Who can change the world? 
Resistance as Communication and METU Advertisements 

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Abstract 

In 2012, Middle East Technical University (METU), one of the most prestigious universities in Turkey, launched a television advertising campaign to reach top-ranking students. Immediately after the broadcast of the commercial, a group of METU students produced an alternative video and streamed it on the Internet. This paper analyzes the alternative video, a parody of the official METU commercial, to better understand changing forms of resistance in everyday life. The students construct an identity of resistance, clearly differentiated from the official student identity in the METU commercial, opposing the commodification of education and the marketing of a consumer-student identity. As a result, they are representative of contemporary resistance against the capitalist ideology of production and consumption. 

Keywords 
Advertising, resistance, identity, new media, Turkey 

Introduction 

In late July 2012, Middle East Technical University (METU), one of the most prominent universities in Turkey, aired a commercial on leading television networks in Turkey. Like the first METU commercial, broadcast the previous year,¹ this second piece of TV publicity² stirred up great controversy. The commercial, which featured some of the most distinguished alumni of METU – including famous writers, scientists, and the CEOs of banks and financial institutions – marked the first time a university had advertised on Turkish television. Turkey’s Higher Education Council (YÖK) launched an investigation into whether state universities were permitted to advertise using traditional media. The debate over the legality of the commercial paved the way for other universities to televise advertisements. A year later, METU’s second commercial appeared on TV. Rather than focusing on prominent alumni, the second commercial featured a single METU student and the praise he received from family, close relatives, friends, and acquaintances. The second advertisement became well known because, soon after it aired, a group of METU students released an alternative promotional video on Vimeo³ and later on YouTube. In the video, current METU students from different departments appear in various parts of the campus, each declaring their opposition to the branding of METU, and highlighting their struggle to achieve their goals on campus. The profound contrast between the official commercial and the alternative video is striking. The official METU commercial is a high quality production. Furthermore, some of the advertising professionals who produced the commercial are METU graduates. On the contrary, the alternative video is an amateur production with poor visual and sound quality, shot by the students themselves. Yet it is still a powerful and effective medium of communication. The students’ version takes a provocative and critical stance toward the original, claiming that METU creates a hostile environment for students who are Lesbian/Gay/Bi-sexual/Transgender (LGBT), disabled, female, or opposed to the hegemonic norms and values of the university. 

In this article, by analyzing the alternative METU student video, I strive to understand and conceptualize its significance as a tactic for resistance, circulating as it did on the Internet as a new media production. Since the students describe this production as an “alternative METU promotional video,” throughout the paper, I refer to this video as an alternative promotional video, rather than a commercial. A standard definition of advertising is a paid form of communication by an identified sponsor, which uses mass media to persuade or influence consumers of a product, service, company or ideas (Wells, Moriarty, Burnett and Lwin, 2007, p. 5). In the classical sense, the effort of the students at METU is not an advertisement, since the message is not sponsored and it is not a strategic communication directed to a target consumer. However, it is a promotional text that takes up space and time on new media. Its production and publication is a tactic motivated by objectives: a non-commercial form of communication that tries to convey a message through the media. Hence, it shares a dimension of “promotional culture” (Wernick, 1991) that is dispersed in all forms of communication. I argue that in any system where the rules are established by hegemonic institutions, oppressed or otherwise marginalized individuals and groups often utilize uncommon or new methods of asserting identity. The video is an example of such a form of resistance, asserted through the use of new media. In the video, METU represents a microcosm of a global hegemonic institution of higher education. The alternative, student-produced video gives voice to the marginalized and underrepresented populations of METU who
are excluded from the official video in much the same way that marginalized people are unrepresented in official discourse. I examine the students’ attempt to create an alternative as a tactic for gaining influence in an era of new media. By articulating resistance and identity, these students create new meanings for the concept of a ‘METU student identity,’ which the official commercial attempts to brand and market. In this video, the students explicitly criticize the higher education system of the capitalist economy, which attempts to market teaching and research. From the students’ perspective, education is thus reduced to a commodity that can be traded and sold. By producing an alternative video, the METU students challenge the marketing of the university, the branding of METU students, and the commodification of education at large while simultaneously forming, manifesting, and acting out a new understanding of resistance in everyday life.

Therefore, while exploring resistance to capitalist ideology – in this case, the alternative METU promotional video – I also reflect on the wider implications of resistance as a general concept, particularly examining resistance in everyday life through the changing meanings of consumption and production. Both Michel de Certeau (1988) and Henri Lefebvre (1971) define everyday life as an activity in which commodification, control, creativity, and resistance occur simultaneously. Following de Certeau and Lefebvre’s conceptualization of everyday life, my focus in this paper will be on the nature of resistance in video, and media as a popular communicative tactic employed by the weak and oppressed. In this paper, I consider the alternative promotional video a tactic for “escaping without leaving” and “a weapon of the weak” for resistance in a de Certeauian sense (1988, p. 23). Although the term tactic is widely used in communication, media, and cultural studies, I use it in the sense offered by de Certeau (1988): “a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus,” and “an art of the weak” (p. 37). I also employ Paul Routledge’s (1997) definition of resistance, which refers to “any action, imbued with intent, that attempts to challenge, change, or retain particular circumstances relating to societal relations, processes, and/or institutions…. Resistance is assembled out of materials and practices of everyday life and imply some form of contention, some juxtaposition of forces” (p. 69).

The article begins with an analysis of official advertisements and the alternative promotional video, which offers insights into different aspects of the “tactics” of the weak (de Certeau, 1988). In the second section, I discuss the importance of place and space for resistance in everyday life, with regard to the use of the campus in the alternative video. Then, in the third section, I explore the articulation of resistance and identity through the construction of an alternative student identity as a type of operation for dealing with the marketing and advertising strategies of METU. Before concluding, I problematize the relationship between production and consumption, and explore the concepts of user and consumer as an identity differentiation strategy employed by these METU students.

Rearticulating Advertising and Capitalism

Advertising, as a global and conspicuous medium of promotional communication and a discursive practice of modern society, is more than simply a means of selling goods (Leiss, Kline, Jhally & Botterill, 2005; Cross, 2002; Williamson, 1978). As Raymond Williams (1960) accurately states, advertising is a magic system and an organic part of the culture of a confused society. Thus, for Lefebvre (1971), the advertiser is the magician of modern times (p. 55). If we consider advertising from a de Certeauian perspective, this imaginary world ensures the existence and resistance of the weak against the reality of the established order. For de Certeau, there is no way of escaping the dominant order, but there are “ways of operating” within this order. Hence, “escaping without leaving” is possible within the existing system. In this context, advertisements are able to function as a tactic and an apparatus to manipulate the system from within.

Now, more than ever, exploring and analyzing new media as an instrument of resistance of the weak may lead to the best possible understanding of economic, social, cultural, and financial institutions and practices in modern capitalist society. In the capitalist market economy, not only goods and commodities but also each service and piece of information are produced as markers and communicators for interpersonal distinction, self-expression, and identity (Hebdige, 1979; Leiss, Kline, Jhally & Botterill, 2005; Williams, 1960; Fiske, 1989). In such a competitive economy, through the process of commodification, even public services such as education are transformed into economic goods that can be marketed, branded, and sold (Olssen and Peters, 2005; Peters, 2002).

Ron Barnett argues that “marketization has become a new universal theme manifested in the trends towards the commodification of teaching and research, and the various ways in which universities meet the new performative criteria, both locally and globally in the emphasis upon measurable outputs” (as cited in Olssen and Peters, 2005, p. 316). From this perspective, as stated by an adviser to the rector of the university, METU’s advertising campaign is an attempt to attract the highest-performing students in order to increase the overall educational standing of the university (Ogel, 2011). However, the effect of such commercials is to transform the university into a commodity that can be selected and purchased, turning education into merchandise to be sold for profit. In a dialogic relationship
with the official advertisement, the alternative promotional video can be seen as the direct outcome of opposition to the formal and authoritative discourse of METU. In other words, the silenced voice of the weak and oppressed is represented through the student-produced parody of the official METU commercial, which excludes unrepresented and marginalized members of the student body and deprives them of the power and authority to be heard. One example is a female student’s condemnation of the patriarchal dominance and oppressive discourse about virginity, especially with regard to a statement by the Office of Cultural Affairs that “there are no women (kadin), only girls (kız) at METU.”4 The word “kız” carries multiple meanings in Turkish. The word implies a young female from her infancy to puberty stage but also connotes virginity, as opposed to the word kadin, which is associated with a sexually mature female who has lost her virginity. This statement was made in response to a request to establish a women’s association for students. Similarly, in the video, two students proclaim that the Office of Cultural Affairs prevented the establishment of an LGBT student club. Another student criticized METU for ignoring the needs of its disabled students.

Another tactic used to emphasize the contrast between the METU advertisement and the parody concerns the role of the student who is the subject of the official commercial. In the official version, the subject speaks only after his mother, brother, grandfather, girlfriend, and neighbor, have finished delineating his personality and qualifications, finally reifying his METU identity himself. In contrast, the parody gives voice to the students from the beginning. The reason behind this stark difference is that the former aims to influence and attract specific consumers (prospective university students), while the latter resists this ready-made branding strategy and creates its own significance. Thus, in the alternative promotional video, the students describe the institution in their own terms, as a place that restricts freedom. By denouncing the official commercial as “a fraud” and accusing the university of “charlatanism” (şarлатan) in the rhetorical context, they claim their own space in a discursive realm. This example of a student-produced internet video parodying the advertisement highlights the growing significance of new media and communication technologies and the role of new technologies in marking boundaries between conventional professional commercial productions and the newly possible amateur video productions, which are recognized as a tactic of the weak in the space of powerful (de Certeau, 1988, p. 122, xix).

METU’s official commercial was broadcast using traditional media, during primetime on popular television channels. However, the students chose new media to run their promotional video. Amani Ismail (2009) explains that mainstream media is criticized for carrying the voices of authorities and officials, as opposed to the voices of the less powerful and marginalized. Ismail (2009) proposes that “cyberspace has arguably functioned as an open forum for those with access and technological know-how to express their ideas, regardless of how socially and culturally accepted or shunned they are” (p. 1). In addition to its low cost and broad dissemination, the Internet is the fastest and most convenient way to directly communicate with the public. This is also well expressed by Eno Akpabio (2012): “New media is fostering participatory communication” (p. 41). As producers of the texts, METU students construct new media as a battleground shaped by popular tactics such as uploading alternative parodies of official commercials, which often become at least as popular as the originals. They use new media as a platform to subvert the official message of the official advertisement and break the silence of the weak in mass media through new communication technologies.

As I will discuss below, in the process of creating an alternative student identity by employing new strategies in the emergent culture of new media, students create multiple and oppositional meanings around the METU brand. The Internet gives students an opportunity to subvert from within [the dominant social order] without leaving it (de Certeau, 1988); to challenge, resist, subvert, and adapt images, styles, and ideologies (Hebdige, 1979); and to achieve popular cultural transformations of production and consumption, encoding and decoding (Hall, 1980).

**Everyday Life as Resistance**

It is no coincidence that everyday life appears in the titles of both Lefebvre’s and de Certeau’s influential books. In Everyday Life in the Modern World, Lefebvre refers to everyday life as a site of resistance in which quotidian practices also provide people with various possibilities for transformation (1971). Moreover, by deliberately entitling his book The Practice of Everyday Life, not The Practice in Everyday Life, de Certeau emphasizes that rather than considering practice as something that occurs within everyday life, everyday life must be considered a practice itself. Users, consumers, or individuals act, create, and operate in daily life. Therefore, everyday life must be investigated from different perspectives by using different methodologies and asking theoretical questions. As both de Certeau and Lefebvre argue, resistance is space for living, and everyday life is resistance in itself. They both consider the everyday to be a site of struggle, resistance, transformation, and even revolution—although this latter concept is closer to our understanding of “evolution” rather than revolution in the traditional Marxist sense.
Lefebvre and de Certeau emphasize the urban environment as a space of struggle for the possible transformation of capitalism. However, unlike Lefebvre, de Certeau emphasizes how individuals act by poaching, manipulating, and operating within the systems and structures of everyday life. Even so, he never falls into trap of atomistic individualism. For both thinkers, the nexus of everyday life politics is the agents’ potential for resistance and change (de Certeau, 1988; Lefebvre, 1971). They find resistance in the ordinary lives of regular people. This theoretical conceptualization is very important to understanding how METU students are able to manipulate place and alter the campus as a space for resistance. The video is a good example of how ordinary places and mundane material objects (sculptures, buildings, and interior spaces) can be manipulated by a group of university students, practitioners in a de Certeauian sense, who did not themselves produce these spaces. These students deliberately transform the spaces and objects of the dominant into symbols, images, and meanings that are resistant. For example, the official commercial features people in private and semi-private places such as the living room, the garden of a house, a primary school classroom, an office, and finally the campus when featuring the student. However, the METU students shot the entire alternative video on the campus itself. The first scene depicts the entrance gate before moving to different indoor and outdoor places such as the cafeteria, the library, the president’s office, and the Office of Cultural Affairs. In so doing, students reclaim the place as the space of resistance.

In his book, de Certeau makes a meaningful distinction between space and place. According to de Certeau (1988), a place “is the order in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence” (p. 117). However, de Certeau defines space as “a practiced place.” He argues: “it is … actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it” (1988, p. 117). Hence, space was produced by operations such as making a video on the campus itself. Here, the campus, a place where an official institution is located, is manipulated, transformed, and temporarily situated in a spatiality of resistance. The students articulate the view that the campus has multiple meanings for the students, which are signified by the relationship between space and identity. According to these students’ declarations via the Internet, METU confines the freedom of students and censors events that do not conform to its worldview. A Political Science and Public Administration student states, “METU responds to students who demand more freedom by inviting policemen to the campus and encouraging them to use pepper spray. It conducts investigations and permits the arrest of the students.” Therefore, the campus is a spatial representation of oppression. However, it is also a site of struggle in which resistance is possible. From a de Certeauian perspective, this means the determination of a place for actualizing identity (de Certeau, 1988, p. 117). In the alternative promotional video, METU students appear in different places on campus and practice resistance, which is fueled by a desire for a free university. Their identities are “implanted in the space of the landscape” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 117). The students in the video construct their identities through a symbolic attachment to the campus. Now, the campus is no longer a place that was created and organized by the institutional power of the university, but rather a geography of resistance in which the students symbolically and spatially furnish their identities.

Words, Subjects and Identities

Lexical choice is another tactic the students used effectively. In the opening scene of the alternative video, a student stands at the entrance gate of the university and says, “I am a restless METU student.” I is the referential code of the self. In contrast to the statements of the other students in the video, the student consciously chose to use I, rather than we, to refer to himself as an agent of resistance. In the statement that follows, through a substantial syntagmatic and paradigmatic shift, METU is put forward as an agent of oppression. In the closing scenes of the video, students prefer to use we instead of I – supplying a framework for conceptualizing a relationship between the students that is based on solidarity and collective consciousness. The students’ overt manifestations signify that their action of resistance is carried out in a completely conscious way. By deliberately criticizing METU’s marketing policy, they are, as de Certeau points out, aware that they are acting within the enemy’s field of vision. They do not have “the options of […] viewing the adversary as a whole […] within a visible space” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 37). Therefore, they use different tactics to redefine power relations within the institution. For example, they make no attempt to hide their faces or conceal their majors or their year, giving such information through subtitles such as “Mechanical Engineering, 3rd year student.” They do not reveal their names, however. To claim the authority to speak for METU students, they simultaneously reinforce and rely on their student identity when they appear on the screen. Thus, they are able to address both the identity of METU students and the difference between this identity and the institutional METU identity that was marketed in the official commercial. The students define their own way of re-expressing their institutional identity as their resistant identity.

The students produce a METU student identity that relies on difference and the deferral meaning of identity as opposed to the student identity marketed in the official commercial. This renders the difference between the official and alternative METU commercials even more striking. For instance, while the former uses the official colors of
METU (red and white), which are also the colors of the Turkish flag, the latter shows students declaring that they refuse to wear the red and white METU T-shirt because it enables the branding of the students. Instead, they appear in colorful T-shirts not identified with any brands. Thus they subvert the official METU student identity imposed on them through a process of negation. Concurrently, they convert the meaning of being a METU student into being a student at METU. They undermine the significance of the university’s name, yet do not leave its dominant social and institutional order. As a result, the alternative video draws attention to the potential for resistance and struggle in every realm of social life. According to Dick Hebdige (1979):

The struggle between different discourses, different definitions and meanings within ideology is therefore always, at the same time, a struggle within signification: a struggle for possession of the sign, which extends to even the most mundane areas of everyday life… These ‘humble objects’ can be magically appropriated; ‘stolen’ by subordinate groups and made to carry ‘secret’ meanings: meanings which express, in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination (p. 17-18).

In this context, in order to create their own meanings in a globalized capitalist world, METU students use both real and virtual spaces such as the campus and the Internet, to promote the struggle for signification. Signs of the everyday life of a student at METU, such as the landscape of the campus, the sculptures, the buildings, and the students themselves, are appropriated and transformed into signs of resistance against a hegemonic discourse and its attempt to define them, the marketing of their university, and the branding of education. By claiming these signs, students at METU create the meaning of these commodities in a new context. However, this process is not always unidirectional. Institutions themselves are also able to re-appropriate ordinary objects to create dominant-hegemonic meanings around the everyday nature of signs. In our case, there is double articulation through the appropriation of objects and spaces of everyday life. On the one hand, the METU campus and students are associated with the university brand within the context of dominant discourse. On the other, the dominant discourse is challenged by a group of students at METU through the appropriation of ordinary objects and the places in which these objects exist, and their conversion into symbols of resistance. Students fracture the dominant meanings related to the METU brand. Therefore, as Hebdige (2001) aptly states, “the apparent can no longer be taken for granted” (p. 139).

Finally, refusal is another tactic for resistance by which the students are able to rearticulate their identity and resistance. According to Hebdige, resistance signifies a refusal. This kind of negation is important within the resistance literature because it has a subversive value. By blatantly criticizing the official METU advertisement on the Internet, students reject the branding of METU as an exclusive university and the marketing of education as if it were just another product. In the commercial one of the students says, “We are not attributing any significance to be a METU student and we refuse to be marketed through a METU identity forcibly imposed on us with ‘1 brain METU’ t-shirts” (emphasis added). For Hebdige, resistance in its purest form, does not completely transform the whole structure; rather it manifests itself in “mutations and extensions” of existing codes. This video, produced by students, is not only a declaration of refusal in its purest form, but also an attempt to subvert power relations and divert the discourse of the dominant. Within this struggle, producing and disseminating a promotional video is a tactic for “taking advantage of opportunities” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 37).

Students as consumers or as users?

In the alternative promotional video, METU students employ multiple tactics for both the construction of identity and the differentiation of their identities from the official student identity marketed in the METU commercial. They refuse to embody the dominant ideology of the official commercial in which students are seen as just consumers. Similarly, many Marxist thinkers emphasize the use of commodities rather than their consumption. Williams, a Marxist intellectual, is one of the best known of the theorists writing on the distinction between users and consumers. In his article “The Magic System,” written in 1960, Williams (1960) emphasizes that the fundamental choice is choosing between [people] as consumer(s) and [people] as user(s) [emphasis mine]. The concept of people as users is particularly important in understanding the alternative promotional video as an attempt at resistance. Williams (1960) harshly criticizes the use of the concept of consumer “as a way of describing the ordinary member of modern capitalist society in a main part of his economic capacity” (p. 28). Williams argues that, “consumption is a very strange description of our ordinary use of goods and services” (p. 28).

According to Williams, consumption is only partially relevant in explaining our use of things, but in modern capitalist society, people are seen as consumers rather than users. Williams (1960) states, “The consumer asks for an adequate supply of personal ‘consumer goods’ at a tolerable price . . . but the user asks for more than this, necessarily. [Users ask] for the satisfaction of human needs which consumption, as such, can never really supply.
Since many of these needs are social – roads, hospitals, schools, quiet – they are not…covered by the consumer ideal” (p. 28, emphasis mine). Education is one of the most important social needs of society. Yet modern capitalist society materializes consumption as an individual activity, emphasizing the alienated and reified consumer and consequently destroying the general purposes of society. That is to say, Williams criticizes the capitalist market economy from a humanist Marxist perspective.

Williams believes that capitalism objectifies people. He argues that “We are the market, which the system of industrial production has organized. We are the channels along which the product flows and disappears . . . the pressure of a system of industrial production is towards impersonal forms” (1960, p. 28). Thus for Williams, resistance refers to resisting the capitalist system, the dominant. Rejecting the role of a consumer indicates a desire to live in a more humane social system. In the alternative video, the students explicitly refuse to be codified and treated as consumers of education and declare their desire to live in a system where education is not “an economic production function” (Olssen and Peters, 2005, p. 324). They augmented their identity not as consumers, but rather as users of education, university services, and the campus. Following Williams, as an antidote to capitalism, they employ activism, solidarity, and community for the satisfaction of human needs and the development of human capacities in a democratic society.

As a tactic of resistance to the commodification of education and the marketing of a consumer-student identity, the METU students problematize the complex relationships between production and consumption. For de Certeau, “production” is an ongoing process that does not finish with the end of the production process. Production has a broader meaning that includes different types of production such as “production through consumption.” Thus, de Certeau is able to manipulate the way he uses the word “production.” Consumption or usage can be forms of resistance as well as production. Within this context, de Certeau agrees with Hebdige that other marginal styles are liberating movements, since they “consume” cultural forms and materials in a new “way of using.” Both de Certeau and Hebdige are coding consumption as an active production process. For de Certeau, “making” or “doing” is concurrently a kind of production and consumption. De Certeau rejects the idea that consumers are merely passive and submissive individuals dominated by powerful systems. A viewer or consumer can operate within an oppositional code and, with an alternate framework of reference, decode the message in a contrary way (Hall, 1980). Both the students’ consumption of the official promotional video, decoded within the oppositional version of televisvisual discourse, and their production of an alternative commercial for the university can be considered tactics aimed at the destruction of the power of the dominant. In other words, students exploit the content of the official commercial to create new meanings presented in their own version. This “difference” between the image of the first production and the new meaning of this image in the second would be very significant in de Certeau’s view. In other words, the dominant/producer can create images, words, and materials but can only partially control the ways in which they are used. Although this does not mean that users are entirely free in the process of consumption and reproduction since the “normal,” “proper,” or “right” ways of using the products or consuming commercials are coded implicitly or explicitly for the users, the dominant cannot always control the entire process, as seen in the case of the alternative METU commercial. In this context, as well as in everyday life, new media has become an arena of struggle and transformation. There is a rigorous battle, taking place in this arena, over the fixation or diffusion of meaning. Power relations and hegemony are simultaneously constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed in this realm of struggle as METU students negate de Certeau’s assertion that we, as a majority, cannot decide what we produce, and that only the dominant or “strong” can be the agents of decision. By producing and disseminating their own alternative commercial, these students are able to organize in opposition to a dominant structure of power relations as well as attempt to overthrow the university’s official control over METU’s image and reputation. Producing a video and spreading it over the Internet is a way of “escaping without leaving.” It is the tactic of the powerless, subaltern, dominated, and exploited when there is no opportunity for active resistance, or when active resistance is not considered the most appropriate action.

**Conclusion**

Within a neoliberal capitalist market economy, education is a system of integration. Thus, in the case of the alternative METU commercial, students act as agents of resistance and manage to create ways of integration and escaping without leaving the system. Resistance is not outside the system, but is always within it. In this context, the alternative METU video can be regarded as a type of operation for dealing with national education systems in neoliberal economies in the 2000s. These students’ operational methods are “an art of being in-between” (de Certeau, 1988 p. 30): between the commodification of education and education as a public service, between the reductionist branding of METU students and the plurality of student identities, and between the marketing of the university and freedom of choice. The students are concerned with the “art of living in the other’s field” (de Certeau,
1988), and demonstrate that the same commodities, whether contextually, historically, or spatially, can be “integrative” or “differential.”

According to Henry Giroux (1994), “between the dynamics of commodification and resistance, difference becomes a site of conflict and struggle” (p. 15). The production of an alternative video is a manifestation of differentiation from the official discourse of a homogenous identity for METU students, as well as a rejection of METU’s branding strategies. The symbolic reconstruction of difference is fundamental for creating an alternative identity for those students who do not accept the categorization of students as defined in the commercial. The METU students who produced this alternative promotional video and the students featured in it perform as a conscious act against homogenization. Therefore, the discourse of the alternative video points to a dialectical relationship between gender, minority, and student identities where resistance stands in opposition to the official discourse of the university. The video is the voice of the oppressed, including LGBT, disabled, anti-capitalist, and other minority students who are absent in the TV commercial and are excluded from the official discourse of METU. Their video is a deliberate objection to the commodification and marketing of education. Through differentiation and refusal, students broaden the spheres of resistance in new media in order to find innovative resistance points and methods.

As de Certeau and Lefebvre both state, everyday life is resistance in itself. Although there is no such thing as pure resistance or pure domination, “power and resistance” dynamic processes in which the weak can execute tactics for escaping without leaving. Resistance is learned, yet it is re-created, re-produced, and re-shaped in the hands of individuals. In the alternative METU promotional video, students create and organize a space for living everyday life through resistance by specifically emphasizing a different METU student identity that takes an anti-hegemonic stance. It is a never-ending battle between the weak/dominated and the strong/dominant. In this battle, although alternative cultures have no clear way forward, they always have hope.

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References


Notes

1 See [http://ithinkof.odtu.edu.tr/](http://ithinkof.odtu.edu.tr/)

2 See [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqLGGzpNHfk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqLGGzpNHfk)

3 See [http://vimeo.com/46177376](http://vimeo.com/46177376)


5 These places give us the idea that the student comes from a middle or upper-middle class family.

6 For the image please see [http://www.turkishbusinessworld.net/News/874.html](http://www.turkishbusinessworld.net/News/874.html)


8 For Williams, the distinction between consumer and user is the challenge of socialism to capitalism; therefore, it is directly related to the structural differences between capitalism and socialism.

9 John Fiske’s analysis of the relationship between power and resistance provides another vantage point for my research. Fiske (1989) says that “power must be understood discursively in terms of its ability to impose a particular knowledge over resisting, competing knowledge. Power and resistance are not just opposite sides of the same coin, each requiring the other; rather, they are interchangeable lines of force” (p. 162). According to Fiske, resistance is itself a form of power; power is not necessarily a top-down force, nor resistance a bottom-up one. Fiske (1989) states that in the case of a bottom-up force, the power of the socially subordinate can be met with the resistance of those who are dominant in terms of economic or politically institutionalized power (p. 162). In other words, resistance and power cannot be studied as disconnected concepts.