



Article



May Tinutukoy ba si Bitoy? A formalist Analysis on How Political Correctness enters the Post-Pandemic Parody Songs of Micheal V.

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Abstract

Parody is one of the visible products of komedi on Philippine television. Parody is a cultural act that recontextualizes an original material to form a new comedic product. Bakhtin's literary criticism of carnivalesque (1965/1984) also gives framework to parody as it pertains to the emphasis of laughter and role play to temporarily disrupt an idea in power. Political correctness now puts comedic acts to reevaluation, and the parody performances of veteran television comedian Michael V are no exemption. My paper served as preliminary research to examine how political correctness enters the popular cultural production of parody. This specifically asked how Michael V acknowledges political correctness through his post-pandemic parody songs.

I particularly sought for the parody songs' forms, themes, messages and indicated sectors. With qualitative descriptive approach guided by the "six elements of humor" by Helitzer and Shatz (2005), I employed formalist analysis through Bakhtin's carnivalesque lens to assess the lyrics of Michael V's parody songs that were part of the original airing of his gag show Bubble Gang.

My results showed that although parody songs were lyrically patterned based on original songs, they still present a counterview of a parody maker through the humor of altered lyrics. The parody songs convey Michael V's perceived truth and implied resistance towards dominant ideas. Political correctness is eventually hinted as the parody songs have restraints that will not directly mock any sector, even though there are individual-level ridicules that can be misinterpreted. Moreover, the understanding of political correctness through these parodies is informal.

The results of my paper aimed to contribute to the scholarship on parody, and to call for more academic discourses on Filipino comedy as it is related to the media-powered popular culture.

Keywords

Michael V, Parody, Comedy, Philippine Television, Popular Culture

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Introduction

The culture of Filipinos, a race with resilient happiness even in times of crises (Casayuran & Terrazola, 2018; Cornelio, 2023), has an embodiment of comedy, making laughter as its cultural outcome and trait (Ancheta, 2011). Filipinos' conditions and taboos that are social, economic, and political were lightened up through comedy. The popular comedy genre draws largely from differences, may it be through race, nationality, gender, and religion, and the resulting clash of representations from these aspects is a bankable source material (Gutierrez, 2015).

Filipino comedy (or komedi) has been a popular staple in Philippine television (del Mundo, 2023, Guieb, 2018). One of the products of komedi is parody, a cultural practice which makes a relatively imitation or restructuring of another cultural production, through recontextualization, transformation and repetition to create a new humorous text which can be either a conformity or transgression of the original material (Cruz, 2013; Kostka, 2016; Pamatmat, 2011). Parodies, or the comedy in general, have been scrutinized if it follows political correctness which is a form to avoid or curtail any offenses against the aggrieved sectors, although it is being contradicted as a hindrance against free speech and creative freedom (Black, 2021; Ferguson, 2019).

Any comedic acts on Philippine television have been challenged by the notion of political correctness (Cruz, 2022, "Michael V.", 2023), considering that the past comedy shows included insults at Filipinos' misfortunes, indecencies, and weaknesses (Sequitin, 2010). The parody making of veteran comedian Michael V, who is referred to as "Ikon ng Parodya" (Cruz, 2013) and a television humor historian (Suralta, 2023), can also be scrutinized if he adheres to political correctness as conceptualized by evolving audiences. Michael V once said that comedy is not anymore universal, claiming that what is funny to some may not be funny to others (Acar, 2023b; Severino, 2021), especially in what he claims as "era of overreactive netizens" (Michael V. #BitoyStory, 2021a).

Most of the aspects of komedi has not been a priority for cultural studies because it is downplayed to be trivial (Sanvictores, 2021). Furthermore, comedy has been misconstrued as "a withering misapplication of intelligence" (Ancheta, 2011, p. 36). Nevertheless, parodies as a cultural production in the Philippine media have been continuously shaped by the struggles and demands of Filipinos for the perceived political correctness.

The Research Problem

My paper served as preliminary research to examine how political correctness enters the popular cultural production of parody in Philippine television. This specifically asked how Michael V acknowledges political correctness through his post-pandemic parody songs.

The specific objectives based on this research problem are:

1. What is the form of post-pandemic parody songs of Michael V?
2. What are the themes covered by these post-pandemic parody songs?
3. What are the messages intended by these post-pandemic parody songs?
4. How are the certain Filipino sectors indicated in these post-pandemic parody songs?

Literature Review

Comedy in Popular Culture

Comedy has been an important form of popular culture (Guiterrez, 2015). Chaney (1994, as cited in Ancheta, 2011), viewed the popular in cultural context as the element that refers to a particular mode of address regarding the element of social life which is practiced or celebrated by ordinary members of the society. I am including here the “deconstruction of the popular” by Hall (1981), to argue that popular comedy is produced by the cultural and leisure activities of different stakeholders, and that popular element stresses a dynamic nature and constant tensions

I am also adding the discussions of Hall (1981) about power relations, to argue that popular comedy is a struggling cultural form by contending classes and is dependent on how it is produced by mainstream television. The popular comedy expands through the mass media that have overdetermination to cater what is deemed as popular (Tolentino, 2005). Television conveys comedic texts and has the strong ability to either affect or reflect society regarding its norms, value system and conditions (Elumba, 2012).

Ancheta (2017, as cited in Sanvictores, 2021) said that the comedy produces is humor. This humor is born both from incongruity (the element of unexpectedness) and superiority (the outlook towards people not within the same social class or condition). She also said:

Humor is, in fact, a Filipino national weapon—one that is utilized not only to reflect social foibles and cultural beliefs that allow Filipinos to find belonging in using humor as a response to crippling national horrors, but one that is used to train an apparently disparaging look at themselves as victims of embarrassing and painful historical, political, or cultural circumstances. (p. 33)

Parody as an Element of “Komedi”

Komedi is a humorous work that aims to amuse audiences and provoke laughter. A television komedi show has funny situations, narratives that are either predictable or with twists and turns, and characters whose behavior are ridiculous or exaggerated (Guieb, 2018). Philippine television has been offering komedi mostly to the “masa” viewers who are the *raison d’etre* of various shows, particular for temporary entertainment (del Mundo, 2003). I am clarifying that the komedi on television must not be confused with komedya or comedia which Tiongson (2010) defined as the oldest genre of formal Philippine theatre.

One of the types of komedi is sketch comedy or gag show. Guieb (2018) defined gag show as “a mixed bag of sketches, spoofs, and music that parodies human foibles, plays practical jokes about everyday life, caricatures products and services, or critiques sociopolitical issues and personalities” (para. 2). Early gag shows gained prominence in the 1930s as features of a radio variety show that combined short skits, comedy routines, and bodabil singing. Slapstick gag shows began in the 1960s on television. Sociopolitical gag shows also gained ground specifically in the late 1980s after the EDSA People Power Revolution. Their proliferation implied strong creative freedom as political situation in the Philippines back then had been normalized (del Mundo, 2003; Guieb, 2018).

One of the elements of a gag show is parody. Dentith (2000) defined parody as a cultural practice which makes a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production. Harries (2000) said that parodies, such as in film, invokes a process wherein the original text undergoes different level of recontextualization through transformation of its elements and creates a new text. It applies satire and irony as its manner of representing the original text. The parody's two structural levels are an authority and a transgression of the authority, while its pragmatic frame includes the 'intent' which spreads from comedy through neutrality to seriousness. In her book *Theory of Parody*, Hutcheon (1985/2000) explained that parody is a bi-textual synthesis that is a repetition with critical difference, and its enunciation includes structural and pragmatic frames. Hutcheon (as cited in Felluga, 2011) added that in the postmodern setting of parody, its aim is to willingly question all ideological positions and claims of ultimate truth.

The usual intent of parody is to convey pungent wit towards those in power, like how the humorous pamphlets of Filipino propagandist Marcelo H. del Pilar criticized the political authority of the Spanish friars (Guzman, 2002). Meanwhile, Pamatmat (2011) cited the persistence of parodies on social media platforms but with minimum exposure. Yet, he argued that even parody may be one of the least respected art forms in contemporary media, it is still one of most powerful, particularly online.

Parody can be related to the "carnavalesque" of Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin. Through his book *Rebels and His World* (1965/1984), Bakhtin stated that the carnivalesque is the result of the desire of the "low people" to fight for their right to be part in forming a culture. This "carnival" reveals temporary resistance against participating in the official world, and promises utopia of perceived good life, equality, prosperity and freedom. Therefore, carnival creates another world or society without hierarchy.

The carnival shows the dialectic of two languages: 1) "high" or "official culture" from the authority of politics and religion; and 2) "low" or "carnival culture" from the indigenous or oppressed. Meanwhile, the four categories of carnivalesque are: 1) familiar and free interaction between people; 2) eccentricity; 3) carnivalistic mésalliances (dualism); and 4) profanation (Bakhtin, 1965/1984).

Figure 1

Bakhtin's distinction of "official" culture and "carnival" culture, according to Storey (2001)

"Official" Culture (High)	"Carnival" Culture (Low)
Seriousness	Laughter
Mind	Body
Spiritual	Profane
Official	Non-Official
Vertical	Horizontal
Dogmatic	Open
Immutable	Contingent
Stasis	Movement
Scarcity	Abundance
Control	Intensity
Opaqueness	Transparency

Parody and Political Correctness

Political correctness is an ideology that is presumably irreconcilable with comedy (Ferguson, 2019). Black (2021) defined political correctness as a form of avoidance that aims to curtail examples of offense that may be directed to a particular group such as the minorities. With liberal, radical, and Marxist political views, it serves as a form of self-parody against dogmatic forms of political assertions. Žižek (2008, as cited in Black, 2021) claimed that political correctness is full of contradictions. He explained that political correctness inhibits free speech that limits the right to freely express novel ideas and philosophies, but this also seeks to promote greater social equality, drawing upon gender, sexuality, ethnicity and disability to reify cultural experiences, resulting in regimented forms of interaction that ultimately undermines social interaction. Given these contradictions, political correctness serves an ideological function in obfuscating the subject's relations both to and with the other. Ferguson (2019) argued that the political correctness would not actually exist without comedy's assistance, citing that the modern battles against sexism, racism, ageism and phobias towards LGBTQI+ have often been championed by comedians to great effect to a mass audience.

Comedic performances on Philippine television are currently difficult due to the reevaluation of political correctness. The 1998 and 1991 studies of Camarillo and Flores, respectively (as cited in Sequitin, 2010) highlighted that previous Filipino comedy shows possessed insulting references at the misfortunes, indecencies and weaknesses of a Filipino. Furthermore, Sequitin (2010) observed that these shows amplified stereotyping of the societal orders that were presented as inferior. The social media behavior also triggers the assumed short-temperedness of Filipinos regarding comedy ("Michael V.", 2023). Film director Jose Javier Reyes (as cited in Cruz, 2022) said that the idea of political correctness has become a bastion of hypocrisy, claiming that certain comedy productions have been used to push political agenda and propaganda. Meanwhile, film critic and anthropologist Tito Valiente (as cited in Cruz, 2022) said that the impact of political correctness to comedy has been huge, as the audience's sense of humor has changed. He cited parody and political satire that require an audience with a higher level of education for these to be appreciated. In looking for the perceived political correctness in comedy, I am focusing on the parody songs of veteran comedian Michael V.

Michael V, the "Icon of Parody"

Michael V or "Bitoy", born Beethoven del Valle Bunagan, is a 55-year-old prolific Filipino comedian, actor, and director whose career spans three decades. Dubbed as "Comedy Genius," Michael V has portrayed and parodied more than 200 television, film, and commercial advertisement characters such as celebrities, politicians, and news anchors, and these focused on current events, ethnicities, languages, genders, traditions, and Filipinos' daily lives (Guieb & Labor, 2018; "FDCP Pays Tribute," 2023; Suralta, 2023). His parodies of hit songs are one of his features ("5 Notable Song Parodies," 2023; Acar, 2023a) and included in the segments of Bubble Gang (now BBLGang), the longest running gag show on Philippine television which premiered in 1995. Michael V is the remaining original member of this show wherein he also served as its creative director (Acar, 2023a; Tomada, 2023).

Cruz (2013) dubbed Michael V as "Ikon ng Parodya" as his comedy frequently centers in parody production. His making of parody songs started through Bubble Gang's segments MTB: Myusik Tagalog Bersyon, featuring mistranslated international songs in Filipino, and MEV: Music English Version that featured mistranslated Filipino songs in English (Guieb & Telles, 2018; Michael V. #BitoyStory, 2021a). Suralta (2023) argued that Michael V turned

himself into a pop cultural phenomenon because of his characterizations and caricatures which can be forms of critique and social commentary. Furthermore, the comedian's triumphs can make him "as a sort of television humor historian" (para. 3).

Michael V (2021a, 2021b) explained through his YouTube vlogs how he creates parodies of original songs. To narrow down his search, he will first find a source material based on what he perceives as timely in Filipino pop culture before going to its international counterpart. He will eventually mistranslate the lyrics, find its potential assonances, homophones or syllabic rhymes via enunciation, play with its title, and change its theme to make the song relatively humorous. He will eventually imitate the original artist's singing and appearance based on the original song's music video. According also to Michael V, making parodies was freer when internet was not yet emerging, like when localized parodies of the international songs emerged because the international record labels could not easily monitor these imitations during that period. He acknowledged that his making of parody songs has been rare, as it now needs legal permissions from the owners and composers, for him, his producers and his television network, and fees regarding the rights of every original song, starting from PHP 5,000.00 to PHP 100,000.00. These requirements are needed for the authorized production of the parody to avoid copyright issues. Michael V further claimed that the success of his parody will depend on his parodied lyrics and if it will be first remembered by his audience instead of the original song's lyrics.

Figure 2

A collage of screenshots of Michael V's video tutorial on how to make parody songs



Note. From #BitoyStory 41: "Parody Tutorial" [Video file], by Michael V. #BitoyStory, 2021b, YouTube. (<https://bitly.ws/39LC4>). Copyright 2021b by Michael V. #BitoyStory.

Can Michael V still be “Politically Correct”?

Michael V claimed that comedy is not as universal as before, claiming that what is funny to some may not be funny to others anymore (Acar, 2023b). He has been acknowledging these challenges, with his emphasis on “cancel culture” due to political correctness (Severino, 2021). He admitted that gender stereotypes and physical flaws were the themes he usually used. Now, he is compelled to incorporate satire and social commentary, and to use parodies to spread awareness and seek inclusivity (Alberto-Masakayan, 2023; “FDCP Pays Tribute,” 2023; Michael V. #BitoyStory, 2021b). His approach is visibly different from his previous parodies that included mockery, like against the LGBTQI+ community (“5 Notable Song Parodies,” 2023; Michael V. #BitoyStory, 2021a). Michael V added that he cannot produce any parody on a whim despite the abundance of available source materials due to sensitivities, like the emerging yet cautionary topics about the COVID-19 pandemic (Severino, 2021).

Even though parodies are still part of Bubble Gang’s creative freedom, Michael V acknowledged that they must improve according to the struggles of every sector of society. He claimed that he has been respectfully consulting with those whom he assumes will be possibly triggered by his parody songs, especially in the present time that he claims as “era of overreactive netizens” (Michael V. #BitoyStory, 2021a; Severino, 2021). Bubble Gang’s creative head Caesar Cosme claimed that there is now what he referred to as “internal self-censorship” within their show, particularly when a parody involves topics like religion and politics. This policy has been a far difference from how Michael V in the same show made direct impersonations and mockeries of political figures during the 2000s, such as former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (Cabial, 2009). Nevertheless, Michael V justified that pushing the boundaries of creativity will be the way to know its limitations or inhibitions, like looking for terminologies that can replace prohibited words, have legal consultations, and explaining that their intended meanings are different from what the audiences perceive (Severino, 2021).

Michael V also acknowledged that content creation on social media is the intervention in the correctness of mainstream comedy, citing that mainstream television and social media has symbiotic relationship for the exchanges of ideas (Tomada, 2023). Sociologist Josephine Aguilar-Placido (as cited in Cruz, 2022) said that due to big paradigm shift through the internet, the thinking Filipino viewers have reached their saturation point, and are possibly looking for new flavors of comedy.

Methodology

The lyrics of the parody songs were assessed with formalist analysis through Bakhtin’s carnivalesque lens (1965/1984). My analysis was also guided by Helitzer and Shatz’s “six elements of humor” (2005), which are the following:

- Target of Ridicule: The subject with universal appeal, such as self, celebrities, or common experiences
- Hostility: Shared frustrations or criticisms, yet not excessively negativity
- Realism: Humor in relatable truths to connect with the audience.
- Exaggeration: Stretched reality to create comedic effect, but maintaining a logical connection.
- Emotion: Tension and anticipation to enhance the impact of punchline.
- Surprise: Unexpected twist that subverts the expectations

Definitions of Dentith (2000), Harries (2000) and Hutcheon (1985/2000) about parody also gave depth to my methodology. This analysis would discover possible forms or hints of political correctness from the parody songs as sample units. Every parody song will be examined by targeting the following: 1) the form; 2) the themes covered or implied; 3) the intended messages; and 4) the represented sectors. I purposively focused on four post-pandemic parody songs of Michael V which premiered from 2022 to 2024, during the post-pandemic transitioning period. These songs have their music videos officially uploaded on the YouTube pages of GMA Network, Inc. (GMA Pinoy TV and YouüLOL), and were part of the aired episodes of Bubble Gang. I found these parody songs relevant because I argued that these songs attempt to fit in the contemporary notion of political correctness towards Philippine comedy.

My methodology had limitations as it would not analyze the derived original songs. The audio-visual elements of the parody songs' music videos such as actors, dialogues, costumes, props, set design, sound effects and musical technicalities, were not part of the formalist analysis. However, certain snapshots of those videos were still presented.

Discussions and Interpretations

Parody Song 1: "Gusto Ko Nang Bumigay"

Figure 3

A sample snapshot of "Gusto Ko Nang Bumigay" music video



Note. From Michael V's "Gusto Ko Nang Bumigay" Music Video [Video file], by GMA Pinoy TV, 2022, YouTube. (<https://bitly.ws/39JmW>). Copyright 2022 by GMA Network, Inc.

"Gusto Ko Nang Bumigay" is a parody of hit song "Gusto Ko Nang Bumitaw," as per the rendition of Filipino pop singer Morrisette Amon, which was the soundtrack of 2022 Filipino drama series *The Broken Marriage Vow* (Ramos, 2023). The parody music video, with Figure 3 as its sample snapshot, premiered on November 25 of that same year. As of June 14, 2025, this video garnered 3,004,604 views on GMA Pinoy TV's YouTube channel.

The lyrics of the parody song narrates about “Morichette,” a husband who is a closeted LGBTQIA+ member. Its music video shows him doing confessions while wearing women’s clothes his wife sells through live selling.

“Gusto ko Nang Bumigay” tells a theme of hidden thoughts of gender preference in a first-person perspective, and the confusion and fear of rejection due to the dominant phobias against the LGBTQIA+. This theme is lyrically formed as a monologue-like confession of a closet LGBTQIA+ member’s self-restraint about his coming out.

In both English and Filipino, the parody talks about “Morichette” who feels unhappy in his marriage (Alberto-Masakayan, 2023), and his dualism regarding his conflicting gender preferences. This is exemplified by the Verse 1 and Pre-Chorus: “Muntikan nang mahuli ng asawa pero 'di nadala/ Tinry ko pang umapila/ Hindi talaga 'ko kalalakihan/ Papa'no sasabihin 'to? Nahihiya ako sa 'yo/ Ngayong singkwenta na ako.” “Morichette” hints of what he would do if he comes out, such as, “Ang gusto ko rumampa magdamagan na iba-ibang suot,” and “Mag va-volleyball, umii-spike habang kinikilig,” In Verse 2, “Pinag-bawalan ng mga magulang ko/ Ilang taon na ba 'kong ganito?/ Nung nag duda ang tatay ko, sa drum, nilunod nya ako/ Sirena na ako” hints of childhood trauma particularly by the physical abuse of his father (Alberto-Masakayan, 2023), with “sirena” as metaphor of beauty and resiliency.

The parody primarily pertains to the decision-making struggles of LGBTQIA+ groups, with “Morichette” as its representative. There is confusion from “Morichette” about himself, as seen through this Chorus: “Gusto ko nang bumigay/ 'Yan lang ang sigaw ng puso/ Gusto ko nang bumigay/ Pero too late na siguro/ Tagal ko nang pinigil pero lalo lang nanggigil/ Kailan ba ako pwedeng bumitaw?” There is also disgust towards hegemonic phobias on genders that is emphasized in this Bridge, “Wag nga kayo!/ Sinasabi n'yo pa na ako ay kadiri/ Bawal bang magkamali?/ Hindi naman nagpabaya/ Kung gusto kong magpabaya, mas madali.” There are no specified minorities throughout the lyrics, as its mostly uses pronouns to remain them unidentifiable. The parody was praised by the LGBTQIA+ groups, citing that this is a redemption from Michael V’s previous parodies that were tagged as homophobic (Madarang, 2022). Michael V (as cited in Alberto-Masakayan, 2023) claimed that he is now committed to represent gay roles with profound respect for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Analysis

The parody “Gusto ko Nang Bumigay” is a monologue-like confession which can possess “carnival culture”, implying the “low” elements of “body,” “open,” “intensity” and “transparency” (Bakhtin, 1965/1984). The song primarily generates laughter and implies the use of eccentric body language. The first carnivalesque category, “familiar and free interaction” is highlighted by secretive and pretentious actions of “Morichette”, while in a marriage with his wife and confronting the barriers of the dogmas against the LGBTQIA+. Bakhtin’s second category “eccentricity” is promoted by the parody. Its lyrics normalize the character’s frustration about his inner conflict. This is also imposed by the assonance of syllables like “bumigay-ay-ay” in the Chorus. The third category, “carnivalistic mésalliances”, allows dualism which is the clash of “low” closeted gay and the “high” pretentious male inside “Morichette’s” body. For Bakhtin’s fourth category, “profanation”, retaliation towards the judgmental who are against the LGBTQIA+ is present, but it is not literally expetive. This is mainly seen in the song’s Bridge and self-relief eventually follows as per this Coda: “Pagbibigyan ko na ang sarili/ Bibigay, bibigay na.” The disgust or angst of “Morichette” with sarcasm, anger or hysteria towards the “ideas” or “sectors” is emphasized. However, he is still an oppressed individual as he keeps on pretending as a binary male, a gender which is assumingly and

hierarchically “official”.

The parody possesses most elements of humor (Helitzer & Shatz, 2005). Its target is unidentified, but this could be those who emphasize “dogma” “control” and “official” which are classified as “official culture” (Bakhtin, 1965/1984). “Morichette” has sources of hostility such as the pre-determined stereotypes of a typical family and binaries on sex that have been attempting to tone down angst and group differences. There is a simulation of reality through the self-narration of his past experiences. Some lyrical parts can be “surprises” like assonance as these may change rhythmic delivery.

Parody Song 2: “Waiting Here sa Pila”

Figure 4

A sample snapshot of “Waiting Here sa Pila” music video



Parody Song 2: “Waiting Here sa Pila”

“Waiting Here sa Pila” is a parody of 2023 hit song “Raining in Manila” by Filipino rock band Lola Amour. Premiered on September 10, 2023, its parody music video uploaded on YoüLOL’s channel, with Figure 4 as its sample snapshot, garnered 3,766,476 views as of June 14, 2025. In its lyrics, Michael V as “Lolo Kanor,” a parodic allusion to Lola Amour, criticizes those who buy expensive coffees as a social status symbol (Acar, 2023a; “5 Notable Song Parodies,” 2023). Meanwhile, the name “Kanor” is also an intertextual reference to the alias “Mang Kanor”, an anonymous controversial online sensation who catered exhibitionism in a form of pornographic materials (Tugano & Santos, 2022).

“Waiting Here sa Pila” highlights the negative traits of consumerism as a socio-cultural activity, and self-assessment of one’s socio-economic status. It hints the need for financial literacy amidst the inflation of commodities (Acar, 2023a; “5 Notable Song Parodies,” 2023). The song specifies splurging on expensive brands as pretension of lavish lifestyle.

The song is with English and Filipino slangs. Using the second-person perspective, Lolo Kanor shows frankness in giving rude comments about the consumers who are willing to have long queries just to have pricey coffees. In the pre-chorus, he calls them “purita” (“poor”), a mockery to cite masquerading of financial situation, followed by a sentiment in Verse 1 about purchasing luxuries while abandoning financial obligations: “Tigilan mo na ang gastos mo

sa kape/ Panay pasosyal, pero purita pa rin/ Nakatambak ang bayarin.” There is also negative hyperbole pertaining to one’s purchasing power, such as, “Kahit sabayan niyo 'ko, tiyak akong hindi naman sapat/ Ang kinikita niyong lahat sa araw-araw/ At kung ilibre man kita, kahit na tall o venti pa/ Kulang pa rin sa utak mong malabnaw.” Lastly, there is a lyrical part to convey negative emotion of disgust: “Di ba, wala na kayong pera? Eh, ba't ka pa bumibili?/ Ang kapal talaga ng mukha mo!”

While criticism towards “purita” and “yayamanin” (“social climbers”) is implied, this parody limits its exaggeration about any socio-economic class. There is a mild stereotyping in Stanza 2 of “tito” or “uncle” who may represent millennial generation, with “10-peso ‘3-in-1’ instant coffee,” remark. Yet, there is an implication of political correctness as it does not show expletive mockery towards specific groups.

Analysis

The parody “Waiting Here sa Pila” implies commentary and prejudice towards ideas of lavish lifestyle. “Carnival culture” is implied (Bakhtin, 1964/1985) due to the emphasis of “profane”, “intensity” and “movement”, as the song promotes self-assessment amidst the “immutable” and “opaque” excesses of consumerism. The “familiar and free interaction” category is present as the lyrics are in second-person perspective simulating Lolo Kanor’s interactions with targeted persons. “Eccentricity” is imposed to dissolute pretentious hierarchies of the coffee consumers. Dualism which highlights “carnivalistic mésalliances” is present due the activities of “social climbers” to hide their financial status. “Profanity” is restrained but the mockery is present like in Verse 1. Still, most targets are unspecified as the song uses second-person pronouns “ka”, “mo”, “inyo” and “kita”. Meanwhile, there is suggestion of degradation for the stereotypes by just be contented with “low quality” “3-in-1” coffee.

The elements of humor (Helitzer & Shatz, 2005) are present as the parody reveals targets who are both specified (“purita”, “yayamanin”) and unspecified. There could be sources of hostility like consumerism which will be treated as a realistic concern. There is exaggeration through “surprising” literary devices such as repetitive lines written in Taglish (Tagalog-English) and rhetorical questions of buying expensive coffee due to the anticipated privileges such as “Wi-Fi” as mentioned in Verse 2.

Parody Song 3: “Oh Wow”

Figure 5

A sample snapshot of “Oh Wow” music video



Note. From Bubble Gang: Oh Wow! by Hilaw (Uhaw Parody) (with English subtitles) [Video file], by YoüLOL, 2023a, YouTube. (<https://tinyurl.com/yp3zx3my>). Copyright 2023a by GMA Network, Inc.

Michael V composed the track “Oh Wow” using the tune of “Uhaw” by indie-alternative rock band Dilaw (Pasajol, 2023). He performed the parody in Bubble Gang as “Hilaw”, a one-man band impersonation of Dilaw. His parodic performance, inside the “Waste Truck” vehicle stage, imitated the band’s live performance inside the Wish Bus of FM station Wish 107.5 last March 2023 (Wish 107.5, 2023). As of June 14, 2025, its music video version (see Figure 5) garnered 6,259,065 on YouTube.

What trending content really means on social media is the main theme of “Oh Wow”. This parody is criticizing mediocre social media content (“Michael V Says,” 2023). Hilaw laments about the growing toxicity on social media due to irresponsible and egoistic content creators. The parody song’s Bridge says, “Daming uhaw sa likes, sa follow/ Please subscribe, mga utaw/ Nalulunod sa kada puri diyan/ Sa comments section mo/ Nakakalula ang taas / Ng tingin mo sa sarili mo”.

Written through a mix of Filipino and English, “Oh Wow” is a comical reminder to online content creators. Michael V adds that he also dedicates this parody to himself to remind what high-quality and ethical content should be. Michael V recommends that content creation must be something inspirational that the generation can tolerate and look forward to, and that this must be done with high level of intelligence, creativity, humor and mindfulness (“Michael V Says”, 2023; Pasajol, 2023).

There are clear tirades against creators who are forcing bad content to trend, like what Verse 2 says, “Kahit na parang baliw/ Laging nagmamagaling/ Baka lang maunahan ka/ Wala nang edit, i-post na ‘to/ Hindi ka matalino/ Siguro ay nabagok ang ulo/ Pero chance mo na ‘to”. Yet, the parody song seems to be careful by only using second-person pronouns like “ikaw” and “ka”. Nonetheless, there is no specific creator or influencer mentioned by the song. Michael V clarified that the track is not intended to take a swipe at anyone, and he only reminds them about the essence of the word “content” (“Michael V Says”, 2023; Pasajol, 2023).

Analysis

The “carnival” culture (Bakhtin, 1964/1985) in “Oh Wow” is implied through the “low” elements of “laughter”, “profane” (low-quality, bad content), “abundance” (saturation of content creators) and “intensity” (bizarre production and online engagement methods). The “familiar and free interaction” category is present. Michael V, also a content creator himself, is opening a discourse on responsible content creation on social media (“Michael V Says”, 2023; Pasajol, 2023). He partly mentioned the usual routine of content creators in forcing even low-quality content just to maintain their viewership records, like what Verse 1 says, “May ilan naman s'yang likes/ May mga tag din ng barkada/ May talent kayo/ Pero wala lang laman”. The “eccentricity” category is emphasized. There are slight syllabic repetitions, just like of the one-syllable word “post” without mentioning its consonant blend or “kambal katinig” in Filipino (“i-po-po-po-po-post”). The emphasis of vowel sounds is also present like through the exclamations “oh, wow!” and “eh, 'di, ikaw!”

For the “carnivalistic *mésalliances*” category, there is a supposed dualism of content creators. Even they seem to be technologically advancing, they are arguably irresponsible and toxic because of their forceful production practices, like what both Chorus and Outro say: “Di aayaw, kahit ano/ Kahit sabaw/ Ang babaw ng pananaw, collab pa rito/ Penge naman ng followers mo”. Furthermore, the “profanation” in this parody song will be mainly composed of sarcasm and tirades. There are sarcastic remarks, like what are stated in the transition of the Pre-Chorus 1 and Chorus: “Kahit ‘di kaya pinilit/ kahit na pangit pwede na ‘tong i-po-po-po-po-post/ Eh ‘di oh, wow, eh ‘di ikaw, trending ka now”. There are also tirades towards the content creator’s ego, like in Bridge: “Nakakalula ang taas/ Ng tingin mo sa sarili mo/ Eh di oh wow, e di ikaw!”

Elements of humor (Helitzer & Shatz, 2005) are mostly present in the parody song, with general targeting of social media content creators. There is hostility towards their community through sarcasm and tirades which will be exaggerated. These are pertaining to the reality the content creators seemingly display which is the toxicity and irresponsibility in online content creation. Amplified by the disgusted emotion, there will be surprises in the parody song like syllabic repetitions and finishing exclamatory remarks.

Parody Song 4: “Hilaw”

Figure 6

A sample snapshot of “Hilaw” music video



Note. From Bubble Gang: Hilaw by Yaki (Dilaw Parody) (with English Subs) [Video File], by YoüLOL, 2024, YouTube. (<https://shorturl.at/INqkQ>). Copyright 2024 by GMA Network, Inc.

“Hilaw” is a parody of “Dilaw”, a 2024 indie-alternative song by Filipino singer Maki. In the “Oh Wow” parody, Michael V previously used “Hilaw” to impersonate the band which is also named as Dilaw. For the “Hilaw” parody, Michael V performs as “Yaki”, the impersonation of Maki. Michael V’s parodic performance inside “Waste Truck” imitates the original singer’s live performance inside the Wish Bus last August 2024 (Wish 107.5, 2024). Its parody video has reach 709,091 views on YouTube as of June 14, 2025.

“Hilaw” criticizes the fakery or pretension of Filipinos in improper use of Filipino language. It generally calls out those who do not speak Filipino and instead adopt a conyo accent to align oneself to the supposed prestige of any foreign language (“Michael V. drops”, 2024).

Through “Hilaw” parody, Michael V wants to raise the importance of the Filipino language and how to use it properly such as its grammar and syllabication (Acar, 2024). The parody also shows dismay regarding the supposed public’s forgetfulness of learnings about the Filipino language. Thus, Michael V said that he wants to create awareness about improving Filipino language proficiency and literacy. Using the second-person point of view, “Yaki” becomes generally rude towards anyone poking fun in speaking Filipino or being forgetful in Filipino lessons (Acar, 2024). For example, the Chorus laments about people failing to practice the Filipino language through this lyric, “Bakit sablay ang Filipino n'yo?/ Bakit pa-conyo kayo bumitaw?/ Iba ang asta, iba ang galaw/ Pinoy na ang dila, may accent biglang lumilitaw/ Ikaw ay Pinoy na hilaw”. The song provokes a message on the importance of being a true Filipino by speaking the language correctly and not just being “nakabarong” or in Barong Tagalog suit as also cited in the Chorus.

However, the remark against “Pinoy na hilaw” or pretentious Filipino is still generic. The song uses second-person pronouns like “ikaw”, and there is no specific sector. Meanwhile, Verse 1 says, “Hindi ako magtatataka, kung sumuko ang guro mo/ Nakailang ulit na/ At taon-taon na'ng salita'y baliko”, while Pre-Chorus 2 adds, “Parang 'di ka na natututo/ Mali pa rin ang 'yong diin at iyong

punto/ Hanggang ngayon, wala pa ring naiba/ Pakitanong sa teacher nila". Therefore, there is an implication that the parody's condemnation would be for everyone who has not significantly learned in their Filipino subjects or has not realized the efforts of their Filipino teachers.

Analysis

Following the discussion about "carnival" culture (Bakhtin, 1964/1985), there is a resistance of "low" culture particularly through "body" (i.e. organs for speaking), "profane", and "movement" (any moves to perform or speak a language). "Hilaw" questions the traits of the supposed "dogmatic" culture (inferior thinking on Filipino language), "scarcity" (limited proficiency in Filipino language) and "opaqueness" (general misuse of the language).

"Familiar and free interaction" category is present as the lyrics opened criticism on the "high" culture's supposed hegemonic failing in learning the Filipino language. This could be associated with the colonial thinking favoring the "White" or "American" (Kano or Amerikano), as said in the Chorus, "Parang nagpapanggap kayong Kano kahit na nakabarong/ Bakit sablay ang Filipino niyo?" The "eccentricity" category is present as the song's emphasis is through repetition of syllables or root words such as "bali-bali", "dali-dali" and "hilaw, hilaw". The third category, "carnivalistic mésalliances", allows dualism as the native Filipino speakers are making errors in speaking it. Finally, "profanation" is mildly restrained. The Pre-chorus 1 says, "Taga-Pilipinas nga kayo pero parang tanga," and there is a "buwisit" (Tagalog of "annoying") remark in Verse 2. Meanwhile, there are exclamations such as "yak" (Tagalog of "yuck"). Still, these are not extreme expletives.

The parody mostly possesses elements of humor (Helitzer & Shatz, 2005). The parody will be generally hostile to those who fail to properly follow the mechanics of Filipino language. These targeted individuals portray the supposed reality which is the public's regular lapses in learning Filipino. The hostility can be exaggerated as it extends to cover fakery in accent, intonation and disordered Filipino words. As powered by the disgusted emotion, some lyrics can be "surprises" like repetition of words, their syllabic and rhyming patterns, and hanging remarks like how the Verse 2 tells the targeted yet unnamed individual, "Hirap mong kausap".

Conclusion

The original songs, being the bases of form of the post-pandemic parody songs of Michael V, are contemporary products of Original Pilipino Music. All parodies as "mistranslations" are patterned from the lyrical form of these Filipino hits.

The parody songs imply a counterview of dominant ideas or themes, through altering and recontextualizing the lyrics that will present a Filipino-based narrative. The languages used by parody songs must be literally appealing. These parody songs will impose themselves by incorporating humor and forming themselves as counterarguments to imply transgression and resistance about the dominating or repetitive ideas, such as fears due to phobias against LGBTQIA+ community, the lack of financial responsibility due to fakery of luxury, the problematic production and engagement methods of content creators, and the abnormal misuse of Filipino language.

Regarding the messages of the parody songs, these give a glimpse of Michael V's perceived truth of a relative idea, yet with his discipline whether to specify targeted sectors or not. Ferguson (2019) said that the imperative of comedy is to impart truth, despite the comedian's subjectivity. He also advised that the responsibility of comedians is to stay one step ahead of the evolving limitations of political correctness while expressing their own truths. Like the progression of Michael V's parody songs as the presentations of his perceived truth, the

involvement of political correctness in these lyrics will also evolve. However, these messages will still be reconstructed according to the sensitivities of the assumed sectors who will reconceptualize political correctness repetitively.

When it comes to the represented sectors, political correctness is hinted as being followed by Michael V. Direct mockery or insults towards minority groups or communities were noticeably controlled in his parodies. Humor as a product of comedy should impart discipline, as argued by Billig (2005, as cited in Elumba, 2012), so that there is no direct encouragement of ridicule. Meanwhile, calling out specific individuals, groups, names, brands or institutions are toned down, at least through the sampled parody songs of Michael V. Yet, individual ridicule against self and unidentifiable persons through these songs persists which can still be misinterpreted as his own sentiment. Thus, my understanding of political correctness in Michael V's parody songs is still informal.

Michael V acknowledges political correctness through his post-pandemic parody songs by being in control or disciplined in giving specific targets of his comedic ridicules. His parodies are primarily entertaining, being in a distorted lyrical form. His parodies' themes or ideas are relatable to any Filipino audience. His messaging would be timely or frank, but still generic as no direct mentions of any individual, group, brand, sect, organization or institution. Michael V's ridicules serve as informal type of lecturing as his parodies hint his implied insights or sentiments. Whether these insights or sentiments are personal or only character-driven is open for audiences' various interpretations.

Implications for Future Research

I am concluding that my paper has contributed to the framework of scholarship about parodies, and to the significant yet overlooked discourses on what should now be "correct" in komedi via Philippine television. Meanwhile, follow-up interviews with, and observations on, other television comedians will be highly recommended.

I am recommending that more critical research should be conducted as other parodies via different media are more persistent. These parodies have been produced by content creators who are arguably more influential online. Furthermore, the inclusion or exclusion of political correctness on various media, and how media performers integrate this in their content production, must be repeatedly examined.

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