such as snow to control the overall look of the music video parody.

3. **Telephone**

Telephone is a 7-minute 12 second music video parody of Lady Gaga's original music video which featured Beyonce. As with other video parodies, Lady Gagita

lifted a number of clips from the original music video and combined them with recreated original shots. Notably, the image of a nipa hut or *bahay kubo* is seen in this video, displaying the exterior and the interior as one venue in a dance number.

4. **Poker Face**

Poker Face is a 4-minute music video parody of Lady Gaga's Poker Face. In this video creativity in costume-making is highlighted mixed with choreography and intricate attention to details of the props.

5. **Paparazzi**

Paparazzi is a 7-minute music video parody of Lady Gaga's Paparazzi.

Highlighted in this video are the various costumes and makeup used by Lady Gagita and the extra characters. There are also techniques in shooting and editing such as an aerial shot and fast cut-to-cut transitions.

6. **Wannabe**

Wannabe is a 2-minute and 53 second music video parody of Spice Girls'

Wannabe. In the video, Moymoypalaboy are presumed to be at their home while lip-synching through a low-quality web camera. There are no camera movements and the actors are permanently situated in front of the camera in a medium shot, as if talking to the viewers in a ridiculous manner.

7. **Low**

Low is a 4-minute 30 second music video parody of Flo-Rida's Low. In this music video parody, Moymyopalaboy went to a lot of venues to shoot different

scenes and dance numbers. There are a lot of props used such as a teddy bear dressed in a Miami Heat jersey, fake shiny accessories and a cow head.

8. Pump It (Louder)

Pump It (Louder) is a 3-minute 36 second music video parody of Black-Eyed Peas' Pump It (Louder). In this video, Moymoypalaboy are seated in front of the camera at home as if talking to the viewers. One of them is donned in a Chinese collar and the other one is topless. Together they lip-synched the song and change their actions assuming the various voices from the song.

9. Crank That

Crank That is a 5-minute 28 second music video parody of SouljaBoy's Crank That. There is a story going on in this video, involving villains and Moymoypalaboy assume the roles of superheroes. There are a lot of venues, props and costumes used in this video. Jollibee, Manila Zoo and Pasay City are all seen in this video.

10. Baby

Baby is a 4-minute 48 second music video parody of Justin Bieber's Baby. In this video another character is seen performing with Moymoypalaboy, fellow YouTube sensation, Kuya Jobert. The setup is in an empty room or studio where the camera is in front of the actors in a medium shot. The lyrics of the song Baby were interpreted to show an imaginary infant whom the actors were playing catch with throughout the video. There are also scenes where Kuya Jobert undresses and Moymoypalaboy are dressed in their usual house clothes.

The videos were chosen specifically because some videos were removed by the management of the administrator of YouTube due to copyright issues. For emphasis, some of the videos that I used in the study were removed but reposted again and reached millions of hits. This data will also be used as a text to support the resistance that I initially identified as a dominant theme in these music video parodies.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the chapter will discuss the observations and textual analysis of the music video parodies in detail according to the indicators of resistance that I identified. At the end of this closed-reading, a synthesis will be provided to highlight all the different forms of resistance that I found in the videos and eventually derive themes of resistance from there.

A. Hit List

Hit list is primarily the text that I consider as the actor's ace in reaching out to the YouTube audience and other internet users. Because of the popularity of certain music, it would be easier to engage internet users to watch these videos. This part of the chapter will analyze the textual meanings of the hit list or the hit songs used by the video channels of Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy respectively.

Lady Gagita in her music video parodies impersonated Lady Gaga, a Hollywood-based singer-composer. Lady Gagita used Lady Gaga's music videos and recreated them using imitated movements, costumes and props. US Billboard Hot 100 named Poker Face as a number one single, accumulating 5,722,000 paid downloads. Following closely was Bad Romance at number two with 4,414,000 paid downloads. Telephone was number three hitting 2,643,000 paid downloads; Paparazzi was number five with 2,776,000 paid downloads and; Alejandro was number six with 2,000,000 paid downloads (Billboard.com).

Meanwhile Moymoypalaboy starred in their music video parodies of Hollywood-based artists such as the Spice Girls, the Black-Eyed Peas, Souljaboy, Justin Bieber, Flo-Rida, etc.

Similar to the case of Lady Gaga, the music used by Moymoypalaboy were also hits according to the US Billboard Hot 100. Wannabe, Spice Girls single, had become number one and stayed there for seven weeks in 1997. It was also named the most successful single ever done and had become number one in music charts of 31 countries. Low by Flo-Rida also became number one in the US Billboard Hot 100 in 2008. Pump It (Louder) by the Black-Eyed Peas ranked 18th at the US Billboard Hot 100 in 2006. Crank That by Souljaboy ranked number one for seven weeks in 2007. And Baby by Justin Bieber ranked number five in 2010 (Billboard.com).

These data show that Lady Gaga and the various artists parodied by Lady Gaga and Moymoypalaboy, conquered the US music chart. For the purposes of this study, the popularity value of the music will be defined through the US Billboard Music charts.

As these hit list or hit songs were popularized by Lady Gaga and the various artists, they were given new interpretations when Lady Gaga and Moymoypalaboy used them in their music video parodies. The popularity of the songs is a recall of the original and it signifies the identity of the music video parodies as a challenge against the original. It used the popularity value of the songs and easily made them access points to reach the mainstream audience who watch videos on YouTube. When one looks for Lady Gaga's or the various artists' music videos on YouTube he or she will also be able to locate the music video parodies of Lady Gaga and Moymoypalaboy because the original music videos and the music video parodies have the same keywords. Moreover, through YouTube's "related videos" feature, Lady Gaga and Moymoypalaboy's video parodies are recommended to the YouTube users, "blindly" making YouTube as an accomplice to the resistance that the video parodies represent. This is a strategy or a tactic to reach the

audience of Lady Gaga and the various artists and tries to invite them to watch the music video parodies. It works on the curiosity of the audience and when they start clicking on the music video parodies to watch, the resistance begins. When they add up their positive and negative comments, it strengthens the resistance inherent in the music video parodies because then, their mere participation and recognition of the music video parodies counts as a resistance similar to when they add up to the millions of views that the videos accumulate.

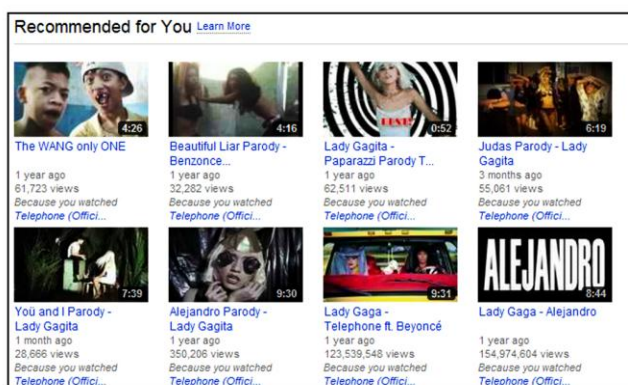


Figure 1. Recommended Videos by YouTube

B. Costumes

Working on Bogatyrev's assertion that costumes have different functions as much as languages, I realized that Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy speak the language of resistance when they wear their 'unusual' and 'weird' costumes in their music video parodies. They displayed a number of costumes that are uniquely crafted using 'unconventional materials' to create their costumes. Lady Gagita used a number of recycled materials to create his costumes such as: bed sheets and curtains (**Bad Romance**), garbage bags and plastic *palengke* or market bags (**Alejandro**), plain *pambahay* or house clothes and cellophane used for Filipino pastries (**Telephone**), and

even paper cups and *balikbayan* packaging boxes (**Poker Face** and **Paparazzi**) to complete his wardrobe.



Figure 2. Blanket and curtain costume



Figure 3. Garbage bag costume

The choice of such materials in creating the costumes opposes the expensive-looking materials from the original music videos (as seen through the interchanging clips of the original and the parody version). Because of colonial mentality, our image of what is beautiful and high-standard are exclusive to branded materials. The music video parodies speak otherwise. Instead, these videos explicitly express resistance against branding and actually showing the ‘versatility’ of our original everyday materials.



Figure 4. Resistance through recyclable materials and props

The opposition further shows that Lady Gagita’s ‘recycled’ wardrobe challenges the idea of patronizing branded clothes as an effect of colonial mentality. When Lady

Gagita exhibits his ‘recycled’ costumes he is actively expressing his opposition to the use of new and manufactured materials.

Moreover, as he continues to use ‘recycled’ materials, the practice itself *recycles* the idea of patronizing branded materials into patronizing our own or the things that we have. As I see it, this also means appreciating a part of our own culture where wearing *pambahay* or house clothes is a common practice. By showing these in the music video parodies, the presence of house clothes and wearing them implies the idea of actually *wearing* our own culture and not surrendering to the dominance of foreign cultures.

Consequently, the use of garbage bags, paper cups and packaging boxes as costumes imply that branded things are not necessary. The music video parodies ‘trash’ this notion and further position themselves in its challenge against choosing extravagant or luxurious materials. In a manner of expressing resistance, the music video parodies consistently involve the use of recycled materials to say that our own locally-made garments are also beautiful and can match those materials.



Figure 5. Half-naked as costume

Interestingly, Moymoypalaboy did not oppose this idea by wearing ‘recycled’ materials as costumes. Instead, in their five music video parodies that I studied, they consistently wore their plain house clothes. As a clear stand against wearing ‘branded’

clothes or patronizing ‘branded’ materials, Moymoypalaboy goes further by *playing* or *toying* with their costumes, removing them while dancing in the music video parodies half-naked.



Figure 6. Wearing plain house clothes

This implies that the music video parodies call for ‘liberation’ from Western ideals. They face this notion barely and express their message of resistance to see beyond the ‘layered’ cover up of colonial mentality in the Philippines. In one music video parody (**Crank That**) Moymoypalaboy were wearing their plain *pambahay* or daily clothes but attached an insignia displaying ‘MP’ on their chests similar to those of superheroes.



Figure 7. Superhero through ‘MP’ insignia

This gesture implies that the music video parodies empower Filipinos to go against the normative and imposing tendency of colonial mentality. In its own way, it

challenges hegemony brought upon by other ‘powerful’ cultures and presents its idea that our culture is ‘powerful’ as well.

To further emphasize the patterns of resistance against patronizing foreign materials, not only the main actors, Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy, were wearing *recycled* and *liberating* wardrobes, so did the support characters in the music video parodies as well.

The dancers in **Telephone** were dressed in their plain house clothes as well, opposing the glamorous costumes worn by the support characters in the original music video. This is similar to the support characters in **Paparazzi** and **Alejandro** where the backup characters were wearing recycled clothes as costumes. In **Low** and **Crank That** the support characters were featured wearing their house clothes such as “*duster*” (worn by Moymoypalaboy’s aunt), baggy hip-hop clothes (worn by the hip-hop groups), and a security guard’s uniform (worn by the security guard), etc. expressing that, to appreciate and patronize our own culture and practices add up to how we view ourselves as belonging to one community.



Figure 8. Wearing plain clothes as costumes



Figure 9. Baggy hip-hop clothes

This further reiterates our awareness that hegemony of one dominant culture brought upon by colonial mentality are continuously resisted and opposed by these music video parodies.

C. Props

When watching the music video parodies of Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy, props are easily noticeable due to their metaphor. Aside from opposing the patronage on branded materials and clothes, the music video parodies also extend its opposition to the assumed superiority of the American culture.

Lady Gagita's **Bad Romance** used bond paper, pirated compact discs, plastic Christmas decorations and even random construction materials like hollow blocks seen either in the foreground or background. There are fake breasts filled with foam and paper worn by the actors (**Bad Romance, Alejandro, Telephone, Poker Face, Paparazzi**), a broken telephone and an imaginary luxurious car using only monoblock chairs as seats (**Telephone**) and even using *puso ng saging* or the heart of a banana plant as a replacement for a synthetic heart used in the original music video (**Alejandro**). Moymoypalaboy used props such as fake *grillz* (accessories used by hip hop groups in the United States) using aluminum foil instead of real silver metal, a teddy bear dressed in a Miami Heat jersey shirt and even a cow's stuffed head (**Low, Crank That, Pump It**). The presence of these 'unusual' props may be seen as random and out-of-place but they are actually directed towards some ideas introduced by colonial mentality of what is cool, hip, important and popular.

By highlighting the locally-identifiable props, the music video parodies projected a message of unique identity, not inferior to other cultures, but actually rich in terms of its own humor and creativity.



Figure 10. Heart of a banana plant as replacement from a real heart prop

Though Lady Gagita's props contribute to its challenge against using new materials, it also replaces this ideology by highlighting locality and ethnicity, and further defeats the superior image of Western culture. Using bond paper instead of richly-woven cloth as a head dress, the back of pirated compact discs as replacements for precious stones and gems, Christmas decorations versus shiny jewelry and accessories, further this opposition. The replacement of such props (shiny adornments, etc.) indicates the music video parodies' taking over the assumed dominance of the American culture.



Figure 11. A shiny adornment

Moreover it adds another layer when it makes fun of this notion by using a literally broken telephone (in the music video parody **Telephone**) therefore communicating a message that succumbing to this system of patronage from colonial ideas is *broken* and therefore, must be fixed.



Figure 12. Broken telephone

As Lady Gagita's music video parodies destroy this effect of colonial mentality, they are at the same time creating new images that the videos deem important.

Familiar images are brought to life in these music video parodies such as *pan de sal* – a common Filipino bread consumed during breakfast; *bahay kubo* or nipa hut – a traditional Filipino image of a house; and a native *kamias* tree – the fruit of which is used in some Filipino dishes.



Figure 13. Nipa hut



Figure 14. Kamias fruit

These images replace the colonial images of the hamburger, mansion and apple respectively (as seen from the clips of the original music videos) and the presence of the said familiar Filipino images imply and reiterate appreciating, patronizing and even loving our own culture and ethnicity.

This is also the message that Moymoypalaboy's music video parodies tell. When fake *grillz* and *blings* are seen in the videos, colonial images of what are popular and trendy are the ideas being put to test. These fake props look ridiculous and in a way, it laughs at the mentality of trying to look the same as the foreigners.



Figure 15. 'Grillz' using aluminum foil



Figure 16. Teddy bear wearing a Miami Heat jersey

Furthermore, Moymoypalaboy ridicules the idea that colonial mentality and the American culture completely controls us. As counter-hegemony, Moymoypalaboy used props that indirectly imply opposition to this notion. In the music video parody **Low**, the actors were playing around with a teddy bear dressed in a Miami Heat jersey shirt. Moymoypalaboy were actually the ones 'controlling' the known colonial image (the toy teddy bear was originally named after US President, Theodore Roosevelt; Miami Heat is a team in the National Basketball Association which is a popular team in the United States as well) implying that Filipinos can be empowered to suppress this 'control.' By

being the masters who control the puppets, Moymoypalaboy actually strengthened the idea that Filipinos are not an inferior race to other cultures and have the capacity to reposition our culture as unique and powerful at the same time.

D. Set/Venue

The set and venue where all the production numbers of Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy, were set up in the Philippines. Specifically, Lady Gagita's productions were consistently done in a community or neighborhood. In **Bad Romance**, **Paparazzi** and **Poker Face**, the venues were the interior of a home, inside the bedroom, complete with a lampshade, electric fan and pillows; a restroom that was made to look like a closet. In **Telephone** and **Alejandro**, they produced some dance numbers outside the home, specifically in their garden and laundry area, and even on the road where their 'neighbors' were the backup dancers.



Figure 17. 'Neighbors' as backup dancers

In the original sources, the venues were limited to those grand places and sights abroad. However, through the music video parodies, local places and sights were highlighted. This gesture of the videos expresses its appreciation of our own ethnicity and history attached to the familiar places in the country. Furthermore, this use of images emphasizes, in a way, our appreciation of Philippine architecture. The *bahay-kubo* is the

prime example of original Philippine design and architecture as it had been present in the country even in the pre-Hispanic period. In a way, using this original Philippine creation highlights our own ethnicity and familiarity to our own roots.

On one hand, these production numbers, done in unlikely places, are ridiculous and funny. A viewer may think that it is awkward to do dance numbers in a narrow bedroom or in a small restroom; however the actors and the support characters actually looked comfortable doing their dance steps. Despite these considerations, there was arguably never a scene where the characters encountered any obvious difficulty; in fact they are actually ‘fit’ for the said venues as they could move around freely without hitting each other. The venues seemed custom-made for the characters, highlighting their personalities through the personalized bedroom, restroom and the laundry area where clothes were hung. The garden and the road were treated as fashion runways complete with electric posts acting as pillars. These create familiarity, inviting a warm feeling for a Filipino viewer like me because all the images are easily recognizable especially in videos that feature communities where, again, Philippine urban scenes were highlighted.

On the surface, this familiarity challenges the production numbers done in foreign places – such as mansions, and even rooms set in outer space (**Bad Romance, Alejandro, Poker Face**). Ideologically, the use of local venues for productions challenges the mentality that foreign places and sights are the only beautiful places in the world. The music video parodies contradict this notion and serve as a window for viewers to see the importance of our own local places. As seen in the interchanging clips of the original and the parody version, the venues used in Lady Gaga’s production are perhaps *beautiful* and *glamorous* on the surface, but these fail to convey a relatable and familiar

feeling. The original videos depict these images as desirable and beautiful but they are usually the stuff of fantasy. Lady Gagita's venues show a tangible aspect of reality – our community, neighborhood and home. These places that the videos portray are the site where we can start building our goals and to which we offer the achievement of those goals. The community where we live in is the core of our identity – our family, our home.



Figure 18. Mansion



Figure 19. Interior of a Philippine urban dwelling

Moymoypalaboy's choice of venues is similar. The music video parodies, **Wannabe**, **Pump It (Louder)** and **Baby**, depicted familiar rooms inside a typical Filipino home such as the *sala* or living room. This is also usually the place inside a home where the family gathers for bonding. It challenges the notion of being in other places, outside the home (in the original music videos, the venues were usually in America's streets, restaurants, prisons, etc.). It depicts an appreciation of their surroundings by using the most basic and accessible resources.

Moymoypalaboy expand this notion of familiarity by going to streets (**Low**, **Crank That**), computer shops, Boracay island (**Low**), and city roads (**Crank That**). Filipinos know and are used to these places, and Moymoypalaboy show that being in these places are fun especially if your *barkada* or friends are with you.

Moymoypalaboy's dance numbers and productions are performed in these places with several people as support characters. These include computer shop boys, and the actors' relatives (cousins and aunt) dancing with them. It may seem ridiculous and funny at first, but looking closer, the video shows how they celebrate the common and the familiar. By highlighting these scenes, Moymoypalaboy challenge the colonial images of what are beautiful and important through their venues.



Figure 20. Participation of a relative



Figure 21. Participation of friends

Familiarity is the central theme that these music video parodies show, and these images connect with the audiences. Through this, the colonial mentality of patronizing other places first is challenged. It further overturns that concept when friends and family and members of the community participate by expressing fun through the dance productions and exhibitions. Furthermore, Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy's choice of shooting venues present an alternative picture of what places are *beautiful* and *fun* a form of resistance in itself.

E. Technical Aspect

When producing their music video parodies, Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy rendered the original music from the original sources (i.e. the original music videos) as they are edited into the music track without any manipulations or cuts. The music is audible and clear in all the ten music video parodies.

As I see it, the music video parodies oppose the assumed dominance of colonial mentality over other countries such as the Philippines through throwing their own mentality back at them (the West as originator of colonial mentality). It works like a response or echo, giving back the same voice (i.e. music) but at the same time showing it with a different point-of-view. This is highlighted and emphasized through the recurrent pattern of interchanging the original clips from the original music videos versus the parody version (Lady Gagita's music video parodies). When the *statement* (clips of the original music videos) of the *powerful* or *authorities* (the mainstream music videos) are shown, the *masses* (represented through the music video parodies) respond by resisting their ideas. This recurrent image of overturning the authority is further empowered as the clips, throughout the duration of the parodies, are manipulated to the parody's advantage. Lady Gagita uses the clips from the original source as 'backup' for his videos making it look like that the original clips are simply his 'backup' dancers. In a way, this empowers Lady Gagita, and thereby empowers the Filipino audience as well.

'Giving back' the same voice is also used in the five music video parodies of Moymoypalaboy, though there are no clips from the original music videos. As a technique, Moymoypalaboy created their own parodies without any reference to the original sources. **Wannabe**, **Pump It (Louder)** and **Baby** were shot using a one camera

setup, usually placed in front of the seated actors. This works like a long answer or response against the assumed dominance of the authorities. In **Low** and **Crank That**, the shots shift from one angle to another. This is Moymoypalaboy's more active response as they are *standing up* for their principle to oppose the dominant ideology of colonial mentality. In opposition against the fast cuts of the original music videos, Moymoypalaboy used the technique of expressing their message in a fixed manner. By this technique, the focus of the viewers will be directed through the message that Moymoypalaboy imply in their videos. Similar to Lady Gagita's empowerment through the unique opening and closing billboards, Moymoypalaboy also used this technique in giving identity to their music video parodies and even acknowledging the support of the extra characters seen in the videos (through closing credits).



Figure 23. Original OBB



Figure 24. One-camera setup

Together, Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy may have little difference in expressing their resistance against colonial mentality through their music video parodies but the nature of their response is similar. By giving identity through unique opening and closing billboards they echo the voice of the assumed dominant culture and overturn this concept through manipulation and editing techniques.

F. Actors

The actors themselves represent opposition against colonial mentality and its assumed dominance over other cultures like the Philippines. Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy embody this resistance through their actions, expressions and gestures and even their names. Furthermore, they also resisted colonial mentality where Western images of people are most of the time, dominant.

The term ‘Gaga’ in Filipino language means stupid. By making it ‘Gagita’ the parody owns the word and appropriates the meaning in Filipino. This makes fun of Lady Gaga and her name. When Lady Gagita impersonates the dance moves, actions and gestures of Lady Gaga, he is actually assuming the function of parody as a jester who repeats the statement of the authority but at the same time questions it and responds to its rhetoric (or language) through the symbols that he possesses (i.e. the recycled costumes, unusual props, etc.). Therefore, it is not simple impersonation or copying. Rather it is more of, first, laughing at the original’s assumed dominance and then second, representing its answer through twisting and skewing this image of dominance.

The word *palaboy* from Moymoypalaboy means wanderer. As an opposition against colonial ideas, Moymoypalaboy live up to its name by wandering beyond the boundaries defined by those in power or the authorities. These boundaries are what the mainstream media impose as important and popular, and through the music video parodies and its recurring messages of familiarity, it challenges the confined thinking brought upon by colonial mentality where foreign images are popular and imposed upon people to use and consume.

Moymoypalaboy further empower the people to look at themselves as equal with other cultures. By showing to the world their uncommon physical looks (dark-skinned, relatively short) they are reversing the notion that being white and tall is desirable. Instead, they are presenting an aspect of reality that we Filipinos have these default native characteristics, therefore we should be proud of our natural color and characteristics because these define our ethnicity and origin.

Throughout all of the music video parodies, Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy's real voices were absent. Instead the voices of the original artists were heard. It may seem at first that the actors are simply trying to imitate the original artists, however this does not actually happen because it works as a tactic to induce laughter at the dominant ideology of colonial mentality by replacing the expected images (desirable by colonial standards) with unexpected images (regular Filipinos as stars through the music video parodies).

Through the music video parodies, Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy represent the voice of the masses that resist the dominant ideology of colonial mentality. When these actors act ridiculously, they voice out a resistance against the imposing nature of the original music videos. By making fun of the images coming from the original videos, they are fooling with the concept of colonial mentality and undermining its assumed dominance over other cultures. They are actually dancing and acting symbols of resistance and go further by representing the Filipino people to the world.

G. Synthesis

The textual analyses of the six indicators that I had observed in the ten music video parodies show that there is an evident opposition against colonial mentality and the

hegemonic nature of this dominant ideology online. Each indicator embodied evidence of resistance, and when combined, present such issues that the music video parodies challenge and continue to challenge (the videos are still available online).

In the music industry where Lady Gaga has begun to reign as an icon, and Justin Bieber, the Black-Eyed Peas, SouljaBoy, the Spice Girls and Flo-Rida topped and dominated international music charts, another world exists where caricatures and ridiculous characters Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy exist, breathe and play around with the whole concept of popularity and dominance of the mentioned artists. Dressing up in recycled clothing and uncommon props, the music video parodies challenge the branded and popular imagery of mainstream idealisms and colonial mentality. When Lady Gagita and the rest of his support characters crossdress they go against the normative social constructions of what is desirable standard and stereotyping. Wearing garbage bags and non-biodegradable materials (cans, plastic cups, papers and bottles), they defeat the glamorous and rich images of the original artists and actually imply that mainstream patronage is trash. While destroying this notion, they are recreating and reshaping the branded world into a liberated one where everyone's individuality is celebrated. This is similar to when Moymoypalaboy are dressed plainly in their house clothes and sometimes even go barefoot and half-naked. As a statement, the music video parodies imply the message 'so what if I am wearing plain shirts?' This empowers one's identity, especially for one who lives in a world of blings, shiny accessories and high-end fashion. In one video, Moymoypalaboy were actually superheroes who were not fighting physical and literal monsters but the *monsters* borne from the hegemonic West such as colonial mentality, thinking that American ideas are superior. By being half-naked,

Moymoypalaboy expose a fraction of reality where a lot of people do not have the capacity to afford rich clothing and live an extravagant life. As they produce these music video parodies they encourage people to 'be who they are' (i.e. being proud of their ethnicity and culture) and liberate themselves from the layered cover-ups of the capitalist industry and the hegemony of colonial thought.

Such images of resistance were also emphasized when obviously Western artifacts were replaced with *pan de sal* (**Telephone**), mansion with *bahay kubo* (**Paparazzi**), luxury car with *bangko* and electric fan cover (**Telephone**), Superman© with super 'MP' (**Crank That**), a runway with backyard (**Paparazzi**), an expensive production set with *salas* and *kwarto* (**Wannabe, Alejandro, Baby**, etc.), electric guitar with *walis tambo* and an artificial human heart with *puso ng saging* (**Alejandro**), 'perfect' models as backup dancers with *tambays*, homosexuals, street kids, Filipino hip hop groups, *barkada*, and even relatives such as grandparents participating as backup dancers (in all the ten music video parodies). As its way of overturning stereotypes and the dominant images from the original music videos, the music video parodies challenge these stereotypes by offering new images that are not restricted to what is 'in' but focuses more on what are really accessible to us. As I see it, these images create familiarity where it opens our minds to realize that before patronizing their cultures we should first look at what we have and start from there.

With these analyses, i deduced five dominant themes of resistance present in all of the ten music video parodies: Ongoing resistance against foreign enculturation, Ideologic replacement, highlighting familiarity and ethnicity, highlighting creativity and artistry, participation in the globalization of culture, and '*filipinizing*' colonial texts.

This part of the chapter defines, explains and expounds on the themes and messages as the lens of resistance that the music video parodies express through YouTube.

A. Ongoing resistance against foreign enculturation

Through the music video parodies and the patterns of resistance that these videos convey, it showed its coherent opposing approach against foreign idealism, particularly patronage against colonial mentality. The coercive nature of hegemony which is symbolically present from the original clips of the original music videos were challenged by the music video parodies as it continually pushes the Western images back to its origin, by playing around with these, using these as twisted and skewed images.

When Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy continually use their locally-available materials for costumes and props and produce these videos in the Philippines, they are rallying and protesting against hegemony of colonial mentality. What they are portraying is a world where all cultures are equally important and there is no hierarchy or level of superiority. With this principle, the music video parodies look at the Filipino culture, as on the same level with other cultures, empowered and capable of equally representing it to the world.

The ongoing resistance also embarks on its opposition against socially-constructed definitions and conventions of what are desirable, superior and standard. Such forms of resistance are seen through defying social definitions of beauty (being fair-skinned and have American features), gender and issues such as poverty (our country being viewed as ‘developing’) where the images of these items originated from colonial mentality.

B. Ideologic replacement

Through the ten music video parodies, colonial mentality is challenged and moreover, replaced with the idea of appreciating our own culture and practices through the replacement of foreign venues for local venues, branded materials by locally-available materials, etc. Imitating these various artists from the West is a mere front or cover to call the audience's attention to, and then eventually reveal its true message of reevaluating how we view our culture through symbolisms and textual meanings that can be found in the music video parodies. When the audience is entertained by the videos it adds up to the resistance enveloping the experience. There is replacement of colonial mentality when familiar and common images are present, such as: families and friends as backup dancers versus professional backup dancers in the original music videos, local images like *bahay kubo* and *pan de sal* versus a mansion and a hamburger.

Such images, as mentioned in the synthesis, expose the idea of 'what if' when we replace colonial mentality in our culture. Will we see things differently? The music video parodies encourage its viewers to see beyond what is imposed upon us and use what we have and show it to the world because through this action we will be able to empower our individuality as Filipino representatives to the world.

The music video parodies may only be one venue to show this thinking of turning the tides but its encouragement to do so successfully conquers the alternative media when more and more music video parodies are uploaded and more hits are gathered with every unique view or rating.

Furthermore, colonial mentality is replaced by cultural mentality through several cultural images portrayed as powerful in the music video parodies. By having cultural

mentality, we tend to have a better image of our own culture. This may directly imply that the assumed dominance of colonial mentality wavers and cultural mentality takes over as the dominant ideology (at least on the web).

C. Highlighting familiarity and ethnicity

Instead of succumbing to the imposed usage of images that are branded and popular in the mainstream media, the music video parodies highlighted familiar and local images such as a nipa hut, *walis tambo*, and *pan de sal*. These texts show the Filipino culture and in a sense it encourages the Filipino viewers to recall our own culture and appreciate it at the same time.

To the rest of the world, the music video parodies present our culture as the *bida* or the protagonists and colonial mentality/ideology as its main antagonist. By highlighting the various local images in the videos, it takes over taken-for-granted mainstream images. Being alternative in nature (as the video channels are online and not on television) the videos challenge the dominance of foreign materials and images resulting in a more empowered sense of ethnicity and culture.

D. Highlighting creativity and artistry

Another theme central to the music video parodies of Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy is its support in promoting Filipino ingenuity.

The music video parodies showed the use of non-conventional materials for props and costumes. Even the entertainment value of these videos underscored creativity, resourcefulness and craftsmanship.

These positive values transcend colonial thought over the net dimensionally because more music video parodies of the same style continue to perpetuate over the net.

Furthermore, these positive values add up to the resistance against foreign sensibilities and turn the tables upside down when the costumes and props used in the videos defy the imposed use of these materials.

E. Participation in the globalization

The music video parodies also presented its stand on the phenomenon of globalization and its hegemonic effects on the cultural aspect. According to UC Atlas of Global Inequality:

“Cultural globalization may highlight the connections among languages, ways of living, and fears of global homogeneity through the spread of North American and European languages and culture (ucatlas.ucsc.edu).”

When we speak of globalization, Western domination and its colonial effect usually comes to mind. However, the music video parodies introduced its idea to overturn the globalizing tendency of the West and define that globalization as collaboration of all cultures, allotting equal space for each in the world.

The music video parodies also retaliate with its persistent call to challenge the domination of one culture. It calls for participation of our own culture, eventually enriching the world with each other’s uniqueness, leading to a more developed notion of globalization.

F. “Filipinizing” colonial texts

Though some scholars may argue that some of the texts that I highlighted were initially borne out of colonial thinking such as the *pan-de-sal* (originally came from Spanish influence); props and costumes made from garbage bags, compact discs, Teddy bear, bond paper, etc (these are originally foreign inventions); and even the use of technology to edit and render the music video parodies, I see these texts as being

appropriated into Filipino context. This appropriation is tantamount to the transformation of '*foreign-ness*' of the mentioned materials into the 'voice' that echoes the message back to the authorities who 'rule' these texts. The parody is at work in these instances because it employs one of its functions by using the same voice (i.e. foreign inventions) and throwing them back to the authorities (i.e. the colonizers who introduced the inventions). By "filipinizing" the colonial texts, the value of these materials becomes more relatable to Filipinos and eventually owning these texts and using them to their advantage.

Furthermore, it can be argued that the Filipinos experiences with the mentioned colonial texts strengthen the intangible value of these texts as part of the lives of the Filipinos. Having a *pan-de-sal* as part of a staple Filipino breakfast makes the experience familiar with Filipino culture and tradition; utilizing materials such as garbage bags, compact discs, Teddy bear toy and bond paper into a novel fashion of costumes and props makes them appropriate with the message of resistance inherent in the music video parodies; and ultimately, using foreign technology to produce the music video parodies can be considered as a defining act of resistance because Filipinos deliberately use the technology to express themselves as jesters to the authority.

Even more questionable is the deliberate use of world wide web (a foreign invention) and YouTube (another foreign invention). By using these foreign inventions into Filipino context, resistance is further empowered and the nature of parody is highlighted.

Through it all, the music video parodies live up to its form by manipulating colonial texts as tools to be used against the colonizers and their presumed dominance over other cultures.

These forms of resistance continually challenge the present conditions that the above-mentioned issues portray. Mainstream and commercial definitions of what is acceptable are faced by people everywhere, yet no clear solutions are presented. Through the music video parodies, norms and conventions are challenged and an arena of free thinking, acceptance and individuality are highlighted.

Furthermore, although these video parodies were removed by the YouTube management due to copyright issues, the actors continuously re-upload them. As a text, I see it as part of the ongoing resistance against colonial mentality.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter of my study summarizes the findings from the music video parodies of Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy.

In response to the theoretical inquiry at the beginning of this research, colonial mentality as a dominant ideology is challenged and resisted through the local YouTube parodies created by Filipino internet users, Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy. Their videos displayed resistance against colonial mentality through messages and images inherent in their music video parodies. Resistance against colonial mentality is embodied through the use of popularity, costumes, props, technical aspect, and the actors in the videos themselves. Furthermore, these indicators of resistance imbibed themes that aside from resisting colonial mentality, utilized the opportunity to promote Filipino values of artistry, craftsmanship, ethnicity, identity, offer a more developed definition for globalization, and also '*filipinizing*' colonial texts.

In the age of new media, many ideas, beliefs and realities are crisscrossing over the net. These ideas are not passively waiting to be acknowledged; rather they are actively seeking recognition and perhaps action from the internet users, and eventually from the larger population.

As a conclusion to this study, some would say that this is only a view about how ideas on the web behave. However, I offer this thought: if we are critical about the different materials that we find on the internet, we will be able to decode messages that are inherent to these materials.

Furthermore, the results of this study reveal that as an alternative venue for production, YouTube paves the way for its users to explore their individuality by expressing their opinions and views through the videos in their YouTube channels.

CHAPTER VI: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the perspective that a third-world country such as the Philippines only receives and accepts foreign materials without challenge, this thesis shows that there is actually another view, an insider's point-of-view that highlights the Philippines' culture and identity and recreates itself through the music video parodies.

Moreover, this study, through textual analysis and an analysis using cultural hegemony, found that there are materials on the web that challenge colonial mentality and certain conventions and norms that the society faces.

The music video parodies represented local and original images (i.e nipa hut, *walis tambo*, *parol* or Christmas lanterns, etc.) that we should consider as worthy of imparting knowledge about us to the world.

Moreover, the music video parodies show that there is nothing wrong if we choose to appreciate who we are stripped of all these colonially-influenced accessories and adornments, and choose to highlight our resourcefulness using what is in our locality.

Through the findings of this study, I hope that there will be future researches related to parodies over the web that further media literacy among internet users.

In relation to the different forms of resistance against foreign enculturation that this study was able to unearth, I also noted other forms of resistance that were also visible and woven into the music video parodies. For one there is resistance against gender biases as represented by Lady Gagita as a text. His gender orientation as a homosexual challenges conservative notions regarding homosexuality in the Philippines where it is not fully recognized in the mainstream media and perhaps in the society at large. By

giving voice and representation in the alternative media, Lady Gagita as a text introduces and recreates gender variation and empowers highlighting the uniqueness of identity.

The study also offers a view on how people from different cultures use the internet. These self-generated content, when posted on the web, signify that they (the internet users and content producers) are posting their sense of being, hence creating their virtual identities online. Lady Gagita and Moymoypalaboy extend their ethnic origins as Filipinos online and through the internet they are able to express a part of themselves and their experiences.

Furthermore, it highlights the potential of the internet as the venue where anyone can voice out their views, where some may perpetuate mainstream ideologies but where most get to air their alternative views and opinions.

This arena where people can voice out their views is pointed out in Habermas' concept of public sphere. In this arena "citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion; thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and publicize their opinions freely (world-information.org)."

The web is an open arena for everyone with an internet connection. The capitalists and the masses (who patronize it and those who do not) coexist in this world. As long as there are people (the 'active internet users') who go the other way by resisting the so-called dominant ideologies, the web will be an effective medium to defeat the imposing and dictatorial system of the West, not just online, but perhaps in the offline world as well.

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