

‘Scandal’ in Filipino Pop-cyberculture

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Abstract

With the observation that potential for accidents is invented simultaneously with the coming to being of any new technology, it may be considered that scandals are an integral risk of ICT and of the sudden shift in speed and scale of communication and use of information introduced by these technologies. This chapter focuses on how Filipinos more than any other people in the world seem to be particularly interested in ‘scandal’ and at the forefront of exploring the potential of this facet of cybertechnologies. This is a phenomenon that is readily apparent when one looks up the statistics on GoogleTrends over the last five years or so for the single search term ‘scandal’. The term ‘scandal’ in fact has come to have a new meaning for Pinoys, who are astute to its value and potential ‘social life’ both as a digital object and as a picture or story that is animated by resonance with other images and social narratives. This chapter explores ethnographically the apparent social fascination of Pinoys with ‘scandal’ as a creative product, and a digital object/commodity, gendered dimensions of ‘scandal’ making, and ‘scandal’ mongering as an emergent process of shaping values and opinions and of acting through cybertechnologies. The material discusses the production of ‘scandal’ as an inherent potential of the interactive new media, and how (paired with ‘piracy’ in a Third World setting), the movement of digitized ‘scandals’ from the participation, both playful and serious, in Filipino pop cyberculture may impact on society.

Key Words: Scandal, viral videos, video anarchy, digital piracy, flessharing, sex scandal, political scandal, pinayscandal, Filipino popular culture.

1. Scandal in the ‘new media age’

If accidents are simultaneously invented with the coming to being of any new technology, then it may be considered that an integral risk of ICT is *scandal*. The sudden shift up in speed and scale introduced to communication and use of information by the new technologies exposes persons and societies to new kinds of vulnerabilities that were not as prominent before.

It could be said that scandals are phenomena of our time, intimately connected with the rise of mediated communications. From the very beginnings of print media and journalism, scandal was material for publication and investigation, and mass media immediately beamed its sights on the personages and institutions that should be moral role models for society in order to expose and disparage social

transgressions they were discovered to be involved in.¹ The Internet “is scandal’s new best friend”.²

Following Virilio, scandal must be an inherent ‘accident’³ that was invented simultaneously with the coming to being of ICT. At the speed of light, digitized information can be accidentally or purposely forwarded to unintended recipients; it may be easily copied without authorization (pirated), and its rapid movements (‘viral’ spread) between one digital gadget to another and within the various spaces of the internet, are virtually impossible to control. Images can provoke and bear witness, with possible positive (e.g. ‘scandal’ put to work as ‘information beacons’ and signs of active citizen surveillance),⁴ or negative social consequences (e.g. ‘scandal’ as the sabotage of subjects).

The relative scale of potential scandal has jumped to new dimensions with global citizens having the ability to record, broadcast and interact with information using messenger, wireless Bluetooth technology, blogs, podcasts, social networking, YouTube, etc. Any email user or cellphone texter has probably already experienced sending a message to the wrong recipient, or worse, to a whole e-group or list of unintended recipients. The new technologies make it easier for anyone to capture and to manipulate and to reproduce all sorts of information. Candid moments are being snapped by cellphones with cameras (as well as by CCTV), and can be shared instantly. Data in a lost cellphone or a laptop sent for repair can very easily slip into the wrong hands. For as long as such recordings or communications are stored or transmitted and especially when the same technologies are also used for documenting, passing messages, and disseminating information widely (globally), so there exists the probability of these reaching unintended recipients and audiences.

Image 1 labeled ‘ICT Scandal’ and uploaded to YouTube in 2005 is one example of this phenomenon: the video was captured by a surveillance camera, and after it was posted online the link circulated in blogs, emails, messages, etc.; the video also passed from hand to hand in cellphones. The movement of this image however also tended toward viewers who thought they had some familiarity with the place or with the subjects of the video, if only as fellow countrymen, as revealed in comments and conversations posted online that sought to identify the particular building the elevator could be found in, the identities of the participants, and warned about how one should behave in places like elevators since you never know who could be watching.

‘Scandal’ is surely any digital technology user’s personal disaster-in-waiting. At risk in the circulation of scandalous information are lives, associations and friendships, careers, and any initiatives that hinge on one’s reputation. On the other hand, scandals also drag into the dirt the reputation of the institutions that individuals represent and the self-image of the social group that they belong to or are identified with. Trauma from a scandal event can be experienced by an entire community and potentially motivate action for social change, or result to calls for

institutional reforms.⁵ Making it possible to hack information, pirate content for a profit, and share knowledge indiscriminately were perhaps not intended features of the technology. Yet these kinds of actions and transactions by individuals or groups today comprise a potentially significant and partly hidden ‘informal sector’ of the network society. The sector is supported by the possibility of general anonymity in individual participation in cyberspace, but at the same time ‘scandal’ only has any value at all in the context of a community.

We should perhaps expect that public exposure - and exposure by the public - of digital materials with ‘scandalous’ content will become more and more an aspect of living in ICT-saturated society (Wikileaks being the most celebrated recent example). Democratized access to ICT, the prevalence of cameras and recording devices in the hands of the population, means that ‘scandal-making’ can be participated in by anybody and everybody (everybody might be a pirate and a scandalmonger). ‘Scandal’ as popular culture may be a trivial pursuit and it may also potentially be an important new media avenue for the imagining of community and the transformation of society.



Image 1 – ‘ICT scandal’, a 5-minute video taken by a surveillance camera inside an elevator and uploaded on YouTube.⁶

This chapter is concerned with a culturally specific phenomenon of ‘scandal’; or, how ‘scandal’ seems to occupy a special niche in contemporary Filipino popculture, or (cyber)cultural expression, at least in recent time. Diverse kinds of digital files are actively circulating among Filipino citizens and netizens under labels bearing the word ‘scandal’, or that are often classed together with ‘scandals’. Different categories of digitized ‘scandals’, and the manner of their circulation through the ‘social network’ (online, cellphone to cellphone, through the pirated

DVD market), and their 'social lives' – both in terms of their value as gifts and commodities and their animation in resonance with other social narratives and images of Philippine society⁷ – will be discussed in this chapter, as well as possible reasons for the contemporary prominence of 'scandal' in Filipino pop cyberculture.

2. Searching 'scandal', the popularity of 'scandal' among Pinoys

When many Pinoys use the word 'scandal', they are specifically referring to recordings that are saved and reproduced in digital media and that are associated with 'scandalous' content. 'Scandals' can for this reason be defined more specifically as messages, images, and audio and video recordings in digital formats (.mp3, .jpg, .wmv, etc.). These files may be information gone astray- originally intended for private and confidential contexts but which end up, accidentally or intentionally, being available for public consumption, as well as reproduction, creative manipulation or 'remixing', and further dissemination. In addition, the term 'scandal' as used by Filipinos online also popularly labels other digitized items like jokes, jingles, animation, short video, and TV or radio news clips, some of which are really scandalous in content, but also others which merely copy, spoof, refer to, or just pretend to be scandals.

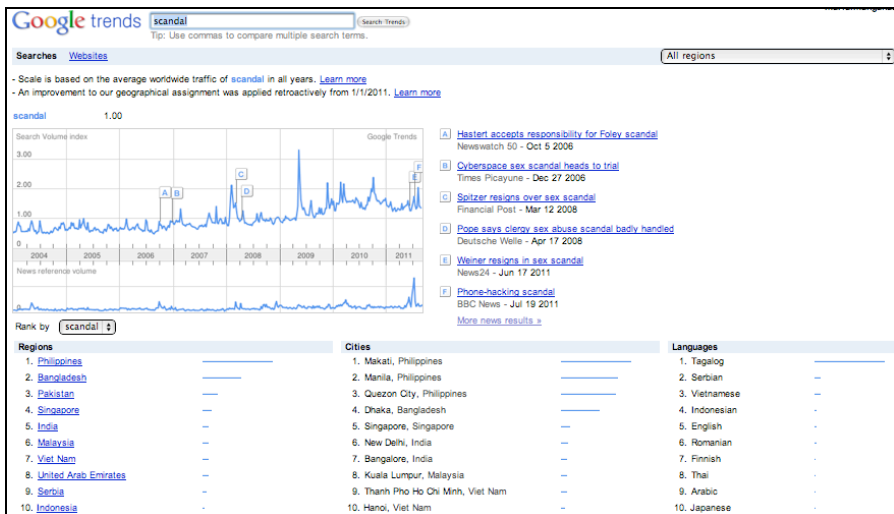


Image 2 - Screenshot of trends for the searches of 'scandal' over the years 2004-2011 on Google (viewed September 16, 2011).

According to the Google search engine, the Philippines ranks first in the world for internet users looking up the single search term 'scandal' on Google (see Image 2). The cumulated statistics on searches for the term 'scandal' covering all years

also shows a huge gap between interest in the Philippines (#1) and the rest of the world, where Bangladesh currently lags behind in #2 place and trades place with Pakistan, Singapore, Vietnam and other (usually Asian or eastern European) countries on different months. This pattern holds as a year-by-year trend from 2004 to 2010. In terms of the search page language, for all years Tagalog comes in as #1 for searching “scandal” (Serbian and Vietnamese are a distant 2nd and 3rd place).⁸

What are all these Pinoys searching for online? (We assume they are Filipinos given the Tagalog search page. Moreover, those searching from other countries are quite likely to be diasporic citizens of the Philippines as well. If one runs the Filipino-specific search term ‘pinay scandal’ on Google Trends, then the countries of United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia which have significant numbers of Filipino male overseas workers rank next to the Philippines.)

Google can provide no news correlation for the sudden steep spike in search interest in ‘scandal’ around May 2009. But Filipinos can surely come up with a hypothesis. May 2009 was when a sex scandal became the subject of Senate hearings and occupied the daily headlines. The hidden camera video clips of two goodlooking celebrities in a dim bedroom setting had at first circulated online, and from cellphone to cellphone, and then became a bestselling ‘pirated’ DVD on the streets, at the height of the scandal outselling other pirated Hollywood movies, and even for the same price as an ‘original’.

Also indicative of the popularity of ‘scandal’ among Pinoys online is the fact that for some years now, there have been bloggers experimentally ‘hijacking’ the Filipino-specific search term ‘pinay scandal’ in order to divert traffic toward their sites, by using terms that would help with ‘SEO’ or Search Engine Optimization. ‘Playing the trend’ in this way can be appreciated as a sincere wave of reaction to prurient cyberseeking being done by fellow Filipinos. The expressed aim by many who write up posts tagged ‘scandal’ is to compete with the sites of sexually explicit ‘scandal’ material for download (one of which was called *mypinayscandal.com*) in order to frustrate typical searches for sex scandals that ‘stain the dignity’ of Filipinas.⁹ Image 3 shows the triumphant post on an SEO ‘movement’ to divert traffic searching for ‘pinay scandal’ when their sites thereby emerged in the top 7 on Yahoo.

Meanwhile, for those who are simply motivated by making money, the deployment of keywords connected to ‘scandal’ is apparently also useful as a good ‘niche strategy’ to get people visiting your blog.¹⁰ The potential conversion of search terms into money value can be monitored through other research and tracking sites.¹¹

Apart from the implicated sex videos however, Filipinos are also actively ‘producing’ and searching for many other kinds of ‘scandals’. On YouTube, the content of ‘scandal’-labeled videos ranges through different categories, from socially transgressive to wholesome; it includes videos that are clipped from

newscasts and documentaries, it includes animation, and political satire, but also photographs and videos from family beach vacations or office outings, perhaps in jest, and, also just like the SEO 'experiment', in order to draw attention to itself.

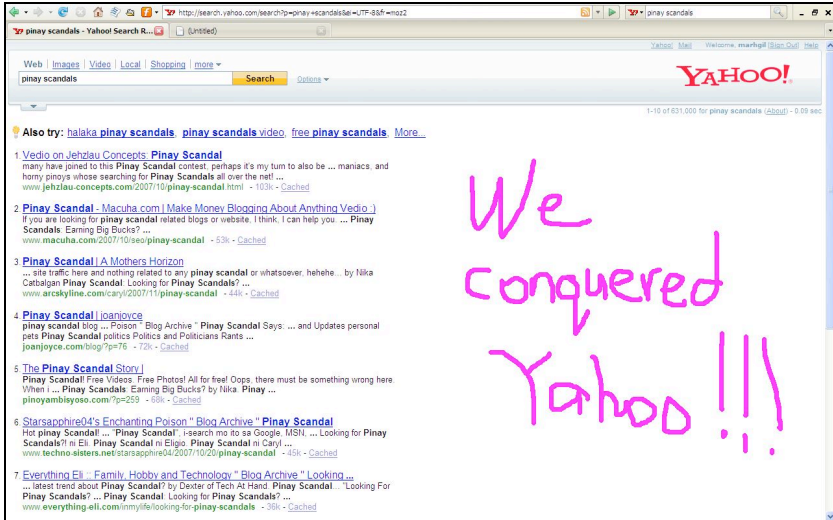


Image 3 –Search Engine Optimization through the keyword ‘pinay scandal’. Screenshot of ‘top 7 sites in Yahoo search for “pinay scandal”’, posted in blog of Macuha.com, November 2007.

In the process, Filipinos interacting through cyberspace and digital media over less than a decade (the earliest data for online searches is 2004) have naturalized a meaning for ‘scandal’ not yet found in the standard English dictionary. In this peculiar usage, ‘scandals’ do not just happen, they are ‘made’ (using digital technology); they are tangible objects of specific volume (bytes) that can be contained in electronic media, and therefore they can also be sent or ‘shared’, ‘copied’, exchanged, bought and sold; they come with titles, brief descriptive write-ups, tracks, subtitles, or credits; they are creative material which participate closely in social worlds both on and offline. As one comment about a ‘scandal’ noted, YouTube is ‘...*the modern vehicle of gossip using video*’.¹²

Using cellphones, consuming digital content available in the streets, and going online, locally-based and diasporic citizens are empowered to create and upload to this media, as part of everyday participation in various social networks and connectivities that are sustained by many ongoing discussions with an evaluative dimension,¹³ i.e. basically gossiping as if they were just next door neighbors. Such interactions are typically centered on particular personalities, certain events,

specific places that members of Filipino society or of other shared social sets or communities, should have knowledge of. In doing this individuals can 'keep up with' and contribute to their personal networks and social worlds and remain part of the 'scene' (or several scenes), which are truly not found simply in cyberspace, nor 'offline', and which has no local or global boundaries although it may be anchored or centered in a specific geographic place (Emilia Barna's chapter in this book has pointed this out).

The popularity of 'scandal' may be the reason why practically every Filipino TV star has a 'scandal' named after her/him, real or not, and the tabloid press often headlines movie stars denying being in a rumored 'scandal' video. A good indicator of a female star's allure and popularity is the number of 'scandals' labelled after her (one big-chested actress-comedian reportedly has more than 300 'scandals'). Many of these scandals' real subjects may not even be Filipino but belong to other Asian nationalities or even Middleeastern, although they may look like the Pinay actresses or personalities. The production of these 'scandals' can emerge from both popular process and industry strategy. The showbiz 'gossip economy' turns on the exploitation of celebrities' personal lives as a commons, and creates wealth from publicizing and discussing scandalous stories, real or not. (Publicity managers routinely fabricate '*gimiks*' or bits of scandalous news about their charges.)¹⁴ While both negative and positive online commentary is difficult to manage, as Sabine Bauman discusses (in this book), apparently for Filipino celebrities and their handlers, controversial publicity is considered better than no publicity at all.

In the ICT age, new parasocial relationships between fans and their 'idols' can be based on 'scandals', and genuine 'scandals' can, albeit not always predictably, become a form of capital to build a career on. Some showbiz starlets have acknowledged that they have their 'scandals' to thank for achieving the recognition and popularity they seek. One starlet discovered rave audiences when she performed in the Middle East which she credited to her 'scandal' which had accidentally circulated when her boyfriend lost his cellphone.¹⁵ Even if the audience had never got to watch the local TV show she regularly appeared on, they knew of her from the scandal video.

Even commercial pornography has latched on to the popularity of 'scandal', adopting the 'scandal' aesthetic of stolen footage, low production values, shaky frame, and also calling itself 'scandal'.¹⁶

As another indicator of the popularity of 'scandal', 'scandal' as a creative product made and circulated by Filipinos often self-references itself through creative spoofs or parodies of other popular 'scandals'. A good example is the '[Name of Fastfood Chain] Scandal' which features the 'naughty mascots' of a popular food chain pretending to make a 'sex scandal'. This case also constituted a 'real' scandal, in the sense that there would have been real consequences for persons transgressing (i.e. the company employees performing as the mascots) and

that the outcome of this as a real scandal would be determined by the social response and require actual application of real social sanctions – the individuals responsible could have been identified and fired. In this scandal's case there are continuing efforts (perhaps by the fastfood company) to take the offending video down from YouTube by flagging it as inappropriate, yet it continues to amuse and to be reposted on YouTube under variations of the title.

In the meantime, some 'scandal' labels could have been deployed for material that has no scandalous content whatsoever simply to grab attention.

3. 'Scandals' as digital goods.

As objects, 'scandals' can be mutually exchanged, given and received through cyberspace and passed from hand to hand, in the context of sharing news, information, and gossip. They also circulate as commodities. There is a market for 'scandals'. Its value in the informal economy is probably not insignificant.

'Scandals' popularly pass via Bluetooth from gadget to gadget and move through cyberspace like 'internet memes'. Offline, 'scandal' flows through the same channels as pirated digital goods, and occupies its own niche in this market like a kind of 'homegrown' product whose copyright infringements are of a somewhat different nature. 'Scandal' collections of a dozen or more brief video tracks are often sold beside pornography or have other kinds of 'amateur sex videos' or pornography pretending to be 'scandal' mixed in. On rarer occasions, political 'scandals' have also been made into commodities. Their path is different however: in several cases incriminating video footage was first offered for auction for millions of pesos to TV news studios and opposition political parties.

The 'places' that one goes to in order to find 'scandal' are: in the streets and alleyways where the Muslim peddlers of pirated DVDs can be found; through the computer screen and online through certain blogs and websites, for free download or for the asking through negotiated exchanges from other contacts made; and, your friend's cellphone. Scandal DVDs are typically sold side by side with pirated Hollywood movies at some street vendors and stalls and for the same price (Php25-50.00). A buyer could try to request for 'scandal' in a big video store and will probably be looked at strangely and then directed to the 'x-rated' section. There have been several commercial Filipino movies made whose plots are about the phenomenon of 'scandals'. (*Co-Ed Scandal* and *Roxxxanne* were two such films made in 2006.) Collectors of 'sex scandals' will find a great many sites online for downloading such files, from general sites like YouTube and RapidShare to blogs and webpages specially dedicated to 'scandal'; and there is more than likely a new 'scandal' uploaded everyday.

An example of annotation to a 'scandal' for download online shows attention to some information that would be useful in the archiving or curating of 'scandal' collections: 1) the identification of details of person and place, ideally specifying social stature; 2) information about the size of the file for download; 3) discussion

of the scandal narrative and possible motivations of the dramatic protagonists/victims; and 4) notes on the popularity or other significance of the ‘scandal’, as well as 5) additional commentary on the power and risks of ICT, including moralistic musings. (Cyberposts commonly remark on the possibility of ‘scandal’ in an ICT world as a threat for everyone.)

[name of city] sex scandal (Police Officer)

September 21, 2006

A sought after sex video in the sidewalks of [name of city], allegedly involving a high ranking police officer [name]... and a wife of a junior military officer... The video was said to be spread by the husband of the woman in the video. *Download Movie 8.77 Mb*

Today, it's the sex video scandal involving a police officer. Tomorrow, it could be a councilor, a mayor, a banker, an employee, or you! It's clear that nobody's safe anymore, unless the authorities can devise ways to catch and throw these buffoons to jail. Yes, it's a complex issue, but somebody has to start somewhere to stop it.¹⁷

As foreseen by John Thompson, people with higher ‘visibility’ in the media like celebrities and politicians are inherently vulnerable to scandal,¹⁸ and the same is generally true for ‘scandal’ (i.e. referring to a genre of cybermedia-object). In ‘scandal’ production anyone can be a subject. However supposedly upright and ‘respectable’ members or sectors of society are truly better ‘scandal’ subjects than the down and out.

‘Scandal’ files may consist of images, video footage, audio recordings, or even merely text. The length and size of a ‘scandal’ video or audio file might range from just a few seconds to 4 minutes, or from a few kilobytes up to several megabytes. At the longest, there are 15-20 minute long videos, including parodies and skits.

If one were to attempt a classification of ‘scandals’ in Filipino pop cyberculture, a confusion of categories and titles would have to be dealt with, which includes ‘dormitory scandals’, ‘rape scandals’, [‘name of school/place/bank’ scandal], [‘name of actress/celebrity’ scandal], ‘priest scandal’, ‘nursing scandal’, ‘golf course scandal’, and many other [‘name of office/place/person’ scandals’. Some of these may indeed contain actual smoking evidence of real scandals/social transgressions or be about such events. Some male scandal aficionados further classify their sex ‘scandals’ into subcategories like ‘motel scandal’, ‘webcam spycam’, ‘wardrobe malfunctions’, etc. On the other hand, a label making an association with a place, like the [‘Name of Tourist Spot’ Scandal] could also be jokingly attached to perfectly ordinary material like family vacation pictures taken at a resort with a waterfall, or a company name like the [‘Name of Corporation’ Scandal] could label a laughable performance during a Christmas party program.¹⁹

I would also class 'scandals' into the following categories: genuine 'scandals' (true accidents, candid footage, unintended dissemination), fake 'scandals' (counterfeits), counter-'scandals' ('scandals' that were circulated or made in order to refute existing 'scandals', to question their authenticity, or to provide counternarratives about the protagonists in existing 'scandals'), 'news as scandal' (news reports), 'spoof scandals' (or satire), and 'non-scandals'.

Video and audio clips of TV and radio reports of certain continuing news stories are often uploaded to YouTube by Pinoys under titles that have the word 'scandal' in it. There are spoofs of scandals (e.g. of whistleblowing and other exposes in the news), and of 'scandals' (referencing popular scandal genres). Jokes, spoofs or other creative digital objects e.g. remixes of video recording to add music or narration or subtitles, can be made out of a scandalous recording or of any material referring to a scandal in the news. Intended for different kinds of audiences, files labelled 'scandals' range from the simply entertaining or 'trivial' to serious online activism.

Generally, interest in and circulation of 'scandals' is directly related to their currency, and to the reactions they elicit, including calls for investigation and institutional scrutiny, and to the unfolding of the scandal as an actual real life 'social drama'.²⁰ 'Scandals' and their circulation through digital technologies among Filipinos interact closely with mass media and events that are current in the nation, as well as in more parochial contexts to which people participating in 'scandal' exchanges belong.

The circulation, sharing or the profit-making sale of 'scandal' itself is scandalous and can become news in the mainstream mass media (newspapers, radio, TV). The theft of images as a source of 'scandals' is also itself scandalous (and criminal). Many materials for 'scandals' were gathered from hidden cameras, there are paparazzi-type images captured by stalking and spying, private conversations exposed through wiretapping, or material obtained by hacking into other networked computers - for example in an internet café where users with webcams thought they were engaged in private sessions. Further, 'scandal' as object scandalously enters into unregulated or illegal modes of distribution (i.e. 'piracy', blackmail, unauthorized filesharing...). The context for '*scandal*' in the Philippines is also the broader phenomenon of pervasive digital piracy consumption. This is also indicated in how in online discussions the movement of information and the 'quality' of scandal CDs is often held up to or compared or contrasted with that of regular - i.e. 'mainstream' - digital piracy. The spirit of 'scandal'-making shares in the underworld and subversive spirit of piracy and hacking; its perpetrators are everywhere and nowhere (see the chapter by Wayne Rumbles).

Thanks to interactive spaces online, interest, discussion, and emerging differences and consensuses are apparent for certain topics. In the annotations to 'scandals' that are posted online, in short bite-sized exchanges in conversations in

forums, in full length essays written up in blogs, in other messages or files sent by messenger, SMS or emails, in the actions of sharing a URL link or merely clicking ‘like’, in the individual purchase of a scandal’ DVD on the streets, in the produsage and circulation of ‘scandal’ and other creative digital genres (textjokes, animation, etc.)- cumulative attention and potential bandwagon of interest in certain cases can be quite palpable in cyberspace.

‘Scandals’ as popular culture should still be analyzed further, as texts for what stories Pinoys are telling themselves; or visually, for what images we may be showing ourselves about ourselves using ICT. How can ‘imagining’ the nation as a community (as Benedict Anderson phrases it)²¹ work through interactive cybermedia? And in the negative, what facets of society do Pinoy cybercitizens find amusing or outrageous enough to make digitized ‘scandals’ of? What truths and what secrets, including ‘public secrets’ or the social knowledge of ‘knowing what not to know’ (in Michael Taussig’s words), may be engaged with by ‘scandals’? What sacred symbols are potent enough to be ‘defaced’ by ‘scandal’?²² And can the revelations of ‘scandal’ eventually participate in social transformation?

In a preliminary manner, the next sections outline some observable themes in ‘scandals’ as Filipino pop cyberculture.

4. ‘Spying’ and ‘scandal’-making across the gender divide

The production and consumption as well as the reactions to the prevalence of ‘sex scandals’ exposes to view a gender divide in the Philippines (rather than a conflict between the generations, see the chapter about erotic ‘scandals’ in China by Wilfred Yang Wang in this book). It is apparent that most of the ‘scandals’ put into DVD collections or found online are taken from the voyeuristic viewpoint of a man wielding the cybertechnology of camera and computer. And it is also men who are motivated to disseminate ‘scandal’, at the expense of women who are the typical subjects.

There is a Filipino term that specifically refers to the secret prank of observation or ‘spying’ on women done by men (*boso*), and to which can be applied the prolific new technologies for image capture (*cyberboso*). There are many reports of boarding houses, motel rooms, bathrooms said to be specially equipped with cameras hidden behind mirrors or with specially drilled small holes in the ceiling through which a camera can peep. Thanks to cellphone cameras, webcams, zoom lenses, the observation of females by males has been facilitated and can take place anywhere. Thanks to cyberspace, anybody and everybody can be a voyeur.

Image 4 shows a couple on a parkbench, as espied from a distance. There is no explicit imagery in the video, but the narrator’s voiceover claims that something sexual is going on (that the boy’s hand is up her skirt). In the comments section, many viewers claim that they can identify the school uniform of the girl, and even

the actual identities of all the subjects (including the others sitting around the bench), and the location of the park. Their remarks reflect an essential aspect of 'scandals', which is that the subjects are never anonymous, they also represent particular institutions or groups, and refer to specific places. If the people cannot be named, then other markers of identification can. In this case, many comments were also made on the narrative of the video, on the imagination of the narrator, as well as self-reflexively on the interest of viewers themselves. Or why, had more than one million people viewed this video? (Note: The same video also appears more than once in YouTube posted by diverse people under different labels.)



Image 4 – Screen shot of thumbnail photo of a 'scandal' video on YouTube (viewed July 2009).²³

Apart from stolen footage, intimate records originally taken with the consent of subjects may also easily turn into 'scandals' when relationships turn sour. It happens that some 'scandal' pictures or video clips were released by ex-boyfriends or ex-lovers with the intention to punish or humiliate the woman. There are incidents of rape which were also videotaped. The exposure of these recordings and images to the public is a virtual form of violence against their subjects (and of 'Violence Against Women', specifically). When the biggest sex scandal occurred in 2009, it was clearly a women's issue (and both the macho male Senator as well as the male protagonist in the scandal averred that they would take up the cause of the women's movement against violence to women).

Statistics for some 'scandal' items on YouTube do show that a demographic of mature males in their 30s and 40s coming specifically from the Philippines are the usual viewers of particular 'scandals'. For example, the map and popularity ranking among different genders and age groups in Image 5 was generated for an item that features press photos of a female celebrity as well as the audio recording of a radio show discussion held by the DJ that is *about* the sex 'scandal' of this particular actress. (In her case, the 'scandal' affected her very badly, she attempted suicide in 2007 and has disappeared from showbusiness.)

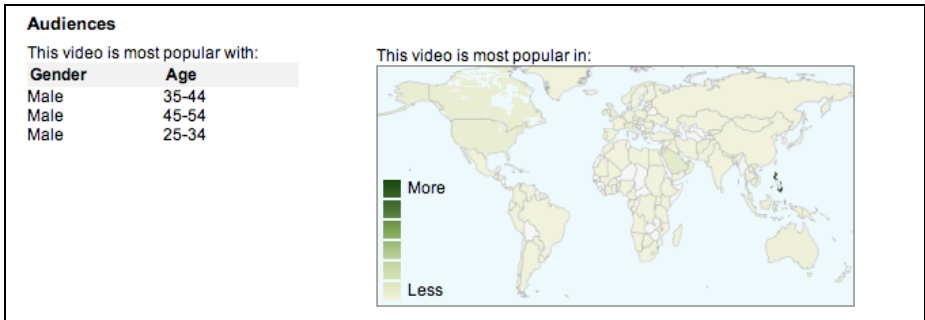


Image 5 – Screenshot from YouTube about interest in a Pinay ‘scandal’ (viewed July 2009).

Apparent interest in ‘scandal’ online among identifiably Filipino cyberusers has increased steadily over the years. Image 6 contains a graph tracking the interest over 2007 to 2009 in a YouTube item tagged as a ‘Rape Scandal.’ This YouTube item contains the picture of a radio station ID and no other images. It is accompanied by a news report in a Bisaya language from the islands in central Philippines that narrates about a rape involving a 16-year old high school student and a school administrator.

Over the last few years, there have been efforts to curtail the making and dissemination of sex ‘scandals’ among Filipinos. Apart from the SEO experiment with the ‘pinay scandal’ keyword, the proliferation of sex ‘scandals’ has prompted action by agents of the law. The Optical Media Board tasked with fighting the pirating of copyrighted video, and the police tasked to enforce the ban on pornography, began to conduct raids against the sale of ‘scandals’ as DVDs in 2009 (when a particularly sensational sex scandal erupted). The newspapers have contained items on complaints brought to police and their making arrests of peeping toms holding cellphone cameras over a bathroom wall,²⁴ of stalkers trying to take upskirt photos,²⁵ or of males attempting to blackmail or humiliate women using intimate footage.²⁶

Traumatic experiences in small towns with the circulation of sex ‘scandals’ have led to review of local government ordinances regulating internet cafes and specifying the responsibilities of their owners.²⁷ National laws specifically against the theft of images of women were proposed in 2007, and R.A. 9995 penalizing ‘Photo and Video Voyeurism’ was finally signed into law in February 2010, integrating several bills that had been put forward in Congress and the Senate (which included the proposed ‘Anti-Cyberboso Bill’).²⁸ The new law penalizes ‘video-voyeurism’ with up to 7 years of imprisonment and/or large fines.

Investigation of the power of images of Filipina women's bodies as seen in the kinds of narratives about them contained in 'scandals' and in the social life of particular 'scandals' containing such images would take another paper.²⁹

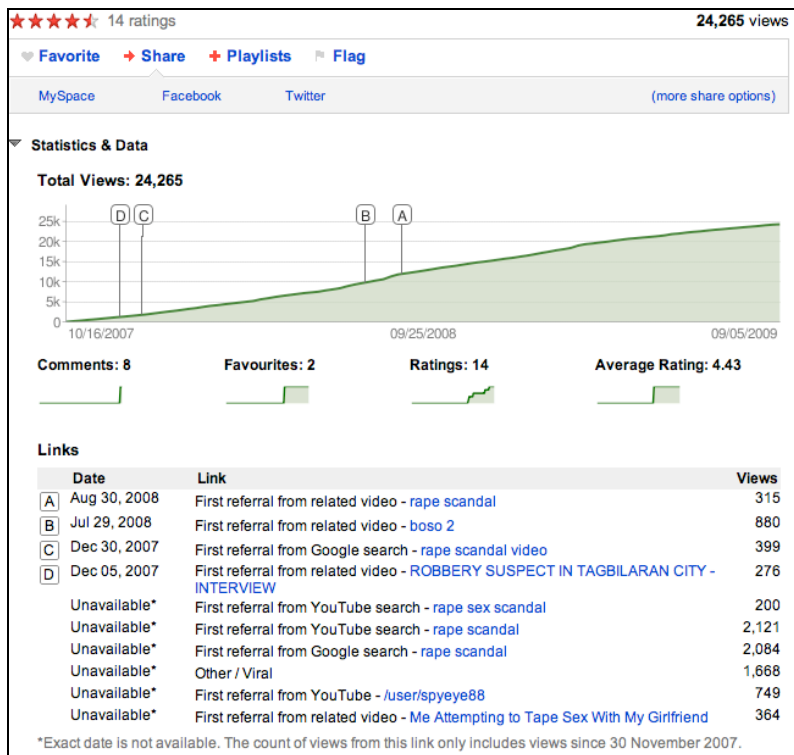


Image 6 – Screen shot of YouTube statistics and data for an item labelled as a 'Rape Scandal' (viewed July 2009).

Meanwhile, not all Pinoy sex 'scandals' target the female gender; and sex 'scandals' as well as other kinds of 'scandals' may come to draw commentary from all genders and from a wide range of age groups because they scandalize for other aspects of the content. It is not simply the exposure of the sex act but the aspects of recognizable identity that make 'scandals' what they are. Moreover, there are also many other 'scandals' which do have explicit images of the body and sexual content but whose audience may be a wider demographic of Filipinos than the typical sex 'scandals' (which appears to be skewed toward mature males).

5. 'Scandals' as pieces of narratives and images of Philippine society.

‘Scandals’ may have an unpredictable participation in the playing out of real scandals / social dramas both online and offline, and in nodding to ‘public secrets’³⁰ that no one dares articulate, which gives form to their trajectories and paths. They can also be animated by simple resonance with the self-images of Filipinos of Philippine society.³¹

The image of sacrifice and the ‘heroism’ of Filipino workers overseas (cited by the state for keeping our economy afloat) for example underlies the ‘[Name of Filipina Journalist] Scandal’. This ‘scandal’ contains no video or audio; it is mere text – a magazine article in English which came out both in print and online. In it, the writer relates her trip to an exotic holiday destination, how she carried so much make-up in her luggage and spent so much money and hobnobbed with famous people, and how she hated to be in an airplane full of noisy and sweaty Filipino OFWs coming home. Her column was found so offensive by many in the Pinoy blogosphere that it was circulated around and a campaign was launched calling for either her resignation or her being fired as a regular columnist in the publications that she wrote for. It resulted to her making a public apology, which also made it to TV news and was posted on YouTube with a ‘scandal’ tag.³²

Filipinos on top of the economic heap caught looking down on their fellowmen who are not as privileged are revealing subjects of ‘scandal’, for what they show about the scandalous gap between rich and poor in Philippine society. The ‘[Name of Fashion Designer] Scandal’ was originally a short piece of video footage, taken from a distance, and that shows a person identifiable as the owner of a clothing line sold in department stores ranting and raving at sales people in a store. Apparently it has something to do with his credit card. At the end of it the gay fashion designer actually makes the male salesman kneel down in front of him. Lacking audio, the original clip of this ‘scandal’ appears in several more spoof versions in YouTube, edited and remixed with other headings and sounds, for example with an audio clip from the movie ‘300’ and even German speech (‘[Name of Fashion Designer] Rants like Hitler!’). After circulating digitally and eliciting many blog commentaries, the ‘scandal’ moved offline, it was featured on the news, and the designer was forced to make a rather ingracious apology on TV to the salesman that he had humiliated, of which the news clips are also to be found on YouTube under the same ‘scandal’ tag. Bloggers point out that the whole thing would not have become TV news were it not for the noise they had created online.

The ‘[Name of an Exclusive Catholic University] Immersion Scandal’ consists of diary entries of a pampered young girl from a well-to-do family who went on a school-organized exposure trip among the Aeta, an indigenous group, and which she had put in her Facebook account. Lifestyle and class prejudices are on display in the ‘scandal’, juxtaposed for contrast against a marginalized people with barely anything in terms of material wealth. Her 3-day log candidly states that she was ‘not immersed’: her parents made her have an exaggerated number of vaccinations

before the trip to protect her from catching diseases, she hardly ate while she was there, was able to control her bladder and colon and practically not pee and poo for three days, and spent as much time as possible sleeping. She went home to a perfumed bubble bath to wash off the smell of the place with its grubby naked children afterwards. Many of those who commented on the text defended their university and recalled their own more socially aware and engaged experiences as volunteers on similar 'exposure trips'. The teenage subject of this scandal retorted to the highly critical comments she received but appears to still be clueless to the controversy which had generated a storm elsewhere in the blogosphere.

The creation of 'scandal' from cyberplaces like Facebook and blogs show how other cybercitizens can challenge the self-image of persons that use these as 'technologies of the self' (see Chris Fletcher's essay in this book). These cybercitizens may be identifiable more closely as 'schoolmates' or 'townmates', or simply as 'fellow Filipinos', which gives them the right to engage with and to challenge the authenticity or the morality in self-making in the cybermedium.

All true 'scandals' provoke lots of commentary. Cyberplaces like blogs, websites with sections for posting commentary, and various discussion forums and e-groups, truly are interaction venues for the 'care of communities' given that these participants obviously share some identities and therefore can engage with the same narrative. This can include self-reflexive insights and jokes on the nature of cyberspace as a 'public sphere' through which 'scandal' can be made and circulated among outsiders (or foreigners) and 'insiders'.

A minor subgenre of 'scandals' comprises the Pinoy 'call center scandals' found on YouTube. These scandals provide windows into the reality of many young Filipinos who take or make calls with worldwide clients for the BPO (business process outsourcing) industry. 'Call center scandals' take the form of clips of audio recordings of conversations between agents and their clients (exchanges which are supposed to be confidential). Sometimes the recording is accompanied by the name and pictures of an agent in a call center workplace setting (who may or may not be the true subject in the 'scandal'). 'Call center scandals' may feature for example callers that are particularly rude and verbally abusive, or they may also feature abuse of the client. One case features a female agent's conversation with a flirtatious foreign caller. In the 'scandal' she actually convinces him to do as she says: 'repeat after me: my name is ----- and I am a *jackass*' (itals translated from the Filipino – '*gago na bobo pa*'), which the caller dutifully says thinking it means something flattering. That this spectacle of the undiscerning foreigner who has no idea that he is being played with and made fun of is posted in YouTube gives the joke on him added power – the 'scandal' is free and open to all of cyberworld to see and hear but for Filipino-speakers only to understand.

'Non-scandals' work on the same basis – as jokes; probably only Pinoys 'get' the reference to the context of prolific 'scandal'-making by Pinoys, while

non-Filipinos or Filipinos that are not into the popculture of ‘scandals’ won’t find any humor in a banal video of a parade or a high school reunion being labelled ‘scandal’.

Other ‘scandals’ however may resonate with self-images of the Filipino that are painful to contemplate. One controversial ‘scandal’ which was discussed in the mainstream media as well as online consists of footage of an embarrassing ‘rectal surgery’ procedure on a man to remove a perfume canister that had been lodged inside (something that must have happened during homosexual sex). The footage was taken by the surgical staff using cellphone cameras, as a souvenir, and ended up posted on YouTube probably after passing hand to hand beyond their original makers’ control. The ‘scandal’ can be viewed by its audience like a terribly funny story (where the final punchline is that upon extraction the canister still works). In the video, hysterical laughter among the staff is provoked by a lot of jokes at the expense of the unconscious gay patient. After being uploaded on YouTube however, this ‘rectal surgery scandal’ flared across cyberspace as a real scandal. It generated online discussion about the ‘immorality’ of the gay patient who had gotten himself into that sort of medical emergency. One comment noted that the issue was also one of discrimination against gays; the same behavior would not have happened if it had been a female patient, and this elicited many reactions. Finally, an emerging consensus was that gay or not the patient was still the victim of unprofessional conduct by the health care providers and there were many calls for boycott or closure of the hospital if they would not sanction their staff. The whole case was also felt to be extremely embarrassing (*‘nakakahiya’*) for the image of Filipinos, given the prominence of this story in cyberspace,³³

When you search “Filipino doctors” on Google, an item about the scandal is in the Top 5 results. When you search “filipino doctors” on Google news, the first item in the search result is about the incident... when you google “[name of hospital]” what appears are ... a whole bunch of other links to the scandal.³⁴

(Just recently, three years after the incident, the news has reported that the hospital has laid administrative sanctions on its erring staff.)

6. ‘Scandal’ and the revolution, ‘scandal’ mongering as ‘people power’.

The power of ‘scandals’ lies in how difficult they are to control. They can reproduce and have a life of their own far beyond geographical borders (and even beyond the lifetimes of their subjects), scattering and moving rapidly through cyberspace, accompanying millions of interactions crossing from face-to-face to mediated contexts back and forth. ‘Scandals’ may participate in the critique of the behavior of fellow Filipinos who by virtue of their social, economic or political status are supposed to be moral role models (or who at least should know better

than to get caught in a 'scandal'). 'Scandals' have sometimes (but not always) proven to be enough to shame or propel establishments and institutions like hospitals, media companies, universities, the Church, and the government to clean up their people and their acts. The blogosphere has enabled many voices to participate in real scandal dramas. The voices of diasporic citizens can be heard both within the Philippines as well as by other fellow Filipinos scattered around the world through cyberspace. Among these active cybercitizens, the Internet is indeed deemed a kind of 'public sphere' where more or less open discussion can happen, and it has certainly been seen as a source of social justice in Philippine society (see also the chapters by Wang and by Bothwell in this book). There are many examples of 'scandal' in Pinoy internet activism. Diverse campaigns and struggles have been waged and won, although some have also been lost, in cyberspace. And where there is a 'digital divide' in computer literacy and access to Internet in the Philippines, popular 'scandals' can still move between cellphones and via DVDs that are made available in the streets through piracy circuits.

The power of digitized 'scandal' against a political regime was being tested early enough in the history of cybertechnology in 2005 in the Philippines with the 'Hello Garci' scandal. In this year, rallies in the streets calling for the Philippine President's resignation were accompanied by pirated CD sales of a scandalous wiretapped recording that contained her alleged voice in a phone conversation with an elections official to ascertain the outcome of the elections in her favor. The year saw the President apologizing to the nation for her 'lapse in judgement' in calling an elections official, simultaneous resignations by cabinet secretaries, restless rumblings in the military, and many predicting that the President would not finish her term (at the end of which, according to the mainstream press, she left a 'legacy of scandals'³⁵).

2005 also saw the proliferation of creative ringtones and jingles spoofing and alluding to the President's 'scandal', often containing the soundbytes 'Hello Garci?' and 'I am sorry'. These were (and are still) downloadable for free online, where they are also 'offered for pirating'. Counter-'scandals' directed at other political personalities (e.g. the 'X-tapes') made an appearance, but apparently these failed to distract attention and flopped on the piracy market. The government declared 'Hello Garci' ringtones³⁶ illegal and threatened telecom companies with prosecution if it was proven that they were intentionally circulating textjokes to profit from the popular activity of forwarding textjokes about the scandal.

'Scandal' has been referred to as 'video anarchy'³⁷ and 'citizen surveillance'. 'We have already seen the silence of the bedroom violated,' said one opinion writer in reference to the sensational 2009 sex scandal, '(w)ith the arrival of camera phones and 24/7 mobile Internet, the time is fast approaching when secret backroom deals will be revealed to the public.'³⁸ But this columnist's realization is actually rather belated; according to Google Trends, online search for the political scandal 'Hello Garci' in 2005 predates the popularity of searching for 'pinay

scandal’. It ran for a brief period only, but was much more intense (see Image 7).³⁹ This period showed the greatest creativity in the ‘spoof scandal’ genre, in varied digital formats (from textjokes to satirical skits on YouTube⁴⁰).

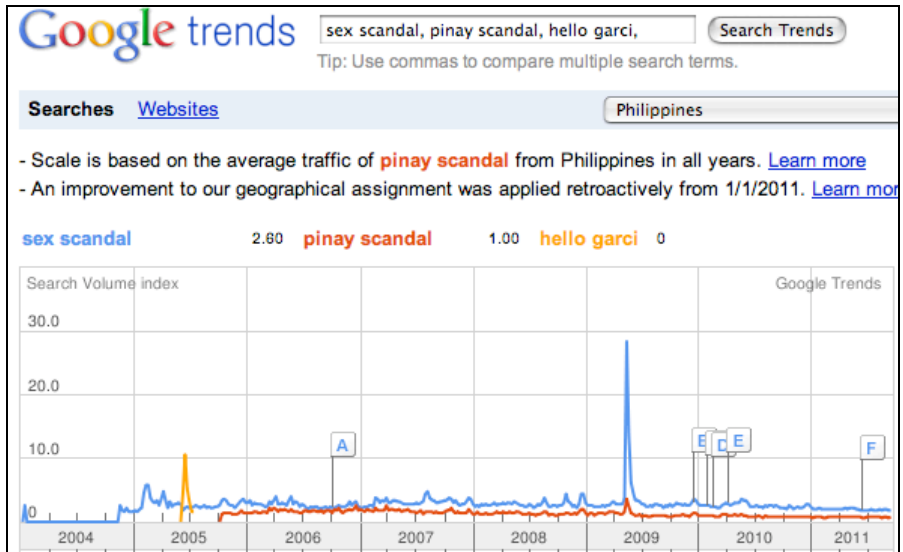


Image 7 – Google searches in the Philippines for ‘hello garci’, compared with ‘sex scandal’ and ‘pinay scandal’ (viewed on September 19, 2011).

In other political activism, many ‘scandal’ types of material have circulated in Pinoy cyberspaces as evidence of anomalies in government – e.g. alleged recordings of elections candidates calling on supporters to cheat for them, pictures of alleged relief goods rotting in warehouses instead of being distributed, etc. A TV station launched its own campaign for citizens to ‘patrol their own votes’ (*Boto Mo, Ipatrol Mo*) during the elections. Digital technology users can still find plenty of material for spoofs for YouTube broadcast in many everyday contexts in the Philippines.

7. Conclusion – ‘scandal’ in a scandal-ridden society.

Filipinos were among those to swiftly take up digital technologies and maximize unintended facets (such as the use of cellphones primarily to send texts), and ‘scandal’ is one such unforeseen function of cybertechnologies. At the moment Filipino cybercitizens appear to be at the forefront of this particular frontier. Aware of ‘scandals’ as part of the risks of ICT, and of the potential power of bytes of

information which can get away from their makers and lead their own 'social lives'.

'Scandal' as a term in popular usage among Filipinos has been resemanticized or has acquired new meaning such that it refers specifically to a particular genre of creative products contained in digital media. These are types of items which should have potential fascination to a particular community, i.e. shock value or gossip value. It shows how 'scandal' as 'accident' of digital technology is a notion that has been popularly appreciated and domesticated by Pinoys.

Perhaps the Philippines is somewhat ICT accident-prone, or 'scandal'-prone. The innovative uses for 'scandal' may have something to do with a large sector of ICT-literate, and with a culture that is more responsive to such features of new media technology, combined with both a piracy- and scandal-ridden society.

The making and dissemination of sex 'scandals' and of other forms of 'scandals' including the spoofs, has many motivations, from prurient self-entertainment to individual profit-making through the informal economy, to its value in simple phatic communication between persons, keeping up with others, joking or gossiping as part of social groups and identities, or more seriously for conveying their news content of socially transgressive events, to conscientizing and shaming, the intentional sabotage of subjects, and subversion of authority and its structures. Using ICT, Pinoys can participate in the process of creation and circulation of 'scandal', as news, gossip, humor, or other digitized art forms they inspire. Uploading and sharing links to '*scandal*' via mobile phone and internet is a way that a globalized diasporic Filipino population keeps touch with home, as well as to actively participate in influencing the development or resolution of a real scandal drama.

The authenticity of scandals is the measure of their value. A 'real' scandal has social consequences for its subjects and relevant social institutions. 'Scandals' therefore, for the Pinoy, do not just happen; they are 'made' (using digital technologies). ('Scandals' are finished creative products. Each '*scandal*' has not only a title, but may also have brief descriptive write-ups, titled tracks, subtitles, or credits.) For 'scandals' which are supposed to be candid or captured original scandalous material, the discriminating audience can identify those that are 'genuine', or not (e.g. acted, spliced, photoshopped). Anyone can 'make' a 'scandal', and anyone can 'send', 'exchange', 'share', 'sell', 'buy' or 'give away' a 'scandal' as a digital good or commodity.

Many 'scandals' may have very localized rather than national referents. From the language and content, the labels of 'scandals' make these recognizable to communities that speak the same language and can identify the allusions, and tap into common news and gossip shared by Filipinos in general or by smaller networks of Filipinos.

While they may be seen as extremely lowbrow form of entertainment, they are also sites for everyday imagining of the Filipino community, or of any other

community contained within the emotional idea of 'nation' or 'hometown' (*bayan* in Filipino/Tagalog).

Maybe another source of explanation for the 'scandal' phenomenon and the behavior of Filipinos in cyberspace are cultural conceptualizations of 'shame/impropriety'.⁴¹ The 'Filipino psychology' may consider individual character, interpersonal relations and professional ethics to be genuinely everybody's business. At the height of the sex scandal controversy in 2009, the principal subject was declared as 'unwelcome' to visit (*persona non grata*) by local governments of two provinces. (An American I spoke with was quite surprised by this, he observed that Americans must be so desensitized to scandal, even if there is a lot of 'scandal' in America it becomes a major concern and source of shame and outrage mainly for the direct family or immediate associates of the subjects of a sex scandal. Among Filipinos on the other hand, the comments and emotions come from all corners, the interest in scandal is so personal, "it's as if it's all family", was his observation.)

Perhaps being the 'only Catholic nation in Asia' also has something to do with the popularity of 'scandal'. There is no divorce in the Philippines and strong opposition from the Church to a proposed Reproductive Health Bill which provides for sex education and would facilitate access to contraceptive methods.

The gender dimensions of 'scandal' are reflections and challenges to society of male subculture which deserve further analysis (especially since there are also continuities with the production of similar sex scandals in the Philippines during the earlier era of analog technologies⁴²).

Another facet of this phenomenon is the 'culture of piracy', which efficiently steps into vacuums in the market and bridges digital gaps. Especially in a 'Third World' country, cyberculture as mediated through digital piracy can be significantly reproduced on the streets as well as in internet cafes.

'Scandal' exchange is also quite normal in the context of a culture of piracy where everybody can be a pirate, including the Filipino middle classes.⁴³ The commodification of scandalous material (in some cases these were first offered for sale as blackmail material) is part of the narrative of unfolding scandal melodrama.

The popularity of 'scandal' brings up the functional role of humor, rumor, news and gossip for creating consensus about reality, the truth, and social values, which can be participated in by ordinary people through the arenas opened up by cybertechnologies. Filipinos have in the past noticeably resorted to the power of jokes in time of political crisis.⁴⁴

We might add that the current social reality of many Filipinos is scandalous. A 'culture of impunity' reputedly shields government officials, politicians and wealthy families involved in corruption or heinous crimes from investigation and sanction. In short, Filipino society has no shortage of scandals in daily life to make 'scandals' of. There is as well the scandal of ordinary lives lived in poverty (which provides independent film-makers with much material), and in distant separation

from family. This reality may be a subtext for many 'scandal' subjects that are celebrities and important or elite figures in society.

Filipinos perhaps have an instinct for the anarchic potential of the new media. If the first 'People Power' in 1986 revolution was called forth through renegade radio, the second one in 2003 was coordinated by cellphone to cellphone communications and broadcasts revolving around scandalous revelations (then President Erap's 'Juetenggate') leading ultimately to the downfall of a sitting president ('*coup d'text*'). A fourth 'people power' revolution could have been created by 'scandal' – 'scandal' as evidence, viral dissemination of 'scandals', creative 'scandal'-mongering.

It may be premature to propose that 'scandal', used here with a specific definition—as a variety of digital object which has several paths for circulation in everyday life—, will become established for the long term. It may prove to just be a fad, it may die down in a short while. Philippine society may learn to be wary of the risks of ICT, and to be more careful of new legal regulations and sanctions, or to creatively adjust to the new routes of rumor and gossip as social control.

As a strange new form of mass media and as a creative product (with its several genres), in the recent past 'scandal' has been playing an emerging special role in the imagination of Filipino community/ies. As 'scandal' participates in interaction with the other 'traditional media' (print, TV, radio) in heightened pursuit of particular narratives, just like a true scandal, the future lives of 'scandal' in the Philippines and the rest of the world depends on popular interest and still remains to be seen.

Notes

¹ John B. Thompson, *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age*, (London: Polity Press, 2000), 31-59.

² Laura Kipnis, *How to Become a Scandal: Adventures in bad behavior*, (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Co., 2010), 28.

³ Paul Virilio. *The Original Accident*. (London: Polity Press, 2007).

⁴ E.g. Raul Pertierra. 'Technologies of Transformation', *Living the Information Society in Asia* edited by Erwin Alampay. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies/Canada: International Development Research Centre, 2009), 36, 39.

⁵ Consider for example the impact of the circulation of the Abu Graib prison photos in Iraq that had been taken as personal souvenirs by US military men and women.

⁶ The screenshot is taken from *The PinoySpy Reporter* ('Union Bank Scandal or ICT Scandal'?, posted on October 30, 2006).

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- ⁷ In the different senses of Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge University Press, 1986), and W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (The University of Chicago Press, 2004).
- ⁸ 'Google trends' ["scandal" x All regions x All years]. Viewed 17 September 2011, <<http://www.google.com/trends?q=scandal>>.
- ⁹ SELaplana, 'Pinay Scandal – Pinay Sex Scandal – Pinay Celebrity Scandal', 12 November 2007. Viewed 28 August 2009, <<http://www.selaplana.com/2007/11/12/pinay-scandal-lets-play-the-trend/>>; Macuha.com, 'SEO, The top 7 pinay scandals in yahoo'. Viewed 25 March 2011, <<http://www.macuha.com/2007/11/seo/the-top-7-pinay-scandals-in-yahoo/>>.
- ¹⁰ E.g. 'How to earn from your Pinay \$cand@l sites', posted 27 February 2008, viewed 17 September 2011, <<http://www.gl3nnx.net/make-money-online/how-to-earn-from-your-pinay-candl-sites.htm>>; 'The Pinay Niche strategy revealed! Pinoy 2 SEO', posted on March 1, 2009, viewed 18 September 2011, <<http://blog.pinoy2.com/post/the-pinay-niche-strategy-revealed-pinoy-2-seo/>>.
- ¹¹ Like *KeywordSpy*, <<http://www.keywordspy.com/>>.
- ¹² Emphasis added. Kartunista, comment on 'Cebu Hospital Scandal: Justice for 'Sottoed' Man' by CCHidalgo/Pinoypress.net, 20 April, 2008. Viewed 24 January 2009, <<http://www.pinoypress.net/2008/04/20/cebu-hospital-scandal-justice-for-sottoed-gay-man/>>.
- ¹³ Kate Fox, 'Evolution, Alienation and Gossip: The Role of Mobile Telecommunications in the 21st century', *Social Issues Research Center*, 2001. Viewed 19 September 2009, <<http://www.sirc.org/publik/gossip.shtml>>.
- ¹⁴ Marian Reyes, 'CHISMAX to the Max!: The Celebrity Gossip Economy', *AghamTao* 16 (2007): 37-49.
- ¹⁵ 'Ethel Booba gets even more popular because of 'sex video'. *People's Journal*. Posted 16 May 2005. Viewed 9/17/09, <<http://splasher.halukay.com/2005/05/16/ethel-booba-gets-even-more-popular-because-of-sex-video>>.
- ¹⁶ 'The Porn Supremacy', *Rogue Magazine*, 16 February 2009. Viewed 18 September 2009, <http://rogue.ph/columns/entry/the_porn_supremacy/>. See also Maria Mangahas, 'Images in motion, Filipina bodies, and the secrets of Philippine society: The Pinay in "scandals"', *Images of the Filipina* edited by Flaudette May Datuin, forthcoming.
- ¹⁷ The URL link to this quote is withheld to protect the scandal subjects.
- ¹⁸ Thompson, *Political Scandal*.
- ¹⁹ shegz1218, 'Metrobank Meycauayan Scandal' (Video, 4:12). Viewed 26 January 2011, <<http://wn.com/metrobank>>.

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- ²⁰ Which according to Victor Turner goes through four phases: 1- 'Breach', 2- 'Crisis', 3- 'Redress', and 4- 'Re-integration or recognition of irremediable schism'. Victor Turner, 'Experience and Performance', *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience* edited by Edith L. B. Turner (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1985).
- ²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1991).
- ²² Michael T. Taussig, *Defacement: public secrecy and the labor of the negative*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999).
- ²³ The URL location of the photo is on YouTube, but I choose here not to specify the location so as not to propagate this 'scandal'.
- ²⁴ 'Pasay City: Peeping Tom caught using phonecam on showering teen!'. Posted on December 1, 2006. *The Pinoyspy Reporter*. Viewed 9/5/09, <<http://www.pinoyspy.com/?p=509>>.
- ²⁵ 'P2,000 bail: Man caught peeping under lady's skirt in SM Mall of Asia'. *The Pinoyspy Reporter*. Viewed 9/5/09, <<http://www.pinoyspy.com/?p=721>>.
- ²⁶ 'Man uploads sex video of ex-GF online; is nabbed'. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. p.A20.
- ²⁷ Monforte, Cha. 'Rural Urban News', 2008. Viewed 7/24/09, <<http://ruralurbannews.blogspot.com>>.
- ²⁸ Among other laws, bills including the 'Internet Protection Act', an 'Anti-video Voyeurism Act', an 'Anti-Image Voyeurism Act' and an 'Anti CyberBoso Bill' had been filed in Congress and the Senate as early as 2007. The unified 'Anti-Photo- and Video-Voyeurism Act of 2009' R.A. 9995, with up to 7 years of imprisonment (signed by the President in 2010) prohibits the taking of photo or video of sexual acts and including images of the 'female breast' without consent of the subject, as well as the reproduction of images, selling or distribution, and "publication or broadcast through VCD/DVD, internet, cellular phones and other similar means or device", notwithstanding consent. *Republic Act No. 9995 - AN ACT DEFINING AND PENALIZING THE CRIME OF PHOTO AND VIDEO VOYEURISM, PRESCRIBING PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES*, February 15, 2010. Viewed 12 September 2011, <http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2010/ra_9995_2010.html>.
- ²⁹ See Maria Mangahas 'Images in motion, Filipina bodies, and the secrets of Philippine society: The Pinay in "scandals"', in *Images of the Filipina* edited by Flaudette May Datuin, forthcoming
- ³⁰ Taussig, *Defacement: public secrecy and the labor of the negative*.
- ³¹ Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*.
- ³² 'Malu Fernandez Scandal on TVPatrol World', *Moslemen Macarambon Jr. Personal Blog*, 24 August 2007. Viewed 14 September 2011,

<<http://moslemenjr.macarambon.com/malu-fernandez-scandal-on-tvpatrol-world/>>.

- ³³ The incident recalled a recent fuss that Filipinos had raised over a line spoken by a character in an American soap opera (Teri Hatcher in *Desperate Housewives*) that voiced wariness of possible counterfeit credentials of Filipino doctors.
- ³⁴ ‘Cebu Hospital Scandal: Justice for ‘Sottoed’ Man’ by CCHidalgo/Pinoypress.net, 20 April, 2008. Viewed 24 January 2009, <<http://www.pinoypress.net/2008/04/20/cebu-hospital-scandal-justice-for-sottoed-gay-man/>>.
- ³⁵ E.g. ‘9 YEARS OF ARROYO: A REVIEW: Palace stinks with scandals’. *Inquirer Headlines/Nation*, posted July 25, 2009. Viewed 25/7/09, <http://services.inquirer.net/print/print.php?article_id=20090725-217150>.
- ³⁶ ‘GMA’s Hello Garci ringtones: Now No. 1 nationwide, worldwide’ BY TXTPOWER / JUNE 24TH, 2005. Viewed September 12 2009, <<http://www.txtpower.org/news/gmas-hello-garci-ringtones-now-no-1-nationwide-worldwide>>.
- ³⁷ Alex Magno, ‘Sex’, *The Philippine Star*. May 23, 2009, p.12
- ³⁸ Paolo Chikiamco, ‘Youngblood: They don’t fear us’, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 30 June 2009. Viewed 18 September 2011, <<http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20090630-213064/They-dont-fear-us>>.
- ³⁹ ‘Google trends’. [“pinay scandal”, “sex scandal”, “hello garci” x Philippines x All years.] Viewed April 14, 2011, <<http://www.google.com/trends?q=pinay+scandal%2C+sex+scandal%2C+hello+garci&ctab=0&geo=ph&geor=all&date=all&sort=0>>.
- ⁴⁰ Such creativity also arguably helped the electoral campaign of the next President, whose inauguration concert featured a performer named ‘Juana Change’ who had become recognized from her satirical skits on YouTube.
- ⁴¹ There is already a long discourse on ‘shame’/‘impropriety’ or *hiya* as a particularly painful emotion; and on ‘other-orientation’ (*kapwa*) in Filipino Psychology. See e.g. Jaime Bulatao, ‘*Hiya*’, 269-280, and Virgilio Enriquez, ‘*Kapwa* and the struggle for justice, freedom and dignity’, 356-368, both in *Readings in General Psychology*, compiled by Lotta A. Teh and M E J Macapagal, (Quezon City: Philippine Social Science Council, 1999).
- ⁴² See e.g. ‘Imelda Marcos and the Scandal of the Shoes’, in *The World’s Greatest Sex and Scandals* (London: Chancellor Press, 2001, 336-337 and 339).
- ⁴³ Tilman Baumgartel, ‘The Culture of Piracy in the Philippines’. Asia Culture Forum, 2006, 376; Rolando Tolentino, ‘Piracy Regulation and the Filipino’s Historical Response to Globalization’, *Social Science Diliman*, 5(2008-9):1-25.

- ⁴⁴ On the circulation of jokes and rumors in the Philippines in Japanese time, World War 2, see Vicente Rafael, 'Anticipating Nationhood: Identification, Collaboration, and Rumor in Filipino Responses to Japan', in his *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000, 103-121). For the period during the run-up to 'people power' in 1986 including a discussion of the circulation of jokes see Belinda Olivares-Cunanan, "Bato-bato sa Langit...", *Ninoy, the Man, the Legend*, edited by Asuncion M David (Mandaluyong: Cacho Hermanos, 1984,).

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