

Scrutinizing the Myth of *Kumunity*: The Semiotics of the Philippines' *Pinoy Big Brother* Season 10

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ABSTRACT

In applying Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to the analysis of *Pinoy Big Brother* Season 10 (Dyogi, Katigbak, Vidanes & Andrada, 2021-2022), this study delves into the intricate layers of meaning embedded in the show's 'Kumunity' concept, a term created by the fusion of 'Kumu,' a social media entertainment app, and "community." The primary focus is on unraveling the myth that the 'kumunity' symbolizes within the broader context of the reality television landscape in the Philippines. The investigation meticulously scrutinized selected components of the show—images, music, and dialogues—to elucidate the orders of signification, exposing the nuanced and multifaceted meanings conveyed. The 'kumunity' is portrayed as mirroring a tangible community with shared goals among housemates, showcasing a cohesive objective reminiscent of a localized collective. However, beneath this surface portrayal, this study uncovers a rich tapestry of implicit meanings. These include subtle assertions of authority and power dynamics, the reinforcement of cultural nuances, the elevation and glorification of resilience as a virtue, and instances of disunity within the overarching support system. The study, through extensive analysis, goes beyond the apparent and reveals the intricate web of hidden ideologies within the signs presented in *Pinoy Big Brother* Season 10. It sheds light on the subtle yet impactful societal messages that permeate the realm of reality television, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the show's influence on cultural perceptions and dynamics.

Keywords: *Kumu, kumunity, Pinoy Big Brother, Roland Barthes, semiotics.*

INTRODUCTION

Television viewing has seamlessly integrated into the pastimes and leisure activities of countless individuals. From the advent of mechanical television to Philo Taylor Farnsworth's invention of electronic television, which paved the way for the contemporary television landscape, TV has evolved into an indispensable source of news, information, and entertainment in every household. This technological leap contributed to a new communication era, facilitating swift information dissemination to the viewing public by transitioning from audio-centric to visual-centric broadcast media.

According to a study conducted by the Statista Research Department (2018), Filipino consumers devoted an average of 4.9 hours per week to watching television in 2018. Additionally, the data revealed that respondents reported watching TV for 95% of their monthly time in the same poll. Despite the increasing prevalence of internet usage in the nation, television remains the preferred medium for content consumption among Filipinos. According to a Pulse Asia survey, 91 percent of adults consider television their primary source of information (Maru, 2021).

TV-watching is seamlessly integrated into the daily routines of most Filipinos, becoming a norm during tasks like meal prep and chores. Families incorporate television time into various activities, revealing diverse viewer preferences across genres like breakfast shows, soap operas, comedies, variety shows, and reality programs. The plethora of TV stations, including the merger of ABS and CBN, alongside media companies like GMA, IBC-13, MBC, RPN, and TV-5, offers Filipino households abundant entertainment choices.

The rise of Reality Television Programs (RTVP) has become a notable trend in recent decades, providing unique unscripted content featuring ordinary individuals in genres like hidden camera, talent, game, and dating reality shows. Reality competition series, exemplified by the popular Pinoy Big Brother, emphasize fan support for contestants, contributing to the widespread popularity of the genre.

Originally produced under the franchise of the Dutch reality show Big Brother, Pinoy Big Brother (PBB) premiered its first episode on Philippine television, in 2005. Broadcasting a total of 16 seasons segmented into ten primary seasons, the program concluded its 10th primary season on May 29, 2022, in collaboration with the social media app Kumu. The formation of the PBB community, known as Kumunity (<https://kumu.ph/kumunity/>), commenced in its ninth season, introducing the Kumu entertainment app as an alternative platform for viewer engagement. This addition not only influenced the duration of housemates' stays and tasks but also facilitated social participation, allowing viewers to form connections, friendships, and camaraderie as they coalesced to support a single housemate's progress within the show. The partnership with Kumu has added explicit and implicit meanings to the media program.

However, this discourse acknowledges the potential distortion of the true meaning presented in Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 (Dyogi, Katigbak, Vidanes & Andrada, 2021-2022). This paper centers on the argument that the Kumunity of Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 contains many images with different and varied meanings that must be communicated, revealed, and disclosed to all readers and viewers.

Therefore, employing semiotics as a foundational framework within the realms of film studies (Gibraltar, Adnan & Rahamad, 2023; Zaki & Zainodin, 2020; Ancheta, 2016), advertisement analysis (Manan, Fadhilah, Auni & Salasiyah, 2023; Mohd Jafar, Mohd Adnan & Ahmad, 2022), and related literature in popular culture (Ritonga, Nugroho & Handoko, 2019; Al Makmun & Nuraeni, 2018; Sew, 2015), this investigation aims to scrutinize the diverse meanings surrounding the notion of "Kumunity" as depicted in Pinoy Big Brother Season 10, aiming to dispel any contradictions. Notably, this research is firmly grounded in Roland Barthes' semiotics theory.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate communication intricacies, specifically examining the portrayal and interpretation of the "Kumunity" concept in Pinoy Big Brother Season 10. This approach, chosen for its ability to collect and interpret non-numerical data, such as images and dialogues, facilitates a deeper understanding of the subject (Bhandari, 2020). Descriptive research is incorporated to comprehensively depict the phenomenon (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019; Kumar, 2011), aiding in uncovering the nuances of Kumunity through comprehensive description, explanation, and interpretation. The study follows a qualitative tradition using textual analysis methodology, focusing on understanding words, languages, symbols, and images in texts to provide insights into how individuals interpret and express their daily lives (Arya, 2020; Hawkins, 2017). Barthes'

Semiotics is applied as the theoretical framework, guiding the analysis of explicit and implicit meanings in the visual and auditory elements of Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 episodes, particularly emphasizing the denotative, connotative, and myth aspects of Kumunity.

The primary source of data is the selected episodes of Pinoy Big Brother Season 10, Celebrity Edition, with a specific focus on visual and aural components. Ethical considerations, such as anonymity and confidentiality, are deemed not applicable due to the nature of the research involving textual analysis and semiotic reading without direct participant involvement. The study ensures no harm to individuals and upholds ethical standards by maintaining transparency and conducting the analysis with integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

THE FIRST ORDER OF SIGNIFICATION – DENOTATIVE MEANING OF KUMUNITY

In this section, referred to as the first order of signification in line with Roland Barthes' semiotics, this study explores the apparent, definitional, and literal meaning of the units of analysis – images, music, and dialogues. These units are instrumental in conveying the denotative meaning of Kumunity in Pinoy Big Brother (PBB) Season 10.

The Denotative Meaning of Images

Television programs have always utilized visual elements, leveraging the brain's efficiency in processing visual information. According to Pamplona (2023), 90% of transmitted information is visual, processed 60,000 times faster than text. Recognizing this, visualization becomes a potent tool for effective engagement and comprehension. In the realm of Philippine television, various visual images are employed to enhance programs and subtly convey goals and objectives.

This section aims to explore the literal and definitional meanings of selected images within the reality show Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 Celebrity Kumunity Edition.

1) *Defining the Visual Images of Pinoy Big Brother Kumunity Season 10 Hosts*

Remember the tale of Cinderella and her fairy godmother's assistance or the Greek myth where Athena provided Perseus with a mirror shield to conquer Medusa? These recurring patterns in literature, termed "archetypes," resonate because readers find them relatable. Writers often incorporate archetypes in character traits to engage readers, rallying them towards a shared objective.

Similarly, television programs employ this concept to forge stronger connections with their audiences. However, in the realm of television, whether fiction or reality, the corresponding tool is referred to as "stereotypes." As Ancheta (2013) points out, writers deploy stereotypes in shows or entertainment to tap into the audience's familiarity with symbols linked to specific characteristics, swiftly conveying the nature of characters in the storyline.

a. *The Image of Toni Gonzaga*

Toni Gonzaga, an influential personality recognized for her achievements as a performer, artist, Youtube personality, businesswoman, and host, played a crucial role in Pinoy Big Brother's debut season. Her adeptness in speaking Filipino added an authentic touch to the Dutch Big Brother series, reflecting Filipino hospitality. Serving as Kuya's right-hand woman, Toni's humility in interactions with co-hosts, housemates' families, and fans fostered a

stronger connection with the audience. In the absence of Kuya, Toni became the anchor of the show, gaining prominence and popularity. She assumed a nurturing role, providing guidance to housemates and co-hosts, delivering both good and bad news. Toni emerged as an icon symbolizing unity within the Big Brother house, facilitating connections among individuals inside and outside the house.

b. The Images of Bianca, Robi, Kim, Melai, and Enchong

Prominent Filipino television hosts Bianca Gonzales, Robi Domingo, Kim Chiu, Melai Cantiveros, and Enchong Dee transitioned from being housemates on Pinoy Big Brother to serving as co-hosts of the reality television show. These co-hosts, who serve as Toni and Big Brother's right-hand men, actively interact with evicted housemates, their loved ones, and supporters, which contribute to the community's dynamic environment. Serving as hosts who frequently interact with ex-housemates, they play a vital role in alleviating post-eviction sadness and embody a sense of fun, joy, and camaraderie. Drawing from personal experiences as former PBB housemates, each co-host reflects unity within the house, fostering a sense of community among housemates, viewers, and the reality television show itself. Together, these hosts epitomize the spirit of Pinoy Big Brother Kumunity Season 10, consciously promoting a unified community that bridges the gap between fans and contestants.

2) The Top 5 PBB Celebrity Housemates' Iconography

Contestants are an essential part of any reality television program. In Pinoy Big Brother, these individuals are called "housemates." The show has a variety of housemates, including adults, teenagers, and celebrities, all of whom add to the program's unscripted style.

The top five housemates from Pinoy Big Brother Kumunity Season 10 are the main subject of this analysis, which focuses on celebrity housemates. These famous housemates came from a variety of industries, including comedy, beauty pageants, music, sports, and internet commerce.

a. Alyssa Valdez: Heartstrong Phenom of Batangas

Alyssa Valdez, known as the "Heartstrong Phenom of Batangas," is a renowned Filipino professional volleyball player. In the PBB house, she exhibits leadership skills, serving as a motivating team player. Alyssa's discipline and competitiveness make her a resilient contender in tasks, emphasizing her trustworthy and friendly nature, fostering strong bonds with fellow housemates, and earning her a spot as a finalist.

b. Madam Inutz: Mama-Bentang Live Seller of Cavite

Daisy Lopez Cabantog, aka Madam Inutz, a social media personality and online seller from Cavite, is known as the "Mama-Bentang Live Seller ng Cavite." In the PBB house, her unique personality, characterized by profanity and humor, is emphasized. The show highlights her role as a mother, depicting her sacrifices for her family and assigning tasks related to motherhood. Madam Inutz's strategic approach to challenges and her family's role as motivation underscore her journey within the PBB house.

c. Anji Salvacion: Singing Sweetheart of Siargao

Anji Salvacion, the "Singing Sweetheart of Siargao," is a half-Russian, half-Filipino singer, actress, and television personality. Her musical talent and youthful spirit characterize her role as the "baby" among the housemates. Anji's courage in facing challenges and winning

competitions, including the Head of the Household challenges, establishes her as a formidable contender. Joining PBB to prove her capabilities and learn more about herself, Anji Salvacion embodies the show's theme of self-discovery and personal growth.

d. Samantha Bernardo: Bread-Queen-Er of Palawan

Samantha Bernardo, the "Bread-Queen-Er ng Palawan," is a Palawan-born beauty queen, recognized for her advocacy work in malaria prevention. Samantha uses her platform within the PBB house to educate fellow housemates about malaria and showcase her talents, including gymnastics. Her nurturing role, akin to a mother or older sister, emphasizes her caring and comforting presence. Samantha's multifaceted talents, coupled with her desire to amplify important causes, define her role in PBB as more than just a beauty queen.

e. Brenda Mage: Fun-Along Comedian of Cagayan de Oro

Bryan Roy Tagarao, aka Brenda Mage, a comedian, vlogger, and beauty pageant titleholder, is dubbed the "Fun-Along Comedian ng Cagayan de Oro." Known for her humor and competitiveness, Brenda brings laughter to the PBB house, even in challenging situations. Her comedic personality and penchant for instant affection for boys add a unique flavor to the house dynamics. Joining PBB to fulfill her dream and represent the longest-running Philippine reality show, Brenda Mage's journey reflects her determination and competitive spirit.

These five celebrity housemates, coming from diverse backgrounds, collectively represent the Pinoy Big Brother Kumunity Season 10 Final Five. Their individual characteristics contribute to the show's portrayal of Filipino citizens as leaders, team players, competitive individuals, and family-centric personalities. Through various tasks and challenges, they showcase unity, camaraderie, and the Filipino spirit on a national stage.

The Significance of Television Theme Songs: A Denotative Exploration

Theme songs play a crucial role in television shows, serving as a powerful tool to connect with viewers and enhance the overall storytelling experience. According to Petronio (2021), theme songs leave a lasting impact on audiences, fostering a strong connection with the show. They pique curiosity and encourage greater engagement with the content. In the Philippine television industry, theme songs are particularly vital for subtly conveying the program's goals to the viewers. This research explores the denotative meanings of indicators in reality television, specifically focusing on Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 Celebrity Kumunity Edition. The analysis centers on two distinctive theme songs: "Pinoy Ako" and "Sikat ang Pinoy."

a. The Definition of the Theme Song "Pinoy Ako"

Jonathan Manalo's "Pinoy Ako," performed by Orange and Lemons, has been a cultural staple since its debut in the first season of Pinoy Big Brother in 2005. The song's message of self-acceptance and belief aligns with the program's authenticity tagline, "pagpapakatotoo," fostering pride and unity among Filipinos. The 2021 version, "Pinoy Tayo," featuring Rico Blanco, enhances the anthem with more Filipino cultural elements, celebrating national pride and resilience (ABS-CBN, 2021). Manalo emphasizes that "Pinoy Tayo" serves as a source of comfort, hope, and inspiration, symbolizing a collective celebration of Filipino identity and pride (ABS-CBN, 2021).

b. The Definition of the Theme Song "Sikat ang Pinoy"

Originally performed by Toni Gonzaga and Sam Milby, "Sikat ang Pinoy" emphasizes the exceptional qualities of Filipinos, portraying them as resilient and positive in overcoming challenges. The 2021 version by Agsunta and Kritiko adds a blues-funk rock edge and Gen Z hip-hop vibe, showcasing the song's adaptability. Both versions played a significant role in Pinoy Big Brother Kumunity Season 10, featured in live shows, the opening billboard, and as the housemates' wake-up call. These theme songs underscore Filipino greatness, bravery, and resiliency, portraying the community as distinct for its strength, passion, and determination. The exploration of these songs reveals their integral role in shaping the narrative of Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 Celebrity Kumunity Edition, conveying messages of authenticity, pride, and resilience to the Filipino audience.

The Denotative Essence of Dialogue in Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 Celebrity Edition

a. Dialogue in the Show

A fundamental component of any show, dialogues, executed by hosts, guests, or players depending on the show's genre, plays a crucial role in conveying interactions, setting the mood, and propelling the plot. According to Kotobee (2020), dialogue is pivotal in displaying character dynamics and advancing the storyline. Furthermore, dialogue serves as a conduit for the exhibition of conflicts, revelations, and the communication of essential information to viewers.

b. Appeals to Vote of the Housemates

At the core of the Big Brother franchise, including Pinoy Big Brother, are weekly nominations and appeals for votes. Nominated housemates express gratitude, share personal journeys, and seek support, emphasizing unity among their supporters to secure votes. These appeals, exemplified by celebrities like Karen Bordador, Alexa Ilacad, Eian Rances, Kyle Echarri, and Samantha Bernardo, foster a sense of collective action within the viewing Kumunity, serving as a powerful means for celebrities to connect with their supporters and influence their PBB journey.

c. Other Dialogues in Season 10's Celebrity Edition

Dialogues among housemates and hosts play a crucial role in shaping the narrative of Pinoy Big Brother. Discussions about successful tasks, charity donations, and personal aspirations contribute to understanding emotions and lessons within the Big Brother House. For instance, when housemates deliberated on distributing their PHP 21,000.00 winnings to charity, the dialogue revealed a selfless decision, showcasing a harmonious "Kumunity" aiming to make a positive impact on society through collaboration and generosity. Additionally, Brenda Mage's decade-long journey to becoming a housemate exemplifies themes of perseverance and dedication, resonating with viewers and fostering unity within the Kumunity.

d. Hosts' Dialogue Delivery

Hosts, like Bianca, are pivotal in guiding the Kumunity's engagement by emphasizing the 24/7 monitoring through the Kumu app during celebrity housemate introductions. This effectively communicated how fans could actively support their favorites through virtual gifts, enhancing the Kumunity's interactive experience. Bianca's emphasis on the Kumunity's ability to influence housemates via Kumu reinforced community engagement, fostering a shared purpose and a supportive atmosphere. Thus, the exploration of dialogues in Pinoy Big Brother

Season 10 Celebrity Edition highlights their multifaceted role in shaping the narrative and fostering unity within the Kumunity.

THE SECOND ORDER OF SIGNIFICATION – CONNOTATIVE MEANING OF KUMUNITY

This section delves into the contradictions and underlying meanings of the literal and definitional explanations for the three units of analysis in the study—images, sounds or music, and dialogues. Aligned with the study's second general objective, it evaluates the cultural, historical, and personal associations embedded in the signs to unveil the connotative meaning of Kumunity in Pinoy Big Brother Season 10.

The Concept of Kumunity

Pinoy Big Brother, spanning sixteen years and nine editions, serves as a platform for global housemates to connect and form kumunities. Coined from "Kumu" and "community," the term "kumunity" integrates into PBB in 2020, persisting into its 10th season. As per Kumu (refer to <https://kumu.ph/kumunity/>), "kumunity" fosters a unique online culture where each member, or "kumunizen," is considered an essential contributor. This collective spirit mirrors real communities, valuing unity, while Kumunity Teams organize individuals with shared interests.

Clarabut (2023) notes that communities involve individuals sharing beliefs, committing to common goals, fostering support and contribution. In PBB Season 10, the community concept materializes as housemates collaborate on tasks, emphasizing teamwork and facing the risk of budget loss. Cooperation, incentivized by rewards, reflects dedication among celebrity housemates. Additionally, the show and Kumu collaborate to collect funds for housemates' survival, revealing support extending their stay. However, capitalist influences challenge community values, though the show conceals diverse Kumunity connotations embedded in its signs.

The Connotation of Images

Building upon the denotative meaning of Kumunity, this section unveils the contradictions within the images of Pinoy Big Brother Season 10, aiming to highlight the core values of the community concept. Focusing on the contradiction in the authority and power dynamics, the discussion centers on Toni Gonzaga as an almighty figure and the hosts (Bianca, Robi, Melai, Kim, and Enchong) as emissaries, exploring the subtle nuances and hidden contradictions in their roles.

1. *Possession of Authority and Power: Toni Gonzaga as Almighty and Bianca, Robi, Melai, Kim, and Enchong as Emissaries*
 - a) *Toni Gonzaga as Almighty.*

Toni Gonzaga strategically assumes the role of "Big Sister" on Pinoy Big Brother, cultivating a god-like image to win the sympathy of the Filipino masses. This portrayal is reinforced by the housemates addressing her as "Ate Toni" and the respect shown by other hosts, fostering a sense of inferiority among viewers. Her authoritative presence evokes emotions during evictions and earns appreciation for her guidance. Gonzaga's perceived wisdom, goodness, and fairness contribute to her almighty-like qualities, evident in well-founded commands, a friendly demeanor, and equal opportunities provided for nominees during evictions.

b) Bianca, Robi, Melai, Kim, and Enchong as Emissaries

Other hosts are depicted as emissaries of Toni Gonzaga, disseminating her messages, rules, and desires while holding lesser authority. Acting as substitutes in Toni's absence, they continue to operate under her command. Despite entertaining the audience with humor, their role is viewed skeptically as a strategy for high ratings and revenue. The hosts manipulate housemates' stories, creating a deceptive narrative and benefiting from contestants' misfortunes. The portrayal of authority and power dynamics, with Toni as the almighty and other hosts as emissaries, reveals subtle contradictions and manipulations within the reality show's framework.

2. Contradictions in Top 5 PBB Celebrity Housemates

The examination of the Celebrity Kumunity Top Five—Alyssa Valdez, Anji Salvacion, Samantha Bernardo, Madam Inutz, and Brenda Mage—reveals contradictions in their portrayed identities within the Pinoy Big Brother (PBB) Season 10. Their stay in the PBB House, marked by diverse tasks and challenges, serves as a litmus test for their determination and authenticity, scrutinizing how they align with their assigned monikers.

a) Alyssa Valdez: An 'Unathletic' Athlete

Alyssa Valdez, a renowned Filipino volleyball player, brings a contradiction to her athletic persona. While her extensive athletic achievements signify competitiveness, her participation in PBB Season 10 challenges, marked by the 'heartstrong' mantra, did not align with her supposed winning spirit. Despite her physical prowess, Alyssa failed to embody the expected 'heartstrong' quality, portraying a more mediocre image within the PBB house.

b) Madam Inutz: A Malevolent Influencer

Dubbed the "Mama-Bentang Live Seller ng Cavite," Madam Inutz's moniker is derived from her role as an online seller and the oldest housemate treated as a 'mama.' Contrary to the positive attributes associated with motherhood, Madam Inutz's unfiltered portrayal revealed aspects that contradicted the ideal influencer and maternal figure. Her excessive use of profanity, violations resulting in punishments, and involvement in gossip culture as a self-proclaimed 'Marites' painted a morally questionable picture. This depiction not only tarnished the image of a mother but also perpetuated negative stereotypes about women, notably associating gossip with mothers through the term 'Marites.'

c) Anji Salvacion: Childish and Faker Sweety

Labeled as the "Singing Sweetheart ng Siargao," Anji Salvacion brought her singing talent and sweetness to the PBB House. However, her continuous nominations, totaling 63% of eight nomination nights, revealed a contradictory aspect of her personality. Described as childish, her overacting and clinginess irked fellow housemates, notably pointed out by Alexa Ilacad. Anji's immaturity overshadowed her sweetness, undermining her moniker as a 'sweetheart.' Additionally, her lack of initiative in household chores portrayed her as irresponsible and negligent. Anji's inability to shed tears genuinely raised questions about the authenticity of her emotions, leading to perceptions of fakery among Kumu fans.

d) Samantha Bernardo: 'Queen' in Front of the Camera

Nicknamed the "Bread-Queen-Er ng Palawan," Samantha Bernardo, a professional model and beauty pageant titleholder, faced contradictions in her portrayal. Despite her training in

pageantry, Samantha's lack of participation in household chores drew criticism. TJ Valderrama highlighted her poor decision-making as a task leader, revealing inconsistencies in her role as a 'queen.' Samantha's intellectual prowess, cultivated in pageantry, raised doubts about her authenticity, as her actions might have been staged for the camera, compromising the genuine expression of her self.

e) Brenda Mage: Cheater, Taleteller Comedian

Branded as the "Fun-Along Comedian ng Cagayan De Oro," Brenda Mage's journey in the PBB House unfolded contradictory aspects of his character. Using an 'Immunity Pass' to avoid nominations showcased strategic thinking but also evoked negative perceptions. Brenda's jealousy and emotional entanglements revealed him as a cheater, violating the principles of his external relationship. Additionally, his role as a 'talleteller' or gossip spreader contradicted the positive vibe associated with his comedic persona. Brenda's negative attributes overshadowed his role as a source of joy and positivity in the PBB House.

The Top 5 Celebrity Kumunity of Pinoy Big Brother Season 10, featuring Alyssa Valdez, Anji Salvacion, Samantha Bernardo, Madam Inutz, and Brenda Mage, aimed for victory but revealed weaknesses during their stay in the BNK. Alyssa lacked heart-strong qualities, Madam Inutz resorted to profanity instead of being a loving mother, Anji's extreme sweetness led to overacting and childishness, Samantha portrayed inauthenticity, and Brenda became a model of betrayal and gossip. These shortcomings highlight that celebrities, despite their status, may have negative traits that can influence others adversely.

The Connotation of the Music

Through a meticulous examination and interpretation of the signs, it has been discerned that Pinoy Big Brother plays a role in propagating the fundamental values and essence of community, both within and beyond the confines of the Big Brother house. Nonetheless, this section of the paper aims to bring to light the contradictions uncovered by the researcher within the sounds and music featured in the show.

1. Exploring the Cultural Dynamics in Pinoy Big Brother's "Pinoy Ako"

a) Reinforcement of Cultural Diversity

Pinoy Big Brother, the Filipino adaptation of the international reality series Big Brother, celebrates and promotes Filipino culture and heritage. The show's theme song, "Pinoy Ako" (now "Pinoy Tayo"), has consistently emphasized cultural pride. Over its extensive history, the program has embraced global participation through auditions held not only in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao but also in international locations with significant Filipino communities. Recent auditions transitioned to the Kumu app due to the pandemic, allowing global submissions. The diverse selection of housemates includes individuals from various Philippine regions and foreign countries, embracing those with mixed ancestry, colloquially termed half-Pinoys. In the tenth season, housemates like Anji Salvacion, Jordan Andrews, Shanaia Gomez, and Kyle Echarri, with foreign lineage, reflect this inclusivity. While technically Filipinos, those with foreign blood often experience advantages, with their physical attributes attracting more fans, influenced by colonial mentality ingrained in Filipino society.

b) The Influence of Colonial Mentality on Beauty Standards

In PBB Kumunity Season 10, Filipino fans display a shift in beauty standards, favoring housemates with foreign blood for their perceived beauty and unique attitudes, deviating from common traits associated with pure-blooded Filipinos. This trend is indicative of internalized racial oppression and a preference for foreign aesthetics over local content. The impact extends to nominations, with housemates like Anji Salvacion, a half-Filipina and half-Russian, facing multiple nominations yet retained in the competition due to robust fan support. This pattern isn't limited to Season 10, as historical winners with mixed heritage, such as Kim Chiu, Bea Saw, James Reid, Slater Young, Daniel Matsunaga, and Miho Nishida, suggest an ongoing trend where having foreign blood enhances one's chances of winning in the PBB context.

c) Contradictions in Cultural Representation

Despite "Pinoy Ako" promoting pride in Filipino identity, a contradiction arises as some half-Filipino housemates communicate in English instead of the national language, Filipino. This linguistic dissonance contradicts the song's intent to celebrate Filipino language and culture. Additionally, the song aims to embody Filipino culture and values, but certain housemates with foreign blood occasionally exhibit traits inconsistent with these ideals, such as instances of laziness, challenging the narrative of hardworking and industrious Filipinos. Thus, while Pinoy Big Brother aims to champion Filipino identity, the nuances in beauty standards, language use, and cultural representation reveal contradictions deserving critical examination.

2. Glorification of Resilience in "Sikat ang Pinoy"

The song "Sikat ang Pinoy," initially featured in the 7th season of Pinoy Big Brother in 2016 and reprised in the 10th season, serves as a motivational anthem within the PBB house. It encourages housemates to embody bravery and resilience while facing challenging tasks presented by Kuya (Big Brother). Throughout the season, participants from diverse backgrounds engage in arduous challenges, revealing their determination and endurance. Notable examples include Daisy Lopez (Madam Inutz), who embraced a task requiring her to adopt a contrasting demeanor, and Alyssa Valdez, displaying sacrifice and determination in physically demanding challenges. These instances showcase the housemates' resilience, emphasizing their ability to triumph over varied challenges.

a) Unveiling the Dark Side of Resilience

The anthem "Sikat ang Pinoy" glorifies Filipino resilience, depicting it as an unstoppable force in overcoming adversity. However, the song's celebration extends to situations where resilience might be misapplied. It implies that enduring toxic familial relationships or hardships in unhealthy home setups, as seen in PBB, is not only acceptable but commendable. This narrative prompts critical questions about normalizing prosperity amid adversity and whether surviving against all odds should be the standard upheld, as the song seems to endorse the concept of Filipino resilience.

b) Reevaluating "Filipino Resiliency"

The frequent praise of "Filipino Resiliency," especially in the face of disasters, may overlook the harsh realities and suffering experienced by individuals with psychological, behavioral, or physical conditions. This is evident in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013, where

survivor resilience was acknowledged, but substantive actions for rehabilitation and recovery fell short. Similarly, within PBB Kumunity Season 10, challenges imposed by Kuya are endured by housemates, emphasizing their resilience while potentially neglecting their overall well-being.

c) Normalizing a Vicious Pattern

PBB's recurring challenging tasks prioritize resilience over safety, reinforcing the expectation that enduring difficulties without seeking assistance is integral to Filipino identity. This aligns with the show's emphasis on Filipino culture. However, the use of "Sikat ang Pinoy" may unintentionally contribute to the misuse of personal narratives of pain and recovery. Instead of solely focusing on individual resilience, there is a need for a collective call for accountability from those in authority. This challenges the prevailing perception of Filipino resilience and promotes a more nuanced understanding that avoids exploiting individuals' strength for mere entertainment.

The Connotation of Dialogues in Pinoy Big Brother

Dialogues and conversations play a pivotal role in television shows, especially in dramas, as they serve to convey information and emotions to the viewing public. Beyond the apparent meaning derived from characters' conversations, dialogues guide the audience through the emotional and intellectual realms of the characters, providing insights into the direction of the story. An in-depth analysis of the essence of dialogue unveils not only the critical messages on the surface but also the deeper, connotative, or implicit significance attached to them.

i. Fragmentation of Support through Housemates' Pleas for Votes

During Pinoy Big Brother (PBB) nomination nights, seemingly straightforward appeals for votes from nominated housemates conceal a deeper layer of implicit transaction. Beyond expressing gratitude and seeking salvation, these appeals serve as strategic self-promotion, aiming to attract attention, support, and potential monetary gain, elevating the housemates' celebrity status. The PBB management capitalizes on this symbiotic relationship, leveraging the contestants to tap into the devoted fanbase ("Kumunizens") through Kumu diamonds and text messaging. This strategic alliance benefits both parties, with the show providing exposure and opportunities, while the contestants contribute substantial support in the form of diamonds and votes. The disparities in external fan support among nominees further impact their likelihood of eviction, with those possessing significant fan bases having a higher chance of survival.

ii. The Illusion of Unity in the Kumunity

Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 presented an apparent contradiction to the idea of "Kumunity" as a unifying force for Pinoy fans. Instead of fostering harmony among Filipino viewers, the reality show inadvertently created divisions by amplifying support exclusively for individual favorite celebrities. The Kumunity, far from being a community of unified citizens, was driven by the singular purpose of championing their admired housemate, disregarding the support for other contestants.

In reality, the show perpetuated a sense of competition and rivalry not only within the BNK (Big Brother's house) but also among the patrons of the show outside. The concept of "Kumunity" masked its underlying goal, which was the formation and strengthening of fanatic groups primarily focused on securing financial gains through Kumu and text voting systems. This portrayal concealed the true spirit of unity and community, emphasizing individual loyalty over collective support among fans.

iii. Subtext in Season 10's Celebrity Edition Dialogues

In PBB Season 10, dialogues beyond nomination appeals played a crucial role in updating the "Kumunity" about the show's dynamics. While discussions among celebrities, interactions with "Kuya" (Big Brother), and messages from hosts had a literal meaning, there existed a connotative layer offering additional meanings. Housemates' decisions to allocate winnings for altruistic purposes conveyed a deeper message of prioritizing altruism over self-interest. The dialogues about chosen beneficiaries showcased positive values, emphasizing gratitude and a commitment to embodying love in actions, extending beyond immediate circles. The platform provided by Pinoy Big Brother facilitated these acts, with housemates considering the "Kumunity's" observation in their decisions. Examining Brenda's dialogue revealed aspirants' optimism, but also hinted at a materialistic side, particularly concerning monetary rewards. Discussions between hosts and the Kumunity exposed an exploitation of the show's resources, subtly highlighting disparities between the rich and the poor in supporting contestants. In essence, the formation of the "Kumunity" reinforced the concept of community, yet couldn't mask the fact that the show management treated its consumers as a "money machine" whenever needed. Therefore, dissecting the hidden meanings in dialogues from Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 Celebrity Kumunity Edition provides a nuanced perspective, revealing deeper dimensions of the show's characters and management.

THIRD ORDER OF SIGNIFICATION – MYTH OF KUMUNITY

The previous sections delve into the explicit, universally accepted denotative meaning of "kumunity" and contrast it with the connotative analysis, revealing the socio-cultural and personal implications associated with the term. Additionally, it explores the subtle ideologies embedded within the show's signs. Furthermore, this section explores the ideologies subtly embedded within the show's signs.

Pinoy Big Brother (PBB): The Dream Factory

Over the course of 16 editions and ten main seasons, the Philippine iteration of the Big Brother franchise has evolved into a nationwide reality competition phenomenon. Since its debut in 2005, the show has crowned 17 winners, offering prizes ranging from cash and real estate to business and tour packages, along with management contracts or celebrity opportunities. Pinoy Big Brother has become ingrained in Filipino popular culture, symbolizing the potential for a prosperous life and offering auditionees the chance to transcend poverty and achieve prosperity.

a) Transformation of Dreams into Reality

Pinoy Big Brother and other reality competition series have been instrumental in developing Filipino talent and opening doors for professional advancement in the media sector. These programs have served as factories, turning ambitions into realities and offering a route to achievement for everyone involved—winners, finalists, and participants alike. Despite the

underlying threats of exploitation, capitalism, and invasion of privacy, these platforms have offered hope for a better future through showcased skills.

As Pahad, Karkare and Bhatt (2015) point out, reality television programs (RTVP) influence the viewing community, especially the youth, fostering dreams of celebrity status or involvement in the showbiz scene. The success portrayed in these shows becomes the yardstick for true progress and achievement, with the notion that fame significantly improves one's life.

The power dynamics between the viewing public and the show are evident in the enjoyment viewers derive from voting for their favorites. The show, exemplified by Kumu Decides in PBB Season 10, strategically caters to the dreams of the audience, camouflaging its profit-oriented objectives behind the illusion of responsiveness to viewer requests. The show skillfully manipulates viewer decisions to ensure continued engagement.

b) Bahay ni Kuya's (BNK's) Glamorous Living Experience

Joining Pinoy Big Brother requires no specific skills or qualifications other than authenticity and sincerity. The allure of living in the Bahay ni Kuya (BNK) is tempting, providing contestants with an upper-class lifestyle that includes elegant living spaces, diverse activity areas, and sponsor-provided luxuries such as ice cream and air conditioners. The telecast of BNK creates an aspirational image, enticing hopefuls to vie for the chance to live stylishly despite the challenges within.

The emphasis on material possessions inside the BNK, from PBB-branded luggage to sponsored products, subtly influences supporters. The show's portrayal of a comfortable lifestyle tricks viewers into prioritizing tangible items over the genuine interactions and character development of housemates. The management effectively manipulates the audience's sense of contentment, steering them toward a desire for the materialistic lifestyle presented.

c) PBB as an Institution for Dream Chasers

The BNK has become an institution for dream chasers, housing nearly 400 official housemates since the show's inception in 2005. Pinoy Big Brother serves as an avenue for ordinary individuals to pursue success not only for themselves but also for their families. The show, viewed as an institute for achieving a comfortable and progressive life, reflects the Bahala Na mentality, where patrons rely on destiny to grant them the life they desire.

Pinoy Big Brother Connect Season 9, recorded as one of the most historic editions, attracted an overwhelming 177,524 virtual audition entries via its streaming app partner, Kumu. This surge underscores Filipinos' eagerness to attain fortune through the promised cash prizes and prominence status, yet it also reveals a reliance on the show for a better life. The show's endurance and its ability to fulfill dreams hinge on sponsor support and audience participation in the voting system, showcasing its prowess in masquerading as a life-changing dream giver.

The Perpetuation of Digital Capitalism and Hypercommercialism

In the era of mass media, consumers encounter a plethora of products through various channels such as TV, newspapers, and websites. Classified ads in newspapers and visual media are inundated with advertisements, making advertising vital for the survival of media platforms, particularly television programs that heavily rely on product endorsements.

Hansika (2022) states that marketing goals include increasing brand awareness among the intended audience, broadening the market reach, breaking into new domestic or foreign markets, improving return on investment (ROI), optimizing company revenue, streamlining the conversion funnel, bringing in new potential clients, fostering loyal consumers, and increasing sales.

Media, whether in the form of news, TV shows, or blogs, possesses the power to sway opinions and purchasing behaviors by strategically presenting products. However, the advertised content goes beyond the product itself, involving a concealed layer of ideologies manipulated by advertisers and the ruling class.

Ancheta (2013) proposes that advertisers employ symbols to disguise their selling intent, linking products to audiences by creating a perceived need. In our interconnected world, people are regularly exposed to ads, but their busy lives often prevent them from critically analyzing these messages. Consequently, audiences unwittingly succumb to the strategic plans of advertisers and TV producers, impacting their purchasing choices.

a) Digital Capitalism in PBB Kumunity Season 10

The discourse on capitalism and mass media explores the influential role of advertising in propagating capitalist ideals. Williams (1980) characterizes advertising as the "official art of modern capitalist society," highlighting its dual role in promoting products and shaping cultural values within capitalism. Dorfman and Mattelart (1975) contribute by emphasizing capitalist propaganda in mass media, exemplified in seemingly benign forms like Disney Comics and Disneyland, underscoring entertainment's role in disseminating capitalist ideologies. Additionally, Liberto (2023) defines capitalism as a system where private entities control capital goods, using labor forces for profit, with mass media, especially advertising, playing a significant role.

However, Pace's (2018) study clarifies that digital capitalism operates within processes where digital technology mediates the structural tendencies of capitalism. It is not a comprehensive structure or historical era but a localized realization within digital processes, influencing developments at their intersection with the capitalist structure.

The rise of information communication technologies has ushered in digital capitalism, wherein information networks infiltrate all aspects of culture and economy. PBB Kumunity Season 10 significantly contributes to perpetuating digital capitalism. By partnering with Kumu, a capitalist ICT company, the program secures additional revenue from virtual gifts and Kumu diamonds, showcasing the pervasive influence of capitalism, impacting both labor power and the financial resources of the public.

Hosts like Toni Gonzaga inadvertently encourage viewers to become unwitting victims of digital capitalism through text and in-app voting, contributing monetary value to the program and Kumu app. Media evolves into a direct platform for capitalism to thrive, advertising the goals and desires of capitalists, ensuring the longevity of programs.

Also, PBB hosts Melai Canteveros and Enchong Dee openly commend and perpetuate capitalism in viewers' homes, emphasizing the pivotal role of Kumu in running the top reality television show. Celebrating the partnership with a virtual party further underscores the symbiotic relationship between PBB and Kumu, resembling activities associated with the ruling class.

While Kumu positions itself as a popular social entertainment app fostering a positive online community supporting Filipino voices globally, these efforts primarily serve to enhance Kumu's image and branding, portraying it as an instrument for volunteerism and community support.

Overall, the interplay between capitalism and mass media, particularly through advertising and propaganda, signifies a symbiotic relationship wherein economic ideologies are not only promoted but also ingrained in the cultural fabric of society.

b) Hypercommercialism and YouTube Presence

The show's hypercommercialism is evident in the repetition of promotions urging viewers to download the Kumu application, with hosts detailing exclusive benefits for app users. Baran (2019) defines hypercommercialism as an increase in advertising and blending of noncommercial and commercial media content. In addition, Tanguay (2019) notes the term "hypercommercialism" goes beyond a mere escalation of commercialism, with the prefix "hyper" indicating an illogical intensification that perceives differentiation itself.

PBB extends its reach by broadcasting episodes on its YouTube channel, capitalizing on the popularity of the platform. YouTube's unique feature of turning individuals into celebrities is highlighted by Bauer (2017), noting the financial success of content creators through ad income. PBB earns a substantial amount through AdSense, with episodes garnering thousands to millions of views, translating into significant revenue.

In recent years, hypercommercialism has become a notable concern in the country. The fusion of mercantilism in media and capitalist companies utilizing mass media, advertising, and social media to reach wider audiences raises questions about the prioritization of monetary gains over other values. The excessive promotion of advertisements poses potential problems, challenging the balance between the benefits of advertising for both media and business and the potential drawbacks. As Tanguay (2019) observes, the influence of hypercommercialism, neoliberalization, and financialization on the evolution of reality television, recognized for its engagement in intricate dynamics.

c) Kumu Diamonds: The Soul of the Show

Pinoy Big Brother (PBB) cleverly intertwines capitalism and commercialism beneath its seemingly benevolent reward system. Ancheta (2013) highlights the crucial role of money in the show's success, and PBB Kumunity Season 10 strategically integrates Kumu Diamonds, a virtual currency, into its narrative. This incorporation serves as a revenue opportunity, subtly perpetuating capitalism, as viewers purchase Kumu Diamonds during lucrative eviction nights to vote for their favorite contestants. Mirroring De Beers' marketing strategy (Presnall, 2019), the phrase "Diamonds are forever" associates emotional support and saving with the virtual currency, aligning Kumu Diamonds with enduring impact in the digital realm. In essence, the show artfully disguises capitalism within entertaining elements, positioning Kumu Diamonds as a lasting influence at the intersection of media, technology, and commerce.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study reveals that Pinoy Big Brother Season 10 Celebrity Edition effectively introduced the "Kumunity" concept through images, music, and dialogues, portraying housemates as representatives of a united Pinoy community. While emphasizing authenticity and determination, the show reinforced Filipino identity and showcased a diverse group

fostering cooperation to overcome challenges. However, in the Celebrity Edition, there were instances where the Kumunity concept seemed compromised, with individuals pursuing personal gain and the unintentional creation of divisions among fans. The broader context of Pinoy Big Brother as a reality TV program exposes concealed ideological meanings, particularly the influence of capitalism, within its signs. Such programs, including PBB, act as catalysts for societal constructs, allowing capitalism to permeate society in exchange for sponsorship and support. The entertainment presented on television screens often obscures underlying business-driven and ideologically packaged agendas, as exemplified by PBB's success in veiling its motives through the creation of the Kumunity concept.

BIODATA

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