

Maganda ka ba? From Sex Object to Powerful Women: A Look at Posing in Lad Magazines

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgment	v
List of Tables and Figures	x
Glossary of Filipino Terms	x

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW / 1

1. Introduction	/ 1
2. Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Feminist Studies	/ 7
3. The rise of the 4 th State: The Corporate Media and the New Morality— The Power of the Media to Insist and the Power of the Person to Resist	/ 18
4. Lad Magazines in the Context of Gender, Power and Morality	/ 22
5. Female ‘Celebrity’ Model in Men’s Magazines: A New and Powerful Breed of Worker Within the Sex Industry	/ 32
6. Celebrity Culture: Cashing on Celebrity Complex	/ 35
7. Research Methods	/ 37

CHAPTER TWO: CULTURAL AND POWER DIMENSIONS OF GENDER IN THE CONTEMPORARY PHILIPPINES / 40

1. ‘Si Malakas at Si Maganda’: A Look at Filipino Indigenous Legend	/ 40
2. The Gendering Concept of Maganda and Malakas in the Context of Philippine Sex Trade: Prostitution	/ 44
3. Influence of the Catholic Church in the Changing Context of Gender and Sex Trade	/ 47
4. Poverty and Smut Culture: From FHM to Pinoy Playboy Mansion?	/ 49

CHAPTER THREE: SEXUAL IMAGES AND SELLING SEXUALITY / 51

1. Sexuality in the Media and the Arts (Television and Film): Stereotypes, Sex, and the Decency Issue	/ 51
2. Graphic Images: Pornography and the Public’s Response to ‘Selling Sexuality’	/ 52
a. Defining Obscenity	/ 52
b. The Movement against the Sexualization of the Visual Media	/ 55
c. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines and Selling Sexuality	/ 57

CHAPTER FOUR: BEYOND STRUCTURALISM AND EXPLOITATION/CHOICE / 61

1. The Exploitation/Choice Dichotomy / 61
2. The Gendering Power of Sexual Discourse / 67

CHAPTER FIVE: FEMALE CELEBRITY MODEL'S SUBJECTIVE ACCOUNTS OF POWER / 73

1. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Strategy and Tactics / 73
 - a. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Conceptualization of power and positionalities in the sex industry / 75
 - b. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Subjective accounts of power / 82
- c. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Demands for basic rights and other social and civil considerations / 91
- d. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Understanding about feminism and/or access to feminist programs /92

CHAPTER SIX: POLITICS OF SUBJECTIVE POSITIONALITIES / 93

1. The Maganda/Pangit Construction of Female Celebrity Model's Decision-Making Agency / 93
 - a. External Impediments to Empowerment / 94
 1. The Powerful World of Showbiz / 94
 - a. The Coercive/Adoring Power of the Public / 95
 - b. The Power of the Network/Producer / 97
 - c. The Power of the 'Gossip/Infotainment' Press / 98
- d. The Power of the Celebrity's Manager /Talent Agency / 101
 2. Culture in Power / 103
 3. International Structures of Political Economy / 109
- b. Women's Internal Impediments to Empowerment / 111

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION 115

Implications for Further Research / 119

BIBLIOGRAPHY / 120

Abstract

Where are women located in the struggle for freedom to express and have control of what can or cannot be said and done in the media? Female sexuality becomes a site for contestation not only on relational levels such as social, moral, religious, economic and political but also on the personal level. This thesis discusses the significance of subjective accounts of power in which female ‘celebrity’ models in the Philippines exercise decision-making power to pose ‘sexy’ in lad magazines. The politics of these women's positionalities can be examined in the complexity of competing and hegemonic structural power struggles involving global capital, the Philippine state, the Catholic Church, the media, and the sex industry, as well as in power relationships between, and/or among female celebrity models and their managers, publishers, editors, magazine consuming customers and the general viewing public.

Different perspectives of Filipino feminism explain women's decision-making agency. They generally see power inequality surrounding women in the sex industry as fundamental impediments to the exercise of women's decision-making power. **Structuralist feminists** argue that women's abilities to exercise choice are absent because of poverty and patriarchy; it is the ‘sexexploitative’ system of the international political economy that forces women to enter the sex trade to serve as commodities for male sexual gratification and financial profits. Structuralist feminists call for elimination of all forms of sex trade, the prostitution business especially, where poor women's choices are reduced to being male sex objects. On the other hand, **liberal** and **neo-liberal feminists** argue that women, regardless of their socio-economic background, exercise choice by entering the sex industry, which needs to be recognized as a legitimate form of work performed by workers in the sex industry. Liberal and neo-liberal feminists both endeavor to oppose the abusive and exploitative operations of the sex industry, where women's choices and rights are unrecognized especially those engage in prostitution.

One can regard women in the Philippine sex industry as oppressed or marginalized in the power discourse of sexual morality. Being disempowered at the bottom of the **malakas power structures** of the sex industry, such women are ‘**mahina**’, the weak in society. But this is not the whole story. While I recognize the realities of these women's oppression and exploitation, my focus is not to replicate structuralist accounts of the sex industry in the form of prostitution and pornographic activities, which further victimize the already vulnerable lives of women in the sex trade. Instead, my point of departure poses the question of women's agency in order to look not only at their unequal positionalities in the power dynamics of the sex industry but also the subjectivities constructed through those positionalities, in essence by offering female celebrity models as an example where women can work in the sex industry and still preserve and/or restore the **social adequacy** of being **maganda** (‘beautiful’), **disente** (decent) and ‘**malakas’na babae**’ (strong and powerful woman) in the power dynamics of the Philippine sex industry. By transcending the exploitation/choice dualism in a (neo-)liberal prostitution debate, I hope to offer new post-structuralist interpretations of women's decision-making agency that examine the subjectivities of female celebrity models in lad magazines within the Philippine sex industry, which create instead a space for such women to challenge existing rules of conduct yet emerge victorious, by gaining celebrity status that affords them more space and power to exercise their will to attain personal goals they set for themselves. In other words, I argue that there should be some space for women's subjective accounts of power in a feminist theory of the sex industry—not limited exclusively to prostitution and/or pornographic acting and includes all forms of work within the sex industry that do not require actual sex acts—that are not predicated on women “choosing” to enter the sex industry in the face of patriarchy and/or political economy. It is therefore crucial to listen to female celebrity models voices in order to understand the extent to which women's self-disciplining impact on

their decision-making agency within the power dynamics of the Philippine sex industry.

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When I decided to go to Taiwan and study in National Chiao Tung University Institute of Social Research and Cultural Studies (ISRCS) I never reckon that I will have the hardest but the most rewarding academic journey of my life. My experiences in and outside NCTU afforded me to evaluate my own biases, fears and limitations first as a student, a woman and a person of value. I have learned that voices from within are more powerful than voices from outside of our own. We are only good as what we think. And what we think is what we will become.

Writing this thesis is not just an academic journey for me, it is emotional, spiritual even. Thank you very much if only for these.

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I made lots of amazing friends both from local and international students. And they were most helpful during the lowest point of my graduate life. It was totally unthinkable, and (unacceptable for me) not to graduate and earned a degree within the specified period prescribed by my program especially so if it was not my own doings, but because the system (in my Institute) does not allow for it to happen—just because it is not the way things are done there--you have to spend at least two years to actually be able to have a proposal oral defense and another year to have a final oral defense for master and longer in PhD. And yet it is normal for graduate and doctoral (Taiwanese) students in my Institute to earn a degree in three or five years or longer respectively. Now, I can understand and relate to some students

writing their frustrations on the walls of our study room in Chinese: “是學生要畢業，不是老師要畢業再給你們延二年也寫不出來啊!!!” (“**It is the students who must graduate and not the professors who must graduate. Even if they give you an extension of two years still you won’t be able to write!**”--This is the literal translation in English). This is really a sad if not tragic state of affairs in our Institute. And for a non-Chinese-speaking student like me this extension problem could be avoided if only a formal orientation was conducted before my two-year program begins or a follow-up reminder at least. I could have prepared and made provisions for it not to happen or to make the impact less severe at least. For a Filipino, the psychological impact of not finishing within the prescribed 2-year scholarship program is more serious than the monetary considerations. Back in my country, an extension could only mean one thing: that I failed, or that I am not up to the standard set by the Institute or simply put, I did something wrong and it’s my fault.

The Institute is supposed to be an international teacher-training and research institution and yet we don’t feel the love (at least I don’t)—it doesn’t matter whether you live or die, if you want to live you have to ‘**survive on your own**’ because the professors there are not in the business of helping the students to succeed but ‘**only to teach**’ (in Chinese—emphasis supplied). In **almost all** my Chinese-conducted classes (**all required subjects**) I was made to feel that I am such a nuisance, a bother and yet I was treated as if I was virtually non-existent--they did not even try to discuss in English long enough for me to understand those difficult abstract cultural concepts that even my Taiwanese classmates found too difficult and too complicated to understand even in Chinese, forgetting that if I had a choice not to take them I won’t. It was worse than wasting time, it was a nightmare—I was treated as if I was a non-entity inside the class! It was a total anomaly, a sham—a farcical cultural studies. But survived I did—by sitting and smiling! But I still cannot get over the shock of learning that my original program—International Graduate Program in Taiwan Studies—is in fact a non-existent program in practice—is just an imposition from the Taiwanese government as part of the on-going internationalization program. In fairness, I must admit without exception, the professors in my Institute are really intellectual giants in their fields. It was really very unfortunate and a shame for me that I was not able to learn more from them only because I do not speak Chinese.

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List of Tables and Figures

- Figure 1:** Definitions of power and empowerment in practice...p.15
- Figure 2:** Different Traditions of Understanding Power and Empowerment...p.18
- Figure 3:** Classification of Men's Magazines...p.24
- Figure 4:** Issues against Lad/ Men's Magazines...p.26
- Figure 5:** Can women empowerment possible in the Sex Industry?...p.30
- Figure 6:** Hierarchy of Workers within the Sex Industry...p.31
- Figure 7:** Traditional Views of Sex Workers...p.33
- Figure 8:** The Power of Internalized Self-Image Imposed by Others: Cultural Norms versus Celebrity Culture...p.35
- Figure 9:** Painting of Malakas at Maganda...p.38
- Figure 10:** Imelda and Ferdinand Marcos' self-image and version of Maganda at Malakas...p.39
- Figure 11:** Putok sa buho...p.41
- Figure 12:** Erotic Art versus Pornography: A Matter of Personal Taste and Perception...p.51
- Figure 13:** Filipino Feminism: The Exploitation/Choice Dichotomy...p.65
- Figure 14:** The Gendering Construction of Filipino Subjectivities: Maganda/Malakas and Pangit/Mahina Dichotomy...p.67
- Figure 15:** Maganda/Malakas METER...p.67
- Figure 16:** The Gendering Construction of Filipina Subjectivities within the Malakas Power Structures: Si Maria Clara at si Malakas (Maria Clara and Malakas)...p.68
- Figure 17:** Star Meter: Celebrity's Star Power...p.71
- Figure 18:** Categories of Filipino Entertainment Stars...p.72
- Figure 19:** External Impediments to Empowerment...p.92
- Figure 20:** External Impediments to Empowerment: The Powerful World of Showbiz...p.93
- Figure 21:** Internal Impediments to Empowerment: Personally Internalized Mixture of Indigenous Gender Concepts and Hispanic Catholicism...p.111

Glossary of Filipino Terms

Bawal—forbidden, taboo

Crush ng Bayan—Nation's Crush. It is usually attributed to people who are considered the most desirable in and outside showbiz

Kagandahan— beauty, allure

Lola—literally it means grandmother. It usually pertains to old ladies. Sometimes it could mean conservative or old-fashioned. (Same is true with Lolo or grandfather).

Maawain—merciful

Mabuti—good, kind

Mabait—good, kind

Maganda—literally it means beautiful. It is synonymous to mabuti. It is usually associated with a woman and also with female physical beauty. It also means anything and everything good and beautiful

Magandang Tingnan—literally it means to look good. As a moral gaze, it means socially acceptable.

Mahalay—earthly

Mahina—literally it means weak, powerless or lacking in power or strength. The exact opposite of what is malakas. Synonymous to: May sakit (sick or in poor health)

Maka-Diyos—godly, religious

Makatao--humane

Malakas--usually associated with a man, and also male virility, sexual prowess, and physical strength. It literally means strong and powerful. It is synonymous to: Makapangyarihan (Influential or people in power). Authority or power itself. The exact opposite of what is mahina

Malaswa—lewd

Malinis—clean, pure—virginity, honest

Marangal—honorable, dignified, morally upright

Maria Clara— is portrayed as the epitome of modesty and devotion of the Filipina. Maria Clara lived a sheltered life—stuck in the convent, or living in her family home, the opulent house of the Delos Santos family (Capitan Tiago). The "ideal" image, promoted by no less than Jose Rizal, is that of Maria Clara, a demure, self-effacing beauty whose place was on the pedestal of male honor. Rizal describes this "ideal" of the Philippine woman with words such as these: "an Oriental decoration," "her eyes...always downcast," "a pure soul." (Chapter 5, Noli Me Tangere)

Masama—bad, evil

Masunurin—obedient

Pangit—literally it means ugly usually pertaining to physical appearance. It also means anything and everything ugly, bad and evil

Pangit tingnan—literally it means to look bad. As a moral gaze, it means socially unacceptable

Pantasya ng Bayan—National Dream Girl or the Ultimate 'It' Girl

Chapter One: Literature Review

1. Introduction

Our world is increasingly driven by a combination of information and entertainment values, and these are both promoted by the explosion of different means of communication, especially electronic communication such as satellite TV and the Internet. Most people, even in many developing countries, have access now to many information sources in their homes and offices, including TV, radio, and internet. The audience is overloaded with options that make the process of choice, selection and even decision-making more informed yet harder.

On the other hand, competition has become increasingly keen in the area of the mass media as they keep fighting for the attention of the readers, listeners, and TV-viewers. The life and death of each newspaper and TV station is at stake when the income from advertising and sponsoring is proportional to the number of readers or viewers. In order to survive, they increasingly turn to other strategies such as entertainment, titillation, scandal mongering, spreading fear and spending fewer resources on serious researching of news.

In most countries, particularly in America and Europe, news is the most important channel for propagation of culture, ideas, and opinions. But this is not true in the Philippines. The entertainment media has been more influential than the news media in the dissemination of culture, ideas and opinions. Religious and educational institutions have been losing their influence on the people, while political institutions already lost its relevance on the people, as people gave up on the government a long time ago. Filipinos rely more on television than on newspaper or internet. Access to television programs is easy and free, whereas one must pay to read a newspaper or access the internet, not to mention the cost of appropriate hardware.

The failure of the Philippines government and to some extent the ‘**serious**’ media to provide authoritative information to the public is the main cause of an impoverished political culture and an inadequate public policy. Today, news is treated more like entertainment. The Filipinos have become so weary that even serious news propagated by politicians from both the administration and the opposition is not seen as credible. Most Filipinos expect more to be entertained rather than informed by the news. The entertainment function of media serves in turn to pacify and excite the viewer, which in the long run reproduces the low literary level of the media culture as a whole. The dominance of music videos, saturated by the seductions of sound and sense impressions, has become a “culture industry” in Adorno’s terms.¹ Most opinion formation takes place while people watch news and debates on television. However,

¹ The classic reformulation of this concept can be found in Horkheimer and Adorno (1989), pp.120-167.

millions of lazy viewers, not only in the Philippines but all over the world, sit comfortably, oblivious to the significant cultural and political transformations taking place in their country. In the Philippines, the attention of the whole country seems fixed on three things: telenovelas, i.e. television dramas, both imported and locally produced; entertainment gossips, particularly of the sensationalist tabloid kind; and, the House of Representatives' and Senate's corruption and even impeachment hearings, hoping to usher in people power revolution to topple down a widely perceived corrupt and illegitimate Arroyo government. However, it seems that the third, people power, is on the decline. If not, the House's and Senate's corruption hearings, however, will create another crisis...this time '**lad magazines**' featuring celebrities, who are considered the '**pantasy ng bayan**' (national dream girl), the ultimate '**it girl!**'

'Lad magazines' like FHM, Maxim and Uno are a successful phenomenon in the Philippines. Their meteoric success is not surprising, considering the aggressive and huge media resources and mileage that they are given. To date, about 300,000 copies of 'Lad magazines' are in circulation per month, with FHM publishing 105,000-135,000, followed by Maxim and UNO, with 100,000 copies each. According to surveys, 70% of their readers are male, 30% are female. More surprising is the relative ease with which such 'lad magazines' were able to penetrate the market, penetrating the Filipino consciousness on a national scale. Two decades ago, this was unthinkable and unacceptable to a general public and would have drawn condemnations from publishers, the Catholic Church, and the government. Religion, ideology, politics, morals, and norms played a conservative role in the Philippines in the past, thus making a study of change in rules of conduct and philosophies of life seminal.

Compared to Western countries, lad magazines are new to the Philippines. However, the avid interest it has generated has now become unprecedented, as many Filipinos eagerly wait for each issue. It has now reached such a level of national popularity that people from all walks of life, of every gender and sexual orientation and preference appear to have opinions about it. To some extent, determining the sexiest and the most beautiful Filipina of the year, much like the Miss Universe beauty contests, has become a national past time. Landing in the list, particularly at the top, has become the most contested, and thus the most coveted, prize for their featured celebrities and movie icons. 'Lad magazines' and the ensuing controversies regarding their popularity are not uncommon either in the Philippines or elsewhere. Simply put, '**lad magazines**' are accused of pornography, that these publications are degrading to women, that they pose a threat to children and that they prey on readers' insecurities and low self esteem. However, for all intents and purposes, one must also point out that lad magazines wittingly or unwittingly create a space for these women to challenge existing rules of conduct

and perhaps emerge victorious by gaining celebrity status that in turn affords them even more space and power to exercise their will to attain personal goals that they set for themselves.

The construction of female ‘celebrity’ models’ decision-making agency stands in the midst of this zero-sum game of empowerment: the struggle to maintain and/ or gain maganda power in order not to become mahina, i.e. the “weak” in the malakas, male dominated power structure using one’s ‘**kagandahan**’ (beauty, youth, sexiness and allure). Central to this is the question of ‘**propriedad**’ (propriety), through the use of women’s personal ‘**kagandahan**’ as a bargaining tool, which is a way to gain or maintain power and control of one’s personhood, in this instance, womanhood in a man’s world. Propriety, after all, with all intents and purposes, has much more to do with gendered, culturally specific and explicit rules of moral conduct. It has little to do with how one views the world, but with how others think you should live your life. Most of the time, it is counterproductive, limiting and to some extent unhealthy. Simply put, there is a ‘sub-rosa rule’ about the way things are openly expressed in the Philippines. Does one really want to be mired in the unproductive and unfair, if not illogical ‘givens’ of a hypocritical ‘principalia-led generation’ of the Spanish colonial past? Are we bound to the feeling that old ways are what make things hang together, that if they are no longer followed, morals will disintegrate? To put it succinctly, why do one’s taste, preference and desire have to conform to the others? It is often difficult to discern which of the sub-rosa rules to keep and which to discard. Moreover, **there is something in each of us that will shock the rest of us**. In the end, it is how one views oneself that counts. As to the question of maganda ka ba, the answer cannot be too obvious: ‘it is who you think you are!’ I realize that commonalities in women's subordination everywhere are constructed in the context of class, race, and gender relations, thus should have different consequences for different groups of men and women.

I am also aware that the women in the Philippine sex industry can be viewed as being oppressed and marginalized in the power discourse of sexual morality. Disempowered at the bottom of the **malakas** power structures of the sex industry, the women are ‘**mahina**’, i.e. the weak in society. But this is not the whole story. While I recognize the realities of oppression and exploitation in women's lives, my focus is not to replicate such structuralist accounts of sex trade within the sex industry in the form of prostitution and performing in pornography that further victimize the already vulnerable lives of women in the sex trade. Instead, my point of departure poses the question of women's agency, to examine not only their unequal positionalities in the power dynamics of the sex industry but also the subjectivities constructed through those positionalities, in this case by viewing female celebrity models as

an example in which women can work and be part of the sex industry and still preserve and/or restore the **social adequacy** of being **maganda** ('beautiful'), **disente** ('decent') and **malakas'na babae** ('strong and powerful woman') within the power dynamics of the Philippine sex trade in particular and sex industry in general. By transcending the exploitation/choice dichotomy in the liberal/neo-liberal prostitution debate, I offer a post-structuralist approach to women's decision-making agency by examining the subjectivities of the female celebrity models in lad magazines within the Philippine sex trade that creates a space for these women to challenge existing rules of conduct and yet emerge victorious by gaining celebrity status, which affords them space and power to exercise their will to attain personal goals. In other words, I argue that there should be space for women's subjective accounts of power in a feminist theory of sex work—not simply that of prostitution and/or pornographic activities alone but all forms of sex-oriented activities within the sex industry—that are not predicated on women "choosing" to enter sex work in the face of patriarchy and/or political economy. It becomes crucial thus to listen to female celebrity models' voices in order to see how and the extent to which women's self-disciplining impacts on their decision-making agency within the power dynamics of the Philippine sex trade. Specifically, the thesis seeks to explain the following:

1. How is the female celebrity model's decision-making agency constructed within the power dynamics of the Philippine sex trade and Philippine show business industry?
2. How are culturally created gender specific labels, such as '**maganda**' o '**pangit**' (beautiful/ugly) and '**malakas**' o '**mahina**' (strong/weak), shaped and mold Filipino women's perceptions and beliefs, not only as a collective group but more importantly as a 'woman' person regardless of achievements, success and even celebrity status?
3. Why is the idea that empowerment can exist in this world—sex industry—a difficult concept for many to grasp? Why is it even impossible to postulate that these celebrity models in such men's magazines were able to actually wrestle control, appropriate autonomy for them, then rise above the victim and their exploited status and even earn 'celebrity' status within the patriarchal and global capitalistic systems?
4. Why it is difficult to realize that there are sex workers who are empowered, have very high self-esteem, like those celebrity models in lad magazines? Why is it even more difficult to believe that prostitutes and movie porn stars, like Jenna Jameson, can be famous, wealthy and successful female adult entertainment stars in history?
5. How do female celebrity models in lad magazines contend with and negotiate within a limited confluence of a tripartite power represented by the ideological spaces of local power and structures of the global political economy in order to succumb to the pangit inferiority complex and to continue to maintain the internalized maganda ideals?
6. Why are internal impediments a more crucial factor than external structural forces to female celebrity model's empowerment?
7. How can women in a supposedly victimized, oppressed, prostituted, marginalized and

exploited status, somehow rise above these positionalities, and still attain that much prized honor of being labeled not only as **'maganda'** but also as **'malakas na babae'** (beautiful and strong woman), but most importantly as an individual 'woman' person?

8. How do lad magazines in the Philippine sex trade create a space for female celebrity models to challenge existing rules of conduct, yet emerge victorious to gain celebrity status, allowing them more space/power to exercise their will to attain personal goals?
9. **How can women's decision-making agency be integrated into a feminist theory** of commoditization of the female body in ways that move beyond these "exploitation" dilemmas? Or how does a traditionally held position of weakness by women as sex object transformed into a position of power?

The key to understanding women's agency is thus to investigate not only their unequal positionalities in the power dynamics of the sex trade but also their subjectivities constructed through those positionalities. The articulation of female celebrity model subjectivity depicts their decision-making agency in ways that can further elaborate a feminist understanding of **why and how these women "choose" by their own accord to enter the sex industry**. This is **different from** understanding women's decision-making agency as **being driven into sex work and/or being forced to enter the sex industry**, like posing 'sexy' for men's magazine and other socially stigmatized sex work, such as prostitution and pornography, because of socio-economic conditions and patriarchal systems.

This principle of from **'power-within' to 'power-to'** (**'bottom-up instead of top-down' approach to empowerment**) is consistent with the main objective of my thesis study: to investigate the significance of subjective accounts of power by female **'celebrity' models** as they exercise decision-making power to pose 'sexy' in lad magazines in the Philippines. How can **women's decision-making agency** be integrated into a feminist theory in ways that move beyond the "exploitation" dilemmas? How can a traditionally held position of weakness by women as sex object be transformed into positions of power? The subjectivities of women within these gendered spaces of politics, economy, religion, class, race and sexuality center on the configuration of power, which construct these women's discourses in various ways in which women can serve as sex worker yet still preserve and/or restore the **social adequacy** of being **maganda** (beautiful) and **'proper'** women. The **maganda** power is about conformity to what is seen as socially acceptable behavior for Filipino women: to be beautiful, 'proper' and moral. Should they lose their state of maganda, Filipino women would become **'lowly pangit'**, whose role is one of only entertaining malakas, strong and powerful men of virility.

I also propose to analyze lad magazines in detail at three levels:

First, beyond the cover and the choice of model, it is important to focus on the worth and merit of the contents. Specifically, what do these "lad magazines" represent?

Second, the ensuing circulation wars between lad magazines soon led to more daring covers and sleazier articles. The question remains, although one can ask where the fault lies. Do “lad magazines” set the pace or are they merely the reflection of a changing society?

This final point is particularly interesting, because it can clarify the debate regarding the power of the media to insist and the power of the people to resist. Mass media analysts have often discussed how much influence the media wields in people's opinions. People tend to selectively read what they already agree with and to rationalize their preformed opinions in the face of contrary arguments. Experimental evidence seems to indicate that the mass media has little power to change people's opinions on issues for which they already have formed a strong opinion, but they have a profound influence, when it comes to setting the agenda and priming people on new issues. The way an issue is framed determines how it is discussed, which social problems it causes, and which possible remedies are applicable to it. It is easy to manipulate people, not because they are stupid but because they are given a wide range of options or choices, thus choosing is difficult. But with the evolving power of the mass media in a market system, the people's will is prone to new trends, norms and social values. Here lies the power of the media, hyping what the people need and to a larger extent brokering what the people need and want even if these choices are not really what they need or want.

In short, there is a need to reevaluate women's sexuality and empowerment through discourses of morality insofar as they are linked at the same time to media industry practices. The construction of women's identity and gender relations in contemporary Philippine media representations occur in the midst of hegemonizing and homogenizing forces: globalization, rapid changes in media technologies, extraordinary contradictions in the transformations of regulatory cultural, religious, economic and political frameworks, and theoretical approaches used to make sense of gender constructions and representations. These changes will require us to rethink about the kinds of theoretical concepts and cultural politics that might be needed to engage with these changes. In sum, constructions of women's identity and gender relations in contemporary Philippine media representations can be categorized as follows:

1. Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Feminist Studies
2. The rise of the 4th State: The Corporate Media and the New Morality—The Power of the Media to insist and the Power of the Person to Resist
3. Lad Magazines in the Context of Gender, Power and Morality
4. Female ‘Celebrity’ Model in Men's Magazines: A New and Powerful Breed of Worker Within the Sex Industry
5. Celebrity Culture: Cashing on Celebrity Complex

2. Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Feminist Studies

Advocates of Filipino feminism although united in their common goal of elevating women concerns to the level of highest priority have seen women's decision-making agency in two different ways. I will categorize these seemingly opposing feminist groups as **'structuralist'** on one hand, and **'liberal or neo-liberal' on the other. Structuralist feminists** argue that women's abilities to exercise choice are absent because of poverty and patriarchy; it is the 'sexplicative' system of the international political economy that forces women to enter the sex trade to serve as commodities for male sexual gratification and financial profits. Structuralist feminists call for elimination of all forms of sex trade, the prostitution business especially, where poor women's choices are reduced to being male sex objects. On the other hand, **liberal and neo-liberal feminists** argue that women, regardless of their socio-economic background, exercise choice by entering the sex industry, which must be recognized as a legitimate form of work performed by workers in the sex industry. Liberal and neo-liberal feminists endeavor to oppose the abusive and exploitative operations of the sex industry, where women's choices and rights are unrecognized, especially where they are engaged in prostitution and pornography.

In my opinion, the Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW or Coalition) exemplifies the structuralist feminist perspective, while Nelia Sancho of the Asian Women's Human Rights Council (AWHRC) echoes the liberal and neo-liberal feminists' line. Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW or Coalition) argues that women's abilities to exercise choice are absent because of poverty and patriarchy, that is, the 'sexplicative' system within the global political economy forces women to go into sex trade, only to become commodities for male sexual gratification and financial profit.² Structuralist feminists have called for the elimination of all forms of sex trade, specifically prostitution, where poor women are reduced to being male sex objects. Such arguments highlight the existence of a structural environment in which women in the Philippine sex trade are situated. In fact, it is commonly understood that women in sex work are trapped within systematic forms of power inequality that engulf operators, procurers and buyers of the sex industry, state's police apparatus and institutions of

² The Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW) is an international feminist NGO that has Category II consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Its umbrella organization, Coalition-Asia Pacific (CATW-AP), is located in the Philippines, and their member organizations provide direct services to women in various areas such as legal assistance, skills, educational programs, material and medical support. The Coalition assists programs of member organizations dealing with women who were previously involved in prostitution. Coalition feminists argue that, for women in poverty and with limited job opportunities, there is no such thing as voluntary prostitution, as they are forced to become prostitutes in order to survive economically.

the global political economy. One should also note the anonymous, centralized, and pervasive forms of power that regulate social behavior rooted in the collusion of native gender concepts and Hispanic Catholicism—institutionally unbound forms of power that can be ‘voluntary’. On the other hand, **liberal** or **neo-liberal feminists**, such as Nelia Sancho of Asian Women's Human Rights Council (AWHRC), argue that women, regardless of their socio-economic background, make choices to enter the sex trade that must be respected as a recognized form of labor performed by workers of the sex industry.³ Liberal/neo-liberal feminists oppose the exploitative operations of the sex trade within this industry, where women's choices and rights are unrecognized, especially where they are engaged in prostitution. The prevailing feminist literature in this regard also tends to limit itself largely to the themes of prostitution, of commoditized, objectified and pornographic representations of the female body, femininity and female sexuality that accent forms of patriarchal structural power that in turn allow little, if any, agency to women. Such arguments perpetuate male domination or sexual gratification above women's needs in addition to continued encouragement of female sexual passivity.

For the purpose of this study, the term sex industry **includes but is not limited to prostitution and pornography**. I wish to point out that while a majority of such women earn all or part of their living as prostitutes, which in my opinion accounts for the relation of sex work to prostitution, this has led to misconceptions about the nature of their work. Moreover, some of these women earn an income in **other areas of the sex industry**, including exotic and nude dancing, poll dancing, telephone sex, cyber sex, acting in R and/or X rated movies, peep shows, escort service, massage parlors, bar hostess and GROs, sex therapy (practitioners who provide one-on-one, hands-on and real time sex therapy to rehabilitate those who are sexually dysfunctional), selling betel nuts (like the betel nut beauties found in Taiwan), and modeling for men's magazines mainstream (like lad magazines). Moreover, the “terms 'sex work' and 'sex worker' have been coined by sex workers themselves to redefine commercial sex, **not just as the social or psychological characteristic of a class of women but as an**

³ Nelia Sancho is the coordinator of Asian Women's Human Rights Council (AWHRC), Manila, an Asia-based feminist human rights NGO with UN observer status. For AWHRC, what constitutes human rights violation is not the act of prostitution per se, but the abuse and exploitation behind the operation of the prostitution business. Thus, AWHRC seeks to protect the rights of women prostitutes to consensual, voluntary sexual service. Sancho and her AWHRC colleagues led various other women's NGOs to establish the Task Force on Filipino Comfort Women (TFFCW) in 1992 and later helped to organize LILA Pilipina Lolas, an advocacy group of the Filipino comfort women survivors and women's human rights advocates. The testimonies of Filipino comfort women appeared in a book edited by Sancho, entitled War Crimes on Asian Women: The Case of the Filipino Women, Book II (Manila: AWHRC, 1999). She is also an active organizer and participant in many international forums on prostitution and trafficking, having collaborated with other Asian AWHRC counterparts and feminist NGOs, such as the Global Alliance against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) of Thailand.

income-generating activity or form of employment for women and men. It can thus be considered simply as a form of economic activity. An employment or labor perspective is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for making sex work an integral part of the ongoing debate on human, women's and workers' rights at the local, national and international level."⁴ This is precisely because those who engage in sex work are generally viewed by society in a discriminatory way. For many, it may serve as the only employment or survival option. While some may freely choose sex work as their occupation, many more young girls, boys and women are coerced through violence, trafficking, debt-bondage or the influence of more powerful adults. In some instances, sex work is simply a temporary informal activity. Women and men who have occasional commercial sexual transactions, where sex is exchanged for food, shelter or protection (**survival sex**), would not consider themselves to be linked with formal sex work. Occasional sex work takes place where sex is exchanged for basic, short-term economic needs, and this is less likely to be a formal, full-time occupation.

What is noteworthy about the exploitation/choice dichotomy is the manner in which it differentiates the act of sex trade per se from the abuse and exploitation in the labor condition of sex workers, thereby distinguishing the work from the person. Feminist perspectives view patriarchy and global capitalism as inherent obstacles to the exercise of women's decision-making power. They focus less on the influences of these women's unequal positionalities on their subjectivity constructions. In my opinion, women's obstacles to exercise an empowering choice do not reside just in the context of structural power forces but can be attributed also to women themselves, through their submission, voluntary or involuntary, to the "gendering" power discourse of sexual morality, propriety and beauty. This raises several cultural notions of morality, e.g. '**magandang tingnan**' (socially acceptable) and '**pangit tingnan**' (socially unacceptable), reverent and irreverent, moral and immoral, and similar notions dichotomizing art and pornography, sex work and prostitution. Notions of **maganda/pangit** (beautiful/ugly) and **malakas/mahina** (strong/weak) engender in the Philippines a power structure vertically or horizontally linking men and women in and outside sex work (in society at large).

Sandra Bartky has developed a theory about the construction of femininity,⁵ drawing

⁴ Jo Bindman. Redefining Prostitution as Sex Work on the International Agenda.

Jo Bindman is connected with Anti-Slavery International with the participation of Jo Doezema of Network of Sex Work Projects, 1997. Available online at <http://www.walnet.org/csis/papers/redefining.html#8>

⁵ See Sandra Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," in Diana Tietjens Meyers, ed., Feminist Social Thought: A Reader (London, New York: Routledge, 1997).

on Michel Foucault's earlier account of the disciplinary power paradigm.⁶ In a similar way, the construction of gendered sexuality and the impact of gender power relations upon sexual morality and behavior in Philippines society have theoretical linkages with Foucault's subtle forms of power that penetrate into the body and mind. The disciplinary practices Foucault cites in **Discipline and Punish** are based on Jeremy Bentham's model of the **Panopticon**:

“At the periphery of the Panopticon, a circular structure at the center, a tower with wide windows that opens into the inner side of the ring. The structure on the periphery is divided into cells, each with two windows, one facing the windows of the tower, the other facing the outside, allowing an effect of backlighting to make any figure visible within the cell. ...Each inmate is alone, shut off from effective communication with his fellows but constantly visible from the tower.”⁷

The structure of the Panopticon imposes on the inmate “a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.”⁸ In the perpetual self-surveillance of the inmate, “the tight, disciplinary control of the body has gotten a hold on the mind.”⁹ The effects of Foucault's Panopticon model resonate within the walls of discourse on the double standard of morality and its impacts on sexual behavior in Philippines society. Gender practices in the Philippines impose on women, through institutions of family, church, and school, core Catholic values of “**dutiful daughters, virginal girlfriends, devoted wives and sacrificing mothers.**”¹⁰ Indeed, the moral value placed on female virginity is so strong that “women's sexuality is generally accepted only within the confines of marriage, and most Filipino men would only marry women without a sexual past.”¹¹ Thus, women are expected to preserve pre-marital virginity and be faithful to their husbands after marriage. The practice

⁶ See Monique Deveaux, “Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault,” in Susan Hekman, ed., Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996). Foucault's earlier modern power framework, in his *Discipline and Punish*, is comprised of two disciplinary regimes: ‘docile bodies/Panopticonism’ and ‘bio-power’. The first refers to the transition in state power from the authoritarian forms of sovereignty to more subtle, disciplinary forms of modern power, which construct the self-surveillant (panoptic) discourse of what human bodies should be in order to remain ‘docile (obedient)’ within a modern state power. The latter refers to a transformation in the state's interests from the juridical authority over the life and death of the population to medical intervention in population control and management, such as reproductive capacities, health, birth; and mortality: the “bio-politics of the population,” or simply “bio-power” (p.2 13-20).

⁷ Bartky, 1997, 94-95.

⁸ Bartky, 1997, 95. See also Michel Foucault. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison, Alan Sheridan, trans.. (New York: Vintage, 1979), 201.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Rene E. Ofreneo and Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo, "Prostitution in the Philippines," in Lin L. Lim, ed., The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1998), 104.

¹¹ Eric Ratliff, "Women As 'Sex Workers,' Men As 'Boyfriends': Shifting Identities in Philippine Go-Go Bars and Their Significance in STD/AIDS Control," in Anthropology and Medicine, Vol.1.6, No. 1, 87.

of such Catholic chastity in the Philippines, however, does not apply to men. Men's sexual freedom is generally considered as a separate category of Catholic sexual morality, although it supposedly imposes on both men and women the same demands of being free from 'sinful' sexual desire. Many Filipino men commit adultery with women, before marriage and outside the marital relationship, and they do not normally have any moral guilt about their infidelity. Former President Joseph Estrada, for example, has more than ten children from extra-marital relationships with other women. A TV personality, Martin Nievera, justifies in the same way an affair that caused his wife, Pops Fernandez, to file for annulment of their marriage by claiming that there is no such a thing as eternal love. Furthermore, the different grounds for legal separation on the basis of sexual infidelity also reflect such sexual double standards.¹²

The double standard of morality underpins the aforementioned gender stereotypes attached to Filipino cultural notions of *malakas*, *maganda*, and *pangit*, which has two distinct implications for prostitution. One is that the purchase of women by men is widely accepted through the **malakas** concept of 'aggressive male with virility' and the **pangit** concept of women as 'objects of male sexual gratification'. This is consistent with the fact that "there is such a strong local demand from men of all social classes for prostitutes."¹³ The other is that sexual double standards also divide women into two types: **maganda** woman as 'moral guardian' and **pangit** woman as 'evil whore.' In this light, it is not surprising that even a woman in the sex industry, insofar as she is a 'cherry girl,'¹⁴ comments that going out with her clients (implies having an intimate relationship with a client) is what loose women do. 'Decent' women outside the sex industry differentiate themselves even more strongly from 'fallen' women. Local women avoid wearing any 'revealing' clothes such as a sleeveless shirt, tight mini skirt or even short pants, which are usually seen as things that only prostitutes wear to attract clients. The way the discourse of sexual double standards infiltrates into a person's

¹² See Dominador D. Buhain. *The Revised Penal Code of the Philippines*, 1992 revised ed. (Manila: Rex Book Store, 1992). See also Sylvia Chant and Cathy McIlwaine, *Women of a Lesser Cost: Female Labour, Foreign Exchange and Philippine Development* (London and East Haven, 1995), 14. There are two separate articles on "crimes against chastity" in the Philippine Revised Code: adultery and concubinage, one pertaining to women, the other to men, respectively. Article 333 states that "adultery is committed by any married women who shall have intercourse with a man not her husband and by the man who has carnal knowledge of her knowing her to be married, even if the marriage be subsequently declared void," whereas Article 334 states that concubinage is committed by "any husband who shall keep a mistress in the conjugal dwelling, or shall have sexual intercourse under scandalous circumstances, with a woman who is not his wife, or shall cohabit with her in any other place.. .If the husband has carnal knowledge with his paramour in hotels even on different occasions, he is not guilty of concubinage for this is not one of three ways by which concubinage is committed" (p. 125).

¹³ Ofreneo and Ofreneo, 1998, 105.

¹⁴ 'Cherry girl' is a bar term that refers to a virgin woman.

mind and sexual behavior reminds us of the image of the Panopticon: “knowing that he may be observed from the tower at any time, the inmate takes over the job of policing himself.”¹⁵

The ‘**moral gaze**,’ which is inscribed in the sexual relations of the Philippine society, appears to be internalized by Filipinos and is perpetually oriented toward the disciplinary practices of self-policing subjects. The exercise of disciplinary power, according to Foucault, is unique in a sense that it “seeks to transform the minds of those individuals who might be tempted to resist” in anonymous forms of psychological power.¹⁶ This contrasts with the authoritarian forms of physical control that are directly exercised on citizens by the state.

When the Spanish first came to the Philippines in the sixteenth century, colonial authorities imposed Catholicism, “a patriarchal culture where women had to subordinate themselves to father, husband and priest.”¹⁷ Women's mobility was confined to the domestic sphere and the church, and their sexuality was controlled through the notion of Virgin Mary and other aspects of a strict moral code that emphasized modesty and chastity. Tragically and ironically enough, prostitution began to evolve and function as the outlets of Spanish men's sexual desire, which was suppressed under the moral authorities; the rape of native women by the Spanish “created a reserve of ‘fallen’ women who became available to service not only the homesick Spanish troops and dignitaries, but also the friars.”¹⁸ In contemporary Philippine society, colonial Catholic institutions no longer shelter young girls from ‘sinful’ behaviors and ‘lewd’ or ‘worthless’ women in separate quarters. Instead, the virgin cult inscribed at school, family and church—individualized forms of “faceless, centralized, and pervasive”¹⁹ power rooted in the combination of indigenous gender concepts and Hispanic Catholicism—seeks to place the sense of unworthiness on the “docile bodies” of those who have lost their virginity.

Thus, Foucault's modern disciplinary power is useful for examining sexual discourses of power and their impacts on sex trade, especially prostitution in the Philippines. Foucault's poststructuralist theory offers alternative approaches the structuralist arguments by Coalition feminists, where prostitution is viewed as a global creation of patriarchal political economy. Foucault's notion of power departs from structuralist analyses of power that **over-determine power subjects** to an alternative notion of **micro-power**, which “brings into play relations

¹⁵ Bartky, 1997, 106.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ofreneo and Ofreneo, 1998,100.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Bartky, 1997, 106.

between individuals (or between groups)" that are intimately bound up with knowledge and discourse.²⁰ In other words, Foucault attempts to deconstruct the normative conceptualization of power as a zero-sum form of structural forces and focuses more on the **relational aspects of power**, where the conditions of power subjects are not the determinants. Foucault argues:

"The idea that the State must, as the source or point of confluence of power, be invoked to account for all the apparatuses in which power is organized, does not seem to me very fruitful for history, or one might rather say that its fruitfulness has been exhausted...the political is not something which determines in the last analysis (or over-determines) relations that are elementary and by nature 'neutral.' Every relation of force implies at each moment a relation of power (which is in a sense its momentary expression). And every power relation makes a reference, as its effect but also as its condition of possibility, to a political field of which it forms a part."²¹

Foucault's disciplinary power can thus explain **self-policing aspects of individuals** as a contributing factor to the perpetuation and proliferation of prostitution and other activities within the sex trade industry and moves away from the notion of patriarchal economy, where poor women are viewed as economically coerced commodities vis-à-vis their male sexual counterparts. Nevertheless, Foucault's conception of power does not show how self-discipline impacts in different ways on different genders. The effects of "moral gaze" remain the same, regardless of whether one is **malakas** or **maganda/pangit**. Evidently, Foucault's work is not gender sensitive. He is not especially interested in feminism or women's power subjection."²²

Bartky's criticism on Foucault's gender blindness depicts this point:

But Foucault treats the body throughout as if it were one, as if the bodily experiences of men and women did not differ and as if men and women bore the same relationship to the characteristic institutions of modern life. Where is the account of the disciplinary practices that engender the "docile bodies" of women, bodies more docile than the bodies of men? Women, like men, are subject to many of the same disciplinary practices Foucault describes. But he is blind to those disciplines that produce a modality of embodiment that is peculiarly feminine.²³

Thus, Bartky attempts to move beyond Foucault's treatment of power by integrating what she terms "institutionally unbound" forms of disciplinary power. Whereas Foucault examines the operation of disciplinary power exercised through specific institutions (schools,

²⁰ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed., Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 217.

²¹ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, Colin Gordon ed. and trans. (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 189.

²² See Foucault, 1980. Regarding the possibilities that his *History of Sexuality* would advance the women's question, Foucault states as follows: "There are few ideas there, but only hesitant ones, not yet fully crystallized. It will be the discussion and criticism after each volume that will perhaps allow them to become clarified. But it is not up to me to lay down how the book should be used (p. 192)."

²³ Bartky, 1997, 95.

hospitals, and prisons), Bartky argues that patriarchal disciplinary power operates both inside and outside the context of institution; institutionally bounding power can be "imposed" but institutionally unbound forms of power can be "voluntary." Bartky therefore highlights this problem with the way the voluntary form of patriarchal power operates and attaches women to **hegemonic norms**²⁴ of feminine identity. For her, women internalize the feminine ideal so profoundly that they lack the critical distance necessary to resist it. It is voluntary, because a woman would conform to the "patriarchal standards of bodily acceptability" out of the fear of losing "her sense of self as an existing individual."²⁵

Bartky's explanation of gendering disciplinary power has significant implications for Filipino women's voluntary submission to malakas power. Her theory provides significant insight in analyzing these sorts of voluntary and internalized forms of patriarchal disciplinary power. Arguably, if female celebrity models in the Philippines (and women in general) gain critical awareness about the malakas power discourse, they would not subscribe themselves to the **maganda/pangit** dichotomy. However, I do not wish to impose Bartky's rigid feminist philosophy that all women must dissociate themselves from any kinds of feminine behavior. Her argument that feminine-looking women are viewed as accomplices of the "modernization of patriarchal domination", as demonstrated by athletes and Olympians as well as by celebrity models who pose for lad magazines across the globe, is to some extent problematic.

I am not privileging feminist research and its methodologies over traditional scientific ones; however, my approach is grounded on a feminist approach to women empowerment. Feminist activists argue that women's empowerment is not really about replacing one form of empowerment with another: women's empowerment should lead to liberation of men from false value systems and ideologies of oppression. It should lead to a situation where each one can become a whole being regardless of gender, and use their fullest potential to construct a more humane society for all.²⁶ The idea of power is at the root of the term empowerment. Power can be understood as operating in a number of different ways:

- **Power-over:** This involves an either/or relationship of domination/ subordination. Ultimately, it is based on socially sanctioned threats of violence and intimidation, requires constant vigilance to maintain, and invites active and passive resistance;
- **Power-to:** This relates to having decision-making authority, power to solve problems and can be creative and enabling;

²⁴ Ibid., 103, emphasis in original.

²⁵ Bartky, 1997, 104-105.

²⁶ Akhtar 1992 quoted in Batliwala 1994: 131).

- **Power-with:** This involves people organizing with a common purpose or common understanding to achieve collective goals;
- **Power-within:** This refers to self confidence, self awareness and assertiveness. It relates to how individuals recognize through analysis of their experience how power operates in their lives then gain the confidence to act to influence and change this.²⁷

Figure 1: Definitions of power and empowerment in practice²⁸

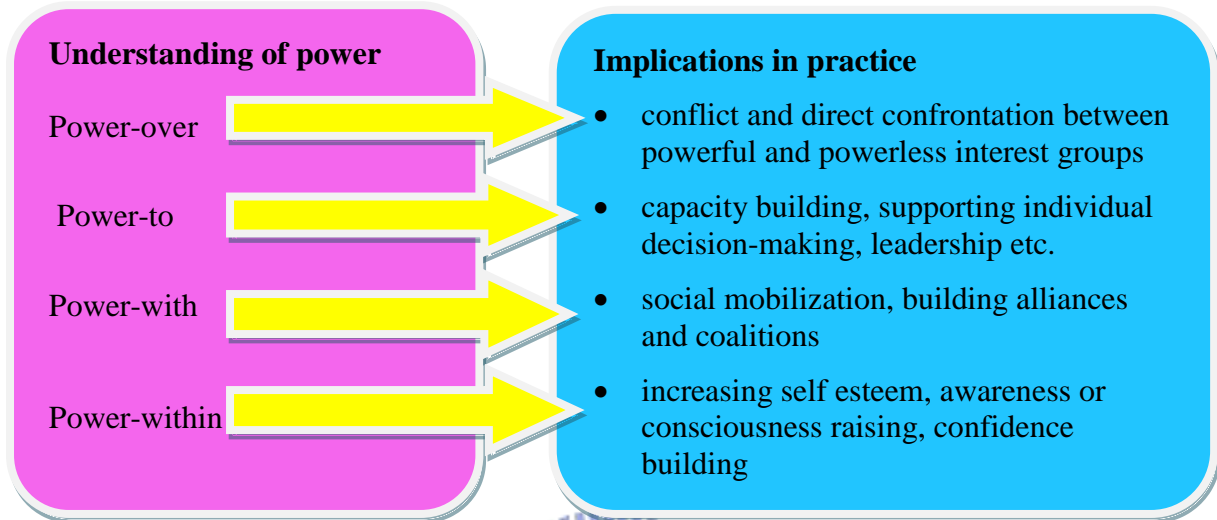


Figure 1: Various understandings of power embedded in the concept of empowerment are involved in different approaches to empowerment in practice. Such distinctions are useful for understanding approaches to empowerment by sex workers and development organizations.

While understandings of power and empowerment can derive from many different movements and traditions, the feminist movement has emphasized collective organization (power-with) and has been influential in developing ideas about power-within. Power must be seen as working at different levels, including the institutional, household and individual. For some theorists, power is a zero-sum: one group's increase in power necessarily involves another's loss of power. The idea of a redistribution of power is therefore seen as necessarily involving conflict. In this perspective, empowerment of women leads by implication to less power for men. Some feminist writers on power have challenged the idea that power necessarily involves domination by one party and obedience or oppression of others. Men may also benefit from consequences of women's empowerment by having an opportunity to live in a more equitable society and explore new roles. Power-to, power-with and power-

²⁷ Williams, Suzanne, Seed, Janet and Mwau, Adelina, 1994, *Oxfam Gender Training Manual*, Oxfam, Oxford.

²⁸ John Gaventain in Zoë Oxaal with Sally Baden. Gender and empowerment: definitions, approaches and implications for policy. (Briefing prepared for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)). October 1997.

within can be regarded as alternatives to power-over. It aims “to convert men and the system to the sense of responsibility, nurturance, openness, and rejection of hierarchy.”²⁹

Jo Rowlands points out that “**empowerment is a bottom-up process and cannot be bestowed from the top down**”: The outside professional cannot expect to control the outcomes of authentic empowerment being given by one group to another, hides an attempt to keep control.³⁰ Jo Rowlands argues here that those feminist professional NGOs who have good intentions albeit a misguided notion of empowerment by outside forces, like a feminist organization, is the key to women’s empowerment, especially those who engage in sex work. She asserts that empowerment is essentially a bottom-up process rather than something that can be formulated as a top-down strategy. **Understanding empowerment in this way means that development agencies cannot claim to empower women. Women must empower themselves.** Devising coherent policies and programs for women’s empowerment requires careful attention, because external agencies/bodies tend to be positioned with power-over target populations. The training of development professionals in government, NGOs or donor agencies does not always equip them to engage with others, which supporting empowerment requires. Appropriate external support and intervention, however, can be important to foster and support the process of empowerment. Development organizations can, under certain circumstances, play an enabling or facilitating role. They can ensure that their programs work to support women’s individual empowerment by invoking women’s participation, acquisition of skills, decision-making ability, and control over resources. Agencies can support women’s collective empowerment by funding women’s organizations that work to address the causes of gender subordination, by promoting women’s participation in political systems and by fostering dialogue between those in positions of power and organizations with women’s empowerment goals. However, caution should be exercised against assuming that promoting a certain type of activity will necessary lead to empowerment. As she phrases it:

Empowerment cannot be defined in terms of specific activities or end results because it involves a process whereby women can freely analyze, develop and voice their needs and interests, without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above, by planners or other social actors. The assumption that planners can identify women’s needs runs against empowerment objectives which imply that women themselves formulate and decide what these interests are. Planning suggests a top-down approach, and yet women may define their interests differently from planners.³¹

²⁹ Sen and Grown, 1985:72.

³⁰ Rowlands, 1995: 104.

³¹ Wieringa S, 1994, Women’s Interests and empowerment: gender planning reconsidered Development and

Planners working towards an empowerment approach must therefore develop ways of enabling women themselves to critically assess their own situation and create and shape a transformation in society. To some extent this may run against the logic of planning, because the content of such a transformation cannot be determined by planners in advance, if it is to be truly empowering to women.³² Wierenga argues that this transformation should be seen as part of an ongoing process rather than as a fixed goal in the distant future.

At an ideological level of a multi-dimensional definition of power, it is evident that empowerment has several different and inter-related aspects. Rowlands notes, “empowerment is not only about opening up access to decision making, but also must include processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to occupy that decision-making space.”³³ **Empowerment is often described as being about the ability to make choices, but it must also involve being able to shape what choices are on offer. Empowerment corresponds to women challenging existing power structures which subordinate women.** As such, what is seen as empowering in one context may not be in another.

Power-over analyses of structural forces—those focusing on patriarchy and political economy—tend to override women's agency. In this model, women in the sex industry are viewed as **‘dispossessed and powerless’** in the system of sexual exploitation, therefore must leave and/or **must be rescued** from the sex industry. In other words, the agency of women, particularly those poor women, is narrowly interpreted as being ‘prostituted’—without the exercise of decision-making power, and determined as the victims of sexual exploitation in a homogenizing context of the patriarchal power in the international (geo-) political economy.

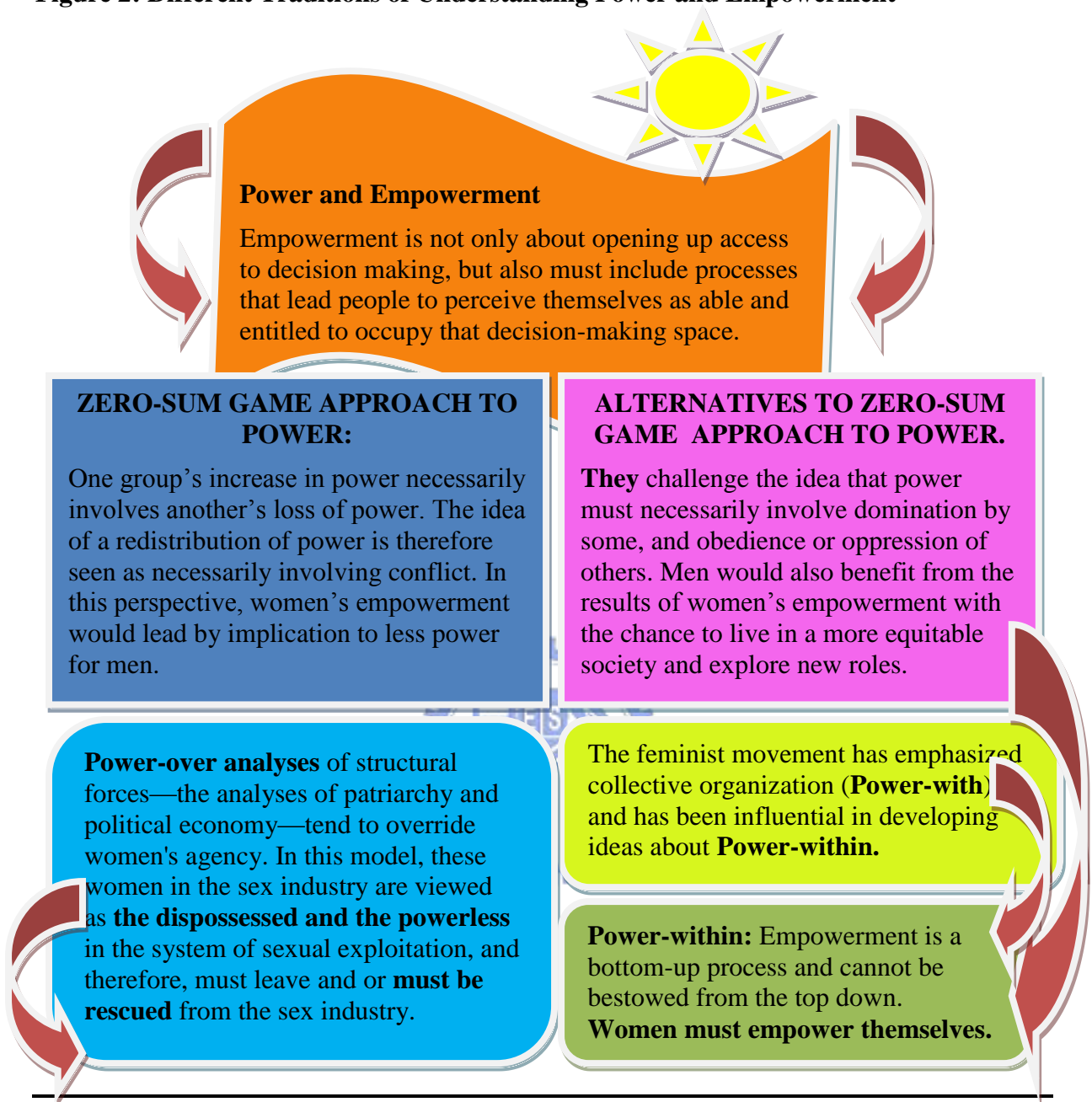
Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that female celebrity models positionalities differ and are far better off than those other women who are in and outside the sex industry. This is not to deny the impact of socio-economic factors on the women's entry into the sex industry. Nor do I argue that women want to remain in the sex industry regardless of the abuse and exploitation inherent in their labor situations. By bringing to light female **‘celebrity’ models’** own accounts of power will reveal how "power" looks in the eyes of Filipino women in the sex industry through analyses of women's positionalities and subjectivities within the existing power structures and discourses of Philippine society.

Change 25 (4), The Netherlands.

³² Ibid.

³³ Rowlands, 1995.

Figure 2: Different Traditions of Understanding Power and Empowerment



3. The rise of the 4th State: The Corporate Media and the New Morality—The Power of the Media to Insist and the Power of the Person to Resist

Many see the media as a source of power—either in its own right or as the tool of dominant forces in society. One must point out; however, that mass media must have the **appearance** of professionalism as well as objectivity, transparency and advocacy to the truth in order for it to be able to assume an authoritative position to the truth, to attain believability, to be able to secure a mass base of captive and loyal viewers.

As organizations, firms, politicians, and advocacy groups of all kinds are constantly engaged in a fierce battle to win the attention of the population, the mass media lures people

with sensational scandals to attract people to buy its stories. Politicians expose their private lives and engage in media stunts to attract public attention and confidence. Advertisers use emotional images to capture consumer attention and make them remember the name of their product. Advocacy groups use demonstrations and dramatic actions to attract media coverage as a means of communicating their message to the public. Charity organizations use button-pushing images of starving children for soliciting donations. Religious groups campaign in order to win new proselytes. Government and official organizations campaign to inform the public about certain important topics. And terrorists go as far as to commit the most shocking crimes in order to make the news media write about them and their political causes, and the journalists eagerly comply to satisfy the thirst and need of the viewing and listening public.

Thus, given the perceived strong link between mass media and power, it is important to consider Foucault's understanding of the nature of power. This will suggest ways in which the mass media might be involved in the exercise of power but also offer ideas on how this power can be deflected. This will be examined in terms of the possible roles and effects of the media. Foucault offers a different perspective on the sources of power, which might suggest ways in which the media might be constrained. Any theory must be either normative or explanatory. The problem with a normative theory is Foucault's rejection of "truth" as an absolute. It is pointless to be normative if there is no norm. There is a similar problem with an explanatory theory. His view is that history is a series of fictions, and what is interesting is not what happened so much as how people were brought to think what happened. Many of these theories are theories of power based on a model of hierarchical domination of the mass by the privileged classes. Marxists, to mention just one viewpoint, see mass media as tools for creating a false reality that disguises a reality of oppression and exploitation. Foucault offers another perspective on how power operates. He rejects simple, hierarchical approaches and suggests instead that power is not a unitary concept, not an absolute. Instead, he argues that "power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix—no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body"³⁴. In other words, he sees power as being dispersed through the network of relationships that make up society and based in discourse. This is not to deny that power struggle might be unequal but to suggest that it is not exercised in a single, downward vector. **For Foucault, a critical component of power is freedom, since power**

³⁴ Foucault, quoted in J Bristow, *Sexuality* (London, 1997) pp. 177.

can only be said to create an effect if the object of power has the ability to resist. As he says, "power is not simply repressive; it is also productive... Power subjects bodies not to render them passive, but to render them active. The forces of the body are trained and developed with a view to making them productive. The power of the body corresponds to the exercise of power over it, hence, the possibility of a reversal of that power."³⁵

This final point is particularly interesting, because it can inform the debate around the power of the media to insist and the power of the person to resist. It challenges the Frankfurt School's view of the 'Culture Industry' as mass deception on two grounds: first, mass culture might not exert an overall and constant pressure on mass society, as it operates in a complex matrix of different situations; secondly, the outcome in these situations is not pre-determined. Most importantly, each has the possibility of creating resistance or at least result in a different outcome. The key for Foucault is that these situations are basically sites of discourse. As he puts it, "discourse can both be an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy"³⁶

According to Foucault, "power produces knowledge."³⁷ In fact, he sees them as two sides of the same coin. At the level of individual discourse, a power-knowledge relationship might create a perceived "truth" that will have ramifications for conduct and consequences for action. In other words, while a Marxist analysis of the mass media suggests that it is being used by dominant groups to mask a reality that they are at least aware of, Foucault's approach implies that at least some of the parameters that define the present are hidden from all. His central thesis that power is everywhere expressed in a multitude of individual discourses offers freedom from the inevitability of determinate power and allows us to see **mass media as a site of power and resistance where the outcome, while prejudiced by a coalescence of power, might well allow resistance as a necessary condition of the exercise of power.** Yet he offers a bleak view of how we come to recognize a form of reality that considerably narrows our view of what is possible and identifies how, in our own time, our perceptions of sexuality might be being used for this very purpose. Therefore, it might be possible to draw comfort from his view that power outcomes are not inevitable and can be resisted.

To add currency to Foucault's idea of people's power to resist, media scientists have often discussed how much influence the media have on people's opinions. People tend to

³⁵ Sheridan, Alan. Michel Foucault, The Will to Truth. (London, 1980), p. 217.

³⁶ Foucault, quoted in Bristow, J. Sexuality. (London, 1997) p. 178].

³⁷ Foucault quoted in Sheridan, Alan. Michel Foucault, The Will to Truth. (London, 1980) p. 220.

selectively read what they already agree with and to rationalize their pre-formed opinions in the face of contrary arguments. Experimental evidence seems to indicate that the mass media have little power to change people's opinions on issues for which they already have formed a strong opinion. Very rarely can the mass media actually make people change their minds or their views instantly. The media primarily reinforce existing views that people already hold.

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that mass media has a profound influence, when it comes to setting agendas and influencing people on new issues and/or ideas, or the issues and/or ideas that people have not yet made up their mind about. The way an issue or idea is framed determines how it is discussed, which causes a social problem to be blamed on, and which of the possible remedies are entered into the discussion. It is easy to manipulate people not because they are stupid but because they are given a wider range of options and choices, thus choosing has become difficult. But with the evolving power of the mass media in a market system, people's will is malleable to trendsetting, new norms and new social values. Herein lays the power of the media--brokering, hyping, conditioning and even manufacturing what the people need and desire, thereby resulting in media induced and mass manufactured needs and desires. The sad part is that people actually think they need or want it, even if these choices are clearly not really what they need or want in normal circumstances.

A.J. Liebling said, **“Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one.”**³⁸ Almost all of the Philippine broadcast media and print media as well are owned primarily by wealthy families who own the biggest and largest business conglomerates in retail and wholesale. Direct ties to the biggest of big businesses are almost unbelievably extensive, and, these ties cannot help but seriously bias and compromise news coverage. Moreover, the media empires are, first and foremost, profit-making corporations that conduct themselves like other corporations, when it comes to corrupting Philippine politics. As large corporations themselves, the mass media want the same preferential treatment and have the same desire to grow without bounds, as all other corporations.

That is, the parent corporations of many play good music with people in power and also act against the public interest in other ways. As big winners in the corruption game, they show no signs of serious interest in political reform. In effect, and like most

³⁸ Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. Available online at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A. J. Liebling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._J._Liebling)

Abbott Joseph Liebling (October 18, 1904 – December 28, 1963) was an American journalist who was closely associated with The New Yorker from 1935 until his death. Liebling is remembered for many quotes and aphorisms, such as: "People everywhere confuse what they read in newspapers with news" and "I can write better than anybody who can write faster, and I can write faster than anybody who can write better."

other Philippine institutions, **the mass media advance the economic interests of the wealthy few** at the expense of the interests, and values, of the majority. And the self-indulgent, empire-building interests of the wealthy few are not those of either liberals or cultural conservatives. At the heart of media public concern is a shallow but highly serviceable **‘relativistic ethics’**: "if it's profitable it's good," is fully compatible.

The mass media has an important role in modern democratic society as the main channel of communication. The population relies on the news media as the main source of information, which is the basis upon which they form their opinions and voting decisions. Competition has become increasingly keen in the sphere of mass media as they keep fighting for the attention of readers, listeners, and TV-viewers. The life and death of each newspaper and TV station is at stake here, when income from advertising and sponsoring is proportional to the number of readers or viewers. Modern advertising (like politicians, advocacy groups, charity organizations, religious groups, official government organizations, even terrorists) relies more on psychology and button pushing than on providing factual information about price and quality (or environmental issues, women, gay and lesbian rights, drinking and smoking, human rights, terrorism, etc.). Many advertisements contain no information other than merely repeating a product name and associating it with attention-catching images and the portrayal of an attractive lifestyle. It thereby attempts to influence the audience to make less rational consumer choices than they otherwise would. At present, the hottest topics in the Philippines range from what happens next in ‘Marimar,’ the hottest soap opera in town, what happens to who or who did what to who, the latest sexcapades of celebrities and politicians, the coolest fashion and make-up, the hippest clubs and night spots, what is new from the Belo Group of Companies—the pioneer on plastic surgery and medical beauty interventions for men and women, and who was crowned FHM’s sexiest Pinay (Filipina).

It goes without saying that, ‘commercialized’ mass media are controlled by economic market forces. By selecting and framing news, the media in turn influences public opinion, which in turn influences political decision makers in the democratic process. Obviously the ones that are able to dramatize their cause in the most newsworthy and button-pushing way dominate the ones who have the most important message to tell. The conclusion is that it is not always the most important topics that win in the competition for the attention of media and the population. Then again, who said issue like looking young, beautiful and sexy is not as important as global warming, flashfloods, landslides, terrorism by extremists of all kinds, political imprisonment, human rights and even Glorietta and Batasan Pambansa bombings?

4. Lad Magazines in the Context of Gender, Power and Morality

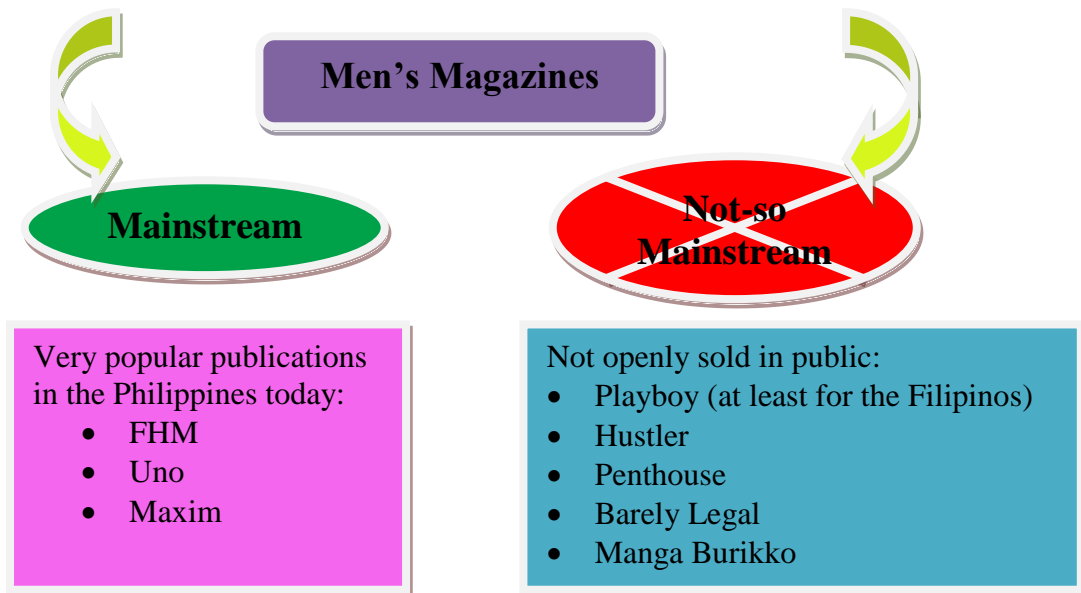
How do we reconcile the growing contradictions between gender representations in the media and women empowerment? How should we make sense of the increasing presence of eroticized images of female body across the media landscape when the usual notion of 'objectification' in a mediascape has gone into a major transformation in which far from being presented as passive objects, women are increasingly depicted as active, desiring sexual subjects? How have constructions of gender, not only of women but also the constructions or representations of masculinity and contemporary gender relations, been depicted and changed in recent years in response to feminist critiques and wider social transformations?

FHM, Uno and Maxim are very popular lad magazines in the Philippines today. These are **'more mainstream'**, as opposed to **'adult'** male publications, like Hustler, Playboy (at least for the Filipinos), Penthouse, Barely Legal and Manga Burikko, to name a few, and they appeal to a broad male audience. Some skew toward men's fashion, others to health. Most are marketed to particular age and income groups. "They contain **'non-nude photography'**, accompanied by articles about the women usually celebrities, models or actresses; consumer stories about cars, tools, and toys; and/or guy tales of sex."³⁹ Lad magazines are primarily marketed to men; however women readers and subscribers of these magazines are not rare. In fact in the Philippines, a solid 30% of readers/subscribers are women.

For years, the term **'men's magazine'** referred to one of two things: pornography or sport. But in recent years a new breed of men's magazine has entered the public arena en masse. The new breed is thick, crisp, glossy, 'hip' but very general. These new men's lifestyle magazines have caught the interest of the market place, which for most part did not exist five or ten years ago. Readers today appear to be very much more focused on the **'self'**, and the magazines have found an editorial format that is having a profound effect on the marketplace. FHM, Loaded, Men's Journal, Maxim, Men's Health, Men's Fitness, Stuff, GQ, Uno, and the long established Esquire (which began in 1933) are just some of the publications that can be found filling the shelves of newsagents around the world since the 1990s.

³⁹ Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_men's_magazines.

Figure 3: Classification of Men's Magazines



Perhaps the popularity of such magazines, with both audiences and advertisers alike, lies in their generality. This allows for an enormous variety of images to exist within the covers of one publication. Whereas Sports Illustrated and Top Gear magazines, for example, are strictly for and about sports and cars respectively, the **‘more modern’ men's magazines** are about sports and cars as well as sex, fashion, women, and anything else that their editors feel might be even mildly interesting. This may partly explain the very large reader base that magazines such as Maxim, Uno and market leader FHM (130,000+ copies sold each month) enjoy in the Philippines today. It also allows for a wide range of advertisers to take advantage of a wider range of readers. By catering to a more popular audience, this new breed of men's magazine is able to cash in on as diverse an audience as possible.

So instead of selling just cars or porn, the likes of FHM, Maxim and Uno, for example, sell everything to everybody, which helps explain its popularity, but only partly. In fact, the success of the lad magazine cannot be put down to one individual factor. There is clearly a need for us to examine and analyze the content and type of individual articles in an attempt to ascertain their possible influence over the reader. There is a need to investigate whether these new publications are in fact a **‘progressive’ force** in society. The term ‘progressive’ asks the question of whether these lad magazines have a positive influence over the male readership in particular—by helping men come to terms with the idea of what it means to be male in a world that is becoming increasingly competitive or by providing advice on masculinity and introducing a ‘men only’ oriented form of entertainment, and society at large—helping men to understand the wisdom of a more egalitarian take on gender relations and women’s issues.

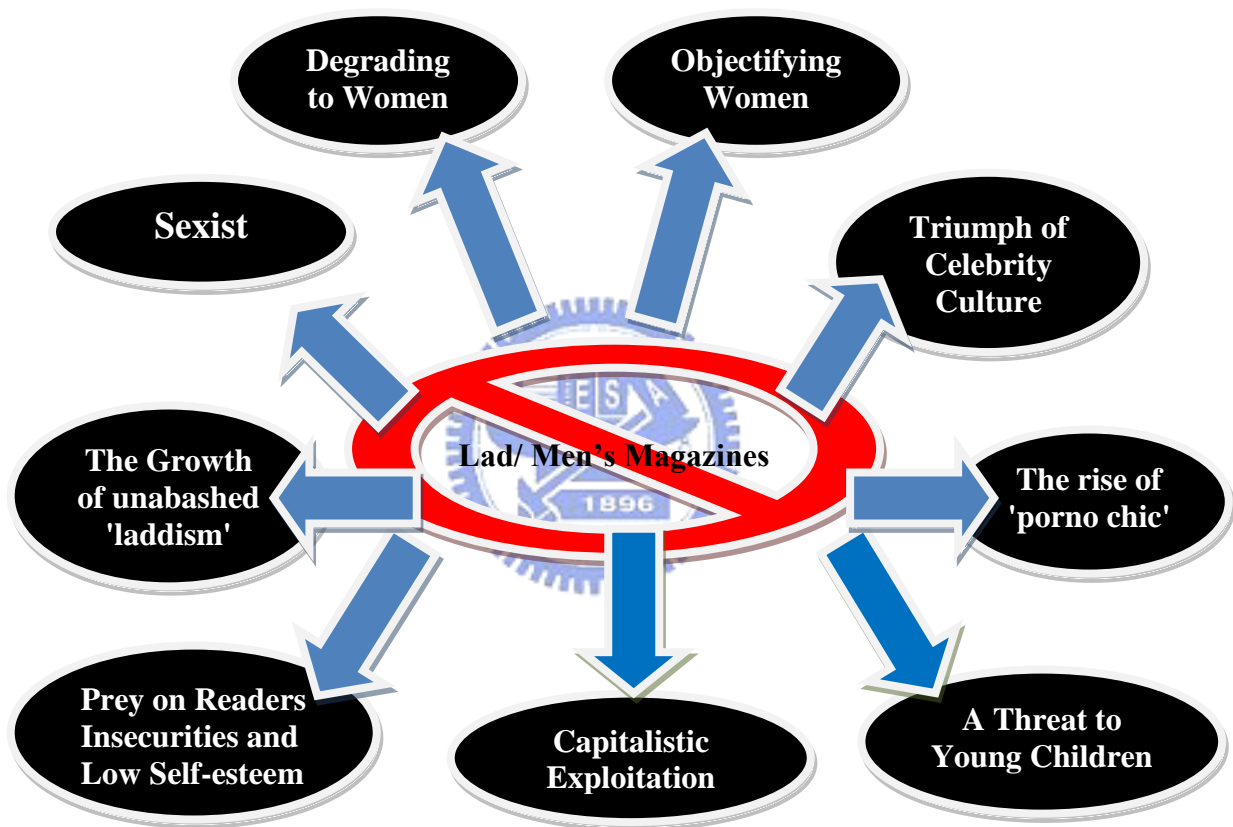
In the early to mid 1990's the men's magazine revolution began to take off in response perhaps to the development of women's position in society, and as they fought to change their roles, some men felt pressure to change too. How this new form of magazine publishing hoped to intervene precisely in the life of men is open to question, since publishers obviously approached the matters **not as ethical or political dilemmas but as a question of business**. Therefore, any definition of new identities and styles of life was intimately bound up with the search for markets, as well as being linked to the wider sense of their (rather vague) social mission. In any case, the 1990's have seen market demand for men's magazines realized. One can argue that men were not changing their attitudes and ideals of masculinity in response to magazines, but the fact that this publishing revolution has occurred at all, particularly in the Philippines since the 2000s, shows that it is already a response to changing attitudes of the male population. This may be outdated thinking, and the idea that men may also be subject to a kind of mini 'sexual revolution' was given little thought. In fact, one should say that change in masculinity has never been part of an organized political movement. Whereas the women's movement had a distinct goal and was in itself a quite clearly-defined political movement, men coming out from their emotional closet should not be confused with such a movement.

During the 1990's for example, men started to take a greater interest in buying clothes, with the result that a magazine could be supported with advertising, so there was and is a commercial base. Ten years later, men have become more comfortable with considering various parts of their lives, so they are happier with things like moisturizers and style articles and suggestions than they would have been ten years ago. They are more comfortable with their masculinity, and magazines taking advantage of this fact have in turn become a viable enterprise. The issue of masculinity is finally open for discussion. These giving and sharing of advices columns, as have already been noted, may not be wholly useful. But whether they are meant as pure entertainment or as serious advice, any publication that makes men more comfortable with who they are or what they are doing is surely a progressive force in society.

On the other hand, many people believe that these magazines, which feature scantily clad as well as naked women in sexy poses on the front cover, despite being very successful, may be a negative force in society. For some, these magazines are a little more than an anti-feminist backlash as they are seen as being sexist, in objectifying women. For others, this is simply exploitation. Lad magazines usually use women as a lure, a way for magazine owners to earn, while treating women as sex objects. Many others point to lad magazines for the rise of '**porno chic**', growth of unabashed '**laddism**', and vitriolic attacks on women in the press and magazines that fail to live up to narrowly defined norms of feminine appearance.

But are these glossies degrading to women and threats to young children as well? Do they prey on readers' insecurities and low self esteem? Should they be banished to the top shelf of local news agents just for featuring scantily-clad photos, often of celebrity subjects on their front cover? Are they supposed to be considered filth that has no place next to Good Housekeeping, Bayani Magazine, People Asia, Boracay Bulletin and MOD magazines? What about those women who pose for these magazines and continue to do so? Their perceptions on this matter are as relevant as the feminist discourses. Moreover, for many others, getting published in such magazines, and making the cover, is an honor, even a road to fame.

Figure 4: Issues against Lad/ Men's Magazines



Thus, it is necessary to look also at the possibility that they are actually a negative force in society. There is a well-rehearsed argument that condemns this genre of publication as being a step backwards in the 'crusade' for equal rights between the sexes. The success of these new publications, which, it could be argued, celebrate the reduction of women to sex objects, is further evidence of the nation's moral decline; but is this really the case? It is fair to say that many articles depict and perhaps, to a certain extent, objectify women. But does this really mean that the middle class males of this nation are sexually naive? Curiously, all these lad magazines are unanimous in saying that their magazines were never conceived as an antifeminist backlash, that they were grounded in honesty about 'blokish lusts' and not on

'misogyny'. This is a question of media effect and its influence over people—a complex and inconclusive topic. Many studies on this topic have been carried out, and they have resulted in different and conflicting viewpoints. Suffice it to say, are we to assume that the laddish sexism that is contained within the magazines should also be taken with the same face value?

With the unprecedented popularity of lad/men's magazines, such as FHM, Uno and Maxim in the Philippines, feminists are denouncing their ill effects, particularly the reduction of women as sex objects, exploitation and the triumph of '**celebrity culture**' and of glamour, over a more traditional choice of ideal role models. But what is more interesting in this is the tacit assumption that feminism or women empowerment and celebrity culture are mutually exclusive and that sex and empowerment cannot go hand in hand. It seems that feminist ideas have become a kind of common sense everywhere, yet feminism has never been more bitterly repudiated. Susan Faludi argues that the 1980s saw a backlash against feminism, especially due to the spread of negative stereotypes against career-minded women. Faludi asserted that many who argue "a woman's place is in the home, looking after the kids are hypocrites, since they (or their wives) are exactly like the women they are criticizing."⁴⁰

Angela McRobbie shows how gender relations are being re-stabilized within a social context to suggest that sexual equality has been achieved. McRobbie argues that by "invoking young women as subjects of capacity and by endowing young women with the semblance of agency, the current gender regime seeks to make feminism unavailable and undesirable, by associating the women's movement with all things that are anachronistic and repugnant."⁴¹ In contrast, others regard the media as increasingly changed by feminism or becoming feminist. From the enormous energy in the way in which sexual politics bursts across a range of media and genres, female independence has now entered into contemporary common sense.

David Gauntlett argues "the traditional view of a woman as a housewife or low status worker has been kick-boxed out of the picture by the feisty, successful 'girl power icons'."⁴² The media thus offers popular feminism that is like "a radio-friendly remix of a multilayered song, with the most exciting bits sampled and some of the dense stuff left out."⁴³

The rise of the 'lad magazines' since the mid-1990s and the emphasis upon celebrity and celebrity culture, and the promotion of the sexualized body as the key site of femininity

⁴⁰ Faludi, Susan. 1991. Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women. New York: Anchor Books.

⁴¹ McRobbie, Angela. 2007. Culture and Social Change: the Post-Feminist Masquerade. London: Sage.

⁴² Gauntlett, David. 2002. Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction. London: Taylor & Francis, Inc., p. 247.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 252.

can be understood as a response to feminism—namely a reaction against 'de-sexualized' new man scripts or a distinctive new classed and racialized articulation of masculinity.⁴⁴

Adding to this picture of paradox and complexity, according to Gauntlett, is another issue: the media, gender relations and feminist ideas are themselves changing and in flux.

There is no stable, unchanging feminist perspective from which to make a cool appraisal of contemporary gender in the media. Rather, feminist ideas are constantly transforming in response to different critiques, to new or previously excluded constituencies, to younger generations, to new theoretical ideas, and to the experience of various kinds of struggle. There is no single feminism, but instead many, diverse feminisms. If media representations of gender have changed then so too have the feminist ideas used to understand and critique them. And, likewise, gender relations are constantly changing. Indeed, we are often told that western democracies are experiencing nothing short of a 'gender quake', so profound are the current transformations.⁴⁵

For most women who want to model for men's magazines, there is little contradiction between being an empowered, 'independent woman' and 'posing in one's underwear.' As feminist ideas have merged into the mainstream, female celebrities have become feminist icons in their own right. When teenage girls think of strong women, most of them don't think of political figures such as President Corazon Aquino, academicians such as Winnie Monsod and legal luminaries such as Supreme Court Justice Cecilia Munoz-Palma and Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago or businesswomen such as high couture designer Monique Lhullier or even Regal Films producer Mother Lily, instead, they think of women such as Angel Locsin of Darna, Marian Rivera of Marimar, Angelina Jolie's Lara Croft, Alias's Jennifer Garner and the stars of Charlie's Angels. And not without reason: these women as well as the characters they portrayed are known and admired for their beauty, wit, intelligence, humor, smartness, self-determination, courage, strong-will and most of all for besting the odds, in other words for being beautiful and successful. And if they can bag the most coveted tag as the '**Pantasy ng Bayan**', the ultimate dream girl, in the process, it would be considered more as an icing on the cake, and to some extent, a validation of their worth as person and as woman worthy of respect and emulation from everybody. Besides, almost all young women's role models have shed their clothes for a men's magazine at one point or another. An FHM cover is now as normalized a career move for most actresses as a Cosmopolitan cover. But not only do actresses and pop stars pose for men's magazines for cash and exposure. Athletes and university students do it. Such women are not naïve bimbos

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

who are forced by circumstance to pose in their underwear; they are women who experience genuine power and accomplishment in their daily lives. Just as importantly, the language they use to justify their decision is a language of empowerment, one that invokes tenets of modern feminism.

If feminism is about choice, as they say, is it not their prerogative to choose to make some relatively easy money from looking pretty and adopting a sexy pose? Yet while money is an obvious and important lure, it is not the only reason why women pose. Eula Valdez and Pops Fernandez, TV and movie actresses, and mothers, for example, did a photo spread for FHM to celebrate and to prove that one can age gracefully and that motherhood is sexy.

While it is true that feminists have much to say against glamour modeling, as it is so empowering to women, it has also become fashionable for feminists, in acknowledging that the relationship between female sex models and the people who look at them is not as simple or one-sided as it might initially seem. Most independent, empowered young women would agree that they deserve to be recognized for all their complex qualities, **sex appeal included**.

Workers in the sex industry are often viewed as victims, sinners, drug addicts, derelicts, undereducated and the dregs of society. It may not be difficult to believe that some women may like certain aspects of their work, in addition to the money. But the idea that empowerment could exist within this world is a difficult concept for many to grasp. Equally difficult is to realize that there are workers in the sex industry who are empowered, have very high self-esteem and very much want to see sex work recognized as a legitimate job, like those celebrity models in men's magazines, it may be harder still to believe, even those prostitutes and porno stars like "**Jenna Jameson**,"⁴⁶--the most famous, successful and wealthy female adult entertainment star in history today because of the stigma attached to women in the sex industry, the sex trade—prostitution and pornography in particular.

There are those for whom sexuality is a private matter, there are those for whom the only sexuality issues that matter are sexually transmitted infections and sexual violation, and

⁴⁶ According to ROLLING STONE, Jenna Jameson is the actress who "put the star in porn star," and NEW YORK magazine calls her a "cultural icon." Recognized by Adult Video News as the leading female adult star of all time, she has won virtually every honor the adult industry bestows. Jenna Jameson is the CEO of Club Jenna, Inc., a video production, licensing, Internet development and management firm for more than a dozen adult stars. The E! TRUE HOLLYWOOD STORY of her life was the highest rated special of its kind. Jenna has appeared in more than one thousand magazine articles and graced approximately four hundred covers.

How to Make Love Like a Porn Star: A Cautionary Tale is an easy to read autobiography of Jenna Jameson, who has become one of the biggest porn stars in America to date. It is not a manual on how to have sex or enter into the porn world as one might think while being pulled in by the over the edge title, but actually details the life of Jenna and explains how to she ended up where she is today.

still, there are those for whom who advocate women's empowerment at the same time as denying women the rights to exercise choices over their own sexual and reproductive lives. **How difficult it remains to articulate a perspective on gender and sexuality that treat all women as victims, to be protected from male predation. What does it take to shift understandings of female sexuality in ways that recognize and indeed celebrate femininity and beauty as vehicle of power instead of exploitation and subordination?**

Indeed, the sex industry is the fastest, easiest to produce and market, and a zero-loss guaranteed cottage and global industry, rivaling even incomes generated from wars or selling of military arsenals, biological, nuclear, etc., and from technological giants such as Microsoft, Apple, Nokia, Hollywood movies, etc.. The idea here is: **sex sells**, either through direct and personal one-on-one sex intercourse with a prostitute/sex worker or through representations or imagery, like **non-nude 'sexy' photography**, acting/performing in pornographic films and peep shows, and dancing, whether exotic, in the nude or otherwise, or any combination of the above. It would also be crazy not to accept this as fact and reality. But this is not to say that exploitation of women in this industry is not happening nor should not be stopped or that crimes against women should be tolerated and accepted. My personal view here is that the sex industry should be made a safe and respectable occupation, not only for women but for men as well through empowering programs and policies in terms of laws and jurisprudence.

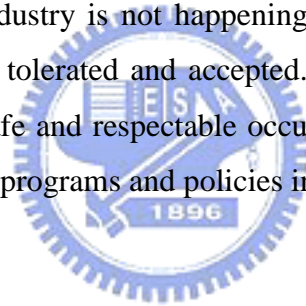


Figure 5: Can women empowerment possible in the Sex Industry? (How could women's decision-making agency be integrated into a feminist theory in ways that move beyond the "exploitation" dilemmas? Or how a traditionally held position of weakness by women as sex object be transformed into position of power?)



5. Female ‘Celebrity’ Model in Men’s Magazines: A New and Powerful Breed of Worker Within the Sex Industry

Figure 6: Hierarchy of Workers within the Sex Industry



Color Codes:

PINK – Sexual services are more on titillation of the senses than actual sex intercourse.

BLUE – Sexual services of any kind especially sex intercourse is required.

I am aware of the potential ruckus over the title of this part of the paper mostly from those feminist prohibitionists who are opposed and totally against all forms of sex trade and from the celebrity models themselves who posed on men’s magazines. This is expected and understandable, because sex work is highly stigmatized in the Philippines. In the Philippines, like anywhere else, there is an acute discrimination against those involved in the sex industry, particularly that of sex work or prostitution itself.

I should clarify a few things. Let me begin with defining and setting the parameters of

what a ‘sex worker’ is as opposed to one ‘working within the sex industry’. Hopefully from this working definition, one may begin to understand the basic premise involved here. I am in this regard fully cognizant of the fact that whatever definition we choose, we inevitably have value positions and favor certain approaches to the problem, be they legislative or otherwise.

So what is a sex worker? Are we referring to the oldest profession in the world, or are we talking about those women-actors in porn movies? Or are we talking about a business transaction of getting paid in cash or in kind in exchange for sexual favors, with or without actual sexual intercourse? The answer to these questions is all of the above.

The following are definitions of sex work/sex trade/sex worker from various sources:

In yourdictionary.com, it defines sex worker as: “any person paid to sexually gratify or arouse a customer, as a model or performer in pornographic magazines, films, or nightclub acts or, especially, a prostitute.”⁴⁷

Joint United Nations Programmes on HIV/AIDS, (2002), defines “sex workers as female, male or transgendered adults or young people who receive money, shelter or goods in exchange for sexual services, either regularly or occasionally, and who may or may not consciously define those activities as income-generating.”⁴⁸

Melissa Ditmore of the Network of Sex Work Projects defines “sex workers as individuals who trade sexual services for money, barter or other compensation. Sex workers may be women, men or transgendered persons spanning a wide range of ages, backgrounds and sexual orientations.”⁴⁹

Common to the above and commonly held definitions is a widespread assumption that engagement in ‘**transactional sex or sexual barter**’ constitutes ‘sex work’, which limits sex work to prostitution. While women and girls remain the largest group involved in sex work, the numbers of boys and men known to be involved is growing. Although far less numerous, transgender individuals—both transvestites and transsexuals—are also active in sex work.

However, in yourdictionary.com, it defines sex work as a paid sexual activity which involved gratification and arousal of the paying customer **not only** through sexual intercourse but also through ‘**titillation through visual performance**’. (Emphasis supplied). Moreover, the term **sex industry does not mean and is not limited to prostitution and pornography**.

While this study uses the term ‘**sex industry**’ throughout, many who work within the

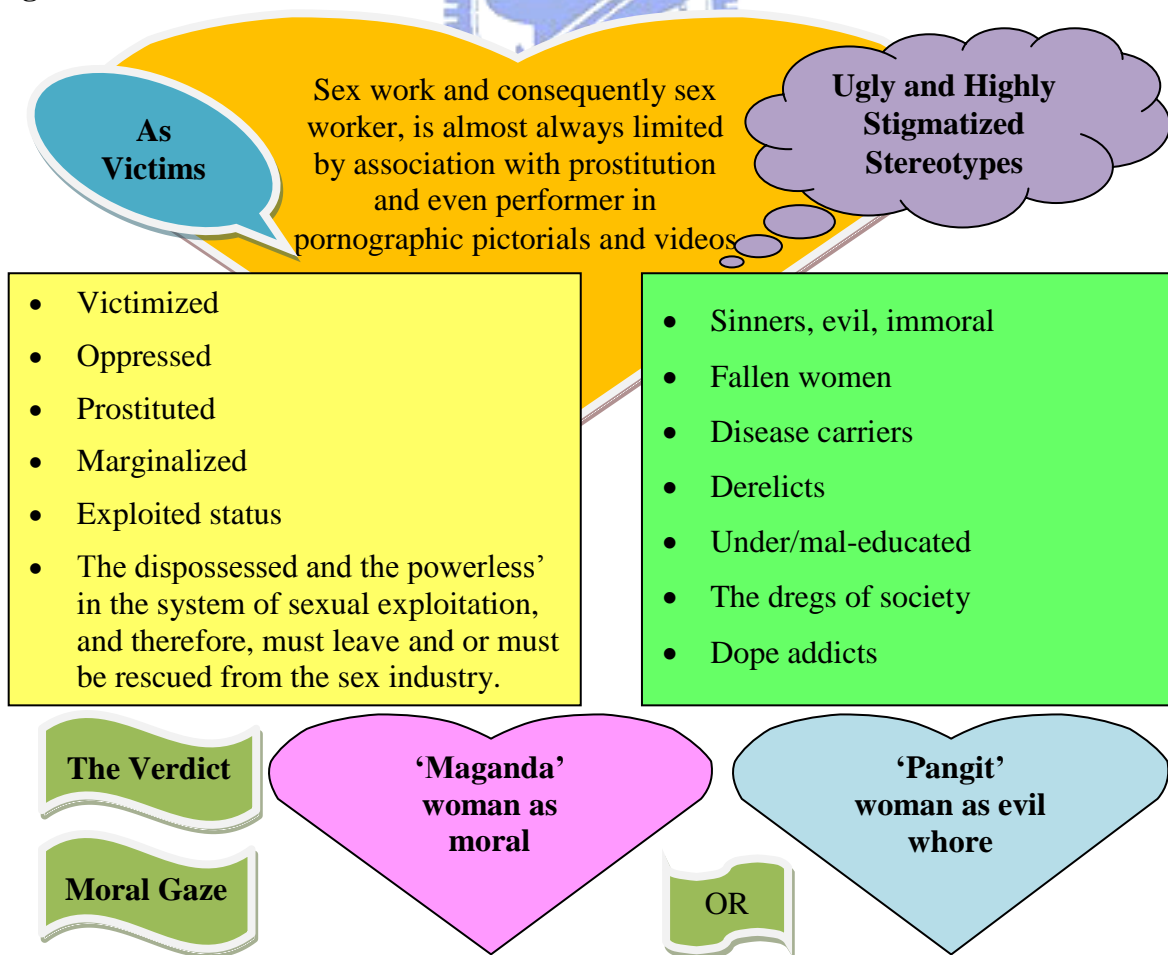
⁴⁷ Available online at <http://www.yourdictionary.com/sex-worker>

⁴⁸ Sex Work and HIV/AIDS. Geneva, Switzerland: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; 2002.

⁴⁹ Melissa Ditmore. Article 3: Reaching Out to Sex Workers, Reproductive Health and Rights—Reaching the Hardly Reached. Melissa Ditmore, also of the Network of Sex Work Projects, elaborates on this theme in her article about the best ways to serve the reproductive health and other needs of sex workers. The human rights of sex workers—male, female, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered—are routinely violated. This article explains why projects with sex workers must go beyond AIDS prevention. This article is available online at <http://www.path.org/files/RHR-Article-3.pdf>.

sex industry do not identify themselves by this term. This is particularly true of young people, of those who live in places where sex work is highly stigmatized, and of female ‘**celebrity models**’ who rather preferred the terms show business industry and modeling industry over that of sex industry. In contrast to the ugly and highly stigmatized stereotypes of sex workers as fallen women, drug addicts, or disease carriers, sex workers are women at work, as single parents supporting children, some of these women are earning money to go to school and surviving economically in a job market that underpays women. However, **female ‘celebrity’ models in lad magazines are a new and powerful breed of workers within the sex industry.** These women are at the height of their careers in terms of beauty and youth, not to mention the fact that many also come from ‘buena familia’ or socially reputable families in elite circles. In other words, they are not marginalized women. Nonetheless, the ‘moralistas’ and the so-called civil society in the Philippines criticize them, by demonizing their posing ‘sexy’ in lad magazines as indecent and vulgar, contrary to Christian ‘catholic’ morals and values, while **prohibitionist** and **neo-abolitionist feminists** on the other hand point to the exploitation, victimization, commoditization, objectification and pornographic representation of the female body, femininity and female sexuality.

Figure 7: Traditional Views of Sex Workers



6. Celebrity Culture: Cashing on Celebrity Complex

What appears on television in most countries is a useful reflection of what topics are on the mind of the people and what is considered socially acceptable. Both Philippine and Mexican televisions have current shows that reflect similarities in outlook that come from being developing and Catholic nations. “What's on television reveals what's happening in a given culture,” said Peter Haratonik, director of media studies at the New School for Social Research. “Certain types of programs emerge at certain times in history.” Put simply, pop culture-- especially TV--does have influence on attitudes and ideas of the people, but much more, TV reflects the ideas that have been accepted by society. But this is not to say that television shows us everything. “It cannot signify everything—because many subcultures are simply unspoken, unable to be classified, repressed from the television world by the dominant cultural order.”⁵⁰

In America for example, a popular courtroom drama/comedy, entitled “**Boston Legal**,” explores celebrity culture: a celebrity star being hounded by paparazzi. The same incident is not only happening in America but also in the Philippines and the rest of the world. In it, Alan Shore (James Spader) takes on the attempted murder trial of a beautiful and sexy Courtney Rae (Jeri Ryan), a Hollywood celebrity who shot a paparazzo whom she felt was a threat to her life. Part of the closing argument that Alan Shore makes goes like this:

A neuro-biologist at Duke University conducted an experiment where he gave a group of thirsty monkeys a choice of either having their favorite drink, which was some sort of cherry juice concoction, or of having the opportunity to look at pictures of the dominant, ‘celebrity’ monkey in their pack. Despite their thirst and the allure of the cherry juice, they chose to look at the pictures. Apparently monkeys have a part of their brain that specifically responds to the **thrill of celebrity**. As do we. Think about that for a moment. A part of our intricate, fantastic and powerful mental machinery specifically responds to Courtney Rae and others who have achieved her level or notoriety. We have hundreds of magazines and websites to follow and track them, stalk them, not to mention cultivate a public obsession for them. It is totally and utterly out of control.⁵¹

As Alan Shore said, think about that for a moment. Despite their thirst and the allure of the cherry juice, the female monkeys chose to look at the pictures of dominant ‘celebrity’ monkey in their pack. Apparently, like us people, in monkeys, there is a part of their brain that specifically responds to the thrill of celebrity. The only problem with this picture is that

⁵⁰ Stuart Hall (1986): Encoding / Decoding. In: Stuart Hall / Andre Lowe / Paul Willis (eds.): Culture, Media, Language. Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79. London: Hutchinsons. 128 – 138.

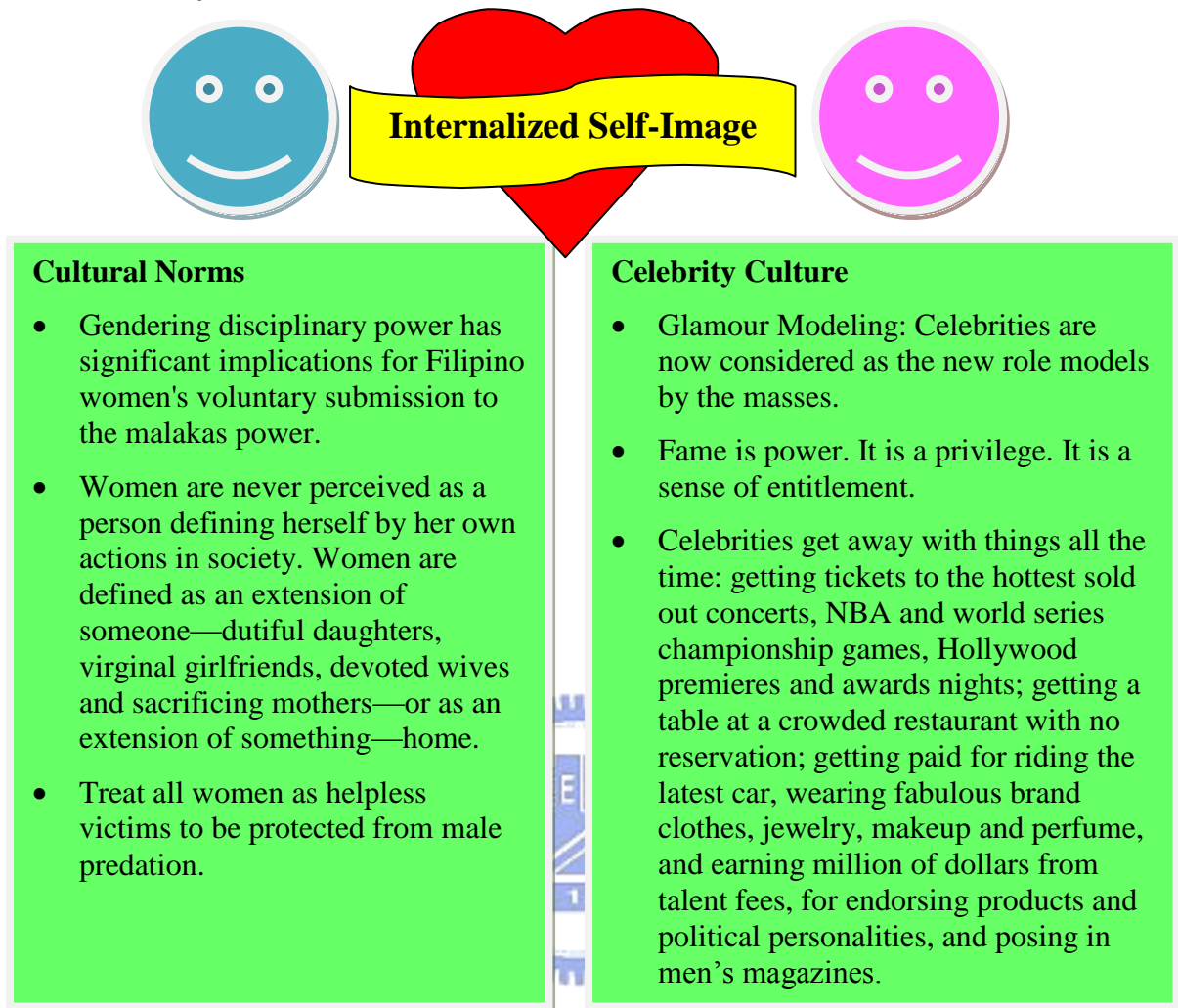
⁵¹ David E. Kelley. Boston Legal, Season 2 Episode 27: “Los Angeles.” David E. Kelley Productions. Broadcast on May 16, 2006.

dominance and celebrity status in ‘**monkey culture**’ are male monkey’s territory. No female monkey would dare to challenge the laws of the pack especially about territoriality and complete control and sovereignty of male monkeys over their women monkeys. Morality has nothing to do with it; so is justice. It just is, and it will continue to be that way, unless some women monkeys exercise their freedom to choose, to decide whether to mate or not and/or to stay single. I wonder.

But the good news is we are not monkeys. We are people! Courtney Rae’s situation would never have happened, if she was a monkey. And women in human world are far better off than their distant cousins, although her male counterparts behave much like the monkeys in the pack, while the rest of us still act like the women in the pack, completely subservient and dominated by the male monkeys.

The truth is celebrities like Courtney Rae get away with such things all the time. They can get tickets to the hottest sold out concerts, NBA and World Series championship games, Hollywood premieres and awards nights. They can get tables at a crowded restaurant with no reservation. They get paid for riding the latest car, wearing fabulous brand clothes, jewelries, makeup and perfume, and earn millions of dollars from talent fees, for endorsing products and political personalities, and posing in men’s magazines. This is their life, all day, every day. They can get away with things, **because fame is power. It is a privilege. It is a sense of entitlement.** I am sure none of us wish to live in a world where there is one set of laws for famous people and another set of rules for the rest of us. Without a doubt, it is unfair. But the fact remains: this is the reality. This is **celebrity culture** then and now. It will always be there as long as there are star-struck individuals who would do anything to have a glimpse of their idols. Moreover, one should expect it to be practical for one to cash in on this adoration and this fleeting, if not intoxicating, inspiring and powerful, celebrity status.

Figure 8: The Power of Internalized Self-Image Imposed by Others: Cultural Norms versus Celebrity Culture



7. Research Methods

I adopt interpretive textual analysis, using a combination of entertainment magazines, newspapers, and video clips. Textual analysis approaches (i.e., semiotics, rhetorical analysis, ideological analysis, and psychoanalytic approaches) often see culture as a narrative or story-telling process in which particular "texts" or "cultural artifacts" (i.e., a pop song, TV program or lad magazine) consciously or unconsciously link themselves to larger stories at play in the society. Key here is how texts (lad magazines) create subject positions (identities) for those who use them. Textual analysis attempts to get beneath the surface (denotative) meanings and examine more implicit (connotative) social meanings. Since I have no access to my primary informants—female celebrity models, thus published interviews in lad magazines (especially FHM), newspaper and live video interviews were the primary sources of data gathering. In the analysis of such data, interpretations of unsaid and implicit worded responses about moral uprightness, sex, sexual fantasies and sex escapades will be particularly important. Nuances

and underlying meanings can also be rich sources of information, even though they are veiled and not evident, which to a certain extent is truer than the more explicit ones.

I use female celebrity models' own words in FHM magazines (lad magazines). Unlike Spivak, I believe these women can speak for themselves. A better way to understand them is to listen to what they have to say. In order to facilitate such analysis, I will categorize data from newspapers, videos and FHM magazine into four themes: (1) conceptualizations of power and positionalities in the sex industry; (2) subjective accounts of power; (3) demands for basic rights; and (4) understandings about feminism and/or access to feminist programs.

The first theme attempts to represent women's views and positionalities in the power dynamics of the Philippine sex trade in show business, specifically to how they see and locate themselves in the power dynamics of the Philippine sex trade. The second theme attempts to show women's exercise of power within that power dynamics, particularly in their abilities to see self-worth as a basic necessary value, their capacities for decision-making, goal settings, self-control and even self-defense. The third theme attempts to relate the significance of these women's subjective accounts to how they understand their rights, including social and civil considerations that they need as women in the sex industry. Finally, the fourth theme sees if these female celebrity models are aware of the gendering constructions of subjectivities in the Philippine society and their anticipated impacts on the construction of women's subjectivities through their understandings about and interests in feminism/feminist programs.

Female celebrity models in lad magazines must confront and negotiate within four forces of power in show business in order to decide on what courses of actions to take—using the coercive/adoring power of the public, the network/producer, the manager, along with the '**gossip/infotainment**' press. They have the god-like power **to make and unmake a star**. However, the more important questions to ask are how and when to do this. Two important considerations are at play here: 1) acceptability and 2) readiness. Acceptability deals with the likelihood for a certain action to gain approval. On the other hand, readiness deals with both timing and willingness to conduct planned action. Ten varied celebrity models were chosen:

1. Eula Valdez
2. Pops Fernandez
3. Joyce Jimenez
4. Maureen Larrazabal
5. Angelica Panganiban
6. Camille Prats
7. Angel Locsin
8. Katrina Halili
9. Cristine Reyes
10. Bianca King

Two are middle-aged, married celebrity actresses with grown-up kids: Eula Valdez and Pops Fernandez. Two are actresses who are otherwise known as sexy actresses starring in sexy (non-pornographic) films: Maureen Larrazabal and Joyce Jimenez, a Fil-Am (Filipino-American), the original *Pantasya ng Bayan*. Two are former child stars: Angelica Panganiban and Camille Prats. The other four are teen stars, two of whom having debuted in the reality-based talent search show *Star Struck*: Katrina Halili and Cristine Reyes. The last two are representative young stars today: Angel Locsin and Bianca King.

FHM, Uno and Maxim are widely read publications in the Philippines today. They are ‘**mainstream**’ and ‘**hip**’⁵² publications, thus for Filipinos they appeal to broader audiences as opposed to more **adult, regulated, x-rated** and **pornographic** publications such as *Hustler*, *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, *Barely Legal* and *Manga Burikko*. The ‘**non-mainstream**’ publications cannot be openly bought, sold and read in public because of its explicit and ‘unconventional’ sexual contents. On the other hand, some lad magazines skew toward men's fashion, others to health. Most are marketed to a particular age and income demographic groups. They contain non-nude photography, accompanied by articles about women (usually celebrities, models or actresses), consumer stories about cars, tools, toys, and/or male macho tales of sex.”⁵³ Men’s magazines are primarily marketed to men, however, women readers and subscribers of these magazines are not rare. In fact, in the Philippines, a solid 30% of these readers/subscribers are women. The choice of FHM is also arbitrary. There are other popular men’s magazines that are currently in circulation in the Philippines today, but FHM is rated number one.

⁵² To be ‘hip’ means for men and women to be both contemporary and fit in with the moment. Being hip is more than being fashionable. It is an attitude, a state of mind. It is synonymous to being ‘cool’. Thus, to be hip is something to aspire for, something like a political statement about oneself and the society in general.

⁵³ Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. Available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_men's_magazines

Chapter Two: Cultural and Power Dimensions of Gender in the Contemporary Philippines

1. 'Si Malakas at Si Maganda': A Look at Filipino indigenous Legend

As a person born whole and separate from man, the Filipina legitimately owns her body herself and can chart her own future and destiny.⁵⁴

Figure 9: Painting of Malakas at Maganda

The Filipino indigenous legend begins with the birth of a woman and man in a bamboo, which splits open in half. One side of the split bamboo became babaye, the first woman who was born out together with, yet independently from lalake, the first man born out of the other node.⁵⁵ What makes this story distinct from Western (Christian) tradition is its independent creation of woman and man; the Filipino legend allows both woman and man to be born whole individually, whereas the Christian creation of woman reminds us of woman as essentially inferior, because she was made out of the rib of man. For many Filipino feminists, such as Lilia Quindoza Santiago, this distinction was seminal in accenting the impact of tradition on Filipina identities, as opposed to Western definitions of



man-woman creation, which is a concept imposed by the Spanish colonial patriarchy.

However, according to Mina Roces, the principle of man-woman creation in the Filipino indigenous story is far from gender-neutral. Roces' conceptualizations of Philippine female-male political power imply that the story of Malakas at Maganda is quite gendered, if not male-dominated;⁵⁶ According to her, what is made out of the node of '**lalake**' (**man**) is

⁵⁴ Lilia Quindoza Santiago, 'Rebirthing Babaye: The Women's Movement in the Philippines,' in Amrita Basu ed., *The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective* (Boulder: Westview, 1995), 110.

⁵⁵ Ibid. As the author mentions in the endnotes, babaye and lalake are early spellings of woman and man in Tagalog, the national lingua franca; current spellings are babae and lalaki, respectively (p. 127).

⁵⁶ Mina Roces. 2000. *Women, Power, And Kinship Politics: Female Power in Post-War Philippines*. Pasig:

‘**Malakas**’, a strong and powerful man, and ‘**babaye**’⁵⁷ (woman) in turn becomes beautiful, virtuous Maganda. The malakas concept thus creates a sense of Filipino machismo, such as ‘aggressive male,’ ‘war hero,’ and ‘virility,’ while the maganda concept reinforces the images of beauty and religiosity: the woman as beauty queen and the woman as moral guardian. The beauty of the woman can be powerful and strong, insofar as she is entitled to exercise power, whatever its form, through kinship and marriage ties to men with power and prestige. Imelda Marcos was the best example of this type of beauty/power in her ‘conjugal dictatorship’ with former President Ferdinand Marcos. The religiosity of Corazon Aquino, who also exercised moral power, was reflected in her deep alliance with conservative forces, such as militant nuns in the Catholic Church. Thus, the maganda power is about conformity to what is viewed as socially acceptable behavior for women: to be beautiful and religiously moral.



Figure 10: Imelda and Ferdinand Marcos’ self-image and version of Maganda at Malakas.⁵⁸

Anvil Publishing Inc. p. 7.

⁵⁷ The modern and acceptable spelling for ‘babaye’ is ‘babae’, meaning woman.

⁵⁸ <http://makeweight.blogspot.com/2006/01/malakas-at-maganda-more-on-imelda.html>

Here are some of Imelda Marcos’ famous lines about beauty:

"I hate ugliness. You know I'm allergic to ugliness."—quoted in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, August 1999.

"Our opponent (Cory Aquino) does not put on any make up. She does not have her fingernails manicured. You know gays. They are for beauty. Filipinos who like beauty, love and God are for Marcos."—on why Ferdinand Marcos would win the gay vote, January 1986.

"People say I'm extravagant because I want to be surrounded by beauty. But tell me, who wants to be

The ‘**Malakas at Maganda**’ paintings show Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos represent the mythical parents of the nation, embodying strength (strong man) and beauty (beautiful woman). In these two famous paintings, the Marcoses depicted themselves as the Ur couple of the Philippines — the Adam and Eve of tribal Philippine mythology, who sprung from a piece of split bamboo, the strong man and the beautiful woman.”⁵⁹ However, what is curious and interesting about Imelda’s (self) representation of ‘Beauty’ is that she resembles herself also to Aphrodite (the Greek Goddess of Love and Beauty), where tradition of the sea is signified by the shell where she sprung forth, instead of the split bamboo.

Within the category of the socially acceptable woman with personal connections to the malakas power of prestige, there are many women whose sexuality is relegated to male objectification, the malakas power of virility. Roces juxtaposes the sexual objectification of women, "where beauty and sexuality are linked with disempowered Filipino women such as prostitutes, Japayukis, mail-order brides", in opposition to indigenous tradition, where beauty and moral conduct are linked with powerful women.⁶⁰ Yet this linkage between beauty and sexuality becomes problematic, if one realizes in fact that women in the sex trade are placed at the opposite pole of maganda power. In Roces' words, "maganda is used to refer to socially acceptable behavior, while its antonym ‘pangit’ (ugly) is used to connote what is evil or bad, or what is socially unacceptable behavior."⁶¹ Women in the Philippine sex trade engage in what our society considers morally unacceptable behavior. Subsequently, these women are labeled as ‘pangit’ women: 'ugly,' 'evil,' and 'bad' women who have little to do with physical beauty, but more in connection with the nature of their profession.

I agree with Mina Roces’ interpretation of Philippine female-male political power set-up based on the story of Malakas at Maganda as explicitly gendered, if not male-dominated. However, I must disagree with her re-interpretation of Filipino machismo—‘padre de familia mentality,’ the final word in the household complex, the leader of the clan and of the whole tribe syndrome—patriarchy or male supremacy, as being reinforced by the legend Malakas at Maganda for several reasons. First of all, the names given to the first man and woman pay homage to their physical attributes rather than character. Secondly, unlike the creation story,

surrounded by garbage? Beauty is love made real and the spirit of love is God. Only a crazy man wants to be surrounded by garbage, and I'm not crazy just yet."

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Roces, 2000,3

⁶¹ Ibid. 1-2, 17-18.

where Eve was fashioned by God from Adam's rib, Malakas and Maganda were created as equals. Born from the same bamboo, the picture in the story invokes images of yin and yang. They are different and poles apart but of equal weight, power and importance.



Figure 11: Putok sa buho⁶²

Like any legend, there are different versions of the Malakas and Maganda legend depending on who is telling the story and for what purpose. However, one obvious and unambiguous commonality about the legend of Malakas and Maganda is that the substance stays the same—the first people on Earth (at least for the indigenous Filipinos) were a man and a woman who emerged from a split bamboo, **separate and distinct**. (My emphasis)

The more interesting questions to ask are: Do these names illustrate a penchant for placing primacy on physical attributes? Or, phrased in another terms, are physical strength and beauty determinative of the importance of one's role in history and society? Does the legend illustrate a primitive society that has respect for gender equality? Does the legend trivialize the existence of social classes, thus implying that their creation was both accidental and inevitable and totally devoid of human greed or any conscious intention to exploit?

⁶² Literally, 'putok sa buho' means basta na lang sumingaw (It just came from out of nowhere). However, with the coming of the Spaniards and along with it is the western version of marriage and license, the expression 'putok sa buho' is now known for its pejorative meaning of walang magulang; (no known parentage); 'anak sa labas o bastardo' (an illegitimate child; out-of-wedlock child), which is considered a social stigma.

It is easy to dismiss the story of Malakas and Maganda as legend. But the legend can provide a better socio-historical context for indigenous Filipino female-male political power set-up. Literature is a representation of culture thus is not an isolated, independent product.

2. The Gendering Concept of 'Maganda and Malakas' in the Context of Philippine Sex Trade: Prostitution

There is nothing beautiful about the sex trade in the Philippines or elsewhere in the world. This is not to pass judgment on moral high ground but more of a condemnation, in so far as sexual services are traded in unequal power relationships. This is particularly true for women who are confined to work in brothels, ago-go/karaoke bars, night clubs and massage parlors without getting minimum wages. Malate and Mabini-Harrison are famous red districts in Manila, while Quezon Avenue and Timog Avenue are famous red districts in Quezon City. In Angeles City in Pampanga, for instance, most of the bars that thrived around the former US Clark Air Force Base are currently relocated to Fields Avenue in the Balibago⁶³ red light district, where sex tourism has taken the place of military prostitution. There, women dance, half-naked, in the center of a raised platform, surrounded by mostly foreign (Australian and American) male clients who come to Angeles City for sexual services. Sex advertisements for these clubs are on the internet and are easily available to men all over the world, who may not necessarily find Filipina bar girls 'beautiful' as such, but who are interested in the availability of women's sexual services, for which they can easily afford to purchase.

As clearly shown in various sex advertisements on the web, there is nothing beautiful about the sex trade. The sexual negotiations in these settings are based on power inequality between male customers with geographical (economic and racial) privilege and Filipino bar women with limited alternative livelihoods. Foreign men, even if they are not wealthy at home, have financial power to buy these women, as they come from wealthier countries. At the local level, women are also enmeshed in unequal power relationships, as papa-san and mama-san (bar owners/floor managers) pay them only meager commissions on ladies' drinks or bar fines.⁶⁴ As bar commissions are the only source of income, women attract clients in various ways. Many women are on drugs, so that they can feel high enough to tolerate any

⁶³ Balibago.com, <http://www.balibago.com/nightlife.html>, 1997.

⁶⁴ Many women working in the go-go bars in Angeles City do not receive any salary unless they get customers who buy their ladies' drinks or who pay bar fines to take women out of the bar for sex. In the latter case, if customers pay steady bar fines, these 'boyfriends' can keep the women for certain periods and women do not have to engage in prostitution with other customers. The percentage of the commission on ladies' drinks or bar fines, however, is a maximum of fifty percent, and in most cases forty percent and below. Obviously, the bar owners and managers are the ones who make the real profits.

humiliating, degrading performance requested by customers who call them names, such as "bitch" and "dumb-dumb." Are the realities of these vulnerable women beautiful?

For women in the sex trade in Quezon City, the largest of the six cities that comprise Metro Manila, these sorts of '**humiliating experiences**' are little different. If Angeles City is the destination of sex tourism for foreigners, Quezon City is the local sex capitol for Filipino males. Though not exclusive to the Quezon City area, it is common for Filipino men from all social classes, ranging from tricycle and taxi driver, to banker and shop owner, to government officials and politicians, to buy women's bodies and obtain sexual services. Depending on his social class and financial position, a man procures a woman from different elements of the sex trade. A tricycle driver, for instance, might solicit a woman who works in a brothel/casa or walks the streets (street hawkers). A politician or a businessman probably solicits high-class call girls, who also sell their sexual services to foreign tourists and businessmen in a neighborhood financial center, like Makati City. In this hierarchy of the sex trade, women in the Quezon ago-go/karaoke bars are most 'suitable' for ordinary, middle-class Filipinos, and occasionally to local Chinese and Korean businessmen.

What does this tell us about power relations of the sex trade within the local context? From Roces' perspective, maganda/malakas power and malakas power structures are not exclusively based on class status but on "access to political power or personal connections to those who are **malakas**."⁶⁵ Her argument departs from a static class analysis of power "where class structure is perceived in horizontal layers," and gives an important account in relocating the dynamics of the malakas power structure, which is instead "vertical, reaching down to the lowest economic level."⁶⁶ This implies that even persons from lower classes can gain access to malakas power, if s/he has the ability to attain personal connections with malakas. Thus, how does a malakas power structure work within the local sex industries that cater to Filipino males? How does the power of malakas extend to women at the lowest economic level?

Most of the bars in Quezon City have two main types of bar women: Guest Relation Officers (GROs), whose role is primarily to chat and drink with clients, and ago-go dancers, who dance half-naked on a platform stage, around whom clients watch exotic performances. GROs have constant access to the clients, while dancers only have this kind of direct access, when they perform a nude show in a private karaoke or VIP room inside the bar.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Roces, 2000, 9.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ It is illegal to perform a full nude show at any entertainment industry in the Philippines. Thus, women dance

Within this power relationship, women could gain access to special privileges through their personal ties and connections with these malakas clients. The actress Rosanna Roces, for instance, fits this category of women who took the opportunity to gain access to malakas power of clients at the time when she was working in a high-class bar (Pegasus) in Quezon City. One can argue that she, from such access, gained **maganda power**, because she gained the **socially pleasing title of "actress,"** despite the fact that she was a GRO and used to belong to a category of **pangit woman**. With the exception of a small number of women like Rosanna Roces, however, it is almost always bar owners and managers who have access to the connections, and prestige, of the malakas. If a policeman is a client, the bar owner might bribe the police officer, who will in turn look the other way regarding the illegal operation of prostitution. Similarly, if a politician is a client, the bar owner will use him to gain access to special privileges, such as tax exemptions. The connections of GROs and ago-go dancers with malakas clients rarely develop into such privileged relations. Most of the clients who go to local karaoke/ago-go bars are ordinary, middle class Filipino males who do not really have money for 'sexual luxury' nor possess social or political prestige for sharing with women. In fact, some of these clients must sacrifice personal goods, such as a watch, to pay off bills that they accumulate at the bar. More importantly, the social stigma attached to bar women weigh heavily, because of conservative influences of Catholicism in the Philippines. That women's sexuality should be "accepted only within the confines of marriage" and that "Filipino men would only marry women without a sexual past"⁶⁸ is a deeply rooted religious, cultural norm.

Within this context of gendered sexual morality, GROs and dancers are largely seen as socially unacceptable women who have lost their ability to preserve Catholic moral values. As a result, these women are deprived of the entitlement to become **Maganda** who is suitable to **Malakas**. It is not uncommon for a client to leave a bar woman after she becomes pregnant from a sexual or intimate relationship. The stigma is reinforced upon this woman, who now becomes a single mother of a "prostitution child." In many cases, if the child happens to be a girl, her daughter will also end up with a similar fate. These circumstances show the gendered moral power that often makes it difficult for many such women to break out of prostitution's vicious cycle, even if there are alternative livelihoods available outside the sex industry.

half-naked on the stage taking a pose and gesture in the most revealing way as possible, but never taking off their bikinis/underwear. Nonetheless, bar owners still allow and encourage women to do so in a private karaoke/VIP room where it is out of reach from the police and where women can be alone with the customers.

⁶⁸ Eric Ratliff, "Women As 'Sex Workers,' Men As 'Boyfriends': Shifting Identities in Philippine Go-Go Ban and Their Significance in STD/AIDS Control," in Anthropology and Medicine, Vol.1.6, No.1, 1999, 87.

Women in the Philippine sex trade (**prostitution**) can justifiably be regarded as being oppressed and marginalized in the power discourse of sexual morality too. Disempowered at the bottom of the malakas power structures of the sex industry, the women are the ‘mahina,’⁶⁹ the weak in society. But that is not the whole story. Although I recognize the realities of such women's oppression and exploitation, my focus is not to replicate such structuralist accounts of prostitution that further victimize the already vulnerable lives of women in the sex trade. Rather, my point of departure lies in the question of women's agency, to look not only at their disadvantaged position in the power dynamics of the sex trade but also the subjectivities that they construct through these positionalities, in this case by offering female celebrity models as an example where women can be a sex worker and still preserve and/or restore the **social adequacy** of being ‘**maganda**’ (‘beautiful’), ‘**disente**’ (‘decent’) and ‘**malakas na babae**’ (strong and powerful woman) in the power dynamics of the Philippine sex trade. By going beyond the exploitation/choice dichotomy in the liberal/neo-liberal prostitution debate, I can offer post-structuralist interpretations of women's decision-making agency by examining the subjectivities of the women in the Philippine sex trade that creates a space in which they can challenge existing rules of conduct yet emerge victorious by gaining celebrity status, which affords them more space and power to exercise their will to attain personal goals they set for themselves. In other words, I argue that there is justification for women's subjective accounts of power in a feminist theory of sex work—not specifically that of prostitution or performing in pornographic videos and movies but rather all forms of sex work—that are not predicated on women "choosing" to enter sex work in the face of patriarchy and/or political economy.

3. Influence of the Catholic Church in the Changing Context of Gender and Sex Trade

The Philippines has deteriorated from being number one among Southeast Asian nations and number two in Asia in the early 1960s to its current shameful position. This deterioration was not just an economic collapse; it was a collapse of character, and an abdication of personal and social responsibility, which inevitably led to political and social weakening as well. What we are witnessing today is a vicious cycle of persistent and grinding poverty, hunger and corruption in all levels of life, from high level economic treason committed by our leaders to ordinary peoples’ ‘palusot’ mentality. ‘**Palusot mentality**’ is an attitude or thinking making excuses or alibis to extricate oneself from difficulty or cutting corners. **Corruption and predation are not the monopoly of rich Filipinos.** The rich stand out because of their privileged education. The poorer predator will conveniently justify his

⁶⁹ Roces, 2000, 9.

wrongdoing as the instinctive drive to survive. But that of course is nonsense. All predators are equally vicious. All these problems simply outgrowths of a deeper underlying malaise—counterproductive Filipino values. In the last 40 years, morality has sunk to its lowest depth.

Ironically, Filipinos take pride in being the bastion of Roman Catholicism and democracy in Asia. But this is contradicted by Filipinos apathy for the high crimes that our leaders commit and the lack of social justice and shared national conscience. Some political analysts and pundits characterized the Philippines as often ruled as though it were an absolute monarchy even while it endeavors to masquerade itself as a democracy. Over the years, the nation has become increasingly polarized and bitterly divided, poverty has worsened, and many democratic institutions have been destroyed. But what is the role of the Catholic Church in all this? The church and its adherents were the leading elements in the “people’s revolt” known as ‘EDSA Revolution’. Edsa I and Edsa II were people’s revolts initiated by the church. In both cases, the Church and its related elements were leading lights of the two revolts that brought down two presidents—Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada. In both Edsa I and Edsa II, it was the voice of the church that initially issued the summons call.

But what happened after Edsa I and Edsa II? Both produced similar consequences. The situation, at least for the masses, radically deteriorated. The church today has suffered considerable loss of moral and political standing because of Edsa I and II. The reasons are simple. Edsa I and Edsa II propped regimes that in the eyes of the masses wreaked more havoc on their lives than the regimes that the two Edsas expelled. Without doubt, poverty and corruption problems worsened even after Marcos and Erap administrations were overturned.

That people’s revolt buttressed a presidency that turned out to be among the most “anti-people” governments in the postwar history of the Philippines. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (GMA) has much to account for insofar as the masa are concerned, which evidently explains Erap’s popularity with the ‘masa’ (masses). The bishops as a whole have been faulted for the past six years for closing their eyes to the many immoral and illegal acts committed by the GMA regime. The Catholic Church lost many of its Filipino faithfuls, not to mention its church leaders’ loss of moral influence over their flock. Having disappointed their flocks too many times, the flocks no longer expect anything from the Catholic Church, much less to listen to it moralizing about family planning, reproductive health, and autonomy of female body which among other things are at the center of women’s issues today. The Catholic Church has been perceived as **the culprit** that laid the ‘moral foundation’ and justification for ‘patriarchy’ that enslaves both Filipino men’s and women’s will for ages. At present, the Catholic Church has been accused of being too **dogmatic** and **unresponsive** to

change. Women groups consider the Catholic Church as the single and biggest **obstacle** in pursuing women's agenda, lesbian and gay rights and issues relating to sexual minorities. However, the weakening of the Catholic Church's tight control over the lives of the Filipino people opens as a result a window of opportunity for other interest groups that allow some latitudes for public articulation of issues, contrary to Catholic doctrines and values.

4. Poverty and Smut Culture: From FHM to Pinoy Playboy Mansion?

While the martial law regime of President Ferdinand Marcos created an environment hostile to the proliferation of the sex industry in the city, ironically it was under Marcos years that the demand for sex labor dramatically increased in the country. Martial law marked the beginning of the overall orientation of export-led development policies, under which tourist development led to a sharp increase in the number of sex establishments that profited from sex tourism. The lifting of martial law in 1981 facilitated the establishment and propagation of sex clubs. After the Marcos years, there were attempts to implement city ordinances⁷⁰ to close sauna parlors and control the proliferation of the sex industry, but poor implementation merely caused the closing and reopening of sauna baths and bars, most of which remain open up to this day. Most of these sex establishments cater not only to local Filipino males but also to male foreigners, mostly from the United States, Australia, Germany and Japan. They are the usual destination for tourists coming to the Philippines for 'sexual comfort.'

The late 1970s and early 1980s were difficult times for the Philippine. Pornography—sexually explicit publications like 'komiks' (comics) and tabloids with graphic drawings, pictures and stories—helped in offering respite. Under martial rule, Filipinos soon found 'Tiktik' and other semi-pornographic reads (tabloids) at street corners in Recto and Avenida. They provided diversion from the Pinoy's daily grind, but they came at a cost—proliferation of more smut and pornographic 'betamax' (videos), marked increase in sex related crimes (particularly those of marital rape) and population explosion. 'Tiktik' died, resurfaced then died again. On the other hand, Playboy magazine declined after its heyday in the 1960s and the 1970s. Inevitably, Playboy survived the influx of other new magazines, such as FHM and Maxim, and in the long run infiltrated the local Philippines market as well.

FHM—through Summit Publishing—was the first to make a hefty profit, and then

⁷⁰ See Rene Ofreneo and Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo, "Prostitution in the Philippines," in Lim Lean Lim, ed., *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*. (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1998). Quezon City Ordinances No.9303 and No.9873 state that "the compartments within establishments should have curtains rather than doors, and that partitions between compartments or cubicles should be made of light wooden materials with one foot of clearance from the floors and at least six feet of clearance from the ceiling" (p. 123).

ABS-CBN imported Maxim. Both magazines have a common denominator in Eric Ramos, FHM's founding editor-in-chief before he quit and started Pump. Pump, however, ceased publication after only two issues, presumably because Eric was lured by investors who wanted to publish a genuine Pinoy Playboy magazine, complete with its own Playboy mansion somewhere in Forbes Park and sexy playmates that would make Eric a local version of Hugh Hefner. Pinoy Playboy appeared just when the country was on the verge of collapse and needed something to cling onto, as it provided the Pinoy with some diversions to mind his other concerns. At present, the former editor of FHM (reputedly the highest circulated magazine) is rumored to be in the final stages of negotiation to head the Philippine version of Playboy magazine.

Before the launching of FHM, Eric tried to describe to what this British publication was about. At the time, he was asked if it would be accepted by conservative Filipinos. He said, it's not like Playboy, but it would be daring. Eric then smiled and said he was ready to take on the challenge, as he was confident that there would always be a market for sex. In few years, Eric and Summit Publishing proved that the Philippines were ready for **naughtiness and daring**. After the publication's success, other men's glossies followed suit, including the US-based Maxim (which claimed to be "decent and tasteful."), where Eric had a brief stint

FHM as the pioneering sexy glossy in the Philippines, for some people, helped quash misplaced conservative notions and ushered the society to the new millennium. In the past, 'so-called dirty magazines' became the ordinary man's diversion from the rigors of daily living. X-rated publications enjoyed their heyday when the going was tough politically and economically. Now that many materials selling the pleasures of the flesh are still thriving, are we back in the same boat we had all jumped off from some 20 years ago?

As for Eric, one can ask, what does he plan to do with Playboy in the Philippines; will he tone it down or remain faithful to Hugh Hefner's vision? For the moment, one can imagine the thought of Filipino girls sporting bunny ears and tails then speculate how such Playboy mansion parties compare with the rumored private gatherings of some local politicians.

The prospect of a Pinoy Playboy may disturb our moral guardians, but we should prepare ourselves for its advent, because we happen to live in a democracy where freedom of expression is upheld. The world is full of hypocrites and playboys, of the moral and tasteful, of crocodiles and bunnies. And in our upside down society, sometimes what is covered up is more shocking and shameful than the sight of bare flesh.

Chapter Three: Sexual Images and Selling Sexuality

1. Sexuality in the Media and the Arts (Television and Film): Stereotypes, Sex, and the Decency Issue

Representations of sexuality have existed through most of history and most societies. Censorship of sexual art and literature probably began in the 16th century, which apparently started the pornographic subculture of today. The clergy also censored nudity in public art. The erotic novel made pornography into a business, provoking backlashes from religion and state. Explicit and subtle sexuality has been increasing in the mass media for the last 50 years.

TV has greatly influenced the modern outlook toward life. Many major networks have increased sexual content in their programming. 70% of shows in the Philippines contain some sexual content in one form or another, some are more blatant and daring, but some are subtle, even in family variety shows, such as Eat Bulaga on Channel 7 and Wowowee on Channel 2, with sexy in-house dancers like the 'Sex Bomb Dancer' and 'ASF Dancers'. These girls have been harshly criticized by moralists and conservatives in the Philippines. These critics have noted that they promote the desirability of sex through their dances (sex-oriented movements) and their appearance (showing off cleavage and underwear). As for the Sex Bomb Dancers, their songs (with double-meaning lyrics) have been popular with the general public, including children. Moralists thus argue that more Filipinos now think of sex as fun and enjoyable.

Apparently, sex sells. Advertising is a modern invention that now permeates our life. Children see about 40,000 advertisements on TV each year. Advertising has 3 purposes: gain attention, invoke physiological excitation, and create associations with the product. Sexuality has been used to sell products since the early 1900s. Some sexual portrayals are blatant, while others are suggestive or subliminal. Debate surrounds the efficacy of subliminal. Sexual information on TV is explicit and implicit. Men are often in positions of leadership. Women, even if in high positions, are sexual temptations. Gender stereotyping is especially extreme in TV commercials. Ads do not show realistic representations of men and women but how they think we behave. Men tend to be taller, standing, confident, authoritative, whereas women are shorter, sitting, childlike, and deferential. Men are presented in 3 times the job categories as women, and women are often at home. Male spokespersons are used for female products, but rarely the other way around. Soap operas are the least stereotypical TV programming. They target women and portray them as competent. News programs rely primarily on male experts.

TV sanitizes and edits the world it displays. In sexual situations, real life issues such as contraception, STIs, morality, sexual dysfunctions, and regret are rarely discussed, but some shows can help educate the public about sex. On the other hand, the depictions of sex

workers in the mass media all too often perpetuates the stereotypical image of sex workers as unworthy, victims and a threat to moral, public and social order. The xenophobic depiction of migrant sex workers in particular adds an additional stigma and increases their vulnerability. Such depictions of sex workers give legitimacy to people in society who seek to harm them and violate their rights. Paralleling such misleading images of sex workers, their clients are represented in the media as being violent, criminal, corrupt, perverted, or mentally unstable.

Television avoids exposure of homosexuality and portrayals of the elderly, disabled, or ethnic minorities. African American roles have been increasing lately; however, roles for Asian Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans are less common. Stereotyping is generally worse in the Philippines. Media roles are constructed or designed only to elicit comedic relief to otherwise heavy and serious drama. TV executives tend to believe that, if a show features a female lead, boys will not watch it; however, girls will watch shows with male leads. Research shows that when children see non-stereotyped behavior, stereotypes are reduced, but the more teens watch, the more likely they believe their peers are sexually active.

The internet provides virtual access to a variety of sexual interests. Sexually explicit sites seem to be the most popular, and purchases at sexually explicit sites on the internet are common. Internet allows sexually explicit interaction, art work, computer games, and face-to-face, **even ‘virtual’**, sexual encounters. ‘Virtual’ sexual encounters are currently popular and gaining currency among online users. Virtual reality has provided sexually explicit movies with vibrators attached to the groin to make the technological experience more realistic.

2. Graphic Images: Pornography and the Public’s Response to ‘Selling Sexuality’

The Philippine legal system is patterned quite literally on American civil and criminal law. The discussion here focuses on obscenity, which legally regards unprotected or regulated speech arising from but not limited to pornography as a criminal offense.

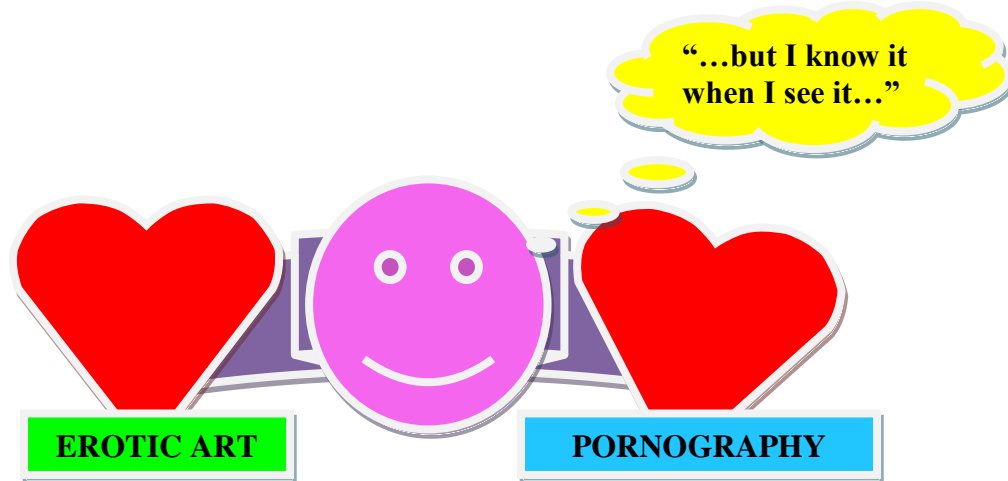
a. Defining Obscenity

Many people do not realize that in our society, which trumpets free speech, that there are many restrictions on speech, including **restrictions on explicit sexual images and words or "obscene" materials**. Other forms of unprotected or regulated speech include:

- Speech which creates a clear and present danger of imminent lawless action;
- Speech which contains narrowly predefined "fighting words";
- written or spoken untruths (libel, slander, fraud) which may be punished by civil suit;
- Speech which is false or deceptive advertising; speech which threatens others; and,
- Speech with restrictions justified because the government can demonstrate a ‘narrowly tailored compelling interest’.

According to the Supreme Court, "obscene" speech is "unprotected". "Unprotected speech" does not enjoy First Amendment protection. In explaining "hard-core", or obscene, pornography, Justice Potter Stewart said in 1964, "I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced ... but I know it when I see it ..."⁷¹

Figure 12: Erotic Art versus Pornography: A Matter of Personal Taste and Perception



This quote (and the intentions behind it) is well known and summarizes the irony and difficulty of trying to define obscenity. For at least fifty years, the Supreme Court has been struggling with defining what speech is "obscene". Can we do better now?

The First Definition

In 1957, Brennan crafted the first Supreme Court legal definition of obscenity in the case of *Roth v. United States*. Although indirectly addressed in the law to this point, *Roth's* formal legal holding on pornography was a case of first impression for the US Supreme Court. Brennan held that the First Amendment did not protect obscene materials.

The definition of obscenity set forth in *Roth* was:

Speech which "... to the average person, applying contemporary **community standards**, the dominant theme of the material, **taken as a whole**, appeals to **prurient interest**" and which is **"utterly without redeeming social importance..."**

By 1964, lower courts had misapplied the *Roth* standard, resulting in many cases for Court review. The Court then tried to clarify this standard by adding another requirement for obscenity in later opinions —that the material goes "substantially beyond customary limits of candor in description or representation." The Court also explicated that the "community" referred to in the definition was the national, not local, community. This clarification resulted

⁷¹ *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184, 197 (1964). In Judith A Silver. FindLaw: For Legal Professionals. Available online at <http://library.findlaw.com/2003/May/15/132747.html>

in a more liberal definition of obscenity.

The Second and Current Definition

The tide turned more conservatively on free speech and sex when two liberal justices, Chief Justice Earl Warren, an Eisenhower appointee, and Black, a Roosevelt appointee, resigned in 1969 and 1971. President Nixon replaced them with Chief Justice Warren Burger and Justice William Rehnquist, along with two other appointees Justice Harry Blackmun and Justice Lewis Powell. With the arrival of Rehnquist and Burger, the Court's opinions on obscenity became more conservative. In the summer of 1973, the Court decided on a group of pornography/obscenity cases that set a standard for the future of pornography. In his Dissent in one of these cases, Justice Brennan wearily admitted:

"Our experience since *Roth* requires us not only to abandon the effort to pick out obscene materials on a case-by-case basis, but also to reconsider a fundamental postulate of *Roth*: that there exists a definable class of sexually oriented expression that may be suppressed by the Federal and State Governments. Assuming that such a class of expression does in fact exist, I am forced to conclude that the concept of 'obscenity' cannot be defined with sufficient specificity and clarity to provide fair notice to persons who create and distribute sexually oriented materials, to prevent substantial erosion of protected speech as a byproduct of the attempt to suppress unprotected speech, and to avoid very costly institutional harms."⁷²

Unfortunately, this realization came too late and without support from the majority of the Court. Thus, in *Miller v. California* (1973), Justice Burger announced a second definition of obscenity, which, more or less, is still in effect today. It is as follows:

- (a) Whether the 'average person, applying contemporary community standards' would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest,
- (b) Whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law, and
- (c) Whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

This ruling specifically replaced the older one and also held that community standards could be local rather than national. This change enabled a more conservative definition of "obscenity" by allowing interpretation by local, sometimes rural communities. While many complained that these rulings were too vague and were impossible to enforce on those trying to comply with the law, the Court set forth examples of what was "hard core", or that which the Court considered to be obscene and illegal. The Court's list of illegal acts was as follows:

- (a) Patently offensive representations or descriptions of ultimate sexual acts, normal or

⁷² Paris Adult Theatre I v. Slaton, 413 U.S. 49, 103 (1973). In Judith A Silver. FindLaw: For Legal Professionals. Available online at <http://library.findlaw.com/2003/May/15/132747.html>

pervverted, actual or simulated.

(b) Patently offensive representations or descriptions of masturbation, excretory functions, and lewd exhibition of the genitals.⁷³

Clarifications and Today's Definition

Since *Miller*, the Court further clarified and explained aspects of the *Miller* standard. Jurors had to apply the standards of the area "from which he comes for making the required" decision as the "community standards" for obscenity.⁷⁴ "Appeals to the **prurient interest**" **mean appeals to "shameful or morbid interests" in sex but not those inciting normal lust**⁷⁵ and include materials designed for or primarily disseminated to a deviant sexual group (for example, sadists).⁷⁶ The "average person" includes both sensitive and insensitive adult persons but does not include children.⁷⁷ Serious artistic, political, or scientific value, using a national standard, is required for a finding that is not obscene and a finding of some artistic, political or scientific value does not preclude a finding whose work is obscene.⁷⁸

In addition, the Court created a middle category of materials—"indecent" materials that are protected speech. Indecent materials are defined as those showing "non-conformance with accepted standards of morality."⁷⁹ In light of the above review, most persons, including lawyers, remain confused about what is and is not legally permissible.

b. The Movement against the Sexualization of the Visual Media

Most, if not all, people seem to want in principle stronger regulation of sexual content and profanity—obscenity. Family-oriented cause groups, the Church and the state have been putting pressure on the mass media, particularly the movie and television industries, to reduce the degree of sexual explicitness in their general releases. Some argue that G and PG rated movies profit more than R-rated ones. The internet, however, is vaguely regulated, exposing

⁷³ *Miller v. California*, 413 U.S. 15, 24-25 (1973). In Judith A Silver. FindLaw: For Legal Professionals. Available online at <http://library.findlaw.com/2003/May/15/132747.html>

⁷⁴ *Hamling v. United States*, 418 U.S. 87, 105 (1974). In Judith A Silver. FindLaw: For Legal Professionals. Available online at <http://library.findlaw.com/2003/May/15/132747.html>

⁷⁵ *Brockett v. Spokane Arcades Inc.*, 472 U.S. 491 (1985). In Judith A Silver. FindLaw: For Legal Professionals. Available online at <http://library.findlaw.com/2003/May/15/132747.html>

⁷⁶ *Mishkin v. New York*, 383 U.S. 502 (1966). In Judith A Silver. FindLaw: For Legal Professionals. Available online at <http://library.findlaw.com/2003/May/15/132747.html>

⁷⁷ *Pinkus v. United States*, 436 U.S. 293, 298-299 (1978). In Judith A Silver. FindLaw: For Legal Professionals. Available online at <http://library.findlaw.com/2003/May/15/132747.html>

⁷⁸ *Pope v. Illinois*, 481 U.S. 497 (1987). In Judith A Silver. FindLaw: For Legal Professionals. Available online at <http://library.findlaw.com/2003/May/15/132747.html>

⁷⁹ *FCC v. Pacifica*, 438 U.S. 726, 741 (1978). In Judith A Silver. FindLaw: For Legal Professionals. Available online at <http://library.findlaw.com/2003/May/15/132747.html>

children to **sexually explicit** material, if not properly supervised by the parents.

The idea here is that there is almost limitless access to pornography. Yet, there is not one coherent and definitive voice about it. In fact, many disagreements exist about the issue of pornography from all fronts: free-speech advocates, anti-porn and anti-anti-porn feminists, religious groups, presidential commissions, civil society, and the pornography industry. The question remains why? At the heart of all the debate on pornography is the utter difficulty in defining it. As Justice Stewart famously said, "I know it when I see it." This now becomes the standard reply to the question, resulting to more confusion than not. Today, "pornography is generally defined as sexually explicit material (verbal or pictorial) that is primarily designed to produce sexual arousal in viewers."⁸⁰ However, pornography may select different types of material in different contexts, since what is viewed as sexually explicit can vary from culture to culture and over time. The First Amendment thus allows for "freedom of speech", although its meaning is actually debatable. In short, the U.S. court has a 3-part definition of obscenity:

- Appeal to prurient interest,
- Offend contemporary community standards,
- Lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

The **pornography debates** are ranging from:

1. **Free speech and censorship**—can a government legitimately prohibit citizens from publishing or viewing pornography, or would this be an unjustified violation of basic freedoms? This question lies at the heart of a debate that raises fundamental issues about just when, and on what grounds, the state is justified in using its coercive powers to limit the freedom of individuals.
2. **Studies on pornography and harm**—in 1970, the U.S. Senate Commission on Obscenity and Pornography released the following findings and recommendations: there was no reliable evidence found that supported exposure to explicit sexual materials is related to criminal behavior among adults or youth. Adults should be able to choose what they will read. It did not distinguish types of erotica. However, the official goal of the 1986 Attorney General's Commission on Pornography was to: find "more effective ways in which the spread of pornography could be contained." It assumed that it was dangerous. It came to the opposite conclusion of the 1970 commission and made some recommendations. However, researchers that were cited in support of the commission condemned the report; at present, studies show little evidence that non-violent, sexually explicit films provoke anti-female reactions in men. Many studies show violent or degrading pornography does influence attitudes, however, they are unsure how long these attitudes last and if they influence behavior. Male aggression tends to increase after seeing any violent movie.
3. **Online pornography**—should families try to shield children from sexuality on the

⁸⁰ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. "In Pornography and Censorship." May 5, 2004. Available online at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pornography-censorship>

internet? Should cyberspace be censored and legislated?

Traditionally, liberals defended the freedom of consenting adults to publish and view pornography in private, while moral and religious conservatives wanted pornography banned for its obscenity, its corrupting influence on consumers and its corrosive effect on traditional family and religious values. But, in more recent times, the pornography debate has taken on a somewhat new and surprising shape. Some feminists have found themselves allied with their traditional conservative foes in calling on the state to regulate or prohibit pornography—although the primary focus of feminist concern is on the harm that pornography may cause to women (and children), rather than the obscenity or immorality of its sexually explicit content. Some liberals have joined pro-censorship feminists in suggesting that the harm that violent and degrading pornography causes to women's social standing and their opportunities may be sufficiently serious to justify prohibiting pornography, even by liberals' own definition. Many others, both liberal and feminist, remain unconvinced. They are doubtful that pornography is a significant cause of the oppression of women or that the "blunt and treacherous weapon" of the law is the ideal solution to prevent the harm arising from pornography. As we shall see, the debate over whether pornography should be censored remains very much alive.

The anti-pornography arguments can be summarized as follows:

Pornography undermines family, authority, and society's morals and should be contained. Anti-pornography feminists see it as a way to silence and assault women, reinforce male dominance, and encourage abuse against women. Some believe pornography is more about power than sex.

On the other side, the anticensorship arguments can be summarized as follows:

Restriction of pornography will lead to a society ruled by censorship and the ability to try to challenge sexual stereotypes. Anti-censorship feminists believe censoring will lead to censorship of feminist writing and gay erotica. It is not clearly shown that pornography actually harms women.

Many are ambivalent, although most want to ban violent pornography, because they believe that it can lead to a loss of respect for women. **Ironically, the pornography industry continues to thrive well in the Philippines, America, Europe and the rest of the world.**

c. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines and Selling Sexuality

In preface, I would like to discuss and explore one or two phenomena that may seem totally inappropriate to the topic at hand—bestiality (zoophilia) and objectophilia. However, I shall explain their relationship towards the end of this section.

Can we legislate and standardized thoughts and feeling about the way we view things, our feelings about things and people (animals too for that matter)? Can we rightfully say that what we think is correct, that our own moral judgment is the superior one? As if to accent

verifiability, police and probers now use lie detector machines and MRIs to ascertain certain predispositions to lying and racist violence (as demonstrated on one of the episodes of Boston Legal). We know that the lie detector test is at its best unreliable. As for MRIs, it is used to scan brain activity, and the possibility of accuracy cannot be discounted, given advancements in science and technology. But for now there is no reliable machine that can actually tell us what we think when we think it, and how we feel when we think it truthfully. We can guess, albeit crudely, but in no certain terms can we say that it is true to everybody.

When I began researching sexual images and selling sexuality particularly that part about erotic representation in history I was shocked to discover the openness and boldness of the people, men and women, and even animals of the ancient world in terms of erotica and eroticism. By contrast, there are repressive periods in history rivaling the Paleolithic age in terms of **‘pakikipagkapwa-tao’**, a relational view of the world towards fellow human beings. Pakikipagkapwa-tao can be referred to as “humanness to its highest level,” as a conviction and value in dealing with other persons as equal.

In Season 4 Episode 6 of Boston Legal, “The Object of My Affection,” a woman was in love with a utility box. Gerry Espenson (Christian Clemenson), in his private conversation with his client Leigh Swift, addresses the issue of objectophilia as follows:

There are many people who find inanimate objects desirable... Most of it is about fear of intimacy and trust with a real person. I read one expert, he says, we become one isolated society what with computers and so forth, with so many socially isolated individuals, that the rise of objectophilia is not altogether surprising...You can achieve an intimate and trusting relationship with a real person. It’s very terrifying, I know, but I think you should give real people a try.”⁸¹

Gerry Espenson and his client Leigh Swift both suffer from **Asperger Syndrome (AS)**. “AS’ is one of several autism spectrum disorders (ASD) characterized by difficulties in social interaction and by restricted and stereotyped interests and activities. ‘AS’ is distinguished from the other ASDs in having no general delay in language or cognitive development. Although not mentioned in standard diagnostic criteria, motor clumsiness and atypical use of language are frequently reported.”⁸² Gerry Espenson, however, is in fact one of the best and more brilliant lawyers in Crane, Poole and Schmidt Law Firm.

After careful considerations about zoophilia and objectophilia, I felt rather disturbed. **Ojectophile** (objectum-sexual) is by no means just straightforward fetishist, for some people,

⁸¹ David E. Kelley. Boston Legal, Season 4 Episode 6: “The Object of My Affection.” David E. Kelley Productions. Broadcast on October 30, 2007.

⁸² Wikipedia. Asperger Syndrome. Available online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asperger_syndrome

their car becomes a fetish which they use to put themselves in the limelight and to attain sexual fulfillment. For the objectum-sexual, on the other hand, the car itself—and nothing else—is the desired sexual partner, and all sexual fantasies and emotions are focused on it.

Objectophilia is indicative of a modern trend away from human to human intimacy, a sign of coping mechanism, a way to compensate for lack of human affection. I suppose we can all relate to this a bit. This predilection, weakness or love may strike us as unconventional, odd, abnormal, anomalous and deprave even, but I nevertheless think require us to respect, if not accept. Nonetheless, the sexologist, Volkmar Sigusch, did not wish to classify such odd behavior as pathological. "The objectophiles aren't hurting anyone. They're not abusing or traumatizing other people," And then he asks mildly: "Who else can you say that about?"⁸³ So said the question remains, what does zoophilia and objectophilia have to do with female celebrity models in lad magazines and selling sexuality?

At the outset, I would say nothing. However, the phenomenon itself is hardly new, as evidenced by its discovery in ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, **regarded even by its excavators as pornographic**. Found were erotic artifacts, frescoes depicting erotic, sometimes explicit, sexual scenes, symbols and inscriptions with strong sexual themes and connotations like regular household items like the Warren cup, candle holder, plates, bronze wind chimes of 'phallus-animals', and street signages using the phalli and testicles as pointers. The commonness of such imagery and items indicates that the sexual mores of the ancient Roman culture of the time were much more liberal than most present-day cultures, although much of what might seem to us to be erotic imagery was in fact fertility-imagery. This clash of cultures led to an unknown number of discoveries being hidden away again.

Moreover, objectophilia and bestiality (zoophilia) are related to **Isolation Syndrome (IS)**. 'IS' is a social phenomenon of modern urbanized life characterized by a trend away from human to human intimacy. The rise of objectophilia and zoophilia can be seen as relevant to this phenomenon. Many people think that **objectophiles** (objectum-sexual) and **zoophiles** are **perverts**, but these 'uncommon predilections' perhaps serve as a coping

⁸³ Wikipedia. "Volkmar Sigusch." Available online at http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volkmar_Sigusch

Retired professor and former director of Frankfurt University's Institute for Sexual Science, Volkmar Sigusch, is one person who believes he has unraveled the mysteries of objectophilia. He has extensively probed this attraction to objects as part of his research into various forms of modern "neo-sexuality." The sexologist views this inclination as proof of his hypothesis that society is increasingly drifting into asexuality: "More and more people either openly declare or can be seen to live without any intimate or trusting relationship with another person," Sigusch says, adding that cities are populated by an entire army of socially isolated individuals: "Singles, isolated people, cultural sodomites, many perverts and sex addicts."

mechanism or way to compensate for lack of human affection. I suppose we can all relate to this a bit. The whole debate about female celebrity models in lad magazines and selling sexuality is in essence about the objectification of the female body and commoditization of the female body as well as the natural consequence of that 'attitude'.

From the moral stand point, the moralistas, the religious and even the so-called self-proclaimed 'civil society' frowns upon and look down on women who flaunt their sexuality in public. These women are open with their sexuality, like those who posed for lad magazines (men's magazines), are considered ill-bred, lewd, indecent, licentious, sexually indiscriminate and promiscuous, and thus offensive and unacceptable. From this point of view, these women and their actions must be censored, stopped and finally must be punished.

From an economic point of view, media owners are generally driven by profits not moral values (which they like to portray as censorship) and will, therefore, make money out of anyone who can be commercially exploited. Media owners discovered that titillation with 'hot' and 'salacious' stories and images guarantees the highest possible returns. Women who pose for men's magazines view it in turn like a ticket to fame and fortune. Who will blame them for making money? It is not as though they are forcing people to buy their magazines with a veil of threat. This is capitalism, pure and simple.

Finally, from a feminist perspective, posing for lad magazines (men's magazines) is a kind of graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through images and texts. Women are presented as dehumanized, sexual objects, and women's body parts—including but not limited to vaginas, breasts, or buttocks—are exhibited such that women are reduced to those parts. This objectification of the female body fosters violence and abuse of women.

This brings me to my main point about female celebrity models in lad magazines and selling sexuality. If the feminists are correct in saying that female body is being objectified and commoditized in the process, then are we in normative terms worse than objectophiles and zoophiles?

In conclusion, I argue that I am opposed to moralistic positions that deny women's agency and sexual autonomy. And I strongly negate any '**androcentric**' perspective and dispute the legitimacy of so-called '**feminine mystique**' in explaining women realities and positionalities. I am also totally for women liberation from patriarchal system enslavement, and I fully support women empowerment. But since patriarchy is a large part of our psyche today as it was 10,000 years ago, a change of system will take time. For now, women must work hard to work the system to make it work for them—from power-within to power-to!

Chapter Four: Beyond Structuralism and Exploitation/Choice Dichotomy—the Discourse of Power in Prostitution

The construction of Filipino female celebrity models' subjectivities underscores their decision-making agency in ways that may further feminist understanding of why and how these women themselves "choose" to enter the sex industry (posing for lad/men's magazines). This is different from understanding women's decision-making agency as the result of being driven into sex work because of socio-economic conditions and patriarchal systems.

Before I explore this argument, I looked at different tenets of Filipino feminism that theorized sex work, **prostitution in particular**, and women's decision-making agency from a liberal/neo-liberal point of view. This chapter is dedicated to the examination of Philippine sex trade focusing on prostitution—bar girls. In doing so, it will be easier to see and locate Filipino female celebrity models' subjectivities within the sex industry and expose underlying hypocrisy by which we all tend to view sex work. This is not to condone it as a profession or to justify work performed by other than female celebrity models in less than human terms. I argue instead that, by offering the female celebrity models as an example, women can be sex workers yet still preserve and/or restore the **social adequacy** of being '**maganda**' (beautiful), '**disente**' (decent) and '**malakas na babae**' (strong and powerful woman) within the power dynamics of the Philippine sex trade. By transcending patriarchal structural power, which leaves little agency for women, one can demystify the myth of male domination and sexual gratification that perpetuates the encouragement of female sexual passivity. By examining the subjectivities of female celebrity models within the Philippine sex trade and the spaces that they create for themselves, one can challenge existing rules of conduct and understand how they emerge victorious by gaining celebrity status that in turn enables them to exercise their will to attain self-determined personal goals. Nevertheless, distinguishing the work from the person is the first step in emancipating them from the stigma and shame that are typically attached, which will subsequently empower the sex workers and female celebrity models.

1. The Exploitation/Choice Dichotomy

The arguments for and against women's choice in prostitution are represented ideally by The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW or Coalition)⁸⁴ feminists (Aurora

⁸⁴ The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW or Coalition) is an international feminist non-governmental organization with Category II Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Its regional headquarters (Asia, Latin America, North America, Europe, Africa and Australia) provide networking services for women in prostitution and sex trafficking (and any other forms that are included in the Coalition's category of sexual exploitation of women) in cooperation with the Coalition's partner or member organizations in each region. The Coalition - Asia Pacific (CATW-AP), an umbrella organization, is located in the Philippines, and their membership organizations provide direct services to women in various areas such as

Javate De Dios, Aida F. Santos, and Mana Dulce F. Natividad) on the one hand and an Asian Women's Human Rights Council (AWHRC) representative, Nelia Sancho, on the other.⁸⁵

Coalition feminists argue that, for poor women, given their limited job opportunities, there is **no such thing as voluntary prostitution**, because they have no choice but to become prostitutes as a matter of survival thus sell themselves for sex reluctantly. On the other hand, Nelia Sancho argues that **there can be voluntary prostitution**, because women can decide to enter prostitution for material reasons, no matter how limited their alternatives. Sancho also stresses that women's choice to enter into prostitution is not a matter of liking sex (sexuality), as their choices are not necessarily made in an ideal situation, where they can fully exercise their preferences in work. The following comments by Sancho explicate her notion of choice:

...there are two types of women in prostitution: women who find themselves forced into prostitution and women who went into prostitution through mutual agreement with their client. Poverty may be a factor, but it is not the only reason for women to go into prostitution. There are so many poor Filipinos in this country...if you say it's because of poverty, it means that every poor Filipino woman would become a prostitute. But that is not the case. It is not the question of liking, either. I became an activist but I never dreamed of becoming an activist. I am a former beauty queen, and then found myself here. It does not mean I like this, but this is where I found myself because of the situation in my country at that period, where I was and things like that.”⁸⁶ It just means that each woman made a choice, according to how she perceives

legal assistance, skills and educational programs and material and medical support. The major Philippine organizing members of the Coalition are feminist advocacy groups in Quezon City such as Women, Education, Development, Productivity and Research Organization (WEDPRO), Women's Crisis Center, and Bukluran ng kababaihan sa Lansangan (BUKAL, association for women in Street prostitution), but it also includes organized groups of women who are currently and previously involved in prostitution such as BUKLOD Center (Olongapo), Nagkakaisang Kababaihan ng Angeles City (NKAC, Angeles), and Lanig Bubai (Davao, Mindanao). Some women from these groups also work for organizations like WEDPRO and BUKAL. Therefore, the Coalition assists the programs of membership organizations based on life-experiences of women who were previously involved in prostitution.

⁸⁵ Nelia Sancho is Coordinator of AWHRC-Manila Office, Asia-based feminist human rights NGO with UN observation status. Sancho and her AWHRC colleagues led various other women's NGOs to establish Task Force on Filipino Comfort Women (TFFCW) in 1992, and subsequently assisted organizing LILA Pilipina Lolas, an advocacy group of the Filipino comfort women survivors themselves and women's human rights advocates. The testimonies of Filipino comfort women came out with a publication edited by Sancho, War Crimes on Asian Women: The Case of the Filipino Women. Book II (Manila: AWHRC, 1999). She is also an active organizer and participant of numerous international forums on prostitution and trafficking, in collaboration with the other Asian AWHRC counterparts and feminist NGOs such as Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) of Thailand.

⁸⁶ See Mina Roces, Women, Power, and Kinship Politics: Female Power in Post-War Philippines (Pasig: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2000). Sancho was the winner of the 1971 regional beauty contest, Queen of Pacific. Yet the declaration of martial law in the following year stimulated her political awareness to become a militant activist of the leftist anti-Marcos group, which led to her involvement with the Communist Party and its military arm, the New People's Army. While being herself a political prisoner, she addressed the issues of national liberation in the communist underground movement. At the same time, she also advocated feminist concerns, and co-founded "the General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action (GABRIELA), which was organized to serve as the umbrella for all women's organizations" after the assassination of Marcos's political opponent, Benigno Aquino in 1984 (p. 180).

her situation. Situations for making choices are not always ideal. Many people in our country have to make a choice at any given situation, most often it is done in a situation of difficulty. Such is not always a nice environment to make a choice. Some people find themselves in an ideal, positive situation, however, for many Filipinos; they make choices in a difficult situation. So, it becomes academic to talk about "Is that a real choice? A genuine choice? I am saying that each one makes choices according to what she thinks is the best for her at a given stage in time.

Sancho's respect for women's choice stems from her conception of empowerment:

One component of empowerment of a person is the development of his or her own individual which includes that person's knowledge, talent, skills or competence that would enable the person to be fully functioning in one's day to day life. As such, the capacity for self-agency or self-determination of that person has to be supported and enhanced at whatever level. Self-agency means being able to determine what's best for yourself and to take care of one's self in any situation one finds oneself in - whether it is a survival or crisis situation; or whether one finds oneself in a good environment where choice could be made at a higher, positive level. One must exercise one's own self-agency by being able to choose what one wants to be. And there must be respect for one's choices. No matter how others think that those choices are not the best choices, the person who chooses what is best for him or her at a given situation expresses the person's power over oneself. The situation to make choices for one self may not always be ideal. For example, the situation of a battered woman who has to make a choice to leave or stay with her husband. Whatever her decision is, even if we as outsiders don't believe that she has made the best choice for herself, we have to respect her will, her own capacity for self-determination. That's what it all means by power. Only an individual knows what would be good for her or him. An individual decision made is an expression of one's power.⁸⁷

Thus, AWHRC respects the agency of women in prostitution for consensual/voluntary sexual service; **what constitutes human rights violation is not the act of prostitution per se, but the abuse and exploitation behind the operation of the prostitution business.** This statement from the Asia-Pacific Consultation⁸⁸ on prostitution epitomizes this point:

This forum defines all labor performed by women in the sex industry as work and recognizes women in prostitution as workers. And hence, prostitution, by definition, is recognized as work. The acceptance and recognition of prostitution as work is to recognize and validate the reality of women who are working in prostitution. There is a need to make a distinction between prostitution and trafficking. **Sex work per se is not exploitation. The element of abuse, violence and criminality in prostitution, particularly vis-a-vis trafficking, is the problem.** The sex industry is a large and profitable industry in the Asia-Pacific region. However, having no rights as workers, women in the sex industry see little of the profit and encounter a majority of the risk

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ The consultation was organized by Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) and the Foundation for Women in Bangkok, Thailand on February 17-18, 1997, followed by its subsequent Regional Meeting on Trafficking in Women, Forced Labour, and Slavery-Like Practice in Asia and Pacific on February 19-21 of the same year. The outcome of the consultation came out with a publication of Removing The Whore Stigma (Bangkok: GAATW, 1997).

and abuse.⁸⁹

In this context, AWHRC sees women's empowerment as recognizing the agency of women to choose prostitution as a livelihood, for whatever reasons, and the protection of the rights of women in prostitution to work under equal and humane conditions, should they choose to do so. Their human rights principle likewise centers on the respect for women's agency and subsequent rights of self-determination. Poverty is not viewed as the sole reason that causes women to enter prostitution, even if it is one of the essential factors that motivate women to engage in it; some women enter prostitution for financial reasons, but other women do not necessarily follow the same route. Recognition of prostitution as a work of women's choice distinguishes voluntary prostitution from sex trafficking the latter being a form of involuntary prostitution that infringes human rights by violating women's right to consensual activities. Prostitution evolves into trafficking, when women's involvement in the sex trade involves "movement, force/coercion/deception, and abusive/exploitative conditions."⁹⁰

In order to distinguish between women's choice and women's exploitation in entering prostitution (especially in trafficking), the above consultation statement also calls for the need of legal reform in the decriminalization of prostitution as work and of prostitutes as workers:

All state laws on prostitution in the Asia-Pacific region contribute to women's powerlessness because they fail to respect the human dignity and agency of women in the sex industry. The laws are often used as repressive tools by both the law enforcement machinery and traffickers to abuse and exploit women working in prostitution. ...We hold our governments accountable for failing to recognize the rights of all women to work under safe and humane conditions. Our governments have one set of policies for workers at the center of society and another for those at the margins. Having recognized prostitution as work and women within prostitution as workers, we seek the decriminalization of prostitutes as workers and of prostitution as a site of work.⁹¹

Sancho thus argues that there is a need to address state power and corruption and their

⁸⁹ AWHRC, *Asian Womenews*, Vol. 4 No. 1, August 1997, 8.

⁹⁰ AWHRC, *Asian Womenews*, Vol. 5, May 1999, 29. This is the outline of a working definition of trafficking in the Human Rights Standards for the Treatment of Trafficked Persons (based on several UN human rights instruments including the ILO Forced Labour Convention) advocated by AWHRC and other related groups such as GAATW. The document defines trafficking as follows: "Trafficking consists of all acts and attempted acts involved in the recruitment, transportation within or across borders, purchase, sale, transfer, receipt or harboring of a person involving the use of deception, coercion (including the use or threat of force or the abuse of authority) or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or maintaining such person in a situation of abusive or exploitative labor or service, whether for pay or not, such as in the garment, agricultural, fisheries, begging, sex or other industries, in the provision of domestic, sexual or reproductive services (including forced or servile marriages), or in any other form of abusive and exploitative labor or servitude or slavery-like practices in the public or private sector" (p.28).

⁹¹ AWHRC, 1997, 8.

failure to recognize the exploitation and abuse of women in the sex industry as a labor issue. But I am not advocating for legalization of prostitution here, because those who make laws in the Philippine Congress do not see prostitution as work. They see this as a moral issue, not a labor problem. Some lawmakers have two lives—in their public life, they appear to be moral family men. Their other life is more hidden—often profiting from business relationships or bribes in exchange for favorable legislation. As part of the other lifestyle, they see prostitutes, like GROs. **To highlight their public morality, they promote laws based on conservative values.** But they never address the situation of women sex workers. The impact of current laws on prostitution encourages moral homogeneity but create abuse at the same time for the women in the sex industry. In actuality, women are placed in an abusive situation, because of the rigid moral legal framework applied to sex workers.

The issues highlighted in these arguments entail elements of abuse and exploitation in the sex industry and the state's policy and enforcement of it. In particular, women's entry into the sex industry is viewed separately as one's freedom to exercise decision-making power. The liberal/neo-liberal perspectives of AWHRC highlights **"the complex ways people seek to ensure their well-being in a changing world,"** one of the factors that Jane Parpart has included in her analyses of power in developmental theory.⁹² Insofar as there are differences in women's decision-making, the Coalition's sexual exploitation theory of prostitution does not account for the complex ways in which poor women decide how or not to enter the sex industry. On the one hand, many young lower-class women seek to earn higher incomes by becoming GROs or dancers. On the other hand, other poor women, such as street vendors, for instance, chose not to enter the sex industry, because bar hostessing was never an option.

In this regard, AWHRC's arguments obscure the distinction between **"inequalities in people's capacity to make choices"**⁹³ and **"differences in the choices they make."** While AWHRC problematizes power inequality for women who are already in the sex industry, it does not focus on the impact of such power inequality on women's decision-making process. It is true that there are differences between women in similar contexts of power inequality; all of these women, being poor and unemployed, make different strategic life choices based on their preferences, no matter how limited. These differences in women's choice, however, do not change the fact that many of these women's decisions to enter the sex industry result from

⁹² Jane Parpart, "Rethinking Participation, Empowerment and Development From a Gender Perspective," in Jim Freedman, ed., *Transforming Development*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, 262.

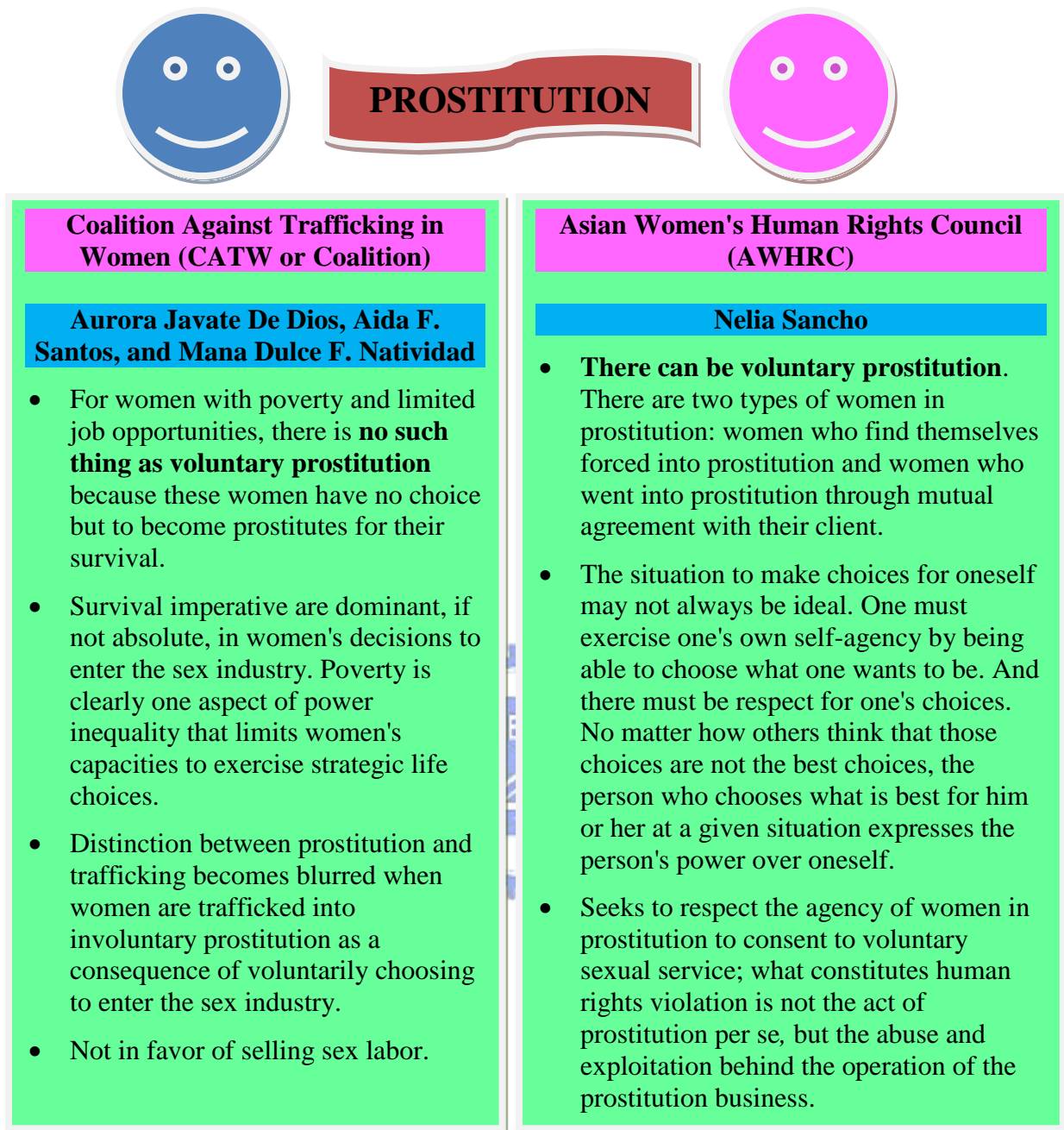
⁹³ Naila Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment," in *Development and Change* (Vol.30, May 1999), 439.

the extended power inequality reinforcing the Philippine sex trade. In fact, arguments by the Coalition feminists have shown that the survival imperative is dominant, if not absolute, in women's decisions to enter the sex industry. Poverty is clearly one aspect of power inequality limiting women's abilities to exercise strategic life choices, however, the distinction between prostitution and trafficking becomes blurred, when women are trafficked into involuntary prostitution as a consequence of entering the sex industry. For example, there are those who are trafficked to Japan or other countries, through their connections between bars and local entertainment promotion agencies in Quezon City. It is hard to say whether choices involved in their eventual trafficking overseas are different from the choices they made to become a GRO or go-go dancer in a Quezon bar context. Although the two contexts are different, these choices are still interrelated in the sense that they would not have been trafficked overseas, if they had not entered the sex industry in the first place.

Similar stories show that trafficking is often involved, even when women decide to enter the sex industry voluntarily, as many of these women are recruited from the provinces through the 'encouragement' of bar managers, pimps and their relatives and family in the bar. Most of these women come to the sex industry without knowing or being informed that they will be forced to go out with customers. Yet they eventually 'choose' to engage in sex after being exposed to conditions of life in the sex industry. In such contexts, how can I still argue that one should respect and not interfere with women's choice? Thus, feminist understandings of women's choices cannot be qualified by simply considering the extent to which the act of prostitution per se or labor conditions of prostitution is sexually exploitative.

In short, the divergent arguments posed by Coalition feminists and AWHRC feminists degrade into an endless dilemma. If prostitution is defined as a system of sexual exploitation resulting from human rights violations, it will overlook the differences in women's decision-making agency. If prostitution is defined as work that prioritizes women's rational choices, it will in turn overlook the underlying inequalities in women's abilities to make choices. One way of getting around this dilemma is to focus on the ways in which the inequality of power dynamics, both within and outside the sex industry, influences women's decision making at the intersection of their life history and socio-economic background. I can now explicate at a deeper level the relationships between discourse, practices and power.

Figure 13: Filipino Feminism: The Exploitation/Choice Dichotomy



2. The Gendering Power of Sexual Discourse

A double standard of morality underlies the gender stereotypes attached to Filipino indigenous concepts of *malakas*, *maganda*, and *pangit*, which have two distinct implications for prostitution. One is that the purchase of women by men is widely accepted through the **malakas concept of "aggressive male with virility"** and the **pangit concept of women as "objects of male sexual gratification."** This is consistent with the fact that "there is such a strong local demand from men of all social classes for prostitutes."⁹⁴ The other is that sexual

⁹⁴ Ofreneo and Ofreneo, 1998, 105.

double standards also divide women into two types: maganda woman as "moral guardian" and pangit woman as evil whore." In this light, it is not surprising that even a woman in the sex industry, insofar as she is a '**cherry girl**,'⁹⁵ admits that going out with clients (implies having an intimate relationship with them) is something loose women do. 'Decent' women outside the sex industry differentiate themselves even more strongly from 'fallen' women. Local women avoid wearing any 'revealing' clothes, such as sleeveless shirts, tight miniskirts and short pants, which are normally regarded as things that only prostitutes wear to attract clients. The discourse of sexual double standards penetrates into a person's mind and sexual behavior and reminds us of the image of the Panopticon: "knowing that he may be observed from the tower at any time, the inmate takes over the job of policing himself."⁹⁶ The '**moral gaze**' inscribed into overall gender relationships in Philippines society, appears to be internalized by Filipinos, and perpetually oriented toward the disciplinary practices of self-policing subjects. The exercise of this disciplinary power, according to Foucault, is unique in the sense that it "seeks to transform the minds of those individuals who might be tempted to resist" in anonymous forms of psychological power.⁹⁷ This contrasts with the authoritarian modes of power directly exercised on civilians through force from colonial times onward.

When the Spanish came to the Philippines in the 16th century, it imposed Catholicism, "a patriarchal culture where women had to subordinate themselves to father, husband and priest."⁹⁸ Women's mobility was confined to the domestic sphere and the church, and their sexuality was controlled by a concept of Virgin Mary and other aspects of a strict moral code that emphasized modesty and chastity. Tragically, prostitution began to emerge, as outlets for Spanish men's sexual desire that was suppressed only in moral terms; it was the rape of native women by the Spanish which "created a reserve of 'fallen' women who became available to service not only the homesick Spanish troops and dignitaries, but also the friars."⁹⁹ In the Philippines today, Catholic institutions no longer shelter young girls from 'sinful' behaviors nor house 'lewd', 'worthless' women in separate quarters. Instead, the virgin cult inscribed by the church on school and family—individual forms of "faceless, centralized, and

⁹⁵ A bar term that refers to a virgin woman.

⁹⁶ Bartky, 1997, 106.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ofreneo and Ofreneo, 1998,100.

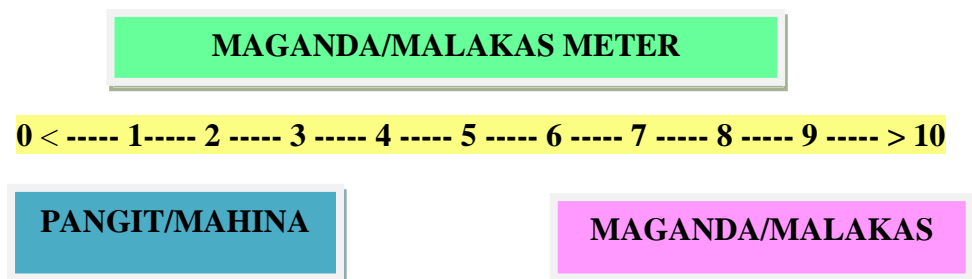
⁹⁹ Ibid.

pervasive" ¹⁰⁰ power rooted in the mixture of native gender concepts and Hispanic Catholicism—has largely replaced the sense of unworthiness of "docile bodies" of those who have lost their virginity.

Figure 14: The Gendering Construction of Filipino Subjectivities: Maganda/Malakas and Pangit/Mahina Dichotomy

MAGANDA	MALAKAS	PANGIT	MAHINA
Usually associated with a woman and also with female physical beauty Literally means beautiful. It is synonymous to: Mabuti (good, kind) Malinis (clean, pure—virginity, honest) Marangal (being honorable, dignified, morally upright) Maka-Diyos (God-fearing, Religious) Makatao (humane) Maawain (merciful)	Usually associated with a man, and also male virility, sexual prowess, and physical strength. Literally means strong, powerful. It is synonymous to: Makapangyarihan (Influential or people in power). Authority or power itself.	The exact opposite of what is maganda. Literally means ugly usually pertaining to physical appearance. Synonymous to: Masama (bad, evil) Bawal (forbidden, taboo)	The exact opposite of what is malakas. Literally weak, powerless or lacking in power or strength. Synonymous to: May sakit (sick or in poor health)

Figure 15: Maganda/Malakas METER¹⁰¹



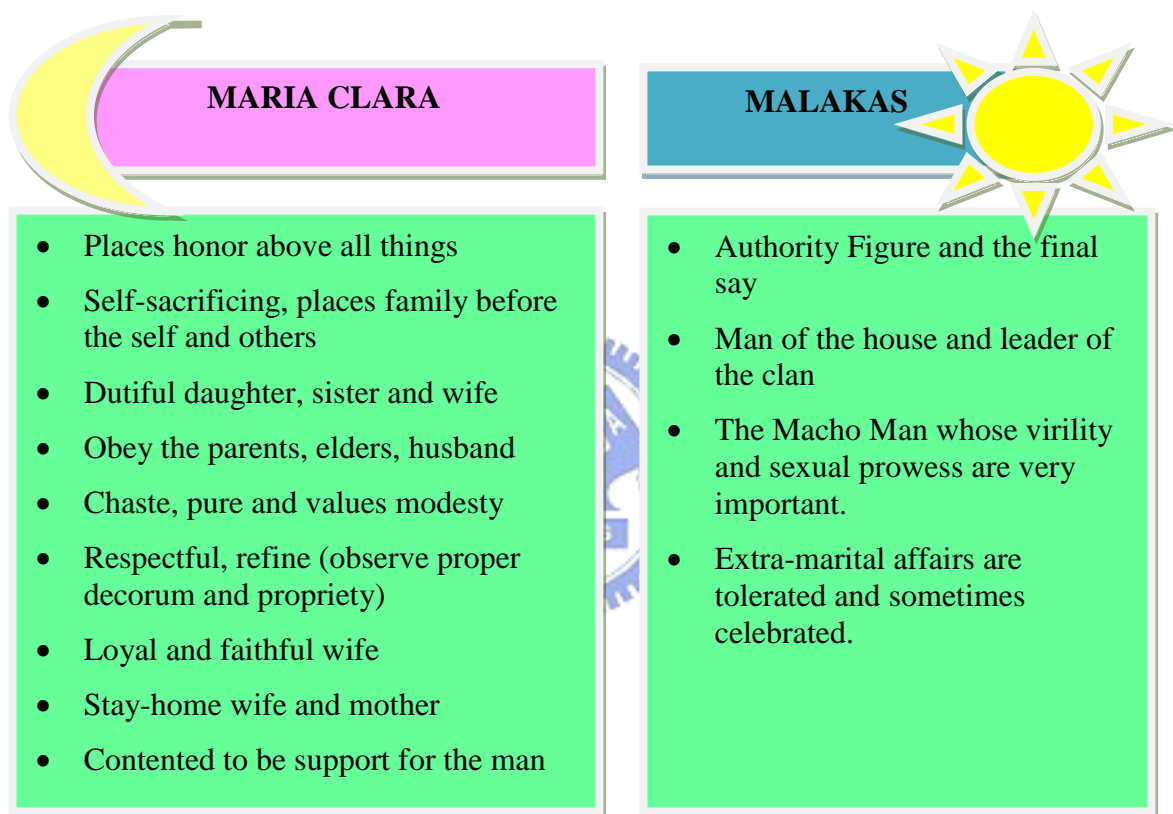
Thus, Foucault's modern disciplinary power is useful in examining sexual discourse of power and its impact on prostitution in the Philippines. One can contrast it with structuralist

¹⁰⁰ Bartky, 1997, 106.

¹⁰¹ Figure 44: In a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 as the least desired characteristics and a perfect 10 as the most desired characteristics. In Filipino Psychology, any undesirable characteristic is considered pangit/mahina, and the desirable characteristics as maganda/malakas.

arguments of Coalition feminists, who regard prostitution as a global creation of patriarchal political economy. In fact, Foucault's focus on power departs from structural analyses, which **over-determine** power subjects, and emphasizes **micro-power**, which instead "brings into play relations between individuals (or between groups)" that are intimately bound up with knowledge and discourse.¹⁰² Foucault thus deconstructs the normative conceptualization of power as a zero-sum form of structural forces and focuses on the **relational** aspects of power.

Figure 16: The Gendering Construction of Filipina Subjectivities within the Malakas Power Structures: Si Maria Clara¹⁰³ at si Malakas (Maria Clara and Malakas)



Foucault's disciplinary power can also explain **self-policing aspects of individuals** as a contributing factor to the perpetuation and proliferation of prostitution and moves away from the notion of patriarchal economy, where poor women are seen as economically coerced

¹⁰² Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed., with an afterword by and an interview with Michel Foucault, Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 2 17.

¹⁰³ Maria Clara is portrayed as the epitome of modesty and devotion of the Filipina. Maria Clara lived a sheltered life--stuck in the convent, or living in her family home, the opulent house of the Delos Santos family (Capitan Tiago). The "ideal" image, promoted by no less than Jose Rizal, is that of Maria Clara, a demure, self-effacing beauty whose place was on the pedestal of male honor. Rizal describes this "ideal" of the Philippine woman with words such as these: "an Oriental decoration," "her eyes...always downcast," "a pure soul." (chapter 5, Noli Me Tangere).

to become male sexual commodities. But Foucault's theory on power does not distinguish the extent to which the impacts of self-discipline differ across gender lines. The effects of "moral gaze" remain the same, regardless of whether one is **malakas or maganda/pangit**. Evidently, Foucault's work does not have gender sensitivity. Although Foucault's homosexuality appears to have sensitized him to the experience of oppression and to the condition of marginal and oppressed groups, Foucault was not particularly interested in feminism or women's power subjection."¹⁰⁴ Bartky's criticism of Foucault's gender blindness underscores this point:

But Foucault treats the body throughout as if it were one, as if the bodily experiences of men and women did not differ and as if men and women bore the same relationship to the characteristic institutions of modern life. Where is the account of the disciplinary practices that engender the "docile bodies" of women, bodies more docile than the bodies of men? Women, like men, are subject to many of the same disciplinary practices Foucault describes. But he is blind to those disciplines that produce a modality of embodiment that is peculiarly feminine.¹⁰⁵

Bartky moves beyond Foucault's treatment of power subjects by integrating what she calls "institutionally unbound" forms of disciplinary power. Bartky argues that patriarchal disciplinary power operates both inside and outside the premise of institution; institutionally bound power can be "imposed", but institutionally unbound forms of power are 'voluntary.' Bartky then highlights this problem with the way the voluntary forms of patriarchal power operate and attach women to **hegemonic norms**¹⁰⁶ of female identity. According to her, women internalize female ideals so profoundly that they lack the critical distance necessary to resist them. They are voluntary, because women conform to the 'patriarchal standards of bodily acceptability' for fear of losing "her sense of self as an existing individual."¹⁰⁷

Bartky's explanation on gendering disciplinary power has significant implications for Filipino women's voluntary submission to malakas power. Women who lose their virginity '**choose**' to enter the sex industry because they have internalized the sense of unworthiness as **pangit women** who entertain the malakas of the sex industry. In the same way, such women 'choose' to remain in the sex industry for fear of exposure to the stigma of a **maganda/pangit dichotomy**. Virgin women can 'choose' to enter the sex industry because they subscribe to the

¹⁰⁴ See Foucault, 1980. Regarding the possibilities that his History of Sexuality would advance the women's question, Foucault States as follows: 'There are few ideas there, but only hesitant ones, not yet fully crystallized. It will be the discussion and criticism after each volume that will perhaps allow them to become clarified. But it is not up to me to lay down how the book should be used (p. 192).

¹⁰⁵ Bartky, 1997, 95.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 103, emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁷ Bartky, 1997, 104-105.

idea of "dutiful daughter," a Filipino religious notion, in which daughters sacrifice themselves to support their family. These "dutiful daughters" in the sex industry may try to preserve their **maganda status** by 'choosing not' to engage in prostitution. There is still another type of bar woman who attempts to obtain maganda power within the sex industry, not as GRO or go-go dancer but as 'beautiful' model. It thus becomes crucial to listen to women's voices especially those working in the sex industry in order to understand the extent to which such women's self-disciplining impact on their decision-making in the power dynamics of the sex industry.



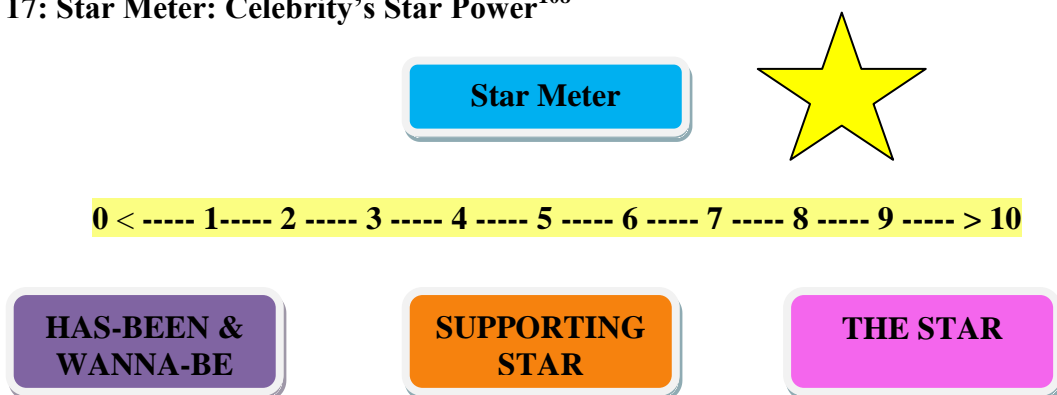
Chapter Five: Female Celebrity Model's Subjective Accounts of Power

1. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Strategy and Tactic

In this chapter, I will use female celebrity models' own words in FHM magazine. Unlike Gayatri Spivak, I believe that these women can speak for themselves, and a better way to understand them is to listen to what they have to say. In order to facilitate the analyses, the interview questions for female celebrity models in lad magazines (see appendix A-1) were categorized according to four themes: (1) conceptualizations of power and positionalities in the sex industry; (2) subjective accounts of power; (3) demands for basic rights; and (4) understandings about feminism and/or access to feminist programs.

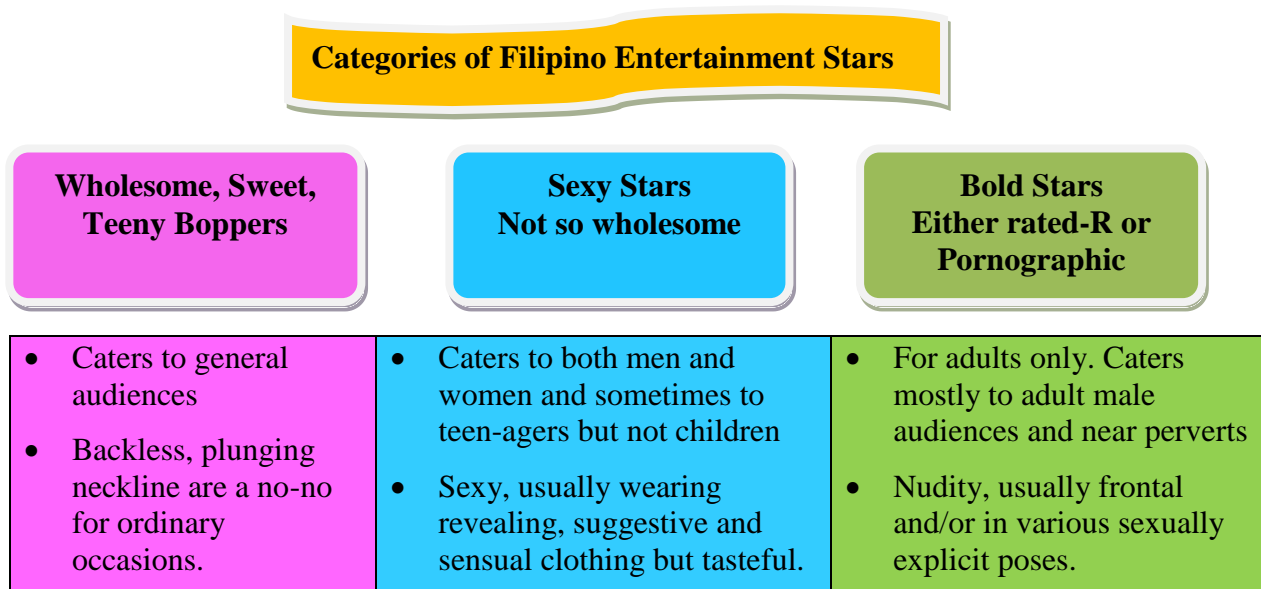
The first theme attempts to represent women's views and positionalities in the power dynamics of the Philippine sex industry within the show business, specifically how they situate themselves in the power dynamics of the Philippine sex industry in showbiz. The second theme shows women's exercise of power within that power dynamics, particularly in their abilities to see self-worth as a basic requirement to be valued, their capacities for decision-making, goal settings, self-control and even self-defense. The third theme is to underline the relevance of these women's subjective accounts with what they think as their rights and other social or civil considerations they may need as women in the sex industry. The fourth theme assesses if these female celebrity models are aware of the gendering constructions of subjectivities in Philippines society and its anticipated impacts on the construction of women's subjectivities through their understandings about and interests in feminism/feminist programs.

Figure 17: Star Meter: Celebrity's Star Power¹⁰⁸



¹⁰⁸ Figure 46: In a scale from 0 to 10. 0 means with the least star power and a perfect 10 means the most powerful star. In the Philippine entertainment industry a 'has-been' is a star that has lost his/her box-office appeal, and usually considered a liability especially in PR department. Lost glory especially if one was so accustomed to can be too much to handle especially so when one is working with new set of co-stars not familiar with you. In this instance, tensions can fly and nerves can flare.

Figure 18: Categories of Filipino Entertainment Stars¹⁰⁹



Ten celebrity models of varying celebrity statuses were purposely chosen:

1. Eula Valdez
2. Pops Fernandez
3. Joyce Jimenez
4. Maureen Larrazabal
5. Angelica Panganiban
6. Camille Prats
7. Angel Locsin
8. Katrina Halili
9. Cristine Reyes
10. Bianca King



The first two celebrity actresses, Eula Valdez and Pops Fernandez, are middle-aged and married with grown-up kids. Two actresses, Maureen Larrazabal and Joyce Jimenez, are known as sexy actresses starring in sexy flicks (but not pornography). Another two, Angelica Panganiban and Camille Prats, were former child stars. Another two, Angel Locsin and Bianca King, are representative young stars in general.

The choice of FHM is arbitrary, because it is number one in circulation size. The interview questionnaire designed for female celebrity models was used primarily to help me focus on information I wished to explore and cover in my newspaper and video analyses relevant to my research work. It is not only through direct answers nor through questions

¹⁰⁹ Stars in the Philippine entertainment world are categorized into three levels: wholesome, sexy stars and bold stars. Traditionally, stars with sweet image are occupying the highest rank in the food chain. However, nowadays, this traditionally held position on by the stars with wholesome image are now being challenged by the sexy stars. The bold stars are always ranked the lowest, with porn stars are the lowest in the hierarchy.

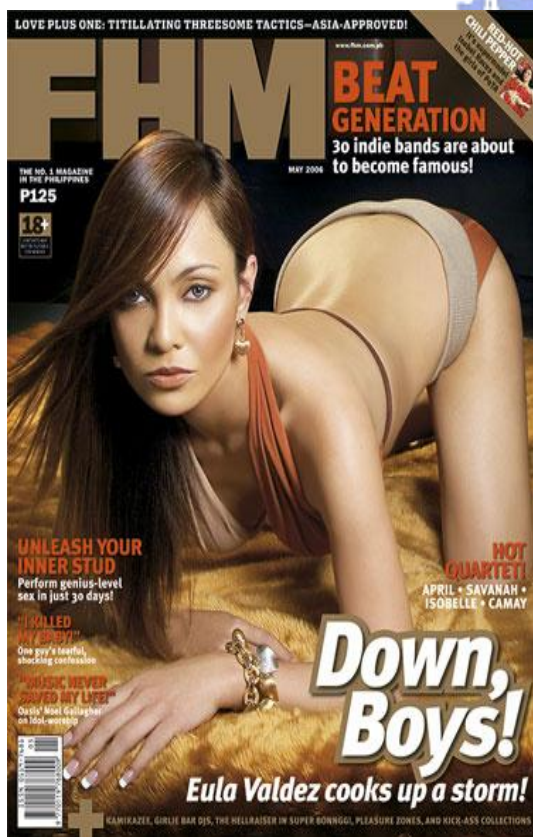
asked that one can get information to help one understand the essence of what these models were trying to say, but also through omissions, suggestions and nuances. Nuances and underlying meanings can also be rich sources of information, which are sometimes truer than explicit utterances.

Needless to say, lad magazines rarely if ever raise issues of systemic power alienation brought about by the patriarchal system or discussions of patriarchy itself. Two reasons come to mind: for practical reasons, magazines do not generally welcome opposing points of view. Ignoring opposing opinions is better than being defensive, especially against feminist groups, moralistas and the Church. Their priority is to promote themselves and increase their own media exposure; however, these publications generally prefer to avoid confrontation on moral grounds. Titillation tends to be a more effective and safer course. Secondly, the idea that lad magazines are anti-women, true or not, is bad for business, and bad business means no profit.

a. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Conceptualization of power and positionalities in the sex industry

The following are answers on questions of why they finally agreed to pose for FHM and why it took them so long to actually agree to do the pictorials, especially for the cover.

Eula Valdez: FHM May 2006 Issue, Interview by Alex Paita



Q: After wooing you for what seemed like forever, you finally gave in! Please tell us this is really happening.

A: Yes, two years ago I was really hesitant kasi masyadong daring yung mga pinagagawa ninyo (because what you were asking me to do was too daring for me). Hindi ko kaya (I just can't do it). Right now, wala naman akong image na pino-project (I don't have an image to project). I don't want to be trapped in one image. I already posed for a body calendar two years ago. I didn't get any violent reactions. Ngayon (now), I'm really flattered kasi nag-offer uli ang FHM na mag-pose ako (because you offered again for me to pose for FHM).

Q: But really, you don't look like a mom. We mean, with that face and that body...

A: Thank you. Yun din nga ang sabi ng husband ko. (That's also what my husband told me). So when he saw Xander's works pumayag na agad siya (he readily agreed). He's proud that I'm posing for FHM.

Eula Valdez is an easily marketable actress. Her most unforgettable TV role was that

of a strong woman, Amor Powers in Pangako Sa'yo, whose rise to prominence were so iconic that it set a model for heroines usually playing a motherly role. After gracing the cover of FHM, Eula is now labeled as a “hot mama.” This is more complimentary than pejorative. The term ‘hot’ means totally desirable and sexy—oozing with sex appeal.

Four things were noteworthy from Eula’s interview: 1) If a woman is not trapped in a certain image, she can do things that she thought were unimaginable or impossible, especially things that were considered too daring or those with explicit sexual undertones like posing for a lad magazine, 2) Public acceptance is necessary for any change of image to be successful. Public disapproval might signal an end to her career. 3) The husband’s approval is important. It was not clear from the interview, however, if she would still pose for FHM, if her husband disapproved of it. 4) Finally, there are husbands who approve and are proud of their wives for posing in a lad magazine. This is not a typical Filipino trait, given the relative conservatism of Filipino males. Filipino men generally would buy and read this kind of material as long as no female member of his family was a part of it.

Pops Fernandez: FHM August 2006 Issue, Interview by Allan Hernandez



Q: We’d like to know how (Pops interrupts).

A: You forced me! Hahahahaha!

Q: We did? It was consensual! No, really, the question is: Do we declare today a national holiday because you have finally unveiled yourself nicely?

A: (looks at her stylist) He said yeah! Actually on my way here I was asking myself: “Did I really say yes to this shoot?! How was I convinced again?” But the truth is FHM has been asking me to do the cover for the longest time.

Q: So what did we do to make you say yes?

A: I don’t know nga eh. (I really don’t know). I’m still trying to ask myself if I’m totally convinced. This shoot was supposed to happen the week before pa, it was already scheduled and all. But then sa sobrang nerbiyos ko (I was so nervous) I said, “Teka, tawad lang. P’wede next week na lang?” (Wait! Can we reschedule

it next week?) As if that was gonna make a difference! Hahaha! I guess I just had to prepare myself mentally and...I want to say physically but all I did was starve myself for this shoot.

Q: Tell us more about the physical sufferings you had to go through for this.

A: Apart from the starvation? I'd have to say it was more the mental part. Because I had agreed to do it, I had to prep myself by [answering questions] like why am I doing this in the first place.

Q: You haven't done anything like this ever in your entire career, yes?

A: No, not at all.

Q: And will this be the last or the revelation of a new Pops ready for more?

A: This will be the last, hahaha! No, but they're gonna see... (Pops' handler interrupts)

Pops Fernandez is popularly known as the country's 'Concert Queen'. The press gave her this title for her ability to attract huge crowds during her concerts. She is the daughter of Filipino action star, Eddie Fernandez. Pops began her musical career at age 16 when she signed a contract with Octo Arts in 1981. She was married to Martin Nievera, also dubbed the "Concert King". They separated in 1998. They have two sons, both of whom have grown up. Despite a failed marriage, Pops Fernandez has maintained a good and sweet image. However, two things were noteworthy from Pops' interview: 1) the need to be mentally prepared in posing for FHM, and 2) the importance of maintaining a sexy figure. Whether Pops was joking or not, the fact remains that one must make sacrifices in order to maintain a hot body. Although it is well publicized, a growing number of eating disorders are caused by this 'body image', foremost of which is anorexia, which is now rampant in the modeling world.

Angelica Panganiban: FHM March 2007 Issue, Interview by Chrissy D. Icamina



Q: It's been a long time coming, this shoot. What took you so long to say yes?

A: When Santa Santita was released, I was aware that you were already trying to invite me to pose. At the time, though, I felt that Santa Santita was enough to show people that I was ready to take on mature roles. Wala pa sa sistema ko ang mag-pose para sa men's magazine (I'm not just ready yet to pose for men's magazine). To me, timing is very important. So ngayong ready na ako, si Mr. M [Johnny Manahan] na yung pinag-decide ko (So now that I'm ready, I asked Mr. M (Johnny Manahan) to decide for me). Kung pumayag siya, go ako dahil kaya ko na. (If he said yes, it means I am already ready for this).

Q: Now that you've come out of your teenybopper shell with such aplomb, aren't you afraid of being typecast into sexy roles?

A: No. Alam ko rin naman na roon na ako papunta—sa lahat ba naman ng mga pinaggagawa ko, hahaha! (Because I know that is where I'm bound to go—what with all the

things I've been doing lately). As long as there's no nudity, it's okay. But personally, if it were up to me, this would be my last appearance in a men's magazine.

Angelica Panganiban started showbiz at the age of 6, and her first show was Ang TV. She won the Best Child actress award for her role of Becky in Princess Sarah, the movie.

Two things were noteworthy from Angelica's interview: 1) she resigned herself to the idea that going sexy was inevitable for her one way or another. It was not clear, however, whether or not it was because it was the surest way to be talked about—stardom, or whether maturity as an actress meant being able to portray different roles, one of them being sexy or going sexy. Moreover, 2) she needed an authority figure in the person of Johnny Manahan, ABS-CBN Star Magic's (formerly the Talent Center) manager, TV director, and currently the senior vice-president of ABS-CBN. Simply put, Mr. M is a 'Star Maker', thus there is little doubt why Angelica sought his counsel to help her decide whether to pose or not in FHM.

Camille Prats: FHM February 2006 Issue, Interview by Allan Hernandez



Q: We still can't believe we did this shoot. Can you?

A: I know it's a big change for me. It's the first time that I'm actually doing this, so I'm very excited. But nervous, too, kasi syempre medyo takot ako kung paano siya tatanggapin ng tao. (I am quite concern about how will people accept or relate to this).

Q: How did you prepare for this? Something drastic, like an exorcism perhaps?

A: Hahaha, last night nga, I went to a party pa. (Actually, I even went to a party last night). I came home at 1AM and my mom told me to sleep already, but then I didn't want to prepare for it that much kasi baka lalo akong kabahan (because if I think about it the more I would be nervous). When I woke up this morning, ayan na kinakabahan ako, hindi ako makabangon, (I was all nerves. I was so nervous that I can't get up from my bed) parang (I said to myself) "this is the day, today is my judgment day!" When I wore the bikinis, I realized it was the first time

that I'm actually wearing them for a shoot and I was thinking, "Kulang yata yung binigay ninyo sa aking damit!" ("Where are the rest of my clothes?"). Naiilang pa ako during the first few shots, (The first few shots I was uncomfortable) but as it went on I was comfortable already. Okay naman siya, I don't see anything bastos in it. (Yeah, it was okay, I don't see anything sleazy or improper in it). Plus it also helped that I did Pilates.

Q: You need to convince us more.

A: Well, just by doing the cover for FHM means I've more to give or show people. The

difference between myself and the other young stars who did the cover for FHM is that they didn't start out as a child actress, so it's much harder for me to make people realize na hindi na ako bata (I'm not a child anymore). This is one of the main reasons I decided to do this, to show people that I'm all grown up. I hope the little girl that they see in me would be replaced by a true woman, which is what I am now.

Camille Prats: FHM June 2006 Issue, Interview by Chrissy Icamina

Q: How's life after being our February cover girl?

A: Life's been different in so many ways, like how people see me. But I don't mind since I got what I wanted out of that shoot, which is to prove to people that I'm not young anymore and that I'm ready for mature roles. And as for the people who stare at me, okay lang because the shoot was done in such a tasteful manner so bakit ako mahihiya? (It's okay because the shoot was done in such a tasteful manner so why should I feel ashamed?)

Q: From child star to certified FHM babe, what does that sound to you?

A: To be honest, there are people who still see me the same way. It's just that suddenly there was more to me than just what they got used to. I guess it's created an impact because in the first place, who'd expect me to be on the cover of FHM? And I can say that they'd never forget that coming out that they'd now remember that yes, I posed for FHM and that I'm now indeed a lady.

In 1995, Camille Prats catapulted into fame after she starred in the movie Sarah... Ang Munting Prinsesa, a Filipino adaptation of the anime Princess Sarah, which was based on Frances Hodgson Burnett's children's novel 'A Little Princess'. But in 2006, she decided to shed her 'Princess Sarah' image by posing for the Philippine edition of FHM Magazine. Four things were noteworthy from Camille's interview: 1) She was excited about the big change, however, she was concerned about how people accepted or related to this big change; 2) one of the main reasons why she decided to pose for FHM was to show people that she was all grown up and ready for mature roles. Finally, 3) she felt that the shoot was done in such a tasteful manner hence she did not feel ashamed.

Katrina Halili: FHM December 2005 Issue, Interview by Lou Albano

Q: How was the shoot? There were some excited fans trying to get a peep, you noticed?

A: Ano ba?! Okay lang, hindi naman nakaka-ilang yung pictorial. Pero ang pangit di ba if I see them drooling. Siyempre sasampalin ko sila. Hahaha! Hindi naman, pero wala naman akong magagawa kasi nagpaalam sila di ba? Nahiya ako siyempre. Alangan namang sabihin kong hindi puwede, hahaha! Ayokong may nanunuod sa akin. Pero siyempre, dedma na lang. Hindi tayo matatapos kung ganun. (Honestly, it was fine. I didn't feel conscious at all during the shoot. I would if I saw them like drooling, I would slap their faces. Hahaha! Besides they asked for my permission to watch me during the shoot. And I can't say no, I don't want to be rude). Besides, we won't be able to finish the shoot if I acted more like a primadona.

Katrina Halili: FHM October 2006 Issue, Interview by Allan Madrilejos



Q: You cried in S-Files when FHM readers declared you the nation's sexiest in 2006. We hate to see you cry, but that TV moment was priceless.

A: Alam mo namang iyakin ako, di ba? (You know that I'm a cry-baby, right?). I cried because I was overwhelmed by all the blessings that were coming my way. Umiyak ako kasi sino ba naman ako compared to other established stars, di ba? (Who am I compared to other established stars, right?). Pero narito pa rin ako. (But I am still here). Thankful siyempre ako sa pagtitiwala sa akin ng GMA. (Of course I am grateful to GMA). They've been giving me nothing but great roles right now. Hindi nila ako pinapabayaan. (GMA is always there to support me). Sobrang thankful din ako sa FHM na isa talaga sa mga unang naniwala sa akin. (I am also thankful to FHM because you are one of the first who believes in me). Umiyak ako kasi yung mga fans na nagpapalakas ng loob ko, sumuporta talaga sa akin. (I cried because I was touched and overwhelmed by my fan's support). Umiyak

ako kasi masayang-masaya lang ako. Kahit, hello, alam kong hindi ako ang pinaka-sexy sa Pilipinas. (I cried because I was so happy even if I know that I'm not really the sexiest Filipina but I was voted as such. I was thankful).

Katrina Halili is an alumna of the 'StarStruck' talent search and was the cover girl of FHM Philippines for its December 2005 issue. She was later voted FHM Philippines' sexiest woman for 2006 and 2007. She was the first 'StarStruck' contestant to top FHM Philippines' 100 Sexiest lists. She was the lead villain in Marimar, the most popular TV drama in the Philippines to date, with Marian Rivera and Dingdong Dantes playing the leads.

Two things were noteworthy from Katrina's interview: 1) It is okay for men to admire her but not to drool over her, otherwise she would have slapped their faces; and, 2) she was thankful especially to her supporters when she won again the title of 'FHM Sexiest Filipina' for 2007, although she doubted she was indeed the sexiest Filipina. This admission was truly honest but respectful.

Cristine Reyes: FHM August 2007 Issue, Interview by Allan Hernandez



Q: It wasn't scary at all, was it?

A: Well, now that it's done, not anymore. But I was really scared a week before.

Q: So scared you cried over it, say some news sources. Why?

A: It wasn't so much that I would be doing the shoot it was because I felt I needed to work out some more in preparation for the shoot. Natakot ako kasi di ba if I'm going to be on the cover dapat yung sexy talaga ako? (I'm a bit scared because I thought if I'm going to be on the cover I should really be sexy, right?). Believe it or not, last week may bilbil ako. (Believe it or not, last week I had a bit of a tummy). Kaya nag-crash diet ako. As in pag may nakahaing rice, isang kutsara lang ang kinakain ko para matikman ko lang siya! (I had to do some crash diet right away. I tried to cut down on my cooked rice consumption, so during meal time a tablespoon of cooked rice would be enough, just to have a taste of it!).

Q: We only set the whole thing rolling a week ago, yet we've been waiting three years for you.

A: Thank you and I feel very flattered. It makes it even more special because I was still 15 back then. But here I am finally. What can I say? Thank you dahil sobrang naging patient kayo sa akin (for waiting so patiently for me).

Cristine Reyes is the younger sister of the sexy actress-singer Ara Mina. Three things were noteworthy from Cristine's interview: 1) she was more scared and concerned to live up to people's expectations of her. She felt she needed to work out more in preparation for the shoot. She thought if she was going to be on the cover, she should really be sexy. 2) Because of this pressure, she had to do a crash diet, in which she needed to cut down her cooked rice consumption to virtually nothing—one tablespoon. Finally, 3) in order to pose for FHM, models should be at least 18 years old (at least in the Philippines).

Bianca King: FHM June 2006 Issue, Interview by Lou Albano

Q: So you can disprove all the ugly connotations about appearing in our lovely mag.

A: I think it's safe to say that I kind of—I wouldn't say set the trend—but opened the door for other wholesome stars to be on the cover. Kasi napansin ko, (I noticed) after my cover, it was teen star after teen star after teen star. Yun yung goal namin (That's our goal). A little sexy, pero (but) very, very far from being malaswa (lewd). It was quite tasteful. We wanted to show those wholesome actresses and teen stars that it's okay to pose for the cover of FHM.



Two things were noteworthy from Bianca's interview: 1) she opened the door for young wholesome stars to be on the cover of FHM magazine. She wanted to show to wholesome actresses and teen stars that it was okay to pose for the cover of FHM. 2) Posing for FHM magazine was quite tasteful: little sexy but very, very far from being lewd.

b. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Subjective Accounts of Power

The following are answers about self-esteem, or how they see themselves as a person and as a woman in relation with other people: family, friends, critics, and men? If posing for FHM changed them, in what way and why? And

how are they dealing with the changes?

Eula Valdez: FHM May 2006 Issue, Interview by Alex Paita

Q: Were you even aware of the large chunk of letters we get from readers requesting for you?

A: Really? I'm not aware! I'd be really flattered if I'd known then. It boosts my confidence kasi at my age di ba, may nagre-request (there are so many people requesting for me to do this). Thirty-eight is not too old after all. But compared to your recent cover girls, that is too old. Hahaha!

Q: That's precisely the point. You're 38 and still as hot as those teens! Do you mind being called a MILF (Mother I like to F--k)?

A: Hahaha! Bahala sila (It's up to them). Para sa akin (For me) this is another role. I can do this, and I can do a lot more things. I'm an empowered woman no matter what I do.

Three things were noteworthy in Eula's interview: 1) thirty-eight is not too old after all and you can still be 'hot'. 2) It does not matter how others look at you. What is important is how you look at things. 3) She thinks of herself as an empowered woman, no matter what she does, thus she thinks she can do many more things.

Pops Fernandez: FHM August 2006 Issue, Interview by Allan Hernandez

Q: You haven't done anything like this ever in your entire career, yes?

A: No, not at all.

Q: And will this be the last or the revelation of a new Pops ready for more?

A: This will be the last, hahaha! No, but they're gonna see... (Pops' handler interrupts)

Q: Oops, your handler says there's more daring stuff ahead...

A: Really?! (laughs) But people will be seeing me with more skin only because I play a superhero alien in the movie Zsa Zsa Zaturnah, which is pretty much what this pictorial is for—maybe that’s part of what convinced me to do this cover, to give some sort of a teaser before I do the movie.

Q: Are you saying eyes are really gonna be popping out of their sockets for you in the movie?

A: Well no, I’m not gonna go or anything like that. Zsa Zsa Zaturnah is actually a comedy musical. It’s just the superhero outfit.

Three things were noteworthy in Pops’ interview: 1) she does not see herself as what these pictures in FHM connote— bold, daring, sexy, etc. This is a big departure from the ‘sweet’ and wholesome’ image she wanted to project and to maintain, indicative of a clear distinction between wholesome, not so wholesome and not wholesome at all. 2) For Pops, the posing indicates a not so wholesome image, thus it can be done but not to the extreme and without too much discomfort for her. Finally, 3) more important than this distinction is the idea that an image is just an image, it does not reflect the person per se. As Pops said, “well no, I’m not gonna go bold, daring, sexy, or anything like that. Zsa Zsa Zaturnah is actually a comedy musical. It’s just the superhero outfit.”(My emphasis)

Maureen Larrazabal: FHM June 2007 Issue, Interview by Lou Albano



Q: Welcome back, Maureen! It’s been a while!

A: Yes, the last time was, I think, in 2003. There were a lot of changes. I look sexier now. Hahaha! I’m more confident now in showing flesh so I think I posed sexier and better this time. And the pictures turned out...wow! I love the pictures! From start to end, parang paganda siya nang paganda (they are getting more beautiful. I’m happy).

Q: What do you think gave you the confidence?

A: It’s probably because of my experiences. I mean the more na meron kang paghuhugutan, mas nailalabas mo nang maganda. (I mean the more you experienced things in life, the more you can relate to what you are doing now. So the outcomes are so much better.).

Q: Is there a particular experience that you used here?

A: Well, it’s a sexy shoot, so...hahaha! Let’s not go into that. Hahaha!

Q: Is there anyone making you feel sexy right now?

A: Oh yes. I am with someone now and he makes me feel really, really sexy. We’ve been together for almost four years now. Whoa!

Q: And...

A: I don't do sex. I make love.

Maureen Larrazabal is a sexy actress who was successful in reinventing herself. She is now more popularly known for her comedic skills than just being a sex nymphet. Four things were noteworthy from Maureen's interview: 1) she thinks she looks sexier now. 2) She is more confident now in showing flesh, so she thinks she posed sexier and better this time. 3) The more you experience things in life, the more you can relate to what is going on and what you are doing. Finally, 4) She made a distinction between sex and making love, when she said: "I don't do sex. I make love."

Angelica Panganiban: FHM March 2007 Issue, Interview by Chrissy D. Icamina

Q: Do you feel pressured to maintain a certain image?

A: Actually hindi kasi mas nahirapan akong gawin yun nung bata pa ako. Especially at the time na karamihan ng followers ko mga bata rin. Dapat lahat talaga ng mga kilos ko maayos. (Actually I did not feel any pressure at all! I was more pressured to maintain a certain image when I was a young star. Maybe because my fans base at the time was children, just like me. I had to mind my manners and the way I act especially in public).

Q: So, you can now admit to having a crazy side?

A: Oo, baliw talaga ako, sobra, hahaha! (Yup, I have a crazy side too). Lumabas na siya ngayon! Makulit ako at sobrang gulo kasi halos lahat ng friends ko bading. Nahahawa tuloy ako sa pagiging maingay at magulo nila. Now, I can openly express them. I am really upbeat and perky, maybe because most of my friends are gays. Now, I feel I am becoming more like them—noisy but fun to be with. Sometimes, I even talk like them when I'm being interviewed on television.

Four things were noteworthy from Angelica's interview: 1) adults are not limited to what they can do and cannot do like children. 2) Public image is not always representative of the true and private self, thus keeping up with one's public image can be repressive. 3) For Angelica, gays (homosexuals) are fun and more liberating to be with. Being in their company with their open and perky personalities allows her to be freer to be herself. Finally, 4) gays' (homosexuals) open, perky and fun personality can be contagious.

Camille Prats: FHM February 2006 Issue, Interview by Allan Hernandez

Q: Here in FHM, we ask all the important adult questions—you know that, don't you?

A: Yes! And I was nervous about that more than the cover itself, hahaha!

Q: So, may we begin?

A: No!

Q: Is that a very direct "no"?

A: Yes! Hahaha!

Q: Okay, we readied ourselves for this. Ganito na lang (How about this question)... How did you know about the birds and the bees?

A: I could say that I was exposed to it at an early age, about seven or eight, because I used to work with a lot of people who told me about those things in a pleasant way, which means not enough to pollute my mind. I did Oki Doki Doc, right? Hulaan ninyo na lang kung sino sa mga co-stars ko ang nagtuturo sa akin. (Well you can guess which of my co-stars taught me about it).

Q: How old were you when you did AngTV?

A: I was eight.

Q: Did any of the precocious boys there hit on you?

A: Puppy love did blossom for me in AngTV. Nandyang si Tom Taus—si Cedie! (There is Tom Taus—he was playing Cedie! Siya ang first crush ko. (He is my first crush). I also had a crush on Patrick Garcia. Yung iba hindi ako masyadong proud sabihin kasi hindi na sila masyadong cute ngayon, hahaha! (As for the rest of my crushes, I'm not proud to mention their names anymore because they are not cute anymore now, hahaha!).

Q: Growing up, were you ever tempted with the perks of showbiz—smoking, drinking, sex, drugs, all that?

A: It was around me, yes. But you know being Princess Sarah helped a lot. Growing up, ganon ang tingin sa akin ng mga tao, (this is how people perceived me to be) that I'm a very good person, that I'm not supposed to do anything bad. So nobody ever tried to ask me to smoke, nor give me a drink—although I do have a drink or two, not much.

Q: Are you ready for the boys looking at you differently when this comes out?

A: No. Honestly, I'm not expecting anything. I did this shoot, now it's over, I'm gonna wait for it to come out, and when it comes out whatever the reaction will be doon ko lang haharapin na “Okay guys, so that's how you reacted.” As for my male co-stars, sampal agad ang aabutin nila pag iba ang iniisip nila, hahaha! (That's the time I will face them, thinking: “Okay guys, so that's how you reacted.” As for my male co-stars, I will slap them if they think or put me in different light and try something funny, hahaha!

Q: But are you capable of being a tease, at least?

A: No, I wasn't given that talent, hahaha! You know, when I told my lola (grandmother) I was going to do a shoot for FHM, she said, “Hay naku apo, (Granddaughter, you know what?) I was given the gift of flirting, and I hope you have that also.” Yun ba naman ang sinabi. (That's what my grandmother said, can you believe that?) I think I don't. I'm just naturally malambing (sweet) and makulit (talkative and playful) when I'm around people, including boys, and what would happen is these boys I become very close with end up falling in love with me.

Camille Prats: FHM June 2006 Issue, Interview by Chrissy Icamina

Q: And now you're modeling underwear!

A: Yeah! I just started with the Bench Body campaign and I've recently done a pictorial for it, which will come out this month. To be honest, when I was offered the contract I laughed. I thought kasi, why was I offered a Bench Body contract when there's Her Bench and their other lines? Maybe they offered it to me because of my first FHM shoot, too.

Q: You know what? You're so easy to talk with.

A: Madaldal ako, eh, (I'm talkative) hahaha! But yeah, a lot of people say that. Masarap din kasi yung feeling that no one feels aloof talking to you. (It's a nice feeling when no one feels aloof talking to you). I guess namana ko yun (I got it) from my dad. He's really ma-PR (very friendly and sociable). You can leave him in one room with all the strangers in the world and he'll come out friends with all of them.

Q: On the subject of your dad, it seems your parents are quite conservative.

A: They are. It was really hard to convince them to let me do that first FHM shoot. But they eventually agreed to it. Because if they didn't I wouldn't have done it wholeheartedly.

Q: As they say, strict ang parents mo?

A: Yes! I started going out on my own with friends only when I turned 20—only late last year! Would you believe that in my first year in college I went to school with my yaya (nanny)? As in she waits for me in the lounge, and she's the only yaya (nanny) around! Good thing that they're okay with my love life. Like my current boyfriend, sobrang legal (they know about him and most importantly they approved of my relationship with him).

Four things were noteworthy from Camille's interview: 1) successfully created public image can also dictate public actions towards celebrity, as shown by Camille's statement when she said: "Being Princess Sarah helped a lot. Growing up, people perceived of me like that I'm a very good person that I'm not supposed to do anything bad. So nobody ever tried to ask me to smoke, nor give me a drink—although I do have a drink or two, not much." This is in turn related to 2) a change of image from sweet and wholesome to not so wholesome or more adult image can open up a lot of misconceptions about the celebrity, and may be subjected to some sexual harassments and other sexual overtures or improprieties, and she is ready for such a situation when she said: "I did this shoot, now it's over, I'm gonna wait for it to come out, and when it comes out whatever the reaction will be, that's the time I will face them, thinking: "Okay guys, so that's how you reacted." As for my male co-stars, I will slap them if they think or put me in different light and try something funny". 3) The idea of grandmothers having a gift of flirting is surprising if not shocking for Camille. She said: "You know, when I told my grandma I was going to do a shoot for FHM, she said, "You know what, I was given the gift of flirting, and I hope you have that also." Can you believe that from my grandma? I was so surprised by what she said to me." This is indicative of the fact that lolas (grandmothers) have a public image equal to that of Maria Clara. And an image of Maria Clara with flirting skills might be totally unthinkable in the past, but today it is just surprising or even refreshing; 4) A change of image opened many doors that were otherwise closed to her. She said: "To be honest, when I was offered the contract I laughed. I thought, why was I offered a Bench Body (Underwear Line) contract when there's Her Bench and their other lines? Maybe they offered it to me because of my first FHM shoot, too."

Angel Locsin: FHM October 2005 Issue, Interview by Allan Madrilejos



Q: Good thing you mentioned that armor. We have to say it doesn't flatter your body at all, so is it a ball wearing it?

A: Yes, and siyempre sobrang thankful ako (I am so thankful). Feeling ko talaga napaka-swerte namin kasi we were quite nervous when the series started, hindi namin sigurado kung kakagatin ng tao yung [concept] na half-human, half-bird [characters]. I really felt that we were so lucky for the show. We were quite nervous when the series started we were not sure whether the public would go for this concept--half-human, half-bird characters. But the audience did get into it and that makes me very happy.

Q: Here's the question most everyone glued to Mulawin want answers to: Sino ba talaga ang sugo (who is the 'Chosen One'—the Liberator)?

A: Dalawa kami ni Richard [Gutierrez] na sugo, I'm the half-breed sugo and Richard is the pure Mulawin sugo. (Both Richard [Gutierrez] and I are the 'Chosen One'—the 'Liberator', I'm the half-breed sugo and Richard is the pure Mulawin sugo).

Q: Will you tell us how it all ends?

A: Ay, syempre hindi pupwede! Eh di hindi niyo na panonoorin! (No, of course I can't tell you! If I told you the ending you won't watch it anymore.)

Q: Very well, just testing your will power, hehehe...but any clue, at least?

A: Actually, Mulawin Book One has just about ended. Tapos na yung mga giyera sa Tierra Fuego (The battles in Tierra Fuego already ended)--the land where the battle between good birds and evil birds rages. But in Book Two, may mga bagong kalaban na lalabas (new villains will appear). We also get to wear a new set of armor.

Q: Good thing you mentioned that armor. We have to say it doesn't flatter your body at all, so is it a ball wearing it?

A: To tell you the truth, hindi (not at all)! Mabigat siya na mabaho na...matigas! But since I get to wear it almost every day, nasanay na rin ako. (The armor is heavy, hard and it smells! But since I get to wear it almost every day, I get used to it).

Q: Since the show has become a pop culture phenomenon, has your fame doubled?

A: Well, nobody knows Angel now. Wala na si Angel, si Alwina na! (Angel is gone, it's Alwina now!). People would greet me saying, "O si Alwina! Si Alwina! Sometimes I find myself telling them, "Ay hindi po, ako po si Angel. But they insist! "Hindi, si Alwina ka!" (People would greet me saying, "O it's you, Alwina! It's Alwina! Sometimes I find myself telling them, "I'm not Alwina, my name is Angel. But they insist! "No, you're Alwina!" But I should tell you, shooting for Mulawin made my schedule very hectic. Ngayon nga bale five days na akong halos di natutulog. (Now we shoot for five days per week sometimes without sleeping).

Q: Wow, so where does your personal life come in?

A: Wala akong life! Puro trabaho. (I don't have a life. Just all work for me. If ever I get to have a free day, I'd usually spend it with my family dahil halos di na kami nagkikita (because I don't get to spend time with them anymore). As for love, I don't have anyone courting me right now although may mga umaaligid-aligid (there are some who are trying to get notice by me). I would prefer if he be from a field that's not show business, pero kahit non-showbiz (even if he not from show business) I don't think I've found the perfect guy. Besides, I don't think I can enter into a commitment right now.

Q: But if you do find that lucky lad, would you be insane enough to spend P500, 000 on him?

A: Kung mahal ko talaga yung lalaki at sigurado na ko sa kanya, why not! I love him! Kung yun ba ang magpapasaya sa kanya, eh. At tsaka pera lang naman yan. (If I love him and I'm really sure about him, why not! It's just money, if it will make him happy, I would gladly do it).

Three things were noteworthy from Angel's interview: 1) a publicly created image especially that evolved into an iconic status, like her role Alwina in *Mulawin*, can alienate the person from the persona. A created persona so powerful can overshadow the real person. She said: "Well, nobody knows Angel now. Angel is gone, it's Alwina now! People would greet me saying, "O it's you, Alwina! It's Alwina! Sometimes I find myself telling them, "I'm not Alwina, my name is Angel. But they insist! "No, you're Alwina!" 2) In the Philippines and elsewhere in the world women especially those beautiful, hot young things are supposed to be the recipient of gifts and not the other way around. But for Angel, money is just money. If she can make other people happy--boyfriend for example--by buying them expensive things, she will gladly do it. And finally, 3) Success has its price. Being the current pop culture phenomenon, Angel has to sacrifice a lot of things money and even fame cannot buy foremost of which is time spent with her family. And it is kind of ironic that with her current celebrity status she cannot afford to get more sleep as much as she wanted to because of her busy schedule.

Katrina Halili: FHM December 2005 Issue, Interview by Lou Albano

Q: How do you feel about being included in FHM's 100 sexiest? Did you expect to get into the list again?

A: Oo. Charing! (Laughter) Hindi. Flattered. Especially last year. Bago lang kami pero lahat kami from StarStruck kasama.

(Yes, of course! Joke! (Laughter) No. I was flattered especially last year. We are all new but all of us from StarStruck were included in the list.

Q: You received one of the loudest cheers at the party.

A: Nahiya ako! (Laughter) Hindi ko alam kung anong gagawin ko. Pagdating ko, itinuturo pa lang sa akin yung instructions, tinawag na ako. Dire-diretso na lang ako, hindi ko nga alam

kung saan ako pupunta. (I was so embarrassed! (Laughter). I don't even know what to do at that time. I just went out and walk on stage I didn't even know where to go from there.

Q: And for next year, what rank do you wish you'd land in?

A: One. Ay, pressuring lang...hindi naman po. (One! Oh just kidding!)

Q: Why, don't you feel sexy?

A: Hindi naman. Medyo lang. Hahaha! (No. Maybe a bit! Hahaha!).

Q: What do you think is it about you that excite men?

A: Sabi ng iba, my eyes daw. Chinita na almond ba yun? Basta almond pa yung sabi ng iba, para raw nangungusap. Weapon ko yun. (Some people say it's my almond-shaped eyes. They say they are so expressive. I think that's my weapon).

Q: You've made it clear that you have no plans of going bold, that sexy is the farthest you'd go. Care to point out the difference?

A: Basta hindi yung walang damit. Hindi naman porke't sexy nakahubad na, di ba? Basta totoong tao, hindi nagpe-pretend. That's sexy. (As long as it is not in the nude, it's okay. Not because it's supposed to be sexy it has to be in the nude, right? As long as you are a real person, you are not pretending who and what you are, that I think is sexy).

Q: Do you mind playing villain roles?

A: Sa akin, wala namang problema. Siguro ganun talaga ang bagay sa akin. But, yes I like playing kontrabida roles. Pag kontrabida, mas mabilis [ang trabaho]. Unlike pag bida, ang daming long lines, laging umiiyak pa. Nakakapagod yun. (No problem with me. Maybe villain roles suit me best. And yes I like playing the villain roles. It's easier and more fun playing the villain roles. Unlike the lead roles, protagonists, you always have the longest lines to memorize, and it's almost always crying. And crying is so tiring).

Q: How do you prepare for such roles?

A: Actually, wala. For Darna, I just did a workshop for the fight scenes. (No preparation at all. For Darna, I just did a workshop for the fight scenes).

Q: But you strike us as sweet! Are you saying you don't prepare and are naturally bad and ruthless?

A: Ang daming nagsasabing bad ako. Hindi ko nga alam kung bakit. Ang dami ring nagsasabing gimikera raw ako kahit parati lang akong nasa bahay. Ang dami ko raw boys kahit wala naman. Hindi sila naniniwala sa akin. Lahat ng masasamang masasabi tungkol sa akin narinig ko na yata. (A lot people are saying I am a bad girl. And I don't even know why. They accused me of partying, night life and all, and yet I'm just home resting when I'm not working. Some say I have so many boyfriends, and yet I don't have one right now. So many nasty things were said about me and I think I heard them all).

Q: So how do you deal with these misconceptions?

A: Dati, nasasaktan ako. Especially before in high school. Pupunta akong restroom, dun ako umiiyak. Iyakin ako—hindi ko alam kung bakit ako naiiyak. Pero dinededma ko na lang. I would become masungit. Pero ngayon, dedma pa rin. Kasi nakakasakit lang sila ng ulo, di ba? You can't please everybody. (Before, I would be hurt by all these especially during high school. Usually I would go to the restroom and would cry there. But now, I just ignore all these nasty talks about me. I would just have a headache if I do, right? Besides you can't please everybody).

Q: Apart from rumors, is there anything else that makes you cry easily? Movies? Sad endings?

A: Crying is a sign of anger. Pag umiyak ako, galit yun na hindi ko mailabas. Minsan pag pinagbibintangan ako ng hindi ko naman ginagawa, sobrang ikinagagalit ko yun. I'm not very confrontational. (If I cry it means my anger is all bottled up inside. I am so angry when I'm accused of something that I didn't do. But I'm not confrontational.)

Q: What's Mr. Right like, anyway?

A: Mabait (kind), sweet, gentleman. What I really, really like is someone na marunong makipag-usap sa friends ko, marunong makisama sa tao sa bahay (who knows how to get along with my friends and family members). Basta mabait. (In other words, I like a kind-hearted man).

Q: You remind us of another FHM babe, Ruffa Mae Quinto.

A: Isa siya sa mga idols ko. Idol ko rin sarili ko, hahaha! Natutuwa lang ako sa kanya. I also like Claudine Barretto and Regine Velasquez in her movies. (She is one of my idols. And myself, hahaha! I find Ruffa Mae funny. I also like Claudine Barretto and Regine Velasquez in her movies).

Katrina Halili: FHM October 2006 Issue, Interview by Allan Madrilejos

Q: You cried in 'S-Files'¹¹⁰ when FHM readers declared you the nation's sexiest in 2006. We hate to see you cry, but that TV moment was priceless.

A: Alam mo namang iyakin ako, di ba? (You know that I'm a cry-baby, right?). I cried because I was overwhelmed by all the blessings that were coming my way. Umiyak ako kasi sino ba naman ako compared to other established stars, di ba? (Who am I compared to other established stars, I am still a nothing, right?). Pero narito pa rin ako. (But I am still here). Thankful siyempre ako sa pagtitiwala sa akin ng GMA. (Of course I am grateful to GMA). They've been giving me nothing but great roles right now. Hindi nila ako pinapabayaan. (GMA is always there to support me). Sobrang thankful din ako sa FHM na isa talaga sa mga unang naniwala sa akin. (I am also thankful to FHM because you are one of the first who believes in me). Umiyak ako kasi yung mga fans na nagpapalakas ng loob ko, sumuporta talaga sa akin. (I cried because I was touched and overwhelmed by my fan's support). Umiyak ako kasi masayang-masaya lang ako. Kahit, hello, alam kong hindi ako ang pinaka-sexy sa Pilipinas. (I cried because I was so happy even if I know that I'm not really the sexiest Filipina but I was voted as such. I was thankful).

Three things were noteworthy from Katrina's interview: 1) she knows that she is sexy and her expressive chinita almond-shaped eyes excites men. For her they are her weapon. She said: "Some people say it's my chinita almond-shaped eyes. They say they are so expressive. I think that's my weapon". 2) There is a clear distinction between going bold and going sexy. She said: "As long as it is not in the nude. Not because it's supposed to be sexy it has to be in the nude, right? And for her, sexy is the farthest she would go; and finally, 3) Being true to one self is sexy. She said: As long as you are a real person, you are not pretending who and what you are, that I think is sexy

¹¹⁰ 'S-Files' is one of celebrity gossips/entertainment shows aired in GMA-7 in the Philippines.

Cristine Reyes: FHM August 2007 Issue. Interview by Allan Hernandez

Q: This will officially be the day Cristine Reyes becomes a big sexy star. More than a hundred thousand copies out and there's no taking them back.

A: Ako (Me)?! (Hesitates) Eh...yata...ewan! Hindi ko alam, ayokong magsabi na sexy ako! I mean, yung ginagawa ko kanina I can really say for myself na sexy yun. I myself was surprised when I saw the pictures—ako ba yan?! But there, that's another reason I was so scared of being on the cover of FHM—mas takot ako kung anong sasabihin ng mga taong bibili ng FHM pag lumabas na siya. (I don't want to say I am sexy. I mean what I did a while ago was sexy. I myself was surprised when I saw the pictures—Is that me? But there, that's another reason I was so scared of being on the cover of FHM—I am more scared of what the readers would say about it when it is finally released).

Two things were noteworthy in Cristine's interview: 1) she does not want to say she is sexy but she thought that what she did during the photo shoots for FHM cover was sexy. And she cannot believe herself when she saw herself in those sexy pictures. Cristine doesn't negate the idea of becoming the next big sexy star. Finally, 2) she was less scared to appear for a photo shoot for FHM than of what readers would say about it when it is finally released.

Bianca King: FHM June 2006 Issue, Interview by Lou Albano

Q: How's life been since you last appeared in FHM?

A: Well, on the final quarter of last year, I did a lot of movies; four with Regal. I shot them all at the same time: Ako Legal Wife, Mulawin: The Movie, Hari ng Sablay and I Will Always Love You. I'm still doing TV, but just one show, Love to Love. I've been doing a lot of traveling. I've been going to the beach every two weeks. I've been going to Bora every two weeks.

Q: What's there to do in Bora every other week?

A: Iba-iba. (There are so many things to do in Boracay). But I hardly even go out at night. It's just mostly relaxing on the beach, skim boarding, diving. I once went diving for three days! I got my open waters license there. So I'm already a certified diver now. My life is so relaxed now. I've been healthy and relaxed.

Q: How has the cover changed your life? Are there more stalkers, more suitors?

A: Of course naman, but I wouldn't say manliligaw (suitors). It helped a lot in terms of exposure because being on the cover was like a window for the Bench Body endorsement.

Two things were noteworthy from Bianca's interview: 1) she has lives other than showbiz. She participates in water sports and is now a certified diver. Finally, 2) being on the cover of FHM has helped her much in terms of exposure to other product endorsements.

c. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Demands for basic rights and other social and civil considerations

Female celebrity models in lad magazines are a new and powerful breed of modern Filipina. These women are on top of their game, at the height of their careers, beauty and youth. In other words, they can control both money and power. But even so, the moralistas of Philippine so-called civil society continue to denounce posing 'sexy' in men's magazines as

indecent, vulgar, contrary to Christian ‘catholic’ morals and values, while the prohibitionist and other feminists criticize exploitation and commoditization of women’s bodies.

From the female celebrity models interviews, it is quite obvious that these celebrity models have no demand for any special job-related rights that they are not currently enjoying, both as a citizen and worker, except to ask for flexibility and tolerance in the pursuit of their creative and work opportunities. What they actually demand from society is basic decency and common courtesy, in other words freedom from bigotry, stigma and unjust labeling. One should also point out that female celebrity models’ positionalities differ from and are better than women in the sex industry. They do not feel exploited by the system (showbiz)—either by people in power—like TV station owners, movie producers, talent managers, media and all those people perceived to be more powerful than they are—or FHM magazine itself.

d. Female Celebrity Models in Lad Magazines: Understanding about feminism and/or access to feminist programs

In conclusion, it seems that posing for FHM and similar lad magazines is a **tactic**, an integral part of a general **strategy** to keep up with their own aspirations for their respective careers in conjunction with the TV network certain plans for them—celebrity star status. Success is no easy task, but maintaining one’s ‘star’ is even more difficult. During the L’Vivante and Sampaguita eras potential stars were either discovered or brought to studio heads. They had to abide by strict rules and were well-instructed or polished in the social graces. In other words, stars were like rare gems. Then came shows like That’s Entertainment and the talent searches. In the long run, **when there are too many stars in the constellation, it takes more to “shine”**. This is why nowadays, longevity in showbiz is quite rare. As they always say, **no one is indispensable—there’s always someone waiting in the wings**. Because stars come and go, talents are a commodity, and so they say. However, in the world of show business, a constant reinvention of the self—drastic if not controversial changes—is also a fact. The public demands it, and they must oblige. Sometimes it is the unimaginable ‘commerce’ rather than artistic expression that spells the difference between a ‘**star**’ and a ‘**has-been**’.

Chapter Six: Politics of Positionalities and Subjectivities

1. Maganda/Pangit Construction of Female Celebrity Models' Decision-Making Agency

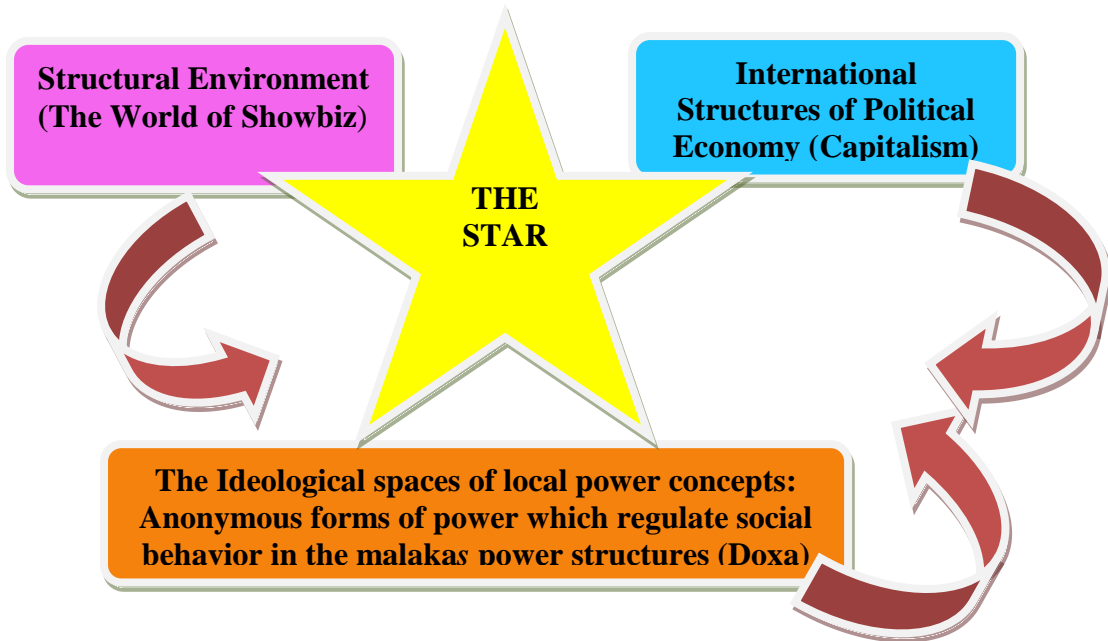
Female Celebrity Model's interviews in the last chapter have shown that these 'stars' are placed in a problematic power relation between an adoring, consuming and judging public and the judged celebrities who are the object of desire and consumption. But the difference and boundaries of each entity are not always clear. The blurred boundary between the public celebrity figure—the star—and the private person whose job description just happens to be a **star/celebrity** is a case in point that highlights discrepancies between the two facades.

When does the public life of a star end and his private life begin? The double-binding influence of the public both in the public and private life of the female celebrity models in lad magazines located within the substantial spaces of the structural environment—the **world of showbiz**—invokes the ideological spaces of local power concepts: anonymous forms of power, which regulate social behavior in the malakas power structures—**doxa**¹¹¹—and the mystifications and machinations of the market within global order—**capitalism**.

Within such contested public or private spaces, the female celebrity model's decision-making agency is greatly challenged, if not reduced. In this chapter, I shall show how female celebrity models negotiate the conditions of tripartite powers in the structural environment, ideological spaces of local power and global structures of political economy in order to avoid succumbing to the pangit inferiority complex, as they continue to maintain maganda ideals.

¹¹¹ Doxa is the aspects of tradition and culture which are so taken-for-granted that they have become naturalized. It is a Greek word meaning common belief or popular opinion, from which are derived the modern terms of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Pierre Bourdieu in his path-breaking *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, used the term doxa to denote what is taken for granted in any particular society. The doxa, in his view, is the experience by which “the natural and social world appears as self-evident” (1977:164). It encompasses what falls within the limits of the thinkable and the sayable (“the universe of possible discourse”), that which “goes without saying because it comes without saying” (1977:169, 167).

Figure 19: External Impediments to Empowerment



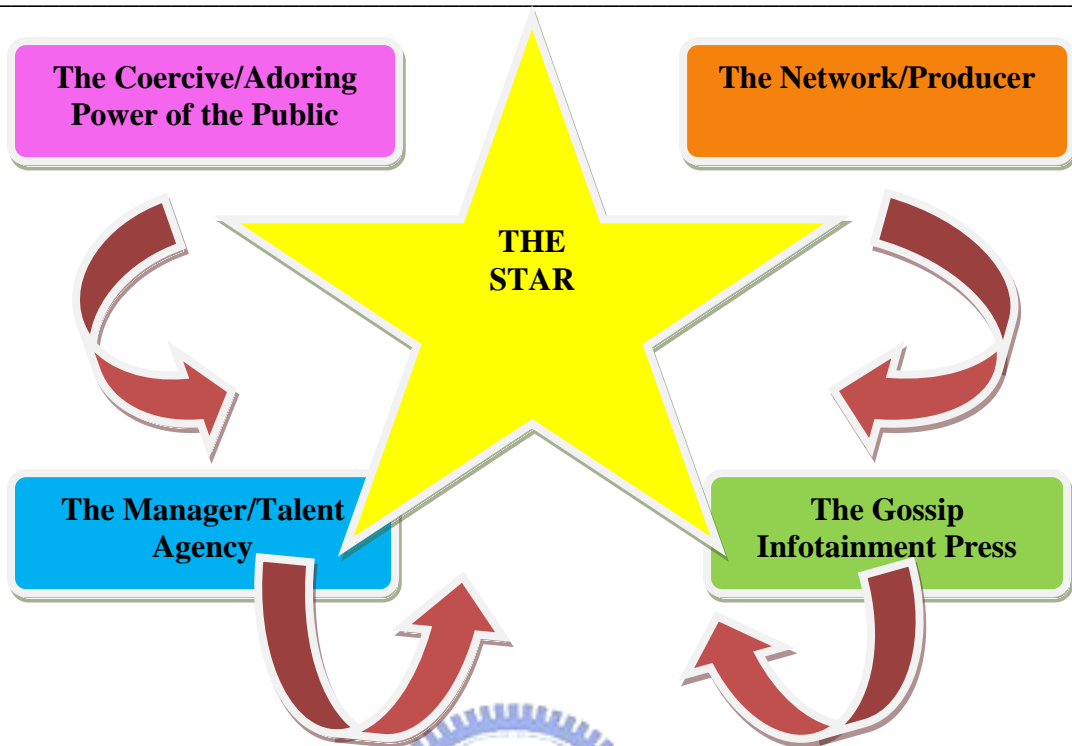
a. External Impediments to Empowerment

Three structural forces form the source of external impediments celebrity model's empowerment in lad magazines: 1) structural environment—the world of showbiz, 2) the ideological spaces of local power: anonymous forms of power that regulate social behavior in a malakas power structure—doxa and 3) global structures of political economy—capitalism.

1. The Powerful World of Showbiz

Female celebrity models in lad/men's magazines must contend and negotiate within four forces of power in show business in order to navigate between the coercive/adoring power of the public, the network/producer, the manager, and the 'gossip/infotainment' press. They have the god-like power to make or unmake a star. But the more important questions to ask are how and when to do it. Two important considerations are at play here: 1) acceptability and 2) readiness. Acceptability deals with the likelihood for a certain action to gain approval. On the other hand, readiness means perfect timing and willingness to do certain action.

Figure 20: External Impediments to Empowerment: The Powerful World of Showbiz



a. The Coercive/Adoring Power of the Public

In the Philippines now, Marimar fever has reached an unprecedented pitch, capturing the largest number of Filipino viewers in history of television drama to date. Gauging by the strong reactions generated by such television drama, Marian Rivera, playing the lead role as Marimar, together with Dingdong Dantes, is easily the undisputed reigning queen of Philippine television drama today. Filipinos, young and old, idolize her. Her popularity seems to have no limits. The viewing public just cannot get enough of her. At this moment, until the public tires of her usual roles, Marian can perform the same roles repeatedly, and the public would idolize her just the same. However, when the public demands something different, the star must oblige. Sometimes it is the aim of profit rather than artistic expression that spells the difference between a 'star' and a 'has-been', thus the need for constant reinvention of the stars. One can add to this the **inherent fickleness** of the consuming public, fluctuating constantly between sameness and newness. Yet again, the stars must oblige. Herein lays the problem, namely the blurred boundaries of satisfying such whims. However, producing newness is more problematic than maintaining sameness in two senses: 1) how different is different, without upsetting expectations of the viewing public and the models themselves? 2) When to do it: there were rumors that Marian Rivera had agreed to pose in one lad magazine.

The question thus remains: will the rest of her fans approve?

For a celebrity, doing something different from the usual expectations of people can be for any reason: 1) public clamor by a specific segment of viewers, such as men or young adults, 2) personal growth, or 3) cheap publicity stunt. Moreover, acceptance by the viewing public can be a product of two different but not mutually exclusive factors. To elaborate on this further, I will focus on subjective accounts of various featured female celebrity models.

When asked why it took them so long to actually agree to do pictorials for FHM's cover Eula Valdez, Pops Fernandez, Angelica Panganiban and Cristine Reyes said as follows:

Eula Valdez¹¹² replied: "Yes, two years ago I was hesitant because what you want me to do is too daring for me. I can't do it. Right now, I don't have an image to project and I don't want to be trapped to one image. I already posed for a body calendar two years ago. I didn't get any violent reactions. Now, I'm flattered because you offered again for me to pose for FHM."

Despite a failed marriage, Pops Fernandez¹¹³ maintained a 'sweet' image, saying: "I don't know. I'm still trying to ask myself if I'm totally convinced. This shoot was supposed to happen the week before, it was already scheduled and all. But then because I was nervous, I requested one week postponement. As if that was gonna make a difference! Hahaha! I guess I just had to prepare myself mentally and...I want to say physically but all I did was starved me for this shoot."

Former child actress Angelica Panganiban¹¹⁴ replied: "When Santa Santita was released, I was aware that you were already trying to invite me to pose. At the time, though, I felt that Santa Santita was enough to show people that I was ready to take on mature roles. It's not yet in my system to pose for men's magazine. To me, timing is very important. So now I am ready. I asked Mr. M (Johnny Manahan) to decide for me. If he says yes, it means I am already ready for this."

Finally, former debutant Cristine Reyes¹¹⁵ replied: "Well, now that it's done, not anymore. But I was really scared a week before. It wasn't so much that I would be doing the shoot; it was because I felt I needed to work out some more in preparation for the shoot. I'm a bit scared because I thought if I'm going to be on the cover I should really be sexy, right?"

¹¹² Eula Valdez: FHM May 2006 Issue, Interview by Alex Paita.

¹¹³ Pops Fernandez: FHM August 2006 Issue, Interview by Allan Hernandez.

¹¹⁴ Angelica Panganiban: FHM March 2007 Issue, Interview by Chrissy D. Icamina.

¹¹⁵ Cristine Reyes: FHM August 2007 Issue. Interview by Allan Hernandez.

Believe it or not, last week I had a bit of a tummy. I had to do some crash diet right away. I tried to cut down on my cooked rice consumption, so during meal time a tablespoon of cooked rice would be enough, just to have a taste of it!).”

What is noteworthy about this part of their interviews is the complete agreement by these celebrity models regarding 1) the god-like power of the viewing public, of their careers hanging in the balance as a function of their ability to maintain their celebrity/star status through public support and approval and 2) timing, mental and physical preparedness on the part of the celebrity, which is required to accomplish what they plan to do then proceed.

Eula Valdez said, “If a woman is not trapped within a certain image, she can do things she thought she cannot do, especially those things that are considered too daring especially those with sexual undertones like posing for a men’s magazine. However, public acceptance is a must for any change of image to be successful. Public disapproval would mean an end of her career.” From Pops’ perspective, need for mental preparedness is required. Whether Pops was joking or not, the fact remains that one must make sacrifices to get that ‘hot’ body. While it is well publicized, the number of eating disorders brought about by this ‘body image’, foremost of which is anorexia, has now become increasingly prevalent in the modeling world.

The question remains, why do some stars do the same thing, like posing for lad magazines (FHM), but do not get the same support from the viewing public? It seems that new actions out of desperation to re-enter mainstream entertainment are not considered hot by the public, especially those seen as ‘cheap publicity stunts’. A good example is Joyce Jimenez, the original ‘Pantasya ng Bayan’. After a long break from showbiz, she marked her re-entry to showbiz by posing for FHM. Despite her posing, her star stature was not restored. Some dismissed her as passé, some said nothing new, she’s old, and there are hotter younger new stars to see, or in plain language, she’s not hot anymore. In other words, she’s just lost it and now she has to put up with the tag ‘has-been’ instead of the usual Pantasya ng Bayan.

Like the other celebrities in this study, even the network/producers, managers and the press recognize the god-like power of the viewing public and the power to make and unmake a star, for the sake of profit. In this regard, the viewing public is really the consuming public. Yet consumption is not free. At the end of the day, sadly, it is business rather than artistic genius that is more important in this arrangement. This is more tragic than ironical but it seems that reality ultimately follows the forces driving the capitalistic impulses of institutions.

b. The Power of the Network/Producer

ABS-CBN-2 and GMA-7 are the largest multimedia conglomerates in the Philippines today. They are primarily involved in TV and radio broadcasting as well as the production of

TV programming for domestic and international audiences and other related businesses. They broadcast a wide variety of programs in different terrestrial networks and cable channels. These include news, public affairs shows, documentaries, dramas (mostly locally produced soap operas), syndicated foreign shows, entertainment news, talk shows, game shows, variety shows, musicals, sitcoms, educational shows, religious programs, children's shows, anime programs, sports shows, arts or lifestyle programs, and reality shows. Different channels also have special programs targeted to different audiences. From time to time, they also broadcast TV specials such as regional programs, festivals, concerts, cultural and sports events.

Both networks offer their shows worldwide through The Filipino Channel for ABS-CBN and GMA Pinoy TV. The rise to prominence of these two giant networks began when they started creating a stable of new stars exclusively for their own TV stations. Before that, starting a new show was a big problem, because they had no stars. At that time, the stars were under contract with large movie studios, Regal, Seiko and Viva Films. Today, this situation has turned against the movie establishment, even though these giant networks have ventured to produce movies independently, featuring the most popular and promising stars from the station-produced dramas and entertainment shows like variety shows, musicals, and sitcoms. The stars above are exclusively contracted to these giant TV networks, except Pops and Eula, who are on semi-exclusive contract, and Joyce Jimenez, who is contracted to Viva Films.

When asked why it took her so long to actually do a pictorial cover for FHM, the former child actress Angelica Panganiban said that she would let Mr. M (Johnny Manahan) decide for her. As senior vice-president of ABS-CBN, Mr. M. manages Star Magic (formerly the Talent Center), which is the stable for exclusive contract stars, such as Angelica. By being under professional contract, such stars, both big and small alike, are not much different from the average wage laborer. In this power relationship—by virtue of the Network being the employer and the star being the employee—the Network has in principle the upper hand.

c. The Power of the ‘Gossip/Infotainment’ Press

The former US President Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1787: "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, I would not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." By 1807, in his seventh year as President and after many years of severe press criticism, he wrote: "I deplore the putrid state, into which our newspapers have passed, and the malignity, the vulgarity and the mendacious spirit of those who write them." To our relief, Jefferson remained faithful to his basic principles: he concluded that "the press is an evil for which there is no remedy. Liberty

depends upon freedom of the press and that cannot be limited without being lost." He was right then and now, to prefer a free press, however flawed, to any controlled alternative.

One cannot doubt the power of the press. The media continually maintains that it can influence the actions of governments, corporations, consumers, and even terrorist groups by the way in which it reports topical stories. At its best, news informs and enlightens citizens of a free society, thereby safeguarding and strengthening our democracy. At its worst—dishonest, unfair, irresponsible—the media has potential to erode the public trust on which its own success depends and to corrode the democratic system of which it is indispensably a part.

The media argues that it acts as a mirror to public sentiment, reflecting the views and opinions of its readers—the great Filipino public. Others take a more cynical view, arguing that the media sensationalizes the news in order to increase its sales and circulation figures. Whether or not a bad media is preferable to no media at all is open to debate. The reality is that the press is sometimes guilty of over-exaggerating stories, but on other occasions it is not. They can, and do, have the effect of making organizations think twice before launching a new initiative, which among other things keeps government in check.

However, gossip/infotainment journalism is not so ‘serious’ but is lethal and god-like. Practitioners of this field are popularly known as celebrity journalists. The serious journalist must at all times follow the ‘Journalist Creed’ or a code of ethics for journalists. However, gossip columnists have always occupied a murky niche in the realm of journalistic standards. In the entertainment field, this code does not apply, at least in the strictest sense of the word, and instead follows the show business adage: “good or bad publicity is still publicity, and if there is smoke, there is fire. **But if there is no fire, create one!**” (My emphasis).

This does not mean that there are no reputable celebrity writers/critics. To say the least, celebrity journalists also strive for the truth. In the final analysis, the truth will come out, even in the case of gossip. However, a sadder truth is, gossip is more often used as publicity stunts or cheap gimmickry that is usually employed by desperate washed up stars, wannabes, manager-discoverers and producers. Sometimes they are even ‘secretly’ commissioned for a fee and are also used by gossip writers themselves to fortify their powers over the stars.

Kickbacks and exchange of favors in this field of celebrity journalism tend to be the rule rather than exception. Powerful writers and editors are always showered with gifts and routinely given access to celebrity stars, events and most importantly, a leak. A scoop would definitely increase newspaper sales, create publicity for the star and enhance the reputation of the reporter who got the scoop. Everybody is happy, except the victim—the ‘innocent’ star’. It is very hard to distinguish the difference, if these favors are used now to bribe the journalist.

These types of celebrity journalists are also looked down upon by the serious journalists. Celebrities think of them as lepers who are best avoided, and while the people love gossip, they know better than to take them seriously until the next juicy gossip or scandal comes along. It is no surprise then that celebrity journalists are often called names, like hucksters, vultures, leeches, sharks, scavengers, blood suckers, sponges, freeloaders, or simply gossips.

Honor and public image are important to Filipinos, especially women. Celebrities with an image to protect do not invite gossip, i.e. the malicious and scandalous kind that would question their integrity and honor, especially if such scandals were committed by the celebrity herself, or a member of her family, friends, especially lovers—past or present. Yet, we all know that juicy gossip, scandals, and scams are what drive the gossip columnist. Sex scandals in particular sell like hot cakes. And sexy stars are always a staple. They are always an open season for these gossip columnists. If their private sex or love life is not the object of gossip, then the way they look or behave often becomes an object of criticism.

Joyce Jimenez, the original *Pantasya ng Bayan*, was panned by gossip columnists, when her FHM cover was finally launched. She was given a bad review about how ‘tuyot’ (dried-out) she looked. She lost a lot of weight and the sudden weight loss did not suit her. Due to the bad press publicity, her re-entry to showbiz was at best lackluster, if not sad.

Katrina Halili, FHM’s Sexiest Filipina in 2007, said: “lots of people say I am a bad girl. And I don’t even know why. They accused me of partying, night life and all, and yet I’m just home resting when I’m not working. Some say I have so many boyfriends, and yet I don’t have one right now. So many nasty things were said about me and I think I heard them all.”

This final point is particularly interesting, because it informs the debate around the power of the gossip columnists through the mass media to insist and the power of the person to resist. It challenges, for example, the Frankfurt School's view of the "culture industry" as mass deception on two grounds; first, mass culture might not exert an overall and constant pressure on mass society, since it must operate in a complex matrix of different situations, and second the outcome in those situations is not pre-determined; each has the possibility of creating resistance or at least resulting differently. For Foucault, these situations are sites of discourse: "discourse can both be an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy"¹¹⁶

Foucault's thesis, that power is everywhere expressed in a multitude of individual

¹¹⁶ Foucault, quoted in Bristow, J. *Sexuality*. (London, 1997) p. 178].

discourses, offers freedom from the inevitability of determinate power and allows us to view the media as a site of power and resistance, where the outcome might well allow resistance as a necessary condition of the exercise of power. Therefore, one can draw comfort from his view that power outcomes are not inevitable and can be resisted.

To add currency to Foucault's idea of people's power to resist, media theorists have often discussed how much influence the media has had on people's opinions. People tend to selectively read what they already agree with and rationalize their preformed opinions in the face of contrary arguments. Experimental evidence indicates that the media has little power to change people's opinions on issues for which they already have formed an opinion. Thus, the media primarily reinforces pre-existing views that people already hold.

Nevertheless, one must point out that mass media has profound influence, when it comes to setting the agenda and priming people on new issues or ideas, where people have not yet made up their mind. The way an issue or idea is framed determines how it is discussed, which invokes a social problem and a range of possible remedies. In this process it is easy to manipulate people. The population relies on gossip writers as the main source of information and the basis on which they form their opinions and decisions about stars. However, the Filipinos are by nature 'likas na maawain' (inherently merciful), and they usually promote underdogs in cases of media overkill. The ones who can dramatize their cause in the most newsworthy and direct way, while appealing to basic human compassion and understanding, will usually triumph. A good example is Rosanna Roces, a bold star but little known in showbiz, who rose to fame and fortune, because a gossip columnist Cristy Fermin and her press cohorts did an 'over-kill'. A 'pang-aapi' (oppression) on such a grand scale is unforgivable. The Filipino people sided with the underdog Rosanna Roces.

The conclusion is not always the 'truth' that wins over people's attention and support in the battle between gossip writers and the stars; it is the way the truth is brought out. A 'media over-kill' is considered a greater crime than perjury and a graver offense in the case of gossip writers and the stars. Sometimes, ethical standards do not operate here, but it seems that human compassion is able to breach both thresholds of real life and reel life (showbiz).

d. The Power of the Celebrity's Manager /Talent Agency

There are many different types of agents for different types of talent. The main types are theatrical (television and film) and commercial (advertisements). There is also dance, print, and voiceover. An agent can represent you for any number of categories. Being with the same agency for everything is called being "signed across the board." In the Philippines, many actors prefer to be "signed across the board" over having separate agents for separate

types of work. Talent managers can be represented by a person or the network's talent agency. It is very rare for Filipino actors/actress now to have their mother or father or any member of his/her family to act as his/her manager. It is rarer still, to have no talent manager at all. At present, networks also have talent agencies specifically designed for their contract stars.

Talent managers are in charge of the overall well being of his/her talent. In addition to taking care of the business side of the relation, managers are obliged to ensure that physical and emotional needs are met and to provide spiritual and moral guidance. The encompassing responsibilities of talent managers also give them the power to decide not only about their talent's showbiz career but also their personal life, including particularly their love life.

In the past, reporters had relatively free access to celebrities. Today, it is a common practice for arrangements to be made first with the talent manager, before one can interview the star, especially for TV. Reporters commonly believe that, when celebrities discover their value to market media, they gain the upper hand. One rarely hears a reporter or columnist threatening to ruin a star. Instead, one will hear that the star's publicist threatens to cut off a magazine or show, if they don't obey demands to grant a cover, approve a photo or select a reporter. In the Philippines, it is common for managers or agents to dabble as celebrity gossip columnists. This is problematic, as misgiving with stars can incite word wars in the press.

It is also common for stars to be dependent on managers, who have the final say in their showbiz careers, especially about new directions they must take to ensure their survival.

The cases of Pops Fernandez and Angelica Panganiban show the power that managers have:

Pops Fernandez represented by personal manager:

Q: You haven't done anything like this ever in your entire career, yes?

A: No, not at all.

Q: And will this be the last or the revelation of a new Pops ready for more?

This will be the last, Hahaha! No, but they're gonna see... (Pops' handler interrupts)

Q: Oops, your handler says there's more daring stuff ahead...

A: Really?! (laughs) But people will be seeing me with more skin only because I play a superhero alien in the movie *Zsa Zsa Zaturannah*, which is pretty much what this pictorial is for—maybe that's part of what convinced me to do this cover, to give some sort of a teaser before I do the movie.

Angelica Panganiban represented by station manager:

Q: It's been a long time coming, this shoot. What took you so long to say yes?

A: When *Santa Santita* was released, I was aware that you were already trying to invite me to pose. At the time, though, I felt that *Santa Santita* was enough to show people that I was ready to take on mature roles. It's not yet in my system to pose for men's magazine. To me,

timing is very important. So, now I am ready. I asked Mr. M (Johnny Manahan) to decide for me. If he said yes, it means I am already ready for this).

During the LVN and Sampaguita eras, potential stars were discovered or brought to studio heads. They had to abide by strict rules and were well-instructed in the social graces. In other words, stars were like rare gems. Then came shows like ‘That's Entertainment’ and the talent searches. In the long run, when there are too many stars in the constellation, it takes more to “shine”. This is why longevity in showbiz is quite rare now. They always say now, no one is indispensable—there is always someone waiting in the wings. In conclusion, it seems that posing for FHM and similar lad magazines is a **tactic**, an integral part of a general **strategy** to keep up with their own aspirations for their respective careers in conjunction with TV network plans for them—celebrity star status. Success is no easy task, but maintaining one's ‘star’ is more difficult. Since stars come and go talents is a commodity. However, in the world of show business, constant reinventions of the self—drastic if not controversial changes—are also a fact. The public demands it, and they must oblige. It is the ‘commercial’ reality, not artistic expression, that spells the difference between a ‘**star**’ and a ‘**has-been**’.

2. Culture in Power

The culturally and institutionally imposed gendered roles women play in the society limit women to only these roles such as:

- A husband’s wife,
- Children’s mother,
- Server of physical needs of husband, children, home.



Furthermore, it was widely accepted that women had no need for outside-the-home occupations to create their own identity. Ironically today, this perception still persists even among modern career women. This is called career **women’s guilt syndrome**, where women are afraid of rejecting their husbands and children wish or demand to work outside the home.

In the Philippines, these gendered practices imposed on women are not so much the product of the structural system maintained by the authority of family, school, and most of all the church—the overarching power of Catholic **values** of ‘dutiful daughters, virginal girlfriends, devoted wives and sacrificing mothers’—but also institutionally unbound forms of power that can be ‘voluntary’. As Bartky argues, that “patriarchal disciplinary power operates both inside and outside the premise of institution; institutionally bounding power can be ‘imposed’ but institutionally unbound forms of power can be ‘voluntary.’”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Maria Clara ideals, characterized by modesty, demureness, subterfuge and repression of feelings of physical attraction for a man, which was the social standard in 19th century Philippines, is still considered by traditional parents to be ideal womanly behavior. Bartky's explanation of gendering disciplinary power has significant implications for Filipino women's voluntary submission to the malakas power. Two opposing realities can be deduced from the female celebrity models decision to pose for FHM: 1) the need for public approval especially from members of the immediate family like the father or husband and or any power figure; and, 2) the desire to break away with the doxa and still maintain that **maganda** status.

It is evident that these celebrity models in lad magazines still subscribe to and have in fact internalized **maganda** modes of behavior. FHM cover interviews with Eula Valdez, Camille Prats, Angelica Panganiban, Bianca King and Cristine Reyes show this clearly.

Eula Valdez and Camille Prats on husband and family's approval:

Eula Valdez:

Q: But really, you don't look like a mom. We mean, with that face and that body...

A: Thank you. Yun din nga ang sabi ng husband ko. (That's also what my husband told me). So when he saw Xander's works pumayag na agad siya (he readily agreed). He's proud that I'm posing for FHM.

Camille Prats

Q: On the subject of your dad, it seems your parents are quite conservative.

A: They are. It was really hard to convince them to let me do that first FHM shoot. But they eventually agreed to it. Because if they didn't I wouldn't have done it wholeheartedly.

Q: As they say, your parents are strict?

A: Yes! I started going out on my own with friends only when I turned 20—only late last year! Would you believe that in my first year in college I went to school with my yaya (nanny)? As in she waits for me in the lounge, and she's the only yaya (nanny) around! Good thing that they're okay with my love life. Like my current boyfriend, *sobrang legal* (they know about him and most importantly they approved f my relationship with him).

Eula Valdez recognized the importance of public acceptance as necessary for change of image to be successful. Public disapproval spells the end of a career. However, she pointed out the importance of her husband's approval, a typical Filipino trait for a wife. It was not clear from the interview if she would still pose for FHM, if her husband disapproved or not. The husband's response on Eula's posing for FHM is not a typical Filipino trait for a husband, considering the relative conservatism of Filipino males. Men generally would subscribe and consume this kind of material as long as no female member of his family is part of it. Camille Prats demonstrated the traditional good daughter-good girl image as obedient daughter.

Camille Prats and Angelica Panganiban on child star stereotype:

Camille Prats:

Q: Growing up, were you ever tempted with the perks of showbiz—smoking, drinking, sex, drugs, all that?

A: It was around me, yes. But you know, being Princess Sarah helped a lot. Growing up, ganon ang tingin sa akin ng mga tao, (this is how people perceived me to be) that I'm a very good person, that I cannot do anything bad. So nobody ever tried to ask me to smoke, nor give me a drink—although I do have a drink or two, not much.

Q: Are you ready for the boys looking at you differently when this comes out?

A: No. Honestly, I'm not expecting anything. I did this shoot, now it's over, I'm gonna wait for it to come out, and when it comes out whatever the reaction will be doon ko lang haharapin na "Okay guys, so that's how you reacted." As for my male co-stars, sampal agad ang aabutin nila pag iba ang iniisip nila, hahaha! (That's the time I will face them, thinking: "Okay guys, so that's how you reacted." As for my male co-stars, I will slap them if they think or put me in different light and try something funny, hahaha!

Camille on life after FHM covers:

Q: How's life after being our February cover girl?

A: Life's been different in so many ways, like how people see me. But I don't mind since I got what I wanted out of that shoot, which is to prove to people that I'm not young anymore and that I'm ready for mature roles. And as for the people who stare at me, okay lang because the shoot was done in such a tasteful manner so bakit ako mahihiya? (It's okay because the shoot was done in such a tasteful manner so why should I feel ashamed?)

Q: From child star to certified FHM babe, what does that sound to you?

A: To be honest, there are people who still see me the same way. It's just that suddenly there was more to me than just what they got used to. I guess it's created an impact because in the first place, who'd expect me to be on the cover of FHM? And I can say that they'd never forget that coming out that they'd now remember that yes, I posed for FHM and that I'm now indeed a lady.

Q: And now you're modeling underwear!

A: Yeah! I just started with the Bench Body campaign and I've recently done a pictorial for it, which will come out this month. To be honest, when I was offered the contract I laughed. I thought kasi, why was I offered a Bench Body contract when there's Her Bench and their other lines? Maybe they offered it to me because of my first FHM shoot, too.

Angelica Panganiban:

Q: Do you feel pressured to maintain a certain image?

A: Actually hindi kasi mas nahirapan akong gawin yun nung bata pa ako. Especially at the time na karamihan ng followers ko mga bata rin. Dapat lahat talaga ng mga kilos ko maayos. (Actually I am not pressured at all! I was more pressured to maintain a certain image when I was a young star. Maybe because my fans base at the time was children, just like me. I had to mind my manners and the way I act especially in public).

Successfully created public image can also dictate public actions towards the celebrity, as demonstrated by Camille's statement when she said: "Being Princess Sarah helped a lot. Growing up, people perceived of me like that I'm a very good person that I'm not supposed

to do anything bad. So nobody ever tried to ask me to smoke, nor give me a drink—although I do have a drink or two, not much.” This is in turn related to a change of image from sweet and wholesome to more adult and can open up many misconceptions about the celebrity and may be subjected to sexual harassment and other sexual overtures or improprieties. She was ready for such a situation when she said: “I did this shoot, now it’s over, I’m gonna wait for it to come out, and when it comes out whatever the reaction will be, that’s the time I will face them, thinking: ‘Okay guys, so that’s how you reacted.’ As for my male co-stars, I will slap them if they think or put me in different light and try something funny”. A change of image can open closed doors. She said: “To be honest, when I was offered the contract I laughed. I thought, why was I offered a Bench Body (Underwear Line) contract when there’s Her Bench and their other lines? Maybe they offered it to me because of my first FHM shoot, too.”

Angelica on the other hand thinks that adults are not limited to what they can do and cannot do like children, which is also true for Christine Reyes. FHM waited for her to turn 18 before it featured her as its cover girl. Public image is not always representative of the true and private self, thus keeping up with the public image can be repressive.

Camille on Lola (Grandmother) Stereotype:

Q: But are you capable of being a tease, at least?

A: No, I wasn’t given that talent, hahaha! You know, when I told my lola (grandmother) I was going to do a shoot for FHM, she said, “Hay naku apo, (Granddaughter, you know what?) I was given the gift of flirting, and I hope you have that also.” Yun ba naman ang sinabi. (That’s what my grandmother said, can you believe that?) I think I don’t. I’m just naturally malambing (sweet) and makulit (talkative and playful) when I’m around people, including boys, and what would happen is these boys I become very close with end up falling in love with me.

The idea of grandmothers having a gift of flirting was surprising, if not shocking, for Camille. It shows that Lolos (grandmothers) have a public image equal to that of Maria Clara. A Maria Clara with flirting skills might have been unthinkable, but today is just surprising.

Pops Fernandez on wholesome image:

Q: You haven’t done anything like this ever in your entire career, yes?

A: No, not at all.

Q: And will this be the last or the revelation of a new Pops ready for more?

A: This will be the last, Hahaha! No, but they’re gonna see... (Pops’ handler interrupts)

Q: Oops, your handler says there’s more daring stuff ahead...

A: Really?! (Laughs) But people will be seeing me with more skin only because I play a superhero alien in the movie *Zsa Zsa Zaturrnah*, which is pretty much what this pictorial is for—maybe that’s part of what convinced me to do this cover, to give some sort of a teaser before I do the movie.

Q: Are you saying eyes are really gonna be popping out of their sockets for you in the movie?

A: Well no, I'm not gonna go or anything like that. Zsa Zsa Zaturnah is actually a comedy musical. It's just the superhero outfit.

Pops does not see herself the way these pictures in FHM suggest—bold, daring, sexy, etc. This is a big departure from the 'sweet' and wholesome' image she wanted to project and to maintain, indicative of a clear distinction between wholesome, less wholesome and not wholesome at all. For Pops, her posing for FHM indicates a shift from wholesome to a less wholesome image, thus it can be done. However, **a not so wholesome image** is not without some discomfort for her and cannot be taken to the extreme. An image is just an image. As Pops remarked, "Well no, I'm not gonna go bold, daring, sexy, or anything like that. Zsa Zsa Zaturnah is actually a comedy musical. It's just the superhero outfit."(My emphasis)

Angel Locsin on publicly-created image:

Q: Since the show has become a pop culture phenomenon, has your fame doubled?

A: Well, nobody knows Angel now. Wala na si Angel, si Alwina na! (Angel is gone, it's Alwina now!). People would greet me saying, "O si Alwina! Si Alwina! Sometimes I find myself telling them, "Ay hindi po, ako po si Angel. But they insist! "Hindi, si Alwina ka!" (People would greet me saying, "O it's you, Alwina! It's Alwina! Sometimes I find myself telling them, "I'm not Alwina, my name is Angel. But they insist! "No, you're Alwina!" But I should tell you, shooting for Mulawin made my schedule very hectic. Ngayon nga bale five days na akong halos di natutulog. (Now we shoot for five days per week sometimes without sleeping).

A publicly-created image especially one that evolves into iconic status, like her role Alwina in Mulawin, can alienate the person from the persona. A created persona so powerful can overshadow the real person. However, along with iconic status comes iconic expectations.

Bianca King on the difference between sexy and lewd:

Q: What's there to do in Bora every other week?

A: Well, on the final quarter of last year, I did a lot of movies; four with Regal. I shot them all at the same time: Ako Legal Wife, Mulawin: The Movie, Hari ng Sablay and I Will Always Love You. I'm still doing TV, but just one show, Love to Love. I've been doing a lot of traveling. I've been going to the beach every two weeks. I've been going to Bora every two weeks.

Q: How has the cover changed your life? Are there more stalkers, more suitors?

A: Of course naman, but I wouldn't say manliligaw (suitors). It helped a lot in terms of exposure because being on the cover was like a window for the Bench Body endorsement.

Q: So you can now disprove all the ugly connotations about appearing in our lovely mag.

A: I think it's safe to say that I kind of—I wouldn't say set the trend—but opened the door for other wholesome stars to be on the cover. Kasi napansin ko, (I noticed) after my cover, it was teen star after teen star after teen star. Yun yung goal namin (That's our goal). A little sexy, pero (but) very, very far from being malaswa (lewd). It was quite tasteful. We wanted to show those wholesome actresses and teen stars that it's okay to pose for the cover of FHM.

Sometimes it is hard for people (especially fans) to picture celebrities as having a life other than showbiz. Bianca King showed that she had a life outside of showbiz. For Bianca, being on the cover of FHM ultimately facilitated other product endorsement. Those featured photos were a little sexy but not lewd. They were quite tastefully done. She wanted to show to wholesome actresses and teen stars that it was okay to pose for the cover of FHM.

Cristine Reyes on FHM and turning 18:

Q: We only set the whole thing rolling a week ago, yet we've been waiting three years for you.

A: Thank you and I feel very flattered. It makes it even more special because I was still 15 back then. But here I am finally. What can I say? Thank you dahil sobrang naging patient kayo sa akin (for waiting so patiently for me).

FHM waited for her to turn 18 before it featured her as its cover girl. Needless to say, as long as minimum legal age considerations were met, freedom of the press was guaranteed. For Filipinos, freedom of expression is as sacred as any Biblical or Catholic considerations.

From the above interviews, one can see that, more than the power of stereotype on certain actions as **malaswa** (lewd) and **mahalay** (earthy), and the consequent stigma attached to improper, indecent and offensive behavior, despite appearing in lad magazines, it was still possible to rise above socially imposed expectations, either by embracing Maria Clara or ideal persona popularized in roles like Alwina and Princess Sarah, to attain maganda status. As shown in the responses by Angel Locsin, Angelica Panganiban and Camille Prats, newly imposed persona can be limiting and not easy.

This highlights the way the voluntary form of patriarchal power operates and binds women to hegemonic norms of feminine identity. However, the celebrity models here were able to succeed to breakaway with the socially imposed standard of good behavior for women and still were able to maintain that maganda status. This is a clear negation of what Bartky postulated, that women internalize the feminine ideal so profoundly that they lack the critical distance necessary to resist it. If this is true, one would not see these women posing for men's magazine. It is a violation of Maria Clara ideals, especially modesty, demureness, subterfuge and the repression of feelings. However, I must agree that it is indeed voluntary, because a woman conforms to the 'patriarchal standards of bodily acceptability' out of a fear of losing "her sense of self as an existing individual." Moreover, I must point out that posing for lad magazines, entering the military, participating in traditionally dominated men's sports like boxing, basketball, etc. and occupying highest positions such as President and Prime Minister, along with using the power of text messaging, chatting and blogging for self-expression, are forms of resistance and a sign of women's breakaway from the socially imposed mold.

3. International Structures of Political Economy

Patriarchy and capitalism have been seen by feminists and Marxists as forms of social oppression. Both systems are different and independent of one another, however, both gains massive benefits from existing side by side. Oppression, in a broad sense, depends on the privilege derived by some from enforcing the lower status of others. In other words, “the existence of a class of people, who derive and sustain privilege through the debasement of others, is one of the fundamental tenets of oppression. The notion of force, both physical and economic, is strongly tied to this definition as it is through force that the latter is created and maintained.”¹¹⁸ Privilege, in the social forms to be discussed, automatically assumes power, hence access to the type of force required in order for an oppressive society to sustain itself.

Women are historically disadvantaged under patriarchy due to the fact that men are in power. However, “women contract away their seeming equality once the marriage contract has been entered into. Women contract into positions of subordination where they perform labor necessary for the upkeep of the home and of society by virtue of their lesser status in comparison to men. A wife becomes subject to the rule of her husband. Instead of being under the control of the state, she is under the control of her husband.”¹¹⁹ Women are thus oppressed as they perform labor necessary to maintain society at their own expense. They relinquish a level of control over their lives and freedom in order to perform their duties. The oppression of women in the above sense greatly benefits capitalist society. If men are given individual status and can interact in the public realm, but women are considered part of the family and the private domain, the state cannot easily interfere with the roles they play and the control that their husbands have over them. This facilitates their exploitation.

Women thus perform the labor that frees men to interact in the public realm. Women reproduce classes both biologically and psychologically. They biologically reproduce both the working and the ruling classes necessary for the upkeep of capitalism, but they also reproduce individual workers and individual capitalists.”¹²⁰ Women also constitute a reserve labor force, thus play a very important role under capitalism. Because women are secondary breadwinners, women can justifiably be paid less than men in such cases.¹²¹ Thus, the family

¹¹⁸ Weil, Simone. 1958. Oppression and Liberty. Arthur Wills (Translator), Preface by T. S. Elliot London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 63-68.

¹¹⁹ Pateman, Carole. 1988. The Sexual Contract. Oxford: Polity Press, 4, 8-9.

¹²⁰ Benston, Margaret. 1983. The Political Economy of Women's Liberation, in Roles Women Play: Reading Towards Women's Liberation. California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 196.

¹²¹ Barrett, M. 1980. Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis. London: Vereso,

is a fundamental component of capitalism. Patriarchy and capitalism evolved separately and as different social systems, but they are beneficial in today's society. Capitalism benefits from the roles of women under patriarchy, and the roles that women in turn play under capitalism reinforce patriarchy. Women's confinement to the family thus ensures that men are free to rule and to oppress at will. Much of women's oppression can be traced to their confinement to the family. A revision of the family is consequently necessary if society is to be altered, but this is a task of such magnitude that it can almost be considered impossible.

The family not only serves an oppressive role, but it also acts as the main socializing agent in the lives of children. Parents teach appropriate gender behavior to their offspring and act as role-models for them. Such socialization is carried into other areas of the children's lives, and situations arise where individuals are adequately socialized into the roles expected of them in later life¹²² However, socialization alone is not enough to explain gendered roles. Historical processes involving women's ability to lactate have been associated with home and with child care. Such domesticity results in the fact that mothers are the primary care givers to children. Daughters bond with their mothers longer, causing them to have more permeable ego boundaries and find greater satisfaction in unity and relationships with others in later life.

Boys, on the other hand, are often encouraged to individuate at a far younger age and to form firmer ego boundaries This causes them to grow up valuing individuality above relationships and other areas associated with femininity.¹²³ Hence, the family seems to be the locus of much of the oppression that happens under capitalism. This further presupposes that those in power, most likely men, would not allow such a change.¹²⁴ Gender roles are a further problem. Socialization is often too strong to be overcome overnight. Men and women often fall into their socially accepted roles out of habit or out of a need to be accepted by the rest of society, thus undermining a potentially egalitarian distribution of labor within the family that would liberate women and overcome the slanted psychological development of children.¹²⁵

b. Women's Internal Impediments to Empowerment

Foucault, in his account of subject and power paradigm, develops the possibilities of a

1980. (Reprinted with new introduction as "Women's Oppression Today: The Marxist Feminist Encounter." 1988, 158).

¹²² Bryson, Valerie. 1992. *Feminist Political Theory*. London: Macmillan Press, 201.

¹²³ Chodorow, Nancy J. 1989 *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1-30.

¹²⁴ Young, Iris M. 1983. Is Male Gender Identity the Cause of Male Domination? In *Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 129-146.

¹²⁵ Ehrensaft, Diane. 1983. When Women and Men Mother. In *Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 41-51.

subject's resistance to the aforementioned individualized forms of power discourse. It is a matter of individual submission of subjectivity to the normalizing tendencies of disciplinary power, and the solution is also an individual matter of rejecting these sorts of submission, namely, self-refusal. The **'politics of refusal'** is thus his theoretical tool to resist "what we are" and "the kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries".¹²⁶

Foucault's notion of resistance and power, however, is narrowly argued in the context of a 'practice' of power relations between individuals or groups: "a way of acting upon an 'acting... or being capable of action upon other actions—a set of actions upon other actions.'"¹²⁷ Power "exists only when it is put into action, and exercised only over free (acting) subjects, and only insofar as they are free."¹²⁸ By this definition of the exercise of power, Foucault conditions the existence of freedom on the subjects, possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized,¹²⁹ thus, the possibility of resistance. In other words, he argues that "a subject must be capable of action or resistance and be recognized as a person on whom force or conduct is exercised."¹³⁰

Foucault's conceptualization of power as inter-subjective play between or among free agents departs from the structural analysis of power that over-determines the characteristics of the subjects' power relation; it nonetheless leads to the problematic conclusion that there is no power relationship, when power is not put into action. Foucault distinguishes power from violence and domination by defining the latter as a 'physical determination', which does not involve any freedom on the part of the subjects and where the subjects are unable to resist:

"A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities. Its opposite pole can only be passivity, and if it comes up against any resistance it has no other option but try to minimize it... Where the determining factors saturate the whole there is no relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains. Consequently there is no face to face confrontation of power and freedom which is mutually exclusive... without the possibility of recalcitrance; power would be

¹²⁶ Lloyd, Moya. 1996. "A Feminist Mapping of Foucauldian Politics," in Susan Hekman, ed., Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 243.

¹²⁷ Foucault, Michel. 1983. "The Subject and Power," in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, 2nd ed., Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, with an afterword by and an interview with Michel Foucault. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 220.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 220-221.

¹²⁹ Ibid. 221.

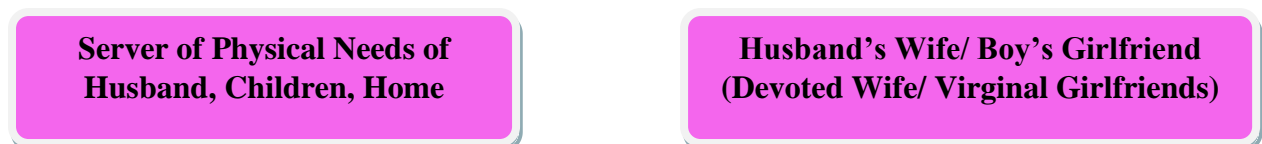
¹³⁰ Monique Deveaux. 1996. "Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault," in Susan Hekman, ed., Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 222.

equivalent to a physical determination.”¹³¹

The separation of dominance and violence from power in Foucault's theory has serious implications for women's empowerment. If the exercise of power is based on actions, it does not explain how a state of power, such as internalized oppression under male domination and violence operates and creates barriers to women's exercise of power.”¹³² Women engage in sex trade for example—prostitution and pornography, the internalization of a sense of unworthiness is fundamental impediment to exercise empowering choices; they ‘chose’ to enter the sphere that is seen as ‘suitable’ for those who have lost virginity in the malakas power structure. To make it worse, their internalization went deep as a number of their sadistic customers repeatedly violated these ‘pangit’ women. Thus, when the condition of power exercise is based on the **‘existence of objective points of resistance,’**¹³³ it does not account for how women's internalization leads to voluntary submission to the normalizing effects of gendered power relations. While Foucault's theory moves away from a structural analysis of power, where external forces impede freedom and resistance on the part of power subjects, it does not further explore the internal impediments to **‘freedom and resistance’:**¹³⁴ the ways in which voluntary and internalized forms of power impede women's empowerment.

In short, Bartky's theory provides a significant insight in analyzing these sorts of voluntary and internalized forms of patriarchal disciplinary power. Arguably, if women in the Philippine sex industry gain critical awareness about malakas power discourse, they would not subscribe themselves to the maganda/pangit dichotomy. This is not, however, to impose Bartky's rigid feminist conclusion that women must disassociate themselves from any kind of feminine behavior. It is problematic to follow her argument where feminine-looking women are viewed as accomplices of the **‘modernization of patriarchal domination’.**¹³⁵ Rather, my emphasis is on a re-conceptualization of female celebrity models’ subjective accounts of power in ways that would deconstruct the maganda/pangit dichotomy—with transformatory significance for removing women's internal impediments to empowerment.

Figure 21: Internal Impediments to Empowerment: Personally Internalized Mixture of Indigenous Gender Concepts and Hispanic Catholicism

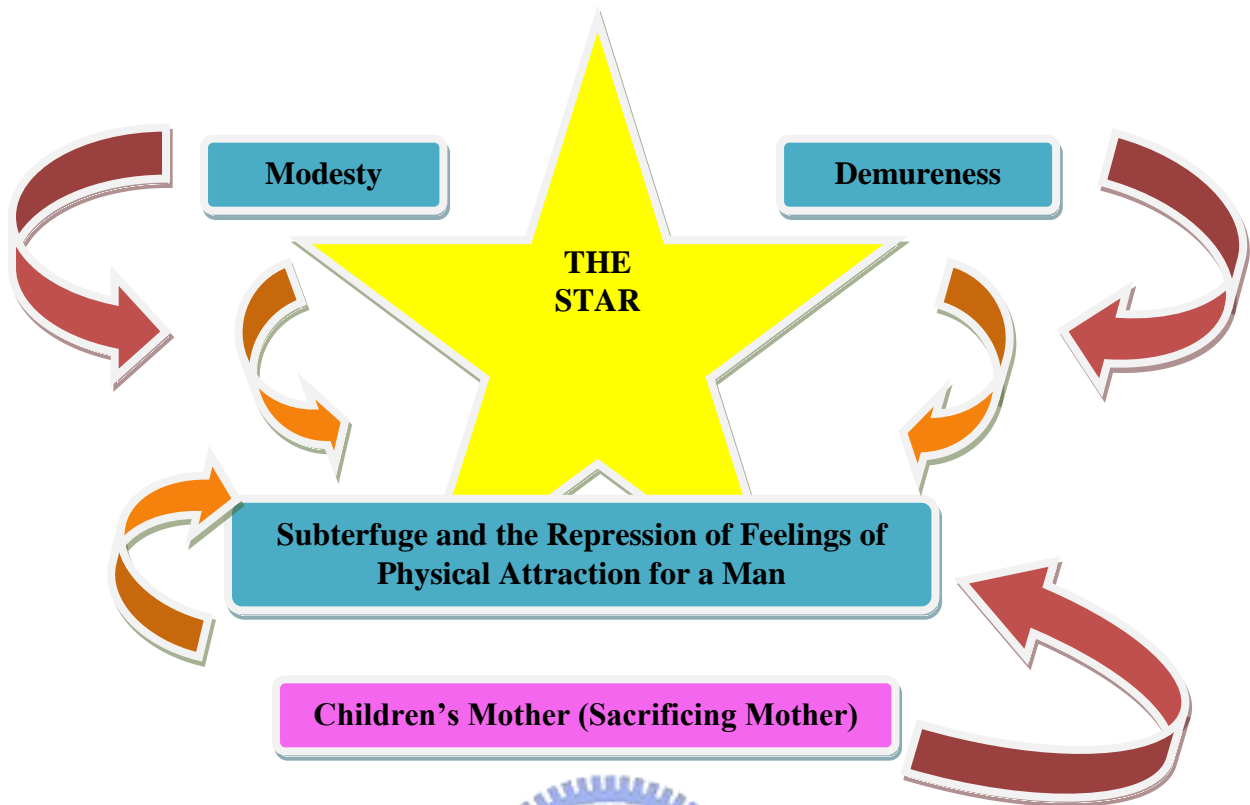


¹³² Deveaux, 1996,224

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Bartky, 1997, 103.



From Figure 21, one can see that women are always defined in terms of their social roles—dutiful daughters, virginal girlfriends, devoted wives and sacrificing mothers—instead of in their capacity as persons. It is widely accepted that women had no need for careers outside the home. Ironically today, this perception still persists even among modern career women. This is known as **career women's guilt syndrome**; where women are afraid of rejecting their husbands' or children's' wish to work outside the home. The '**moral gaze**' inscribed in the sexual relations of the Philippine society appears to be internalized by the Filipinos, and perpetually oriented toward the disciplinary practices of self-policing subjects. The exercise of this disciplinary power, according to Foucault, is unique in the sense that it "seeks to transform the minds of those individuals who might be tempted to resist" in anonymous forms of psychological power.¹³⁶ This contrasts with those authoritarian forms of power that are directly exercised upon civilians through physical control, as was the case of the colonial era in the Philippines.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

In this thesis, I have advocated the importance of integrating women's subjective accounts of power into a feminist theory that is not predicated merely upon prostitution and objectification of female bodies. The search for women's **'power-from within'** started with my attempt to examine the degree of female celebrity models' voluntary engagement with the 'gendering' power discourse that is taking place within the power dynamics of the Philippine sex industry in the larger context of show business. The construction of women's decision-making agency reflects the ways in which women internalize the dichotomous discourse of **'maganda/pangit'**. They submit themselves to the assertion and restoration of their sense of self as maganda individuals, which tends to be lost due to their socio-culturally inadequate positionalities in the **'malakas'** power structure. My research has shown that these sorts of voluntary and internalized forms of power contribute to women's internal impediments to exercise choice with subsequent ramifications for empowerment.

As I have systematically argued, however, positionalities of female celebrity models in lad magazines are not only located in these spaces of the structural environment but also in the ideological spaces of local power—abstract forms of power that regulate social behavior in the **'malakas'** power structure. Some of the development studies literature explains such discursive accounts of power in a context of Foucault's theory on disciplinary practices. The notion of doxa—aspects of tradition and culture which are so taken-for-granted that they have become 'naturalized'—has a procedural linkage with Foucault's theory of the normalizing forms of power discourse which I have applied to the power discourse of sexual morality in Philippines society. The linkage can be found at the intersection of the two notions, where the normalizing discourse of power contributes to the congruence of 'the subjective assessments of social actors' (people's subjective accounts) with the routine practices of daily life that are embedded in the taken-for-granted socio-cultural norms and values. Stated differently, while Foucault's notion of power refers to a process where disciplinary practices have effects on the construction of subjectivities, Kabeer's notion of doxa refers to the stage where the power of discourse construction takes more static forms as the 'naturalized' socio-cultural order, ruling out the availability of culturally different ways of 'being and doing' as alternative modes. Thus, the linkage between these two forms of discursive power accounts for the ways in which the discourse of gendered sexual morality penetrates into the subjectivities of Filipinos and leads to the naturalization of the socially marginalized status of women.

Maria Clara ideals, characterized by modesty, demureness, and the repression of physical attraction with men, which was a prescribed norm in 19th century Philippines, is still

considered by traditional parents to be ideal womanly behavior. Posing for lad magazines is not considered ‘standard’ female behavior and work. Female celebrity models’ words, despite their boldness, show how inferior they are viewed within the rigid moral religious framework of conservative Philippines society, reflecting the burden of social stigma attached to their work in the sex industry. It appears in turn that female celebrity models’ devalued status in the long run makes it difficult to recognize their labour rights, as well as other basic human rights, in the face of discriminatory norms and values imposed by morality and religion.

I can briefly summarize the findings for each theme to show the degree of female celebrity models’ voluntary engagement with the gendering discourse of malakas power. The four themes were drawn from the interviews published in FHM Magazine. They demonstrate the extent to which the female celebrity models submit themselves to the gendering discourse in the **malakas** power structure: 1) conceptualizations of power and their relevance to female celebrity models’ positionalities in the operation of the sex industry; 2) women's subjective accounts of power, particularly in their strategies of self-defense, self-control, and self-worth, decision-making and goal orientation; 3) women's demands for basic needs and rights; and 4) understandings of feminism and access to feminist programs. In short, each theme poses an analytical problem relating to the power discourse and construction of women's subjectivities. How do female celebrity models view and locate themselves in the power dynamics of the Philippine sex trade? How do they exercise power within such dynamic relations? How much do women's demands for basic needs and rights underlie their subjective relations? Finally, do these women have gender consciousness and awareness of the **malakas** power discourse?

Female celebrity models in lad magazines must contend and negotiate within four forces of power in show business to be able to decide on what courses of actions to take—the idolizing power of the public, the network producer, manager, and the ‘gossip/infotainment’ press. They have the **god-like power** to make and unmake a star. The first theme showed that all female celebrity models are conscious of ‘power over’ manifestation by these four forces in show business. They impose rules and norms that female celebrity models are supposed to follow. Women celebrities are embedded agents in these power relationships and appear to struggle with the self-internalization of their inferior status as ‘**pangit**’ woman, both within and outside the malakas power structures of the sex industry.

The second theme depicts such women's struggle with inferior internalization in the forms of self-defense and self-control against these four forces. Celebrity models are able to assert their **maganda** power in various ways that resist lowerizing themselves to the **pangit** category. Celebrity models’ assertions of maganda power reflect the level of their self-esteem

on future goals. Accordingly, women without means to assert the power of **maganda** grow desperate because they do not want to become a 'has-been'. For has-been stars, they privately drown their inferior feelings in drugs and alcohol while adopting defiant attitudes against the social stigma. The restoration of maganda power for these pangit women can only be made by staging a comeback otherwise it is a long, dark, lonely future for them.

From the female celebrity models' interviews, one should also point out that female celebrity models' positionalities in show business are generally better than those of women in the sex trade business—prostitution and pornography. They do not feel less exploited by the system (showbiz), either by people in power, such as TV station owners, movie producers, talent managers, media and the magazine itself. However, it must be pointed out that there are evidently certain limits on the ability of female celebrity models to negotiate with these powerful actors in the sex industry, because they are vulnerable to the threat of social and economic harassment that contribute to their expulsion from the industry as has-been stars.

The third theme shows that these female celebrity models' subjective accounts are often buttressed by their demands for basic human rights. It is obvious that these celebrity models have no demand for any special job-related rights that they enjoy as citizen or worker, except to demand flexibility and tolerance in their pursuit of creative and work opportunities. Celebrity models call for their rights to be respected, even if they engage in 'not-so proper, sexy forms of work,' the need to protect themselves from involvement in 'loose' activities, the obligation to be 'dutiful' to their parents, and the right to gain malakas recognition for their maganda artistic and creative work/performance. In short, what they actually demand from society is basic decency and common courtesy, freedom from bigotry, stigmatization and unjust labeling in the pursuit of their creative and professional endeavors.

The fourth theme demonstrates that women submit themselves to the maganda/pangit dichotomy without much critical awareness of the gendering construction of subjectivities. While some women are critical of their unequal positionalities within the malakas power structure, nobody seems to question the gendered aspects of their subjectivities constructed through such power positionalities, because they already have internalized maganda ideals and pangit inferiority, both in thought and practice.

The impediments to the empowering exercise of female celebrity models' decision-making agency do not solely lie in the external power inequality underlying the sex industry but rest implicitly in women's subjectivities that are constructed through their unequal power positionalities in the malakas power structures governing the sex industry and power relations within the sex industry. Underlying female celebrity models' unequal positionalities in both

structural and relational terms, there is a more powerful modality of power that penetrates and constructs people's knowledge and discourse—the ideological spaces of local power, i.e. **doxa**. These abstract forms of power that regulate behavior in the malakas power structure pose a greater impediment to the exercise of female celebrity models' decision-making. The dichotomous notions of maganda/pangit reflect the discrepancy between women's 'socially unacceptable behavior' in the sex industry and their rationale in doing so. Accordingly, these women's struggles are indicative of the double notions of discipline and resistance: on the one hand, 'being a conformist' to gendering disciplinary practices and on the other hand engaging in acts of resistance that go against the **malakas** standard of feminine behavior.

When there is power inequality between people and institutions, empowerment tends to be “constructed on a ‘**power over**’ basis.”¹³⁷ Yet, empowerment will only become a zero-sum game, when the conceptualization of power is made through a dualistic understanding of ‘**malakas/mahina, strong/weak, or powerful/powerless**’. If empowerment is drawn from a zero-sum form of power, then those in a less powerful position will inherently compete or struggle to be ‘empowered’ to participate within the existing power structures, in order to gain control in terms of political and economic decision-making. Those in positions of power on the other hand will lose her/his control over the other, who still remains constrained by it. Empowerment in this regard “does not involve structural change in power relations.”¹³⁸

For alternative conceptualizations to the ‘**power-over**’ construction of empowerment, I have relied on Rowlands' ‘**three dimensions of empowerment**,’ as exercised through the interrelated forms of ‘power-within’, ‘power-to’, and ‘power-with’.¹³⁹ “**Power-within** refers to a personal level of empowerment: developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression.”¹⁴⁰ One can thus argue that female celebrity models’ seemingly veiled inferior internalization will dissipate, if and when they develop their sense of self that is not predicated upon the malakas standard of feminine behavior. “**Power-to** refers to a relational level of empowerment: developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it.”¹⁴¹ Female celebrity models’ decision-making strategies can be enhanced by such productive and

¹³⁷ Jo Rowlands, *Questioning Empowerment: Working With Women in Honduras*. Oxford: Oxfam Publications, 1997, 11.

¹³⁸ Rowlands, 1997, 12.

¹³⁹ Rowlands, 1997, 15.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

generative power, which does not necessarily require them to assert and/or restore *maganda* power in relation to men. **Power-with** refers to a collective level of empowerment: “where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone—collective actions or co-operation rather than competition.”¹⁴² This can be a counter-measure against **maganda/pangit** dichotomy; women can exercise their power cooperatively with other women without competing with each other to gain **maganda** power. Their exercise of power need not be through struggle or competition with the power and prestige of *malakas*.

In conclusion, the construction of women's decision-making agency reflects their voluntary engagement with the normalizing tendencies of this gendered power discourse, which not only perpetuates the external power inequality in the Philippine sex industry but internally impedes their abilities to exercise choice with empowerment potential. Thus, “the power to give voice to one's aspiration to be heard is not so much the removal of an external impediment as the beginning of an internal empowerment”¹⁴³ that addresses women's ‘**power-within**’. This requires transformation of their internal impediment to exercise choice, which has significant ramifications for empowerment. Ultimately, it is necessary to regard the impact of women's internalization of the **maganda/pangit** dichotomy as a kind of resistance, which in turn becomes the potential for empowerment.

Implications for Further Research

The literature on *lad* magazines has provoked conflicting positions about their value and the role of women in them. Instead of just being degrading to women, a threat to children and an assault on readers' insecurities, I argue that they also create a space for these women to challenge existing rules of conduct and allow them to emerge victorious by gaining celebrity status. Such magazines are not exclusive to the Philippines thus can be viewed as a problem that is generally relevant to many societies, albeit invoking different kinds of considerations for culture, power and gender. Their use and potential as a progressive force must ultimately follow from the way we understand these underlying dynamics at various levels and between different agents or institutions. Although it would be seductive to offer recommendations in this regard, I think that it is something perhaps left for other scholars and activists to make.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Virginia Held, "Freedom and Feminism," paper presented to the conference "The Intellectual Legacy of C. B. Macpherson," University of Toronto, 4-6 October 1989, 8, 12, cited in Monique Deveaux, 1996. "Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault," in Susan Hekman, ed., Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1996, 224.

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