

ADSA – MonoVlog

Hey, guys! Welcome back to our channel. And to those of you who are new here, please don't forget to hit the blue bell button and subscribe. Today as a continuation of our quarantine journey, we have with us someone who's also going to share with us her own quarantine journey. She's a university assistant professor and a stage actress. So guys, let's all welcome Ms. Olivia Nieto!

L: Hello, Olivia.

O: Hello!

L: So what have you been up to?

O: During the start of the lockdown last March, I was at my sister's condo unit. And remember we were chatting and you asked me if I want to try doing a vlog on FB live but with a monologue somewhere inside of the vlog?

L: Or a vlog inside of a monologue. Yes, I do remember that. And we've had how many?

O: Thirteen.

L: Oh we already had thirteen. So how was it? How did you find it?

O: I had a lot of fun, and I also learned a lot by sharing my day to day experiences while connecting them with the experiences of the characters you wrote for me.

L: If I remember it right, that's our main idea. To do a vlog wherein you're just sharing something about your life and then somewhere there, during your sharing, you are to portray a character who's also doing a vlog and sharing something about her life. And then we'll see if your FB friends who are with you during your fb live may connect or relate with the things that you and your characters are sharing. And eventually it became some sort of a support group as the concerns of different individuals including fictitious ones were discussed.

O: But it wasn't limited to my FB friends. Because we decided that the FB live should be made public since there were friends of friends of friends who started to message or send me friend requests as they also wanted to watch the monovlog.

L: Oh that's very interesting because even if you were sequestered at home you were meeting new people, gaining new friends.

O: That seems to be one fruit of the digital or the Internet era. We have two planes all at once where we can live our lives. We have the physical plane, and of course the cyber plane.

L: So can you tell us about these new people you've met while you were performing these thirteen monovlogs.

O: One person I couldn't really forget was this politician.

L: Oh a politician.

O: She's known as the Ate ng Bayan, Ate ng Magandang Kinabukasan. Or the Town's Big Sister, The Bright Future's Big Sister.

L: And how do you find her?

O: I think the more appropriate question should be, How did she find the monovlogs.

L: Oh. She didn't like them?

O: She did her own monovlog.

(O to Ate.)

Ate: Wait. Wait. My signature look. We have how many minutes more? No, no, no. Not for the whole FB live but before we go live. Thirty seconds? (*Rushes to prepare, looks at monitor*) I'll just click this? Or do I have to do something else? Ah ok. Just a little bit of final touch and we'll go live. (*Clicks*)

Hey, guys! Welcome to our town's FB page. I'm your town's big sister, your bright future's big sister. Your very loving mayor who loves you, and you, and you. You, Bryan. You, Oscar. You people of Barangay 52. You all from Nieto Street. All of you. As promised, I'm going to give you an update about what I am doing for our town. And I am to answer your questions, just comment them down below.

Oh, thank you for a lot of hearts. Keep on clicking the heart shaped icon. You're making me feel the love and that should be the case because I also love you all. Because I am your mayor, your town's big sister, your bright future's big sister.

Why do I have an angry react? Who sent an angry react? Can I see? Will I know? How will I know who sent that?

What right do you have to send me an angry react?

You watched that monovlog, didn't you? Is that what it's called? Or it's just a monologue done on cam? Comment down below.

I didn't even understand what that was. But I didn't like it. The nerve of that actress or vlogger, or whatever she is to question the live chickens I gave you all. What's wrong with a living chicken? It's a whole chicken. You can cook it in whatever way you want to. You can even turn it into a pet.

My job as mayor is to find ways to feed you while we're all in quarantine. It is no longer my job to teach you how to kill those chickens, pluck their feathers out and cook them as tinola or adobo, fry them, boil them, or what have you. I don't even care if you eat them alive. I already gave you food, now eat it.

(Reads at monitor) "It is a performance. A work of fiction." So what if it is a performance or a work of fiction. I was hurt. You have this monovlog with a vlogger showing how she's preparing to cook a live chicken, then all of a sudden she becomes me. Me! Me! I don't even eat chicken because I'm a strict vegetarian!

(Reads) "She wasn't playing you. It was a parody of all politicians." That's it. All politicians! I AM a politician. I belong to ALL POLITICIANS. She portrayed me. Showed me as a heartless politician who's only desire is power. How can I be like that? My only desire is to help you all, guys. All of you. I am your town's big sister, your bright future's big sister. I love you all.

(Looks at monitor) Another angry react? Two more angry reacts? More angry reacts! Stop it! Stop it! I don't want to see angry reacts. I'm doing everything I can. The lockdown was sudden. I have to feed you all. I have to think of the design of our quarantine pass. You think those glitters on your quarantine pass just came out of nowhere. That was my idea. I have to coordinate with the police force, all barangay captains, my councilors, the vice mayor, the public health officials, everyone, everyone at all. And you, you townspeople I love you all, what have you done?

You give me angry reacts. You bash this page. You even bash my own personal fb account. How many times have I deactivated my fb account? You made a hashtag of me. Hashtag where is mayor your town's big sister your bright future's big sister. That's a tacky and long hashtag.

Where was I? I was here all along. In our town. In my house. Thinking, thinking of how we can all survive this pandemic. Then this, that, that monovlogger or whatever she's called had the gall to question my decisions.

That monovlog is insensitive. It's insensitive to my feelings!

(Reads) "It is a vlog which shares the vlogger's life and connects it with other's lives through performing a monologue." I don't care! That monovlog hurt me! Bashed me! It ruined my life. *(Composes self)*

(Reads) "How?" What do you mean, how? You, lonelygirl30, where are you? Do you know her? Comment down below. Where are you lonelygirl30? What do you mean by

how? Lonelygirl30, I'm calling you. Don't make me order our chief of police to look for you. Lonelygirl30 you comment down below. Lonelygirl30! Lonelygirl30!

(Beat. Inhales deeply. Stands up. Juggles. Go back to monitor.)

O: Hey guys! Did you like my juggling? I'm still not a professional juggler but I've been juggling so many things for so long. I'm juggling my job as a university assistant professor, my passion as a theater actor, my roles as a daughter, a sibling, a friend, a tenant, taxpayer, a consumer, and a lot more. Now, I'm also a vlogger. Yes, comment down below the things you juggle too.

And shoutout to our 34 viewers. Hello, Aling Ada. That's Ms Ada my next door neighbor. Aling Ada, tone down the noise at night. It's not that I don't appreciate your singing. I do love *(sings OA)* "Ayoko sana na ikaw ay mawawala, mawawasak lamang ang aking mundo. (I don't want you to go. My world will be shattered into pieces)." But I love hearing it when it's not three o'clock in the morning. And I'm not trying to get some sleep. So, Aling Ada. Please sing only when I'm not sleeping.

Ok.

We already have 36 viewers. And we're at monovlog 14. Layeta our writer just emailed me the script now. And she told me to just do a dramatic reading because according to her there is urgency in this performance. I'll read part of her email. Uleb, this has to be done now. Because a friend of mine is in an isolation facility. He'll be watching. And I hope we can cheer him up as he battles the coronavirus.

Yes, Aling Ada. Thank you, thank you for the prayers. And I just want to remind us all that this is a monovlog. Though I'm vlogging a monologue or delivering a monologue in vlogging format, the text is original and is a structured reality. This is my online persona, look at me.

(Reads) Oh, Aling Ada says I look like this everyday.

You're very right, Aling Ada. That's the vlogging part. I have to be who I am. Have to keep it real. It's as if I am allowing you all entry to my life or a snippet of my life.

What we've been doing here is to blur the line between what is real and what is fiction.

(Reads) Aling Ada, you're so active today ha? "Why do we have to do that?"

Because what we post online though not the total truth in our physical plane may be deemed as real. We have people believing in fake news. We have people believing in the little tweaks we do on our physical reality.

Look at me, Aling Ada. You always tell me that I am a happy person. That I am always perky. That nothing rattles me. But at night, at three o'clock in the morning, when I hear you sing, it's not that I don't want to hear you sing. I love your singing because it assures

me that there's someone living next to me. That when I scream, someone will hear it. And there's a chance someone will rush to me.

But all these uncertainties nowadays, sometimes they take a toll on me. I can't sleep. So many fears. So many questions. So many doubts. Will I contract the virus? Will I get infected? Does the WHO know everything about the virus. Is there a conspiracy behind it all? Is this even real? Or is this a nightmare? I last saw my mom during her leap year birthday this year. Will I ever see her again? I miss having a love-hate-hate relationship with my mother. Mama, don't get out of the house.

I stare at the ceiling and I feel my mind is no longer in the present. It goes back, back then when I was a child. Back then when all I had to worry about was who among me and my siblings will get the biggest slice of my mother's cake. Was it worth it? All the experiences I had. All the things I learned. What's the worth of getting an education? Or having a profession? Of working? Of having a passion? Of falling in and out of love? Of gaining friends and enemies? Was it worth it? Was my life worth something?

And then slowly, without me knowing it, I fall asleep. And then you sing. I wake up. And then I realized, I'm lying in a mattress on the floor. Hugging a cheap pillow from Lazada. I hear you, and I know I'm alone.

You're with your family. Your husband and your daughter, and your daughter's two children. Cramped in a studio unit just like this one. I would imagine you all: where you also sleeping on the floor? How could you even fit in that studio unit? Is there someone already sleeping on the sink? What are you hugging? The refrigerator? And as I imagine, as I imagine you and your family, I question my choice. Was it the right choice? To be alone. To live in isolation.

I would stretch my arms and feel blessed that I have more than enough space for my stretched arms to cover. I would stand up and juggle and feel blessed that I have the means to buy things I just want to try. I would sit in front of my computer, open facebook or Instagram. Watch youtube videos and think how blessed I am for having a laptop, home wifi, and even a chair to sit on.

You told me once, it is only your daughter who owns a laptop. Everyone in your family takes turn in using it. And you can only use it while everyone is already asleep. And that's around three in the morning. When you can open youtube and sing with a videoke of your favorite songs.

I don't know if I will exchange my laptop for a chance to share my studio unit with other people. Will the limited space make me irritated with them? Will I long for silence, or the freedom to do anything I want to do.

I don't know, Aling Ada. And I'm not even sure if I want to know.

(Looks at the monitor) Oh, Aling Ada. No need for tears react. We may no longer be seeing each other since you're high risk and you know how people come and go in our alley. But as long as you sing at three in the morning, I know you're still there. There, next door. Behind a wall.

(reads) "I have sore throat." *(Laughs)* So you can no longer sing. *(Laughs)* It's ok. You're watching my monovlogs. Keep on watching. Thank you, for not letting me feel alone and lonely. Let's touch each other. *(Touches the monitor)*

(Beat)

L: Oh wow. I didn't know you were able to meet both bashers and those who showed you their love.

O: I think that's one of the things that made this journey special. In each monovlog, since it's being done on FB live, the viewers are encouraged to be part of the performance. There's already a conversation happening between the viewer and the vlogger with each clicking on an emoji or whatever they type on the comment section. When the vlogger transforms into a character, the viewers need not be passive. They continue with the engagement. Even asking the character for a shoutout. So, in a sense, the viewers are very much active participants in the shaping of the performance itself. They're not just reacting by typing whatever they want in the comment section, they are interacting with the performer, that whatever they put in the comment section becomes part of the performance.

L: Were there comments which really interested you?

O: There was this one comment asking for my address. *(Starts transforming)* At first I chided the commenter. "Why are you asking for my address? Are you from Coca Cola?" Because remember that time, we were joking that we were wishing for a product placement and I'd always mention Coca Cola. So it became like a running joke in our monovlogs *(Transforms into an animated babaeng bakla)*

BB: Girl, she's so pitiful, I'm telling you. You have to watch it. They call it like a monovlog with a capital M and a capital O or something. There's this vlogger who asks the viewers about their day and then she'll share what's happening to her life. You know? The typical vlog. Sometimes she'd juggle or play with a hula-hoop. Talk about current events. Show an area in her house. Or just talk about a big hat that she is wearing. Then somewhere along the way, you'll realize it's no longer her but a character. They have like this script and apparently there's drama somewhere. There's like this narrative. So it feels as if, you know? As a viewer I'm also like *(in quotation)* PLAYING roles. Like at first, I'm just me. Like myself. Me. Then all of sudden she's addressing me like her mother, or her constituent, or her neighbor, or her friend, or even her husband. *(Laughs)* No, no. It's not like I'll gonna be there with her performing a character, too. It's on FB live, girl. I can't just enter the frame. But at times I'd really feel as if I'm ... I'm ... I'm ... I don't

know. As if I'm feeling what like a husband is supposed to feel. Or like how a poor town's citizen would feel. Yeah! Like in your case, girl. Can you even imagine it if someone would knock on your door then gives you a live chicken? Like what are you going to do with the chicken? Your maid already went home to her province. We're like on the same boat. We're living alone in our condo units. So what are we going to do with a live chicken? I don't even want to see one. You know I have so many allergies.

But then, she was already addressing me as her mother who's waiting for her to get home. Because you know, the character is a frontliner, like a poor nurse. She got the chicken from their ... this little health center in a barangay. And then she's doing a video chat. I guess in that monovlog it says that the character is talking to her mom thru viber or maybe fb video call or something. *(Laughs)* Girl, we're talking of poor people here. They're not doing face time. But what really got me was when as a character, she was all excited telling her mom to wait for her because she'll be bringing home this whole chicken. And so I was watching it. And she was looking at me, talking to me as if I'm her mom. And ... and I just suddenly felt like I was also getting excited too. I just started imagining that I also had like six grandchildren who weren't sure if they'll have something for dinner because the marketplace is closed, and we couldn't just hoard stuff from the grocery because we've been budgeting this measly monthly income of their aunt nurse on a daily basis.

I don't know, I got so drawn to it. And so when the character has already been dropped and she becomes the vlogger again, she started saying that she herself was getting low on supplies. And then she joked about it. That the canned goods that were only meant to be opened on special occasions have already been wiped out. And then on that instance, I just felt that I should be doing something. Like, you know how huge my pantry is. And I'm such like a hoarder. *(Laughs)* I know right? I've been watching too many zombie apocalypse movies and tv series. So, I feel that I'm so ready for a zombie outbreak. And so, I asked her for her complete address in the comment section. Yes. Yes, she was still on fb live. It was in the middle of the monovlog. You can type whatever you want in the comment section and I guarantee you girl, she'll gonna acknowledge it. No, not just shoutouts. Whatever. It's like you're already part of it. And so, to cut the long story short, I sent her a care package.

(Laughs) Yes. I just sent a total stranger a care package. Not too much really. Just some canned goods, toiletries, rice, you know? The usual care package. Just S & R stuff. *(Laughs)* Of course, she thanked me. In the next monovlog, she really thanked me a lot. And then she joked that it came from a very wealthy lady. I really had to comment. So I typed on the comment section that ... *(Laughs)* Yes, yes. You know me well. Wealthy only, not very. *(Laughs)*

It was your maid 'no? She was the one who sent me the link. And you know how she is. She keeps on sharing, sending all these memes, and vids, and posts.

But you really have to try it. They're all in the Uleb Nieto account. I'll gonna type it here. *(Types)* That's Uleb Nieto. And they're not private. So you can just watch them. And

they're kinda short. Around 12-15 minutes. Like the usual vlogs on youtube. But this is done live. So, you may want to send her a friend request so you'll get notified whenever she'll go live.

Worth a try, girl. You're not doing anything there. I know you're bored. I've been seeing your Instagram posts. Come on. So you just try it. If you don't like it, then do something else. *(Laughs)*

What? What do you mean? Oh you googled it. *(projects Tatang and nora)*. Oh I didn't know this. See? It's being adopted by others. Is that Nora Aunor? Yeah, of course. I know Nora Aunor. I'm not just into K-Pop. How could I not know Nora Aunor, she's like the superstar or something. *(Laughs)* Yeah, my grandmother was a fan. I bet your grandmother was a fan too. OMG, look at that. She's doing it. She's doing the monovlog. And ... oh this is from Tanghalang Pilipino of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Oh, nice.

I remember there was this one monovlog where it was mentioned that the monovlog was already being done in Bicolano. Yeah, of course the Bicol language. It was I guess a group called Sining Banwa. So they've been like translating the monovlogs into their own language and then doing it on fb live.

And what's this? What's link? Oh nice. It's done as a contest in high school. Look at those teeners, they're so cute. They're vlogging and performing a monologue at the same time. I don't know if I could do this when we were in highschool. *(Laughs)* I don't know. I'm not a performer. I'd rather be a viewer or an audience. But ... it feels so good to realize that you're actually part of the performance. I don't know. You know me. I'm so Me, Me, Me. So it felt good that I wasn't just watching. Like my existence was being acknowledged. Like when she started thanking me, there were viewers who were also thanking me in the comment section. So I started to also thank them for thanking me. *(Laughs)* And then, yes. You know the story now. That's how I met Robbie.

L: That's a very lovely story you just shared. So a total stranger just chanced upon a monovlog, then watched it, and eventually sent you a care package.

O: Yes. I kept the bag. *(Shows whatever bag)*

L: So did you become friends eventually?

O: Yes. And she's just one of the many who became my friends because of having performed monovlogs.

L: So what happened to her? Did she also gain some other friends?

O: *(Laughs)* You should invite her as a guest in this channel.

- L: (*Laughs*) I'll do that. I'll do that. So let's get it straight. In the monovlogs, you're basically sharing your life or your day to day existence –
- O: You made me share it.
- L: Yeah, of course. Because that's vlogging. But anyway, eventually through a character the monovlog has been able to comment on current events ...
- O: It became a form of protest from home. Since we were in a lockdown, we couldn't physically gather in one place and stage our protest. But we can also gather online. And then open up discussions on pertinent issues through a performance.
- L: Like creating a community online?
- O: In a way, it did become a community. The personal is always very important in the monovlog. I'm guessing that's one appeal of vlogs and vloggers. They're personal.
- L: Or they appear to be personal.
- O: You can say that.
- L: And once the monologue is already there, the vlogger and the viewers are lured into the personal story of the character. That in the end, they become one. Is that how it feels?
- O: Yes, the monovlog is an exploration of a different kind of the spectator's agency through collaborative engagement and interactive story building. It is also an exploration of humanity, and a confrontation of the problems of distractions during the global health crisis, by focusing on the state of the country, and the welfare of the frontliners including the artists who provided care in their online performances.
- L: So, if you're going to describe the experience as a whole ..
- O: It reminds me of the concept of *kapit*. You know? Holding on to each other as an emergent and emergency response to performance-making in the time of physical distancing and the digital as the platform.
- L: And the irony is very poignant because while the existence of the virus resulted in physical distancing, it is also able to gather people online and establish groups and communities in your case, through performance or through the monovlog.
- O: Yes. We are continuously investigating on ways of contextualizing the role of collaboration and performance ecology in the time of the pandemic, and of converting practical experiments and temporary communities to propositions for new approaches to performance-making, for reimaged classrooms, and for understanding how we can hold on to each other as a community to live with the dangers imposed by COVID-19.

L: And because of the emergency brought about by the virus –

O: We have an emergent form.

L: Which is still in its experimental stage. As we discover more possibilities, more things that we can do when we mesh the vlog and a monologue together.

O: Yes. And may I just read from Theater and the Digital. (*Reads*) “Live interaction, genuine intimacy, real presence, and bodily expression are all exactly what the digital lacks, and indeed often seems to suggest we could just as well do without.”

This changes everything as we are staying home to stay safe from the virus and all we have is the digital interactions, the realest of interactions at this moment. Resistance to the digital is futile.

And to continue, “On the theoretical side, pushing at the digital frontier means rethinking the very idea of the theatre and the nature and status of the audience. On the more practical, entrepreneurial side, the digital embrace is about building relationships.”

L: And with that, thank you for being in our channel tonight. I hope you enjoyed being us as we enjoyed having you here. And to you dear viewers, our quarantine journey continues. Don't forget to hit on the blue bell button. Comment down below your thoughts and what you want us to feature here in our channel. So bye for now.

O: Bye! May I do a shoutout?

L: Yeah of course. Shoutout.

O: Shoutout to my next-door neighbor Aling Ada! Thank you for the champorado and dried fish.

L: Hello, Aling Ada. I love champorado and dried fish too. Ok, bye guys.

O: Bye.