THE MEDIATIZATION OF FILIPINO YOUTH CULTURE
A Review of Literature

Gerry Lanuza
Department of Sociology
University of the Philippines, Diliman
gerrylanuza@freemail.ph

A. The Relevance of Youth Study

In 1995 youth population constitutes eighteen percent of world population. In the same year it is estimated that there are 1.03 billion youth in the world. Eighty-four percent of these youths are found in developing countries (*National Youth Commission*, 1998:4). In 1990 Asian region contained 64.3% of world's youth population. It also represents 70% of global increase in the number of youth in the middle of the century (Xenos and Raymundo, 1999:99). Interestingly, according to 1995 national census, the age structure of Philippine population continues to be young (*1995 Census of Population*, Report No. 2:xxiii).[1] The age group between 15 and 24 constitutes twenty percent of the total population (14,857,326 of 75,037,00). These younger members of the population are considered as youth by the United Nations. Demographers tells us that what we have today is a "youth bulge" or "youth in transition" whose number will gradually decline in the future until it reaches 12.4% in 2075 (Xenos and Raymundo, 1999:6).

Now, there are three general reasons for studying this younger age group (Fornas, 1995). First, is social and political reason. The youth are the bearers of traditions,

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[1] According to the 2000 **NSO** census the population of the Philippines as of May 1, 2000 is 76,498,735 persons. This represents an increase of 11.5 percent or 7.88 million persons over the 1995 census count of 68,616,536 persons. At the time of writing this paper the data on sex-age composition of the 2000 national population was not yet available.

customs, and cultural heritage (Kanjanapan, 1986:1). Members of this age group would eventually assume the responsibilities of the future generations. They represent the wave of the future (Otto and Otto, 1969). Six years from now and onwards this group of young people will assume the full adult roles and responsibilities. Furthermore these young people will be the pacesetters of the younger generation. As the reference group for the succeeding generations, studying the current culture of this generation could provide significant insights about the future beliefs, values, behaviors, attitudes, and practices of the next generation (Otto and Otto, 1969). Moreover standing as potential reservoir of human capital knowledge of young people could help the nation invest in the present and reap inestimable profits in the future.

Undoubtedly, youth studies would contribute considerably to overall development planning of the country. Knowledge about youth would also contribute towards better rapport between adult and the younger generation.[2] Hence there is a general tendency today for multidisciplinary collaboration among various professions concerned with youth (Lageman, 1993). This has been the major thrust of government and other specialists on youth. It is for this reason that youth studies are experiencing renaissance today in the social sciences (Tanakishi, 1993). But this thrust often leads to an extreme slogan: what is wrong with the nation is what is wrong with the youth. As a policy orientation, this approach could easily slip into a form of benevolent paternalism. Youth are targeted as passive recipients of social charity and pre-packaged programs.[3] Or,

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[2] Modern bourgeois families needed the help of pedagogues to transform the rebelliousness of young people into responsibility. So the latter invented "adolescence" to describe the process of transformation (Bothius, 1985; Davis, 1990).

[3] For a critique of such approach from critical theory and social constructionist paradigm, see Alderson (1999) and Penn (1999).

alternatively, it could lead to a moral panic that often depicts the youth as "anti-social" and "threat" to the moral order (Lupton, 1999; Bothius, 1985).

The second reason for studying the youth is the seriousness of some scholars to really engage in and address the life crisis of the youth. Such approach aims at helping the youth go through the difficult processes they are undergoing. Most studies done in this direction are in educational psychology. Still, other scholars pursue youth studies because they want to find out what creative experiments youth have done that could possibly be use to improve the country. Herbert A. Otto and Sara T. Otto (1969), aptly express this point when they point out, "The adolescent brings to the social scene an idealism, integrity and commitment to values which penetrate to the very heart of dysfunctional institutions and social structures" (p. 55). This orientation has a danger of romanticizing youth culture by excessively celebrating what is quixotic in youth culture. Most studies done in this direction are found in sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Today, studies inspired by the latter approach fall under the rubric of "youth culture study".[4] Youth culture study explores the dynamic creativity of young people in the wider context of power relations and the new conditions in late modernity ((Fornas, 1995; McRobbie, 1994a).

Aside from these reasons, youth study in our country has also an historical dimension. As Loretta M. Sicat (1972:14) points out, "The theoretical importance of investigating the political attitudes of the young is enhanced by the role that they play in politics. No less than the national hero of the Philippines, the versatile Dr. Jose Protacio

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[4] Youth culture study has affinities with subcultural theory of *Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Study* (Hall, Jefferson, McRobbie, Phil Cohen, and Albert Cohen) and the radical tradition of the Frankfurt School (Marcuse, Habermas, Horkheimer, and Adorno). These theories are further elaborated in Part VI below.

Rizal, less than eighty years ago, saw the Filipino youth as the "Fair Hope of the fatherland." Historically the struggle for nationalist independence was spearheaded by the group of younger educated *illustrados* (Gomez, 1986; Dano-Santiago, 1972).[5] This is due to the critical and liberal attitude that educated youth imbibe from schooling. Indeed Filipino youth had always been at the forefront of social movements and the bellwethers of social change (Acuna, 1960; de Vera, 1971; Tuano, 1994; Jacob, 2002; "Rebel with a Cause," 1988). From the *First Quarter Storm* to Edsa I, and from Edsa II to the recent peace rallies Filipino youth had played prominent role in our nation's history (De Vera, 1971; Recana, 1973; Abinales, 1984; n.d.; 1984; Montiel, 1991; Santos, 1977).

Not less important however is the significance of studying youth and their culture in the Information Age. As noted by Michael Tan (1988; also Tan, Batangan, and Espanola, 2001:3), an anthropologist, many studies on youth, especially those dealing with sexuality, tend to be moralistic and emotional. Often these studies subordinate empirical findings for policy analysis –either for political or religious ends.[6] Nonetheless the study of youth as an interesting field per se should also be valued. For the present paper the focus is on mass media and its impact on the formation of youth culture. As in other areas of social scientific studies, the study of youth and mass media

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[5] Just to cite some few examples from history: Emilio Aguinaldo became the first President of the Republic at age 29, Andres Bonifacio founded the Katipunan at 29, Emilio Jacinto becamne the brain of Katipunan at 20, Gregorio del Pilar became a general at 24, Jose Rizal wrote Noli at 25, and Mariano Tinio became brigadier general at age 19 (Martin, 1995:36).

[6] For an example of religious overtone, see Andres, Gaerlan, Limpingco (1974), and the entire issue of **East Asian Pastoral Review**, volume 22, no. 3 of 1985. For political overtone, see the various studies conducted by the *National Child and Youth Research Center*. The overtones of research on youth are also dependent on the sponsors or funding institutions. For instance, *UST Social Research Center*, *Asian Social Institute*, and the *Catholic Bishops Conference* emphasize the pastoral implications of their research on youth. Likewise, government-sponsored studies and other government-attached institutions emphasize policy implications such as studies done by *The University of Philippine Population Institute*, *Philippine Population Commission*, and *National Youth Commission*.

has a great deal to contribute in advancing multidisciplinary cooperation among social scientists in general.

Unfortunately, today there exists no comprehensive survey of the state of Philippine youth studies in relation to mass media. This is surprising given the large amount of literature in the field, and the inestimable significance of mass media on the formation of youth culture. In view of this, the present paper aims at (1) providing a preliminary summary and assessment of existing Filipino youth studies in relation to mass media studies; (2) describing the general relationship, if any, between youth culture and mass media; and (3) providing some useful recommendations for the future direction of youth studies vis-à-vis mass media. It is also the hope of the present paper that by providing interested individuals and parties with general knowledge about Filipino youth and media study, they will gain better understanding, not only of theoretical significance, but also more importantly, of the current and future generations of young people.

To facilitate the study, the present paper includes only those studies that cover and include young people within the age bracket 15 to 24. Hence studies on children, adolescence and youth included in this paper overlap. Other studies that deal with young people within the age bracket 15 below and 25 above are therefore not included. As for the temporal dimension of research, the present paper tried to incorporate existing early studies on youth especially if they bear relevant relation to the current youth studies. But insofar as this paper is not primarily an historical view of the development of youth studies in the Philippines there is no attempt to provide coherent historical trend in Filipino youth studies. Moreover for the present purposes the discussion focuses on the

decades of the sixties up to the present. Much earlier studies are invoked and cited simply to provide historical continuity and background. Furthermore, the present review included both published and unpublished studies (both undergraduate and undergraduate theses and dissertations). Inclusion of studies for this paper is determined by three factors: namely, the availability of materials, the quality of the research, and the time frame for this paper. Owing to time constraints, the present paper may have neglected an unknown number of unpublished and published studies –both earlier and recent ones-- from various academic and non-academic institutions. Be that as it may, the author tried to incorporate as many studies done from other academic and research institutions from various parts of the country as possible.

B. Modernizing the Youth Through Mass media

Today the most powerful catalyst for modernizing youth culture is the mass media (Lanuza, 2001). It is largely responsible for shaping the consumption patterns of youth (Casillan-Garcia, 1991; McCann-Erikson, 1996; de Seguera, 2001), their dressing styles (Estuar, 2001; de la Torre, 1995), leisure and malling (de Fiesta-Mateo, 2002), political involvement (Cipres-Ortega, 1984; Quintos, 1994; Datiguinoo, 2001), delinquent behavior (Ebol and Talag, 2002), and even religion (Labayen, 1996). Yet the youth are not hapless victims of media consumption (Roberts, 1993; Yujuico, 1994). To the contrary, the young are the most sophisticated readers of images and media of any group in society (Willis, 1990:30; Crisostomo, 1982; Nava, 1992; Bennet, 2000). The study of Lanuza (1998) shows that the modernizing influence on the youth is coming more from the mass media than from the peer group and the school.

Nevertheless it must also be noted that, like any other agent of socialization (e.g., the school and peer group), mass media exhibits ambivalent character in relation to the formation of youth culture. While it carries modernizing currents, yet at the same time, it also promotes traditional Filipino values. Hence studies on youth and values promoted by television would show the propagation of traditional Filipino values such as respect for elders, family solidarity, and reverence for authorities (see Concepcion, 1986; Parungao-Adorable, 1982; Yujuico, 1994). This is interesting if one notes that mass media consumes much of the time youth spend in leisure activities (Cheng, 1974; Torres, 1982-1983; de Vera, et. al., 1999).

Television, newspapers, and radio are the main sources of Catholic youth's knowledge about social issues (*Episcopal Commission on Youth/Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines*, 2002). There are also indications that mass media shapes to certain extent the values and behavior of children (Pagayon, 1993; Mateo, 2000; Concepcion, 1986; Galindo, 2000). This is all the more true considering the diminishing role of parents in the advent of overseas migration and the increasing entry of mothers in the working force (Arellano-Carandang, 1994; McCann-Erikson, 1996). Mass media, next to the peer group, becomes a surrogate to parental socialization. In the process the mass media creates alternative expert system that competes with the traditional authority represented and monopolized by the family, school, and religious authorities (Sebald, 1996).

C. Filipino Youth Culture in Late Modernity

Today social scientists inform us that our world has entered into a new period called "late modernity" –as a result of tremendous global processes. This new social

condition ushers in new cultural sensibilities and practices. In cultural terms, late modernity or postmodernism, "the cultural logic of late capitalism" (Jameson, 1984; Harvey, 1989), is characterized by the blurring of the distinction between low and high art, the celebration of consumerism and consumerist values, the triumph of collage (chaotic combinations of different elements), pastiche (mixing of styles without overarching coherence), parody, and the importance of signs as commodities (Storey, 1994; Strinati, 1995; Featherstone, 1996). Late modernity, the social condition of reflexive or radicalized modernism, heralds the birth of virtual reality and the advent of "cybersociety" or "semiurgical society" (Baudrillard, 1983). In late modern condition, the spatial links of youth and their various cultures shrink more and more as a result of the time-space compressing technologies. Distances are compressed, if not annihilated, via text messaging and cellular phones (Onate and Sison, 2000). Youthful solidarity is becoming more virtual rather than intimate and personal (i.e., through Internet relasy Chat or IRC). The virtual character of youthful sociality in the age of late modernity transcends the spatial confines and boundaries of traditional youth subcultures. Consequently it poses great threat to traditional authorities and disciplinary institutions.

Even traditional identities and gender roles that youth readily assume become fluid and volatile (Bruckman, 1996; Wark, 1998; Turkle, 1996). More and more young people are exposed to greater external stimulation and massive information saturation. They find themselves swirling in the vortex of promotional signs of advertising (O'Donahoe, 1997:266; David, 2000). Information technology produces youth that are connectivity-driven (de Seguera, 2001). As a result of this phenomenal development youth culture is now moving beyond the simple tension between modernity and tradition.

Now youth culture is being transformed by the new cultural waves of late modernity. It is here that crevices of resistance, or even new forms of conformism, can materialize that might eventually lead to the development of new youth subcultures. The closest approximation of this emerging subculture is the culture of the *cyberkids* (Lanuza, 1998; 2001) or *cyberpunk* (Wark, 1998).[7]

Furthermore mass media today, largely though advertising, operates as the major harbinger of late modern culture (Smee, 1997). In Ma. Charmina Garces' (1998) semiotic analysis of Gen X TV commercials,[8] the following images are associated with female Gen X youth: aggressive, expressive, unconventional, and liberated. Males are depicted as: optimistic, independent, adventurous, and wild. Nevertheless youth themselves object to these values because they perceive these values as not yet prevalent in Philippine society. However some younger audience already perceive the presence of these traits (Natividad, 1996). In general, most TV commercials portray youth as adventurous, full of insecurities, and susceptible to foreign cultural influences (Natividad, 1996).

Through the procession of information technology, Filipino youth today can have a glimpse and share the culture of the youths from different geographical regions (Miller, 2000; Bennet, 2000). The Internet is making communication faster and faster. Data transfer is a matter of minutes, even seconds. One can chat with another person at the other side of the globe via the modem. An estimated 10,000 to 20,000 Filipinos are using the Internet. Three out ten households have access to Internet (Buenaventura, 2001:133). It provides encyclopedic resources for youth in all areas of life –from sexual information

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[7] Other terms are: generation dot com, digital generation, phantom generation, etc. See Dandaneau (2001).

[8] These are: Pepsi's *I'm Danielle*, Mountain Dews' *Scream* and *Thank heaven*, Jag's *Your own rules*, and Penshoppe's *Message by Nadya*.

to intimate relations, from educational information to anime icons, from state-of-the-art products to business information. This has created an alternative expert system that is now competing with traditional authority figures. However studies so far show that youth use the Internet primarily for emails and chatting (Agbayani, 1998; Bustos, 1998; Duenas, 1998; Gargarita, 2001; Reyes, 2000). Interestingly, among gay youth chatting provides a means for establishing sexual relations, and building virtual gay communities (Lorenzana, 2003). Cyberspace allows young people to experiment with their own identities and re-invent existing ones (Alvarez and Valbuena, 2003; Valdez, 2003). Thus, to some extent, it is true to claim that new information technologies empower the youth (Abalena, 2003; Saloma, 2003).

Exposure to Internet comes mainly from peer influence (Abalena, 2003). This new form of electronic communication enhances interpersonal relationships (Valdez, 2003). It is a venue for meeting new friends and developing romantic relationships. It is also a vicarious substitute for rebellious acts that are not physically damaging –cybersex, violent games, hacking, plagiarism, gender switching, etc. (Wark, 1998; Lorenzana, 2003).

Meanwhile, new fashions, dress styles, hairstyles, argots, and music are constantly updated through **MTV**s and cable TV channels (Stuar, 2000; Real, 1996; Kellner, 1995). Photocopying machines and the digitalization of knowledge and information are now enabling students to gain fast and easy access to newest cultural trends and fads in the West. Indeed globalization, defined as the process of "time-space compression" (Harvey, 1989),[9] is shrinking youth cultures in one global village via MTV

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[9] Other alternative definitions are provided by Robertson (1995), Giddens (1990), and Therborn (1999). David Harvey's (1989) definition is adopted here because it captures the process in which time is

channels, websites, advertising images, and simulated mass media icons (Bennet, 2000).[10] Popular Disney movies are also Disneyizing youth cultures (Giroux, 1996). This explains why, for instance, aside from family members, Western personalities are the predominant idols of the Filipino youth (Lanuza, 1998; McCann-Erikson, 1996; 2000; *Episcopal Commission on Youth/Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines*, 2002). Among Catholic youth showbiz personalities even outranked church personnel and teachers (Episcopal Commission on Youth/Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. 2002:44.)

Also, the accelerating speed of new information technology is creating unprecedented problems for the youth, and society at large (Virilio, 1986; 1997). Most young people today are obsessed with "instant solutions", from politics to sexual problems. They want to eschew tedious efforts in achieving their goals (Sebald, 1996). Parallel to this is the increasing phase of young people's socialization into adult world. Children are going to schools much younger. They also mature faster. This might bring about what, David Elkind (1986), a world-renowned child psychologist, calls as the "hurried child syndrome."

But while the globalization of culture tends to homogenize youth subcultures, nevertheless it must also be asserted that the elements of these global cultural artifacts are contextualized in local youth cultures through the process of glocalization (Pertierra,

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ordered in such a way that space is compressed, if not annihilated. Time-space compression allows the shortening of time and the shrinking of space that facilitates exchange of messages and transfer of goods, commodities, and people from different parts of the globe.

[10] I have derived my analysis here of globalization from Robertson (1990). In this connection it would be very interesting to analyze how this linkage among local youth cultures might be forging global youth culture, and how this global culture is being "glocalized." See also footnote no. 21 below.

1998).[11] Thus, it is safer to say, with Roland Robertson (1990), that globalization ushers in univeralization of particular youth culture (reggae, for instance) and the particularization of universal youth culture (western punk-rock, for instance). This produces "trans-local subculture" where "young people appropriate music and stylistic resources in local contexts while still retaining a sense of their connectedness with parallel expressions of musical taste and stylistic preference occurring in other regions, countries and continents" (Bennet, 2000:146).[12]

D. Anime-ting Filipino Youth Pop Culture

In a recent study done by Manahan (2002) on the influence of anime TV programs among selected students of University of the Philippines, Diliman students, is explored. The study identifies the emergence of "*otaku-ism*" or culture of anime fans among college students. This subculture exhibits certain characteristics that are not found among ordinary viewers of anime programs. This includes understanding of Japanese language, preference for anime theme songs, making fan arts, collecting posters and pictures, and campaigning to press television networks to change existing anime programs. Using audience-centered analysis, the study dispels the notion that youth are mere hapless recipients of television programming. Moreover the researcher rejects the notion that television communicates monolithic messages to the audience. Far from it, the

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[11] Robertson (1995:28ff.) derived his use of "glocalization" from *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (1991 edition). Glocalization involves "the simultaneity and the interpenetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local, or –in more abstract vein—the universal and the particular." Glocalization opposes the notion that globalization produces homogenization of cultures. Globalization involves both the localization of the global and the globalization of the local. For further debates on this issue, see Featherstone (1993; 1990), Marxist critique is in Kellner (2001), Guillermo (1997), and Constantino (1997; 1998).
[12] Andy Bennet (2000:197) further adds that popular culture understood as global forms assumes particularized every life meanings.

study, through interviews with "*otakus*", shows that youth as audiences is active and selectively interpret the meanings of media messages (p. 84).

E. From B*arkadas* to Cyberkadas

The *Angus Reid* study shows that there are more than 300 million Internet users worldwide (cited in Gargarita, 2001:49). Today there is an estimated 750,000 to 1 million Filipino Internet users.[13] In Metro Manila alone, ten percent of the population is Internet users. This may reflect the quite good IT infrastructure in our country compared with other Asian countries, albeit it is concentrated in urban centers especially Metro Manila (Gargarita, 2001:50). The study by Wibono Santos (1998) suggests that most Internet users are young, male, and educated. As a result, more and more young people are being hooked on to the Internet. Carlo Gargarita's (2001) study of chatting practices of Internet users reveal the influence of socioeconomic status. Most of them use Internet for academic purposes, females use more aliases than males, females are inclined towards gender switch, and use chatting to make new friends. In a similar study of Celeste Reyes (2000), on the gender differences in Internet use, it was found that more males use the Internet, more males also use it for chatting. Females often use the Internet for academic purposes. Indeed cyberspace has become a preferred alternative venue for establishing potential intimate relationships as shown in Felixberto Bustos' (1998) study of the use of Internet relay chat (IRC) among de la Salle and U.P. students. Its advantages are: it makes one busy, meet new friends, chat with relatives abroad, helps one relax, improve one's inter-personal skills, and to get advise. But the Internet has a negative side, too.

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[13] The Philippines was connected to the Internet only in March 30, 1994.

There are also indications that an increasing number of youth are using the Internet for sexual exploration, especially among gay youth (Lorenzana, 2003; Lanuza, 1998). This is very likely to increase because cybersex provides safer and faster access to pornographic materials (Rheingold, 1996).

F. From "P*atintero*" to Counterstrike

In the most recent survey of *Social Weather Station* (Sandoval, Mangahas, and Guerrero, 1998) on youth, sports activities and organizations topped the social involvement of Filipino youth. Other organizations include (in order): church and religious organizations, youth organizations, arts, music, and political parties. In the same study, the youth identified sports as their major talent. Other talents identified are: good dancing abilities and singing skills (p. 15). Meanwhile Lilia Lagdamen's (1982) study of community recreation reveals that the preferred games among urban youth are basketball, chess, volleyball, tennis, and karate. They also prefer outdoor recreation. The preference of sports activities is related to sex and gender (Mejia, 1973). Hobbies of the youth include conversing with friends, collecting, reading, dancing, music and arts, watching movies. Topics of conversation concern mainly personal affairs than national issues (Espejo, 2000; Mejia, 1973).

On the whole however when it comes to interests and hobbies, Filipino youth today still inclined towards traditional activities. In the recent study of *Episcopal Commission on Youth/Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines* (2002:43) only 37.3% of the Catholic youth reported to engage in post-modern hobbies such as movies, computers, Internet, text messaging, video games, videoke, and going to malls. Interestingly, young people today, compared with other age groups, are the ones who

engage in post-modern leisure activities (Dy, 2001). However traditional games that emphasize social interactions (sipa, taguan, patintero, tumbang preso, marbles, tex, etc.) are being eclipsed very rapidly by videogames and network games (de los Santos, 1993; Anonuevo, 1993). The study of Julie Ann Dumlao and Charmaine Lada (2002) of network games[14] suggests that these post-modern games are producing a new play culture among the youth age 7 to 12 (Dumlao and Lada, 2002). Such play culture is characterized by the following: preference for fantasy and unrealistic situations, or characters, network gamers are impersonal and unmindful of external environment, individualistic, lacks emotional interaction, they have lesser knowledge in manipulating the natural environment, and they no longer play outside. This is also observed among children who use interactive, multimedia learning materials (Mercado, 1997).

In a lone study on youth's visits to the *National Museum* in 1983 (cited in **CYRC**, 1984), it was shown that 3 out of 100 youth in Metro Manila had visited the *National Museum* as compared to 1 out of every 100 in all regions of the country. The situation may even be worse today. For youth today are fond of going to shopping malls rather than hanging in historic places and public parks (de Vera, Cabreza, and Lujan, 1999). In the study of de Fiesta-Mateo (2001) on malling behavior, it was found that most of those who frequent malls are young people. Youth equate malling with *gimmick*. They stroll in the mall simply to window shop. Hence they are called "mall rats." In rural setting malling is a symbol of status (Honquilada and Lucio, 2000). Malling is usually done with peer group and family members (De Jesus, 1998). Malling in these studies is not

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[14] Network games are computer games that are stored and played through **CD-ROM**s. In the study of Dumlao and Lada (2002) the following games are cited as the most popular: Counterstrike, Red Alert, Diablo, Starcraft, and Quake 3.

equated simply with consumption. It is fun itself. It becomes a preoccupation that substitutes for pastime.

Mass media does not only promote and magnify "mall culture." It also promotes through advertising certain habits and fads that become part of the leisure culture of the youth. They also influence consumption of imported goods (Salas and Quijano, 1981). In **YAFS II**, for instance, other than the family, mass media is very influential in promoting smoking and drinking habits among the youth.

G. Mediatization of Youth Through Popular Culture

Early on in their socialization process, gender stereotyping already takes place. Hence a study done in 1970 shows that male Filipino children prefer to play with inanimate objects as compared to females who prefer animate playthings (**CYRC**, 1984). Other studies would also show that contrary to stereotypes, males dress to attract females, while females dress for comfort. There are also differences in leisure preferences. Girls tend to enjoy soap operas and read romance novels compared to boys (Lanuza, 1998). These gender roles are often buttressed by the popular culture promoted by mass media. More recent studies reveal that mass media can have reproductive function in reinforcing gender stereotypes (Gomez, 2000; Santos, 2002; Mateo, 2001).   Advertisement capitalizes on women's bodies to promote commercial products. Young audiences are keen to detect such images. Boys often use these images as point of conversation, and use them as jokes to ridicule women (Gomez, 2000). But girls also strongly react to these sexist images (Gorayeb, 1993).[15]   Also, the violence portrayed in mass media has an effect on the identity formation of youth offenders (Rosales, 2000).   For instance,

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[15] Interestingly, some studies even show that high school students want to enforce strict censorship on obscene movies and commercials (Pagarian, 1982; Gomez, 2000).

masculine role models like Robin Padilla, popularly know as the "bad boy" of Philippine cinema, is popular among members of "*Bahala na*" gang. Some juvenile delinquents can identity with "Binoe" because of his personality and character depicted in television and movies. (Ebo and Talag, 2002).

Popular culture tends to reproduce the values of the dominant social order not only along gender axis but also in terms of class. Its language and style reflects the division of society along class lines (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Giroux, 1996; Hebdige, 1979; Bourdieu, 1984). Each youth culture is positioned in the social field via class-specific discourse. Hence the "*burgis*" and "*sosyal*" are distinguished from the bad tase of the "*jologs,*" the "*baduy,*" and the "*bakya*" (Enriquez, 2002). Hence there are some indications that youth who are immersed deeply into popular culture have the tendency to be conformist (see Fajutagana, 1992). Popular culture is appealing to the youth because it allows them to assert their own identity. Popular culture, especially music, serves as a barometer for what is "cool," "in," and "hip." (Bennet, 2000). Being "hip," in turn, is a badge of group belongingness (Calabia, 1994; Wells, 1998).

Nevertheless, in general, Filipino youth are not fond of classical music (**CYRC**, 1968). This is even true for students of the University of the Philippines. Indeed popular music has become the dominant preference of youth (Lanuza, 1998; Fajutagana, 1992; Calabia, 1994). There is also the emergence of "alternative music" (e.g., *Greyhoundz, Yano, Eraserheads, Parokya ni Edgar, Wolfgang, Slapshock*) and alternative popular literature called zines (Contreras, 2000). Alternative music, like rock and punk, provides the youth the medium to express their rebelliousness. It also provides them the genres to express their angst about the world, environment, and everyday life (Verdida, 1995;

Fajutagana, 1992). In short, alternative music is the heart and soul of youth's collective consciousness.

Youth are drawn to popular literature because it is light and easier to comprehend (Bothius, 1985). Hence it is not surprising to know that Filipino youth are not fond of reading classical or serious literary pieces (**CYRC**, 1967:43-44). In Lanuza's (1998) study of UP college students, romance and religious materials are the youth's top choice for private reading. For television shows they prefer situation comedies, variety shows, movies, science and inventions (Crisostomo, 1982). As they grow older they prefer religious shows (**CYRC**, 1967). But the advent of media globalization, imported oriented shows and movies (e.g., Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Charmed, Friends, Sabrina, Ally McBeal) are now very popular among the youth (Lanuza, 1998).   The content analysis made by May Cruzada (1997) on teen-oriented shows reveal that love, popularity, and group belonging are the central values of these programs. Thus peer group influences more the choice of programs than family (Belen, 1986; Wells, 1998). Jill Javier's (1997) and Mirzi Moralde's (1997) studies, on the other hand, show that what attracts the youth to teen-oriented shows is the story and the physical characteristics of the protagonists. They identity with the characters. Meanwhile, among local shows, situational comedies or "sitcoms" are preferred by youth. Interestingly, the study of Janice Crisostomo (1982) shows that young audience demands more than entertainment from local sitcoms. They also look for relevance and the promotion of Filipino values. This indicates that young audiences are not mere passive recipients of mass media "propaganda".

Other studies further indicate that exposure to teen-oriented shows could have considerable influence on youth's sexual attitudes and view of intimate relationships

(Prescillas, 1998; Quiray, 1998). Youth who are exposed more romance novels and shows tend to have idealistic view of love (Andrade, 1991; de Guzman, 1986). The influence of mass media on youth culture is nowhere more demonstrated clearly that the role of Francis Magallona as the leader of Philippine delegates to *Global Youth Forum* in 1992 in New York (**Philippine Daily Inquirer**, May 13, 1992:26). Dramatic comics are also preferred by youth –especially females— because of their sentimental nature and stories often speak about youth's life (Diaz, 1996). From fairy tales adolescents switch to romantic novels (Abad, 1983).

Meanwhile the proliferation of obscene tabloids, on the other hand, is exposing the youth more and more to sexual language (Andarino, 1996). As the McCann-Erikson study notes, youth today live an environment that is highly sexualized (cited in de Segeurra, 2001). Sexualization via the mass media is easily available through popular "green raps" and songs, music videos, bomba films, and tabloids (*Toro, Remate, Abante, Bandera, Busero, Tiktik, Brusko,*). These popular media have become not only the source of information but also the source of sexual socialization and entertainment (Sarne, 1991; Andarino, 1996; Panabi, 1994; Lopez, 1995). The proliferation of tabloids also contributes to the showbiz-nization of Filipino youth culture. Youth now are more interested and knowledgeable about latest showbiz tittle-tattles than political issues (Andarino, 1996). Besides, sexy tabloids have become the pornographic literature for adolescents (Sarne, 1991). But the study of Helen Andrade (1991) shows that while mass media might influence the attitudes of young people towards love and romance, yet their attitudes to sexual issues remain the same. This is also true for sexy music videos. Studies done by Rommel Panabi (1994) and Elsa Olaer (1985) show that young audience believe

they are not influenced by the sexual messages of these music videos. Their existing value system prevails. Put differently, youth are not mere imitators of what they see in television. They also watch these images with preconceived notions about sex. Not all music videos however deal with sex-related themes.

In Ma. Cecilia Lopez's semiotic analysis of Channel [V] videos, she found that music videos cater to various interests of youth. They address different youth subcultures. Music videos deal mainly with enjoyment of life, love life, survival in crisis, and dating game. Moreover other studies also indicate that the presence of foreign music does not diminish youth's interest in local artists (Dabu, 1986; Garcia, 1985; Solis, 1985). But local MTVs tend to concentrate on love and romance than foreign ones (Calabia, 1994). It may be inferred from this trend that globalization through spread of Western, mostly American, music does not create total homogenization of Filipino youth culture.

Conclusion: From *Stormers* to *-Xers* and Beyond

In summary, Filipino youth today, rightly or wrongly, are the products of mass media more than genes or school, or least of all, of the home (de la Torre, 1995). Mass media today stands as the most formidable institution to reckon with in predicting the future behavior and attitudes of youth. However the impact of mass media on youth culture must be situated within the larger context of the Philippine social system. Given a country with a relatively young population, with predominantly traditional values and attitudes, mass media has to contend with this social milieu.

Given the growing absence of parental guidance mass media may easily become an alternative expert system. It could become a surrogate to parental socialization. The mass media can do this by supplying the youth with simulated images and symbols that

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they use to express their own subcultural styles. In turn, mass media keeps watch on the youth's ever-changing fashions and aesthetic styles in order to connect these images to the dominant cultural forms (Datinguinoo, 2001). That is why, the youth have been the target of media advertising because they are potential users and consumers of simulated images –from **CD**s to **VCD**s, from anime to teen-oriented films, from hairstyles to youth jargons, and from videogames to latest **MTV**s (Leslie, 1995; Datinguinoo, 2001; Salas and Quijano, 1981). But there is no monolithic determination involved. In this dynamic relationship, youth culture has largely influenced the direction and trends of mass media development –especially advertising (Rodica, 1992; Salas and Quijano, 1981).[16]   In return, youth today are seduced by the images offered by television. But youth are also active discerners of these images and signs. In short, the influence of mass media on youth culture is not along hegemonic control and homogenization.

Undoubtedly mass media heralds modernizing innovation by promoting alternative value system such as individualism.[17] Along with the mass media the advent of new information technologies –or time-space compressing technologies— are also reshaping the contours of youth culture. In this connection, the significance of text-culture of the youth cannot be underestimated. Philippine is considered as the texting capital of the world. [18] *TXTPower* consumer advocacy group claims that there are 10 million mobile phone users today in the country. There are 150 million texts sent each

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[16] A good case in point is the recent Sprites' ad of "*magpakatotoo ka*" that describes the youth's definition of what is "cool" (Datinguinoo, 2001).

[17] Lisa Gokongwei, for instance, the chief of *Summit Magazine* observes that in their magazines (like **Cosmo**), "We encourage girls (to think) you can do anything you want. You can be a fun, fearless female" (quoted in Datinguinoo, 2001:22).

[18] *Globe Telecom* claims that it has 500,000 subscribers nationwide, 70% of which or 350,000 transmit 18 to 20 million text messages a day. This is twice the volume of text messages of entire Europe (David, 1999).

day or an average of 20 messages per person (Sotto-Resontoc, 2002). The advantages of this technology to youth is enormous: guaranteed delivery of messages, notification and alerts, low cost, ability to screen messages, return calls, email generation, multiple sendings, and other services provided by telecommunication companies. There is no doubt that the youth are at the forefront in using this technology (Onate and Sison, 2000).[19] Consequently, youth are always under the constant panoptic watch of adults. With this technology, spaces separating the youth and their cultures are breached. New interconnectivities are established while the old ones are either drastically changed or enhanced (Bustos, 1998). Cyberspace is annihilating the traditional barriers that keep the traditional elements of culture intact. Aside from mobile phones, **DVD**s, **CD**s, **VCD**s, discman, Internet, emails, chats, on line talks, network games, etc. have made possible new experimentations among youth that are challenging the disciplinary mechanism of the family, school, and religious institutions (see especially Tripon, 2000). More and more the local cultures are networked into the global flow of information (Cheng, 2001).

The flow of global youth culture from the West –especially American varieties— has dramatic impact on youth's search for new subcultural expressions. From the "new waves" of the 80s we have now the punks and heavy metals of the 90s (Gonzales, 1988). New videogames and network games are also altering the lifestyle and game preferences of Filipino children (Dumlao and Lada, 2002; Ureta, 1992; Rodica, 1999; Erestain, 2000).

Interestingly, traditional institutions have not been passive spectators in the flow of this development. Accommodating these new technologies for conservative ends has

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[19] Preliminary studies done by Mildred Rojo-Laurilla (2003a; 2003b) show that texting has no significant impact on the grammar and language competencies of some selected college students.

been the best strategy for tradition-bound institutions. The battle has been waged in the control of these technologies at home. For control and ownership ensures the continuing control of adults of these technologies (Siazon, 1986). But the potentially liberating and secularizing powers of these technologies are also harnessed by youth for more radical, often opposite ends such as cyberpornography and releasing virus on the net (Pabico, 2001). Despite of these however there is a clear indication that even in cyberspace traditional structures are still maintained. Ana Ebo (2002), for instance, observes among the emails of her students that gender roles are still evident. Thus, user name of females are often based on traditional physical attributes of women. Males, on the other hand, use names that denigrate women and affirm their machismo. Patriarchal ideology about the body and sexuality is still entrenched in cyberspace. Hence in the semiotic-based analysis of *Ah My Goddess,* a Japanese-produced anime, by Christine Afdal (2000), traditional gender discourse is still found to be prevalent.[20]

The studies discussed so far have shown the breadth and latitude of Filipino youth study and the mass media. Yet with the accelerated speed of information technology and the mass media, there is a much to be desired in addressing the ever-changing and novel trends in mass media development. There is a need to map out the variegated influence of mass media on different youth sectors and strata. As suggested by one current researcher, the use of mobile phones, for instance, has contrasting impact among high school students and elementary students, on the one hand, and college students, on the other, notwithstanding the presence of class and sex differences (Rojo-Laurilla, 2003a; 2003b). Another area worth investigating would be the constitution of late modern

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[20] Feminists also raise the issue of reproduction of sexism in cyberspace, see for instance: Kantrowitz, 1996; Tannen, 1996; Bergman and Zoonen, 1999; and Dibbell, 1996.

subjectivities and sexualities of Filipino youth in the light of globalization. Consequently, the most fertile ground to dig for these trends is in the cyberspace and its various paraphernalia (CD-ROMs, VCDs, MP3s, IRC, video games, emails, etc.). But the more traditional and modern expressions of these elements found in the broadcast (television, popular music) and print media (novels and newspapers) must not be underestimated. Such studies will cast considerable light on the elusive relationship between tradition, modernity, and late modernity. To what extent are the Filipino youth still traditional? Future research on these areas will not only contribute to the growing body of literature on Filipino youth and mass media, but more significantly, to the improvement of theoretical and methodological issues in Philippine social sciences. Equally important, of course, is the knowledge it will provide on the future of youth and social change. And it is the hope of the author that this paper has given sufficient impetus for others to take the same direction.

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